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PATTERNS OF EXPOSURE TO THE MEDIA OF 12-17 YEAR OLDS IN SECOND LEVEL

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DECLARATION

I, Marion Reynolds being a candidate for the Degree of Master of
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DATE: 20th July 1990

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TO PAT

ABSTRACT

Patterns of Exposure to the Media of 12-17 year olds in second level schools in Ireland.

by Marion H Reynolds

This is an exploratory study of the exposure and attitudes to the media of young people. It is based on data assembled from a self-administered questionnaire completed by 991 students in 20 schools throughout Ireland. An analysis of the data revealed that ownership of the media in homes is high and there is little control of media usage by parents. The media appear to be little used in schools. Books are bought often by more than 50% and 48% are members of a library while 39% read a newspaper every day. Pirate radio stations are popular. Girls listen to radio more than boys, but boys listen to records more often. Half of them spent 23 hours per week watching television. Students differentiated between fantasy and realism. Violence on television was upsetting for 18%, mainly girls. Most visit the cinema occasionally. Although 24% own video recorders 56% watch videos regularly. Horror videos were the most popular. Most did not like ads, but had favourites which tended to be for products not marketed to young people such as alcoholic drinks. The media are the main source of information for young people and television enjoys high credibility. Gender was found to be an important variable.

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INTRODUCTION

Len Masterman,[1] the well known teacher, writer and lecturer on Media
Studies relates, in his introduction to "Television Mythologies",
how he began to teach a Television Studies course in school as a
response to his growing conviction that middle class cultural
values, forms and language had little to offer students in
predominantly working class schools. My road to Damascus was very
similar.

I teach in a large school in a predominantly working class area of
Dublin, to all levels, from First Year Remedial English to Honours
Leaving Cert. Over the years I have discovered that many of my
students find much of the curriculum irrelevant. Yet these same
students are articulate and witty when discussing television or
video, especially when these media deal with issues and concerns of
modern life. I was particularly struck by the students' reaction to
Alan Bleasdale's "The Boys from the Blackstuff", how they related to
the characters and what stimulating and thought-provoking
discussions they brought to the classroom. It is very difficult to
work up enthusiasm for Emily Dickinson and her obsession with death
in sixteen year olds who are so busy living life. If, on the other
hand, all around you is recession, redundancy, unemployment and the
social problems resulting from these, then it helps to see how other
people deal with it in the Blackstuff or Coronation Street.

This may sound as if the problem lies in the out-dated curriculum of

second level schools. But the fact is that no matter how we change

the curriculum, we are still talking about the print media, and, in

the language area, Literature with a capital L.

Something that teachers must face is the fact that most of our

students get most of their information about life from the

electronic media and not from books. That may even be true of many

adults if we are honest about it.

It would seem that this is the new literacy and teachers as well as

students need to learn about it. It is time that the media were

brought into the classroom. We teach critical appreciation and

understanding of Literature, a facility which many of our students

will seldom use again once they leave school. Yet television, one

of the major socialising influences in the lives of young people, is

ignored.

The low esteem in which communication and media studies are held can

be deduced from an article written by Augustine Martin,[2] Professor

of English in University College, Dublin. He says these subjects

"have their place, but they can never be allowed to hijack

literature which caters to the deeper and more universal roots of

human experience."

This article provoked an answer from me, in a letter to the editor,

which, I believe, represents the attitude of many teachers of media

studies.

"We do education a great disservice if we continue to
categorise what is worthy of study according to outdated
ideas of culture. Culture is living and changing ....
The new media are an important part of that culture and
of our language and communication system."[3]

But it is not enough to simply introduce the media into schools. We
must also be very clear about our motives for bringing the media
into the classroom. If we only wish to inoculate our students
against the dangerous effects of television, if we denigrate their
favourite programmes and dismiss as worthless most of what they
enjoy, then we are dismissing as worthless a large and important
part of their lives. Teachers are willing to comb Yeats's poetry
for the hidden nuances of meaning, but are not willing to
investigate the hidden curriculum of television. Our students are
growing up in a very different world to the one in which we grew up
and it would help our understanding of them if we became interested
in the different ways in which they use the media: for information,
for escapist fantasy, for advice on inter-personal relationship, for
relaxation, for meeting people and situations with which they would
not normally come into contact. We need to become aware of how
different groups interpret media messages. We need to consider how
the media represent the world in which we live and what they are
saying about such important issues as the role of women, the role of
men, the importance of power, money and our culture.

Working, as I do, in an outer suburb of Dublin, I began to wonder if
my impression of the importance of the media, particularly

television, in the lives of my students was typical of students all over Ireland or peculiar to that area. I wanted to know if the extent of their exposure to the media and their attitudes to them reflected those of their peers in the rest of Ireland. I looked for relevant research on the subject but in fact little research had been done on young people and the media in Ireland. Even the TAM ratings used by RTE in audience research includes all young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four in one group. Of course there is a vast difference between a school-going fifteen year old and a working twenty four year old who may even be married, so that source yields no relevant information for an educationalist.

During the 1970s, Grant Noble[4] did some research on the effects of television on children, some of which was conducted in Ireland. However, most of the Irish children used in his research appear to have been under twelve. In 1977, John Quinn[5] conducted a study of children's leisure time activities with particular emphasis on television. His sample of children was under twelve. In 1982, Michele Dillon[6] researched youth culture in Ireland. While this study yielded some very interesting data on young people and the media it laid particular emphasis on an examination of the contexts of home, school and peer group relationships within which youth leisure cultures develope. It also only involved the 14-18 year olds and left out a very important group from an educationalist's point of view, the 12-14 year olds.

The Costello Report,[7] or the final report of the Youth Policy Committee, published in September 1984, devotes only one page of a

large volume to the role of media in the lives of young people but did recommend "that media studies should be found some place in the school syllabus, whether as a subject or part of a wider course providing education for life".

With such a dearth of information on young Irish people and the media, I decided to do my own research. I felt that the information which I recorded would be of help to teachers like myself, who see a need for media education as an integral part of the curriculum. It might also, by defining the particular areas of the media which most engage the interests of young people, help teachers to a better understanding of their students. It should also help parents and educators to see the marvellous potential of the media for education and information, rather than as simply the time-wasting or evil influence which the detractors of the new media portray. Finally, I hope that by tracing emerging patterns of the media consumption of young people and their attitudes and preferences to the media, I will help those teachers involved in curriculum reform to design a curriculum which is as much aware of the new media as of the old and which integrates media studies into a curriculum which educates for life.

The results of this study were first delivered publicly in June 1985 at the First National Conference on Media Education organised jointly by The Irish Film Institute and Ballyfermot Senior College. At the end of the conference the Teachers' Association for Media Education was formed. The results of the study received wide coverage in the press and as a result of this I was invited to write

a series of articles for the Evening Herald during October 1985 on

my findings. A paper on the findings was delivered to the

Psychological Society of Ireland at their annual conference in July

1985.

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CHAPTER 1

Research Design and Methodology

The Main Models of Media Research

Before deciding on the most appropriate research design and
methodology, for the purposes of this research, a study was made of
the main models of media research. Although criticism of popular
culture goes back as far as the sixteenth century,[1] research in
Britain and Ireland did not begin until the 1950's. Up to that,
media research was largely dominated by American thought.

James Carey[2] argues that European and American research into the
media derive from two quite different kinds of intellectual views of
communication studies.

> "American studies are grounded in a transmission or
> transportative view of communication. They see
> communication, therefore, as a process of transmitting
> messages at a distance for the purposes of control. The
> archetypal case of communication then, is persuasion,
> attitude change, behaviour modification, socialization
> through the transmission of information, influence or
> conditioning."

While there are many exceptions to these rather general statements,
it is true that most American research into the media has been in
the areas of attitude change and dissonance theory, influence and
diffusion theory, uses and gratification analysis and audience
effects. On the other hand, most seminal media research in Europe
has been in the area of popular culture e.g. the work of Roland

Barthes,[4] Raymond Williams,[5] and, more recently, Len Masterman.[6]

The Three Main Theoretical Approaches to Mass Media

Denis McQuail[7] points out that different theoretical approaches to the media offer alternative ways of relating three basic elements: technology of communication; form and content; change in society. There are three main alternative approaches to the study of the media, according to McQuail. They are:

1.   Macro Approaches;

2.   Message Centred Theory;

3.   Theories of Audience and Effect.

1.   Macro Approaches in turn can be divided into four distinct strands:

      a)   Mass society theory which emphasises the interdependence of institutions that exercise power and thus the integration of the media into the sources of social power and authority. According to this theory, the media offer a view of the world which manipulates people but also helps them to live in difficult conditions. This theory is no longer very popular, understandably so, since it is so patronising in its attitude to the average consumer of the media and shows so little confidence in the discernment of the public. This theory is most clearly seen in the writings of E. Shills[8] who argued that popular culture as seen in mass media was neither debased nor exploited, in contrast to the elitist views of MaDonald[9] and Mills [10] who saw mass

media as the tool for the manipulation of the worker.

b)   Marxist Approaches and critical theory assume a class
       unity at the upper end of society and a subordination of
       all significant social power to the interests of that
       ruling class. From this perspective, the media will
       represent a view of the world which is in keeping with
       ruling class interests. Therefore, the media will
       inhibit anything that is a threat to class dominance
       without necessarily using coercive measures.

       There are three theories within the Marxist approach.
       (i)   The political economic media theory which focuses
              more on economic structures than on ideological
              content of media and considers media institutions
              as part of the economic system although they are
              closely linked to the political system. Murdock
              and Golding,[11] for example, emphasize the need to
              analyze patterns of ownership and control in the
              media for a fuller understanding of the dynamics
              of class relations in a capitalist society.

       (ii)   The "Hegemoney" theory concentrates on ideology
              itself, the forms of its expression, its
              signification and the ways in which it flourishes
              with the help of the working class who are its
              victims and whose consciousness it shapes. One
              would have difficulty with this theory because of

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the low level of intelligence and discernment it

accords the working class. This theory is based

on Gramsci's[12] term for a ruling ideology. It

differs from other Marxist approaches in that it

recognises a degree of independence of ideology

from the economic base. The most influential

theorists of this school are Poulantzas[13] and

Althusser[14] who point towards ideological rather

than economic causes for the survival of

capitalism. Once again this theory affords the

working class a very low level of discernment and

intelligence.

(iii) The Frankfurt school saw the media as a powerful

agent for the containment of change. The apparent

failure of the revolutionary social change

predicted by Marx was explained by them as a

result of the acceptance of capitalism by the work

ing class who had been brainwashed by a system of

mass culture, consumerism, short-term

gratification and the myth of classlessness. The

main proponents of this theory were Adorno[15] and

Marcuse.[16] For some time this theory was out of

fashion but has re-emerged in the work of Neil

Postman.[17] This theory is also important for the

influence it had on the social-cultural theories

of media research.

(iv) The Social-Cultural approach is more positive in
      its attitudes to mass culture and wishes to
      understand the meanings and place assigned to
      popular culture in the experience of particular
      groups in society. It also seeks to explain how
      popular culture integrates potentially
      oppositional elements in society. Raymond
      Williams,[18] Roland Barthes[19] and Stuart Hall[20]
      have all been influential in this area. This
      approach has a lot to recommend it when study
      patterns of exposure of young people to the media.
      There is one problem, however. Most of this type
      of research into the media and young people has
      concentrated on young males, as in the work of
      Willis,[21] or treated the subject as though both
      genders would derive the same meanings from media
      messages. This researcher would argue, and some
      of her research bears this out, that gender is as
      important a variable as class in the responses of
      young people to the media.

(c)   Theories of media structure and function see society as
      a system of linked working parts, of which media is one
      and each of which makes an essential contribution to the
      whole. According to these theories, media maintain
      society as it is, rather than acting as an organ of
      change.

There are many difficulties with this approach. One is
the ambiguity of the word "function". The function of
the media can be seen to have different meanings
depending on whether one views it from the point of view
of sender, receiver or neutral observer. Since the
media are used by political parties, advertising
companies, etc., it sometimes is difficult to
distinguish the function of the media from the function
of the organisation using it. There is also the
difficulty that since we do not have an agreed version
of society, we can hardly have an agreed version of
media function since the same media activity can be
viewed in a positive or a negative way. The main
critics in this school are Merton,[22] McGormack[23] and
Lasswelll.[24]

(d) Normative theories of media deal with questions of
regulation and control of media, assignment of purpose
to them by society and society's expectations of them.
Each society or nation has its own normative theories by
which they judge media performances. The first and
definitive work in this area was by Siebert, Peterson
and Schramm[25] whose 1956 work was the first attempt at a
comparative statement of major theories of the press.
According to Siebert et al there are four main normative
theories although McQuail[26] would add two further types
to allow for more recent developments in thinking.
These two extra theories follow Siebert's four theories

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below.

(i) Authoritarian theory which sees the media as answerable to the state. This theory would be relevant to totalitarian regimes but there are situations in all societies at certain times, for instance when the state seems threatened, when these theories are popular. Those who support Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act in Ireland[27] would presumably support this theory.

(ii) Free Press theory which sees a free press as an essential part of a free and democratic society.

(iii) Social Responsibility theory which holds that the media have an obligation to society to set standards of truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance. This theory also holds that the media should be pluralist and reflect all aspects of society, avoid giving offence to minorities and avoid anything that might be disruptive or cause violence in society. The difficulty here is in trying to reconcile independence of the media with obligation to society. This difficulty has produced two sometimes opposing approaches to the social responsibility theory. One, which has advanced the social responsibility concept, is the development of public but independent media

institutions. The second is the concept of
professionalism as a means of achieving higher
standards of performance while maintaining self-
regulation by the media themselves.

(iv) Soviet media theory sees the media as having an
important function in the furtherance of social
and economic change. Therefore, media should be
controlled by the working class or their agents.
Media should also provide a complete and objective
view of society according to Marxist principles
and not according to personal interpretation.

(v)   Development Media theory is a newly emerging one
in developing countries which emphasises the need
for positive uses of the media in national
development for the autonomy and cultural identity
of the society. These theories could also be
important for a country like Ireland, which, in
many ways is still a developing country, subject
to the cultural imperialism of our two neighbours,
Britain and the USA.

(vi) Democratic-participant media theory emphasises the
right of the receiver of the media messages to
relevant information, the right to answer back,
the right to use the means of communications for
interaction in small-scale settings of community

or particular interest groups. This theory
opposes traditional centralised professional,
state-controlled media in favour of localised
media institutions involved closely with local
social life and controlled by the users and
receivers as much as by the practitioners.

2. Message centred theory centres on the media message itself.
It argues that the rules of a language or any mode of
representation are determined by the structures of the
originating culture. Therefore, every text has a "preferred"
reading. This theory emphasises the dependent nature of
media, and owes much to the work of Barthes[28] and Eco.[29] It
is very popular at the present time. One reason is, that it
offers a method for the empirical analysis of ideology. It
can also be applied to the non-verbal and yet connects
traditional cultural analysis with modern cultural analysis by
emphasising the text. This approach can be seen in the work
of Fiske and Hartley[30] and, to some extent, in the work of the
Glasgow Media Group.[31]

3. Theory of Audience and Effect.
Denis McQuail[32] sees the history of research into audience and
effect falling into three main stages:

(i) From the beginning of this century to the late 1930's
the media "were thought to have considerable power to
shape opinions and beliefs, to change habits of life,

actively mould behaviour and impose political systems even against resistance." At the time, this idea of the massive power of the media was accepted widely. Governments used the media for propaganda purposes during World War I. The advertising industry flourished. This period also coincides with a sudden growth in audiences for the popular press, cinema and radio. Methods and concepts in social science had not developed to the point where they could deal with the needs of research into the mass media although there was some research being carried out into the effects of film and other media on crime and aggression.[33]

(ii) The second stage extends from 1940 to the early 1960's. By now empirical methods were being applied to specific questions about the effects and effectiveness of mass communication. Presidential elections of 1940 and 1948 were studied[34] as was the use of films for training and indoctrination of American soldiers.[35] This second period reversed the assumptions about the mass media which were made in the first period and found that radio, film or print did not influence or change attitudes or behaviour directly but operated within existing structures of social relationships and systems of culture and beliefs. As Klapper[36] concluded in 1960, "Mass Communications ordinarily do not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects." However, in spite of this negation of the myth of media

power, the general public seemed unconvinced, as did

those in advertising. The unease with which the public

viewed the power of the media was exacerbated by the

intrusion into homes of the new medium, television. It

was during this period also that the derogatory term

"mass media" came into common usance, thanks mainly to

the Frankfurt school of critics such as Adorno,[37]

Rosenberg,[38] Marcuse[39] and Reisman.[40] Rosenberg stated

succinctly the worst fears of these critics. "At its

worst mass culture threatens not merely to cretinize our

taste but to brutalise our senses while paving the way

to totalitarianism".

(iii) The third phase extends from the early 1960's to the

present day. Once again the focus is on the effects of

the media but the methods of research have changed.

Many critics such as Halloran[41] had been critical of

earlier research into the effects of the media. What

had been measured then was short-term changes, often

conducted with the subjects isolated in laboratory

conditions. Today, media effects are studied within the

normal social framework where the media are normally

encountered such as in the home, as in the work of David

Morley.[42] Social institutions, such as the school,

which may have been affected by the media also provide a

framework for effects research, as in the work of

Murdock and Phelps.[43] In media research in the

eighties, content is considered to be of as much

importance as effects and particular attention is paid
to the power of the visual image and the level of
credibility accorded to visual imagery especially on
television. Len Masterman[44] has been very influential
in this area.

Though people are now seen to be actively using the
media, rather than passively soaking up media messages
like sponges, present day research into the media is
mainly agreed on one point with those in the earliest
period. The media do affect people. What is in
question still is the nature and extent of the effects,
particularly in the long-term. Blumler and Gurevitch[45]
argue that the media do have an influence on what people
know, on their priorities and on the political system.
Blumler[46] showed in 1979 that television had become the
main source of election information for 70% of voters.
The agenda setting function of the media was examined by
Becker and McCombs[47] who found that their influence was
major but gradual. Hartman and Husband[48] in 1974 found
that the media are most influential in areas where the
receiver has little or no direct experience of the topic
or event. Other critics like John Whale[49] argue that
the media simply reflect the balance of power within our
society.

Perhaps the most noticeable change in the third phase is the shift
of attention from short term effects to long term effects as in the

work of Gerbner.[50] In earlier research into effects, clear
distinctions were made between:

1)   cognitive effects which concern knowledge and opinion;

2)   effectual effects which concern attitude and feelings;

3)   behaviourial effects.

These three concepts were treated distinctly and as though they
followed a logical order. Recent research finds it can no longer
sustain the distinctions or follow the logical sequence. McQuail[51]
sees media as having six possible effects. According to him the
media may:

1)   cause intended change;

2)   cause unintended change;

3)   cause minor change (form or intensity);

4)   facilitate change (intended or not);

5)   reinforce what exists (no change);

6)   prevent change.

Even though the latter two effects seem to produce no change, we
should remember that
"anything that alters the probability of opinion or belief
distribution in the future is an intervention into social process
and thus, an effect."[52]

Some types of effects research are more suited to empirical methods
than others. Effects on political institutions have been mapped

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successfully by Blumler[53] (1970) Seymore-Ure[54] (1974) and Paletz and Entman[55] (1981). However, measuring effects, particularly long term effects, on individuals is not so easy since it often depends on the individual responses, whether in questionnaire or interview responses which, in themselves, are affected by such important and trivial things as the respondent's political ideology or whether she slept well the previous night.

In spite of the diversity and difficulty of effects research there is little doubt about the fact that media do have effects on people. What is unclear is the nature of those effects and the long or short term consequences.

From the above examination of models of Media Research it is clear that the theories which seem most relevant to this study are:

1)   The Social-Cultural approach because of its emphasis on the place assigned to popular culture in the experience of particular groups of society, in this case, young school-going people between the ages of twelve and seventeen in Ireland.

2)   Social Responsibility Theory. In spite of the apparent contradictions in this theory between the independence of the media and their obligation to society, it is an important theory to consider when dealing with young impressionable people. It is particularly relevant to the discussion on violence in the media and to whether the media should feel obligated to protect young people from "harmful media

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effects".

3)   Development Media Theory has some relevance to Ireland because
       like developing countries, we too have the problem of a media
       diet largely presented by our cultural imperial neighbours in
       Britain and the USA.

4)   Message centred theory is particularly applicable especially
       in the context of advertising.

5)   Theories of media effects are inevitably linked with any
       research on young people and the media. However, this study
       is exploratory and seeks to research attitudes rather than to
       measure changes in attitudes. It seems as important to know
       how a young person feels about viewing violence on television
       or video as to know whether they are changed in any way by
       that experience.

Media research is not exact or dependable, it is subject to great
variability according to the ideological views of its proponents.
Some theories such as Culturalist Theories do not lend themselves to
empirical research. Others, such as Theories of Audience and Effect
are unsatisfactory and inexact in what they purport to measure.
Once must also consider the dearth of research on Irish consumers of
the media. Therefore, since my study is exploratory, although I
will draw on various approaches to media theory, no one approach is
completely suitable to my purposes.

A Review of the Literature

Most research on the media is in the context of the individual's use
of the media or of the effects of the media on the individual. Yet
viewing of television; reading books, newspapers and magazines, even
listening to radio, tapes or records usually takes place within the
family and in the home. Even looking at video is generally done in
peer groups or in family groups.

David Morley[56] sees viewers' activities "as a constitutive part of
the social and primarily familial or domestic relations through
which they construct their lives". One could argue that the same
could be said of many of the other media which are part of family
life such as the newspaper, radio, record or cassette player.

Herman Bausinger[57] makes a number of points which should be borne in
mind when considering media consumption in the home.

1)   He talks about "the media ensemble" which every one deals with
      and points out that the consumer integrates the content of
      different media.

2)   Media messages have to compete with other messages. Therefore
      the amount of attention we give to any medium depends on a
      number of variables. For example, many people watch
      television, read a newspaper and interact with their family,
      all at the same time.

3)   The media he says "are an integral part of the way the

everyday is conducted" and therefore decisions we make about the media are affected by other factors in our lives.

4)   Media consumption is not done as an individual but as part of a group of friends, family or colleagues.

5)   The media are used as material for finding common ground for conversation, therefore they cannot be isolated from direct personal communication.

Television

The most central medium of communication in most homes is the television set.   James Lull[58] has some pertinent observations to make about the social uses of television within the family.   He suggests that the social uses of television can be understood along two dimensions, the structural and relational.

1)   The structural dimension:
   (a)   the entertainment, companionship, background noise aspect;
   (b)   the punctuation of time and activity.

2)   The relational dimension:
   (a)   provision of common ground and experience, agenda - setting;
   (b)   the use of television to encourage or discourage contact;
   (c)   the provision of social learning, values, role models,

information;

(d) the use of television as a tool for domination, reward
or punishment.

The first major study of children's and young people' viewing
patterns was done in Britain in 1958 by Himmelweit, Oppenheim and
Vince.[59] This study of 1,854 English children aged 10-11 years and
13-14 years showed that children and young teenagers viewed
television on average for slightly less than 2 hours per day. They
also found an inverse relationship between level of intelligence and
time spent viewing. Boys viewed more than girls but age and social
class were not found to be significant variables. In the years
during which the study was completed, 1955 to 1958 BBC closed down
for one hour every day between 6 pm and 7 pm. ITV began
broadcasting in 1956.

Himmelweit[60] carried out a similar study in 1961 this time with a
group of 900 young people in the 11-17 age group. The findings were
fairly similar to the first survey except that the young people
viewed 30-40 minutes per day more than was found in the first
survey. The peak viewing age was found to be 13-14.

Bradley S Greenberg[61] did a study of young people's viewing habits
from an examination of BBC research data in 1971. He found that
young people between 5 and 19 years of age viewed, on average, 2
hours 25 minutes per day. Hours spent viewing peaked between 12 and
14 years. Boys watched on average 9 minutes per day more than girls
and working class children spent 15 minutes per day more watching

television than their middle-class counterparts. He found heaviest television users to be 12-14 year old working class students of both genders who spent, on average, 3 hours 22 minutes viewing per day.

In 1975, Whitehead et al[62] found that boys aged 10+ viewed on average 2.9 hours per week night while girls of the same age viewed 2.8 hours on average.

In the USA the first major study of the television viewing patterns of young people was done in 1961 by Schramm, Lyle and Parker.[63] They found that the amount of time spent viewing increased with age from 45 minutes per day for a three year old to three hours per day for a 12-13 year old. Although the bright child tended to be a heavy viewer when young, by the age of 10 they were tending to view less and less. Family example and level of education of the parents seem to have influenced the viewing hours of the children.

In Ireland, the first major study of television viewing patterns among children were undertaken by John Quinn[63] in 1976. The study investigated the leisure activities of 720 children in 5th standard in primary schools throughout the Republic of Ireland. The mean age of the children surveyed was 11 years 7 months. The study found that while television was easily the most popular leisure time activity, even in June when the study was carried out, television viewing did not dominate the leisure time of the children to any great extent. Half of the sample watched at least four hours television over the three days of the study, one quarter watched more than six hours and just over one tenth watched for more than

eight hours. While 23 children watched no television at all during the three days of the survey he also found some evidence of very heavy viewing. Eight per cent of the sample spent 8-10 hours viewing and 2% viewed for 10-16 hours. On average he found that boys spent 35 minutes more than girls in total viewing time. He also found that children in single channel areas viewed more than those in multi-channel areas. Himmelweit et al[65] also found that, with the introduction of a second television channel to Britain, children became more selective in their viewing in the sense that they viewed more of their favourite types of programmes and dropped less favourite ones.

In 1977, K P M Griffin[66] conducted another study of the leisure activities of senior primary school children in selected areas in the Republic of Ireland. He found that 54.6% of his sample spent at least 2 hours viewing on an average weeknight.

Michele Dillon[67] conducted a study in Ireland in 184 of the forms of youth culture which exist among school-going adolescents in Ireland. She found that the average amount of time that students spent watching television on weekdays during term time was 1 1/2 hours. Working class males were the heaviest viewers spending 2 1/4 hours on average each evening. Middle class rural girls were the lightest viewers spending just over 3/4 of an hour on average each evening. At weekends she found that the average amount of time that students spent viewing increased to 3 1/4 hours per evening.

Violence in the Media

Society has always been suspicious of any new mass medium and its
possible effects on consumers, particularly the young. Burke[68]
shows that as early as the sixteenth century in Europe there was
disquiet that "popular songs too often presented criminals as
heroes". In 1751 Henry Fielding[69] wrote about "too frequent and
expensive diversions among the lower kind of people" which he feared
were changing society.

Martin Barker[70] shows how theatres were castigated for encouraging
immorality among the young in the nineteenth century. Music halls
attracted the same kind of approbation later in the same century.
Cheap literature of "penny dreadful" comics were the next target.
At the beginning of this century the newly emerging medium of the
cinema was deplored by people as eminent as F R Leavis[71] and George
Orwell.[72]

In the 1950's, there was a sustained campaign against American
horror comics.[73] At the same time there was an outcry against rock
'n' roll music and the sub-culture which it spawned to which Richard
Hoggart lent his voice in "The Uses of Literacy".[74]

By the 1960's television was the most important and influential
mass medium in Britain and America and so began to take the brunt of
criticism which had for centuries sought to blame the ills of
society on the latest form of mass communication. In the 1980's the
scapegoat has become the video, as we shall see in the chapter on
Cinema and Video.

Denis McQuail[75] has pointed out that there is little evidence in
"effects" research to show that people learn from the media or that
the media affects the way they view the world. Yet, as he points
out, when it comes to the question of violence in the media, another
picture emerges. Citing Halloran[76] he says "It seems as if general
public opinion still holds the media responsible for a good deal of
the increasing lawlessness in society".

Most research on the effects of television violence has occurred in
three specific areas.

1) The amount of television violence on our screens;

2) The adverse effects of the viewing of television violence by
young people;

3) The possible cathartic effect of television violence.

The first major American study of violence in the media grew out of
a public concern with the growth of crime and lawlessness in that
society in the 1960's. The American government set up a number of
special commissions to examine particular problems in society. One
of these, the National Commission on the causes and prevention of
violence issued a fifteen volume series of reports. One of these
reports was "Violence and the Media" edited by Robert K Baker and
Sandra J Ball and published in 1969.[77]

Professor George Gerbner and his staff at the Annenberg School of
Communications did a content analysis of the television world of
violence for the Commission. They examined programmes during prime
time viewing hours, ie 4 pm to 10 pm and Saturday morning 8 am to
11 am during the week of October 1st to 7th in 1967 and 1968. For
the purpose of the research they defined violence as "the overt
expression of force intended to hurt or kill".

They found that, generally, the American network entertainment in
both years was filled with violence. Approximately 80% of all
programmes contained one or more violent incident. Crime type
programmes were the most likely to contain violent incidents (96.6%)
with cartoons a close second (93.5%). They found that it was the
young or middle-aged unmarried male who was the most typical violent
character. The police were found to be portrayed as nearly as
violent as the criminal.

The main findings on long term effects of violence on television
were:

1) That people who were exposed to violence in the media over a
   long period of time might be socialised into accepting the
   norms, attitudes and values for violence which they saw on
   television. The probability of this happening increased as
   the age of the viewer decreased.

2) They would be desensitised or become emotionally neutral to
   real acts of violence.

3)   Since media portrayals of violence are simplistic in their
      distinction between the "good guy" and the "bad guy", this
      would encourage psychological rigidity among young viewers.

4)   Stereotyped or inaccurate portrayals of class, racial,
      religious or other groups can be damaging to communications
      between groups.

5)   Long exposure to violence on television would bring the
      individual to believe that the world is very violent and that
      individuals must be violent in order to survive.

The above findings made "Violence and the Media" an important piece
of research.   It also forced social scientists to reconsider the
importance of the reinforcement aspect of the media.

No sooner was this report finalised than, due to continuing
controversy about the rise of crime in society and the causes,
another committee was set up, to study the effects of television.
This committee would eventually publish the "Surgeon General's
Report on Television and Social Behaviour" in 1971.[78]

Gerbner,[79] who had done a content analysis for the national
commission did a similar study and compared his findings with those
of 1967 and 1968.   He found that the amount of killing on television
had declined sharply since 1967, but the prevalence of violence was
much the same.   In children's cartoons, however, he found that
violence had increased and that children's viewing hours were the

most violent of all television hours in 1969.

Also in Volume I of this report is a comparison by Michael
Gurevitch[80] of the way television content is organised and
controlled in the USA, Great Britain, Israel and Sweden. He notes
that the proportion of violence in American entertainment programmes
is greater than that broadcast by those other countries. Yet,
because most countries buy in American television shows, a
substantial proportion of the violence on television in other
countries is provided by America. In Britain, Israel and Sweden, as
in Ireland, broadcasting is tightly controlled by government and
other public institutions. These countries also subsidise their
stations in some way so that they are not totally dependent on
advertising revenue. In the US, government influence on broadcasting
is small and the advertisers largely dictate what is seen and heard
on radio and television. This lack of government control may at
least partly explain the extreme disquiet with which sections of
American society have viewed the escalating amount of violence on
television. It may also explain why much of the research on
television violence has originated in the USA.

Volume II of this report seeks to determine the nature and extent to
which social learning occurs as a result of children watching
television. Liebert, who summarised the research concluded that
continual exposure to violence is positively related to the
acceptance of aggression. A major criticism of this research has
been that it was conducted in laboratory conditions and, therefore
did not include the many other factors in real life which affect

people's reaction to violence on television.

Volume II concentrated on the question whether aggressive behaviour by adolescents can be contributed to by watching violent television programmes. The main findings were:

1) The average amount of time spent viewing by half of all American adolescents per day was three hours or more.

2) The amount of time spent viewing decreases throughout adolescence reaching a peak at twelve or thirteen and declining.

3) They found a negative relationship between television use and mental ability.

4) Socio-economic status tended to be negatively related to the time spent viewing.

5) The violent shows were seen as highly realistic.

6) Both boys and girls reported emotional involvement with television violence but boys were more likely to identify with violent characters.

When studying the relationship between viewing televised violence and aggressiveness, some studies in this volume used total viewing time as an index of exposure, others employed preference for violent

programmes and some used the criteria of the amount of violence
viewed. Most of the relationships obtained were positive but the
explanations for them were inconclusive. However, Steven Chaffee[81]
concluded "There is clearly a preponderance of evidence in these
studies to support the conclusion that adolescent aggressiveness and
the viewing of violent television programmes are statistically
associated".

The committee's conclusions concerning the relationship between
viewing television violence and aggressive behaviour echo the
conclusions of "Television in the Lives of our Children"[82] when it
says:

> "Thus the two sets of findings (laboratory and survey)
> converge in three respects: a preliminary and tentative
> indication of a causal relation between viewing violence
> on television and aggressive behaviour: an indication
> that any such causal operation, operates only on some
> children (who are pre-disposed to be aggressive): and
> an indication that it operates only in some
> environmental contexts".[83]

If the research linking the viewing of television violence and
aggressive behaviour is tentative and inconclusive, so is that which
claims that television violence may have a cathartic effect.
Possibly the best known research in this area is that by Feshbach
and Singer[84] whose work indicates that boys most at risk use
televised aggression in order to control their own aggressive
impulses and that watching televised aggression purges them of their

aggressive feelings. Noble[85] has also conducted experiments which
support the cathartic theory but only in the situation where the
violence viewed is stylistically portrayed. He found that
realistically filmed aggression, far from being cathartic, actually
disturbs young viewers and makes them aggressive.

Cinema and Video

Most research on young people and the cinema has been "effects"
research. Typical of this were the studies framed by the Payne Fund
in New York in 1928.[86] These studies concentrated on the
relationship between watching films and the attitudes of young
people, particularly those involved in juvenile crime. These
studies were inconclusive. So too were most of the studies featured
in "The Williams Report on Obscenity and Film Censorship"[87] which
appeared in 1979. The inconclusiveness was mainly due to the fact
that laboratory experiments were used instead of real social
settings. Long term effects of years of looking at films could not
be measured accurately in a laboratory.

Since video has replaced cinema to a great extent for many young
people, it is predictable that video viewing has also been treated
in the same way by researchers. The most well known effects
research is probably "Video Violence and Children"[88] whose
unreliable evidence has been discussed in the chapter entitled "The
Moral Panic about Video". Some of the most thorough research on
young people and video has been conducted by Keith Roe[89] in Sweden,
a country which, with Britain, enjoys the highest ownership of
videos. He has extensively researched the uses which teenagers make

of video as well as the attitudes to video films. Extensive

reference is made to his research in the two chapters on Video.

School and the Media

"The mass media are everywhere with daily and hourly

impact. People learn, think, act, laugh and cry with

them. They are the most powerful agency ever devised

for impressing values, facts and ideas on the minds of

millions. Whereas the schools encounter some of the

population for a fraction of the time, the mass media

reach most of the population most of the time. The

schools use the limited methods of a classroom setting:

the mass media utilise every possible devise for total

sensory appeal."[90]

In spite of the fact that the media and school are both in the

business of educating and informing in their different ways, they

have traditionally been seen as antithetical forces. Parents and

teachers frequently complain about the amount of time that young

people spend with the media, particularly the electronic media.

Much of the research on school or education and the media has

concentrated on educational broadcasting. Schramm (1964)[91] claimed

that the mass media could overcome problems of teacher shortage and

even provide education in areas where there are no schools. The

naivety of this view was shown by Katz and Wedell[92] in 1975 who

pointed out the logistical difficulties of delivering specific

programmes at a specific time and day to classes of particular

students in a particular grade. There was also the difficulty of sustaining the quality of programmes over a period of time. This approach is also at variance with the present attitude to learning which is child-centred, individual and flexible making use of audio and visual cassettes and programmed learning texts.

There has also been a body of research into educational broadcasting in third world countries. For economic reasons radio is more successful for education in developing countries. Critics such as Mattelart (1979)[93] have pointed out the political consequences for these countries whose communication technology probably derives from western based multi-national companies.

The first report on media and education from the point of view of teachers emerged in 1960 from a conference organised by the National Union of Teachers. It was called Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility[94] and predictably, given that it was written in the 60's, concentrated on the effects of television.

The definitive body of research into School and the Media was published by Murdock and Phelps in 1973.[95] They found that although the media, especially television, were central to the lives of young people, the majority of teachers thought the media to be irrelevant to the classroom. This seems odd since the report was ten years after the Newson Report[96] 1963 which advocated that film and television should be studied in schools. The Bullock Report[97] 1975 also advocated the use of television in schools and advised that teachers should develop a critical approach to the media in their

students.

Popular TV and Schoolchildren 1982,[98] a study carried out by 15
teachers in England, was concerned with the images of adult life and
society available to young people on television. So the emphasis
has shifted from "effects" research to questions of social
responsibility and questions of influence.

Since the seventies, Media Studies and Media Education have become
quite prevalent in schools in Britain and in Ireland so that it is
likely that the attitude of many teachers has changed since Murdock
and Phelps reported their findings. But since that definitive study
there has been no study in Ireland nor in Britain of the interactive
role of school and the media.

Music
Where teenagers are concerned, it can be assumed that time spent
listening to the radio, records or cassette recorders is time spent
listening to music - usually pop music. During the adolescent
years, music assumes the dominant position among the communications
media in terms both of the amount of time devoted to listening and
of the meanings attached to it. Yet, as Lez Cook has pointed out
"The ideological significance of rock music has been seriously
undervalued".[99]

Research on music and young people has concentrated on three
distinct areas:

1)   The history of the pop music industry. An example of this
      would be the work of Chapple and Garofalo.[100] They have
      written a historical analysis of how US media corporations,
      new communications technology and teenage affluence combined
      to transform the folk music of the rural US South into an
      immensely lucrative youth culture industry in the US and the
      world. A recent Irish publication by Mark Prendergast[101]
      gives a historical analysis of 25 years of Irish rock music, a
      more local example, although not written from an academic
      point of view.

2)   How pop music influences youth cultures. Possibly the best
      known work in this area is that of Simon Frith.[102] He found
      that there are 5 different approaches to explaining the
      importance of pop music in youth cultures, each of which
      starts with a different concept of youth:

      (a)   the first approach sees youth as a transition to
             adulthood and may be termed functionalist. This
             approach would see pop music as having two basic
             functions for young people: it is a symbol of group
             status and also a means of defining its own identity in
             relation to other groups both adults and other types of
             peer groups. Frith criticises this approach because it
             implies that all adolescents go through the same kind of
             transition period and that all have the same needs. It
             also implies that music has the same meaning and
             function regardless of family income, job opportunities
             and social status.

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(b)   The second approach sees youth as the New Style of
        Consumer Economy. This was common in the 1950's and
        60's during the affluent period following depression and
        war. It believes that the leisure industries, popular
        media and advertising deliberately created a teenage
        identity in terms of a distinctive consumer style,
        especially among working class youth, because of the new
        teenage affluence. However, Frith does not believe that
        teenagers are all that manipulated. He points out that
        the development of pop music has initially been the work
        of small independent producers or informal groups of
        young musicians. The big industries enter only after
        the music becomes popular.

(c)   The third approach sees youth as a threat to the
        industrial work ethic. Pop music particularly rock 'n'
        roll music has been linked to a culture of violence.
        Anyone who experienced or read about the first showings
        in Irish cinemas of "Rock Around the Clock" will
        remember the descriptions by clergy and media of the
        music which they felt incited young people to wild
        sensuality and revolt against adult society. In fact,
        as Frith points out, the responsible or irresponsible
        use of leisure time and the way youth approach music in
        free time, depends on what kind of job career or leisure
        opportunities are given to young people of different
        social backgrounds. Frith agrees that rock is

rebellious and does articulate many deep resentments
against dull routines of uninteresting work or the lack
of work. But it is not the music which creates the
violence and the tensions but the inequalities and
contradictions in the world of work.

(d)   The fourth approach sees youth as a separate sub-
culture. This approach believes that different kinds of
rock music have transformed random negative reactions
into distinct sub-cultures integrated around deliberate
values such as the Teds, Mods or Punks.

Frith himself discovered that, though rock music is an
important form of entertainment for almost all young
people, the music is important in itself for only a few
who feel deeply marginal to their surroundings.

(e)   The fifth approach sees youth as a counter culture and
their music as the conscious language of that counter
culture. The most obvious manifestation of this was
probably during the 1960's when youth became politicised
and wanted to transform society. Rock music seemed to
become the major expression of the hippy desire to
liberate society from the hypocrisy of sexual repression
and an economic system that depended on war industries.

Frith however argues that for the great majority of
youth rock music has never been the conscious language

of a counter-culture. He holds that teenagers of

different age, sex and future social class aspirations,

used music in different ways and found different

meanings in it. Music, he feels is a conscious counter-

culture only for those few who find it a symbol for

rejecting their given class culture. Frith contends

that these five different approaches lose sight of the

fact that pop music is sensual and above all fun.

3)   How young people use pop music

Although Frith's research covers this area as well as the area

of youth culture, this third area is probably the least

researched. Some of the most interesting research has been

done in Sweden by Keith Roe.[103] According to Roe, Sweden has

one of the highest per capita record sales in the world and

listening to music is an important leisure activity. He

notes:

(a)   that there is a continuing shift in the habits of Swedes

       from radio listening to listening to records or tapes

       and teenagers tend to listen more to the latter two;

(b)   a general interest in pop music appears to be universal

       at age 11 and by age 13, 66% of his study were listening

       daily;

(c)   adolescent boys move towards a greater peer orientation

       and a higher degree of music involvement irrespective of

       home background, the rate at which girls become peer

orientated is strongly influenced by social class, ie working class girls are more peer orientated that their middle class counterparts;

(d)   the greater the interest in and frequency of listening to pop at age 11 the more peer orientated the individual was likely to be two years later. Similarly, the more peer orientated an individual was at age 13 the more likely he was to listen to pop and so on over the years of adolescence;

(e)   degree of peer orientation was also found to be important for explaining music preferences. He found a positive relationship between greater peer orientation and preference for "harder" less socially accepted forms such as punk. There was a negative relationship between greater peer orientation and preference for mainstream pop;

(f)   Roe discovered three distinct ways in which young people use music:
        (i)   to create atmosphere and control mood;
        (ii) for silence-filling and passing the time;
        (iii) to listen to the lyrics;

(g)   Roe inferred from correlations between motivations for listening and music types, that rock, new wave and punk are the types of music which best fulfil the needs and

wants of their adherents. He point out that these forms

of music are the most clearly defined and identifiable

in group and sub-cultural terms. On this point he seems

to disagree with Frith;

(h)   he found that school achievement and attitude to school

       may both operate as independent causal variables in

       respect of adolescent music uses and preferences;

(i)   the higher the school achievement of the student the

       more likely they were to express a liking for classical

       music;

(j)   the less successful students used music to pass the time

       or fill the silence;

(k)   important differences in the results were found

       according to gender. Roe points out that sub-cultural

       theory often does not differentiate between the sexes

       and either ignores girls completely or treats them as

       appendices to male sub-cultures.

Research in Ireland

Research in Ireland on young people and music is virtually non-

existent. Michele Dillon[104] in her study of youth culture in

Ireland points out that research on Irish youth has tended to

concentrate on teenagers and education or more specific phenomena

such as their drinking habits. She studied students' favourite

leisure interests and found that 55% of the students listened to the radio every day, on average for 1 1/4 hours on weekdays and 1 3/4 hours at weekends during school term. The majority of the students in her study (66%) reported that they listened to tapes or records a few times every week. Their favourite radio programmes were those which featured mainstream pop music and 53% stated a preference for this type of music. New wave music was the preference of 28% and 13% stated a preference for an Irish pop singer or band. The nature of the music itself - its sound and beat was the reason given by 72% as the reason for their favourite types of music. Pupils did not tend to identify with just one type of pop music but often liked two or three types simultaneously.

Girls had the greatest tendency to report listening to the radio every day with 69% of working class drop out girls as she termed them and 62% of middle class urban girls reporting that they did so. She found that middle class urban boys and working class successful boys listened to the radio only occasionally.

Their favourite radio stations were as follows: 47% listened to pirate stations, 39% listened to RTE 2, 4% listened to RTE 1 and 3% to BBC or Luxembourg.

She found that working class students tended to buy records and tapes more than middle class students. Working class drop out students both male and female at 55% and 49% respectively, had the greatest tendency to listen to tapes and records daily.

Reading

Much of the research on young people and reading in the last twenty years has concentrated on children rather than teenagers. This is understandable since children tend to reach the peak of their reading attainment at about the age of twelve. However, it is obvious that it is during the teenage years that they lose the habit of reading and the reasons for this have been little researched.

Since the advent of television, and certainly since the television became a necessary part of the living-room furniture, research on young people and reading has laid great emphasis on the effect of television on reading. The most well known of these studies is probably that of Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince.[105] They came to the conclusion, from examining children's diaries, that even children with no television in the home gave little time to reading. They reckoned that the average adolescent read for about 2 1/2 hours per week and that less intelligent children and children from working class homes did not read very much. When a television appeared in the home, they appeared to read less but after a few years book-reading returned to the original level.

Schramm[106] et al found no significant change in the reading of books and newspapers after the advent of television but they did find that comic-reading had been cut by half. They explained this by offering the theory that because books and newspapers supply reality needs, eg information, they were not affected by television, whereas television fulfilled the fantasy needs formerly met by comics and escapist magazines.

Whitehead et al[107] found that teenagers aged 12+ read 2.2 books per month and teenagers 14+ read 1.9 books per month. He also found an inverse relationship between the amount of television viewing and the amount of reading.

The Bullock Report[108] in 1975 posited the "displacement" theory when referring to Whitehead's findings, ie "If new activities or new media capture part of the available time and energy," they will "displace by the same amount" those which formerly played an equivalent part in the child's life.

This displacement theory was not supported by later researchers such as Lyle and Hoffman[109] or Brown et al.[110] They concluded that television had little effect on the time spent reading by children who grew up with television.

In Ireland, research on reading and young people has concentrated on primary school children. In the 1970's three such studies were undertaken - O'Baoillain's[111] in 1972, Griffin[112] in 1977 and Quinns[113] also in 1977. Recent research by Greany and Hegarty[114] also concentrates on fifth class primary students.

Michele Dillon,[115] in her research on Youth Culture in Ireland concentrated on magazines and comics, the frequency with which young people buy them and the types they prefer. Her sample population ranged in age from 14-16 years. Just over half of them said that they bought magazines on a regular basis, ie at least once a month. Working class "drop out" girls most frequently reported buying

magazines on a weekly basis and the boys in each of the sub-groups had the greatest tendency to report never buying a magazine. A clear gender difference was apparent with respect to the magazine pupils reported buying regularly. The girls tended to buy romance magazines such as Jackie while the boys bought sport, adventure and specialist magazines.

An interesting report published in Britain in 1986 by the Book Marketing Council[116] attempts to assemble what information there is on the topic of teenagers and reading. Admittedly, it is written from a marketing point of view but it has some insight to offer the academic researcher. As they put it "What teenagers think about reading in the context of their other activities; whether they are reading more now than they used to or less; to what extent the time they give to reading diminishes when they stop being children; how they choose what to read; how many of the books they read are published for adults and not for them; all these are important questions to which there are no precise answers."

Advertising

Comstock, Chaffee et al in "Television and Human Behaviour"[117] describe the three different types of research which have been done on young people and advertising. The studies have three aspects:

1)   Young people's attention to commercials. These studies
       generally conclude that:
       (a)   attention to commercials is negatively related to age.
              Children from 5-7 years pay full attention to ads on

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television 50% of the time while 11-12 year old pay full attention to ads on 33% of the time;

(b) older children pay more attention to ads placed at the beginning of programmes;

(c) younger children pay great attention to ads which are irrelevant to them, presumably using them to learn about the unfamiliar;

(d) children and young teenagers respond to commercials in different ways than do adults;

2) Young people's cognitive and attitudinal responses to commercials. These studies conclude that:

(a) there is a strong positive correlation between age and understanding of the nature and intent of ads;

(b) distrust of commercials is positively related to age;

(c) adolescents are very likely to have negative responses to commercials and will characterise them as "stupid" etc;

(d) there is a mild relationship between a measure of materialism in the family and positive attitudes to ads.

3) The behaviourial impact on young people of commercials. There are fewer studies in this area and fewer again which concentrated on teenagers rather than children. These studies conclude:

(a) that there is a weak positive relationship between exposure to drug commercials and the use of proprietary drugs;

(b) there is a weak negative relationship between such exposure and use of illicit drugs;

(c) there is no relationship between such exposure and an attitude of readiness to take drugs;

(d) inter-personal communication operates as an important intervening variable between exposure and purchase;

(e) commercials are more effective when there are facilitating conditions in the young person's environment.

Comstock, Chaffee et al[118] find at least tentative evidence that young people's behaviour is influenced by television commercials. They say that there is little evidence on the contribution of young people's exposure to television advertising to the holding of materialistic, consumption-oriented values. But they point out that there is little research on the influence of such exposure on major and life long consumption practices, such as food preferences, over

the counter drug use and other health-related behaviour. So it
would seem that Comstock, Chaffee et al see cause for concern in the
effects of television advertising on young people.

McQuail[119] sees four distinct areas of research into the influence
of the media or the effects of the media on audiences. They are
based on four media situations.

1)   The campaign which can include political campaigns, public
      information, commercial and public service advertising,
      education, the diffusion of innovation, the use of the media
      in developing countries. Three important sets of factors
      emerge in this type of research.

      (a)   The audience. A large audience must be reached.
             Appropriate members of the audience should at least not
             be antipathetic or resistant to the campaign. Here
             there is evidence that the lack of strong feelings
             either way about a subject may be most favourable to the
             success of mass propaganda. The campaign is likely to
             be successful if the flow of personal communication and
             structure of relevant inter-personal status is
             supportive of the campaign. The audience must
             understand the message as intended by its creators and
             must not distort it in any way.

      (b)   Message or Content. Campaigns are most successful at
             reinforcing existing tendencies or channelling them into
             slightly different paths. The informative campaign

seems more likely to be successful than the campaign to change attitudes or opinions. Novel and distant subject matters are best treated by a campaign. Familiar topics are likely to have competing sources of information. The campaign which allows some immediate response in action is more likely to be effective. Repetition may contribute to the effect.

(c)   The source. The more channels of information carrying the same campaign messages, the greater the probability of acceptance. The status or authority of the source is important. Some media may influence more than others because of loyalty or affective ties.

2)   The definition of social reality and the formation of social norms. This concerns learning from the media and is usually unplanned and unconscious on the part of the receiver and often unintentional on the part of the sender. There are two aspects to this. One is the representation by the media of a consistent picture of the social world which the audience may adopt as reality. Secondly, there is the interaction between the person and the media which plays a part in shaping the individual's own behaviour and self-concept. In this area there is little evidence to suggest the conditions which must exist if the media is to have these effects. However, McQuail suggests that there are some conditions which can be seen to produce effects in this case. He points out that the more consistent the picture presented and the more attention given

to it the more likely it is to have effects. Matters outside
immediate experience will be more susceptible to influence.
The authority and level of trust in the source is also
important. He also suggests that conditions of social crisis
or danger might be associated with strong short term effects
from the media on the definition of problems and solutions.

3)   Immediate Response and Reaction Effects: This area falls into
       two main categories:
       (a)   The problem of crime and violence and the effects of the
             media on this problem. In the chapter on Violence on
             Television this type of research has already been
             discussed.

       (b)   Panic responses to news or information. Since panic
             responses is the outcome of lack of information it would
             seem that the mass media may actually modify panic
             responses. However, the media may play a part in the
             spreading of violence or unrest by giving publicity to
             these events. There is no proof to support the widely
             held view that criminals imitate what they see on
             television. But the media obviously spark immediate
             response and reaction in the area of pop culture.

4)   The consequences for other social institutions. The social
       institutions likely to be most affected by the media are the
       political, educational, religious and legal institutions.
       They are under pressure to adapt or respond to or make their

own use of the media. In doing so they are likely to alter. The social institutions of most interest to this study since it concerns young people of school going age is the school. Yet, as has been shown, there has been very little research on the effects of the media on schools. Yet we know that the electronic media in particular have made dramatic changes in the lives of most people. We also know that school life has changed, ways of learning have changed, the status of teachers has changed. The media must have contributed in some way to these changes but these questions have not been adequately researched.

The effects of the media on the political institutions can clearly be seen in the way politicians have learned to use the media. It is also widely believed that the development of the media affects culture and social structure. However research in this area is sparse and there is little evidence to support the widely different theories on the effects of the media on culture and society. In spite of this many social scientists believe that the media have great social power and have now moved on to the question of who has access to this power.

Research Design

This study explores the exposure to the media of 12-17 year olds in second level schools in Ireland. It is based on a survey carried out in April and May 1985 of 991 students in 20 different schools throughout Ireland. Since, as already stated no one model of media research suited the requirements of the study, it was decided that

the aims of the study would fall into different areas of media research.

The Aim of the Study

To find out:

1)   The background and demographic data of the students;

2)   Ownership and control data such as

    (a)   the level of ownership of the various media in the homes of the students;

    (b)   viewing and media consumption patterns in their homes.

3)   Quantifiable data related to uses and gratifications research such as:

    (a)   the amount and type of television usual for these students;

    (b)   the frequency of book and newspaper reading;

    (c)   the types of comics and magazines preferred;

    (d)   the amount and favoured time for listening to the radio;

    (e)   the amount of time and money spent on tapes and records;

    (f)   the availability of videos to students;

    (g)   their video preferences;

    (h)   frequency of attendance at the cinema.

4)   Attitudinal Data such as:

    (a)   the attitudes of the students to particular types of television programmes eg violent programmes;

    (b)   attitudes to "video nasties";

(c)   attitudes to advertisements on television;

(d)   students' perceptions of the attitudes of teachers to
        television;

(e)   attitudes to favourite characters.

5)   Data on the Level of Influence and Credibility of the Media.
       (a)   the extent to which the media are used in schools,
               whether as learning aids or in terms of media education;
       (b)   the extent of the influence and credibility of the media
               among the students as sources of information and news.

Preliminary Research

As a teacher, the researcher was able to draw on her experience to
establish certain areas of viewing, reading and listening which are
of particular interest to students in second level schooling.
Students in four different schools were interviewed about their
favourite television programmes, radio stations, newspapers, comics
and magazines. Tam ratings were also considered. Before drawing up
the final questionnaire, questionnaires used in surveys which in any
way resembled the proposed survey were studied, eg Michele
Dillon's,[120] the Annan Report,[121] the Bullock Report.[122]

The final questionnaire was discussed with a number of teachers,
some of whom were involved in media studies. It was felt that the
questionnaire should be capable of being answered in one class
period, ie 35-40 minutes. This would facilitate school timetables
and it was also felt that any longer would be a strain for junior
cycle students. In March 1984 a pilot survey was done with one

senior cycle group and one junior cycle group in a community school in Dublin. Some minor adjustments were made.

The Questionnaire

It seemed from research carried out by Murdock and Phelps[123] in Britain and Michele Dillon[124] in Ireland that the most suitable research method for gathering the required information was by questionnaire. The final questionnaire contained 68 questions in nine sections and run to seven pages.

The questions were designed to elicit information which would relate to the particular theories of media research which I have shown to be most relevant to this study. The theories and corresponding questions are:

1) Social-Cultural

    (a)   Biographical and background information - 1-9;

    (b)   Ownership and Control - 10-11, 55, 57-58, 61;

    (c)   Quantifiable data - 12, 17, 19, 20-22, 23-26, 28-32, 33-35, 36-38, 47-48, 50, 54, 56, 59.

2) Social Responsibility

    (a)   Adult intervention - 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61;

    (b)   Violence in the media - 26, 45, 46, 61, 62, 63.

3) Development Media Theory

    15, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45, 47, 48, 50, 51, 54.

4)   Message Centred Theory

     14, 15, 19, 23, 26, 27, 38, 39, 40, 41, 46, 51, 52, 59, 60,

     64, 65, 66.

5)   Theories of Media Effects

     (a)   Effects on Social Interaction - 11, 20, 21, 23, 29, 30,

           31, 36, 37, 58, 62, 63.

     (b)   Effects on Education - 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 24, 26,

           31, 36, 37.

     (c)   Effects on Attitudes - 39, 40, 41, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53,

           58, 60, 62, 63, 67, 68.

The Schools

Schools were chosen at random from the list of post-primary schools
1983/84 while controlling for type. It was decided to include 20
schools and to survey 25 junior cycle and 25 senior cycle students
in each school. The schools were spread right across Ireland and
represented all types of second level schools. Of the 20 schools
surveyed, 12 were Secondary schools, 6 Vocational and 2
Community/Comprehensive. Seven of the schools were in the Dublin
metropolitan area, 5 in other urban areas, and 8 in rural areas.
See Fig.1.

The Location

Schools were classified as "urban" if they were located in a city or
town with a population of 5,000 or more and rural if otherwise.

The Students

In all, 991 students were surveyed. The girls numbered 508 and the boys 483.

	12-14	15-17	Total
Females in Secondary schools	161	205	366
Females in Vocational, Community and Comprehensive Schools	68	74	142
			508
Males in Secondary schools	145	124	269
Males in Vocational, Community and Comprehensive schools	91	123	214
			483

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaires were administered by this researcher during the months of April and May 1985. The principal or vice principal of each school was contacted at least one week before the planned visit. They were assured of the confidentiality of the data and were advised of the purpose and content of the questionnaire. All of the principals and vice-principals were helpful and agreed to allow me to survey their students with the exception of one principal of a secondary school. This school was replaced by a similar type school.

One junior cycle and one senior cycle class in each school was surveyed. Classes were of mixed ability as far as was possible, for

instance, using a mixed ability religion class rather than an honours maths class. Students were not told the purpose of the questionnaire, but simply that a teacher of media education was interested to know their attitude to the media, their favourite programmes and so on. Students were asked for their co-operation, and assured of confidentiality. No teacher was present while the questionnaires were being answered and collected. The students were asked to respond individually to the questions and were not allowed to consult with each other. This researcher read through the first ten questions with them and then allowed them to proceed on their own. The questionnaire presented no problems to the senor cycle students. With junior cycle students, the time sometimes ran over the allotted class period and some words had to be explained to them. Schools were understanding in giving extra time to finish the questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed as accurately as possible. When the questionnaires were completed, the class was involved in discussion on the contents of the questionnaire in order to gain further insight into the role of the media in the lives of young people.

Analyzing the data

Most questions on the questionnaire were pre-coded. Open-ended responses were coded by me.

The computer used was an IBM PC XT 640KK Data base 3. A file containing approximately 120 fields (logical and numerical) was created. The questionnaires were then punched in and checked. A programme file was created which analyzed every question. Separate

data files were created from the master file, eg 12-14 year old male urban working class. The programme was then run on each data file.

The coding of open-ended questions

The first open-ended question asked the students to describe his/her father's job exactly. This created some difficulties because many students were vague about the precise nature of the job, eg works on a farm could mean that he owns a farm or is a farm worker. It was not possible because of the number of students involved and the time at my disposal to check the actual occupation of the fathers. Therefore, it was decided that it would not be possible to categorise respondents into socio-economic groups such as those used in the Census of Population Report.[125] Instead, it was decided to use only two categories - middle-class and working class. Middle class included higher and lower professionals, managerial and salaried jobs, farmers. Working class included skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled manual workers plus the unemployed. Where there was any doubt about the socio-economic group to which the respondent's family belonged, the type of school attended was taken into account and the group to which the majority of the students at that school belonged.

Most of the other open-ended questions asked the students for reasons, eg why they liked a particular programme or why they liked a particular character. A system was devised for coding the answers. A random sample of every tenth questionnaire was taken and listed all the given answers. They were then drawn into broad groups until there were ten possible answers which were then coded.

The ten possible answers for each open-ended question are listed in the appropriate chapters.

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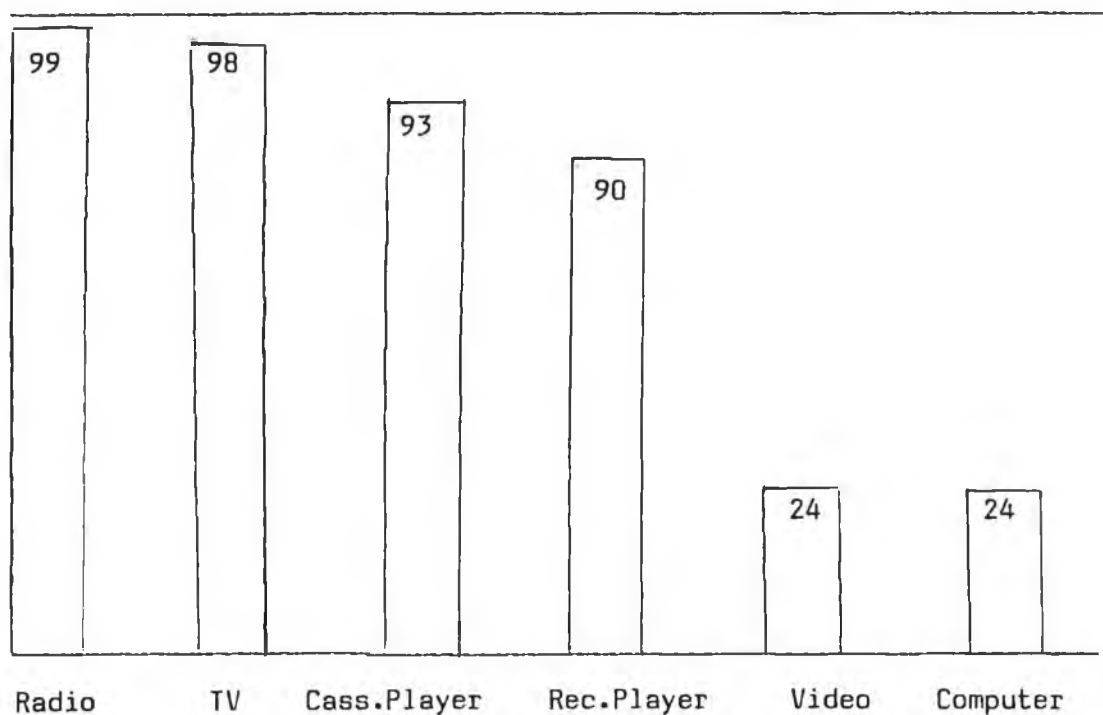
HOME AND THE MEDIA

Findings

The section in my questionnaire on Home and the Media, questions 10,
11, 12, 20, 22, 55, 56, 57 and 58 were designed to elicit
information about the ownership and usage of the media in the home
and about power and control of the media in the home.

FIG. 2.1

HOME OWNERSHIP OF THE MEDIA

| 99 | 98 | 93 | 90 | 24 | 24 |

Radio   TV   Cass.Player   Rec.Player   Video   Computer

50% of students have more than one television at home.

Home Ownership of the Media

Home ownership of the media is high. There is at least one
television set in the home of 98% of all respondents while 50% have

more than one television. The figures for the ownership of videos
and computers were the same at 24%. Ownership of computers tended
to be highest among urban middle class males with the 12-14 year
olds in this group reporting 62% ownership of computers. Ownership
of videos is highest in urban areas and slightly higher for middle
class families than for working class families. Ownership of the
other media is high too with radio at 99%, cassette players at 93%
and record players at 90%.

The Establishment Irish Tam Survey of February 1986[1] found that 92%
of those surveyed had a television and 13% a video. However, they
also found that whereas in a home of one or two people only 6% had a
video recorder while in homes where there were up to seven persons
17.6% had a video recorder. It seems a reasonable assumption then,
that in homes where there are children or teenagers, the ownership
of videos is likely to be higher than average. This assumption is
also made by Geoffrey K Nelson[2] when discussing the findings of the
National Viewers Survey which formed part of the research conducted
for the Parliamentary Group Video Enquiry.[3] He found that whereas a
study published by the International Institute of Communications
showed that 30.1% of homes in Britain with television sets also
possessed a video cassette recorder (VCR), the National Viewers
Survey showed that 40.9% of children had a VCR in their homes. The
latter survey, entirely composed of families with children of school
age was 10% above the national average ownership of VCRs.

My findings of 90% ownership of television and 24% ownership of
video recorders seems reasonable when it is considered that I

surveyed students between the ages of twelve and seventeen years, and is 11% above the Irish Tam Survey in terms of VCR ownership.

Home Ownership of the Media and Location

Location was found to be an important variable in the ownership of computers, videos and second television sets. Urban students, particularly those in the middle class,were far more likely to own a computer, video or second television set than their rural counterparts. Nelson[4] also found that "irrespective of region, VCR ownership is higher in large towns than in the countryside."

He showed that the highest rate of VCR ownership is found in the suburbs and outer commuter zones of large cities, areas that are predominantly middle class and relatively wealthy. However he points out that since VCR ownership is also high in inner city areas which are predominantly working class, class and wealth are not the only factors that influence ownership of VCRs. He postulates that it is the differing patterns of culture or the urban-rural divide are important factors. This urban-rural cultural divide is also evident in Ireland and is one explanation of the higher incidence of ownership of VCR's in urban areas. Another quite simple explanation is the easier access in urban areas to video libraries.

Ownership of the Media and Socio-Economic Group

Socio-economic group was not found to be a significant variable except among rural students. Middle class rural students were more likely to own a computer and less likely to own a video than their working class rural counterparts.

Table 2.1

Table 2.2

Ownership of the Media and Gender

Video Recorders:

Gender was found to be an important variable in ownership of two media, video recorders and computers.

Overall, males report a higher ownership in their homes of video recorders than females. This was particularly noticeable in the age group 12-14 of working class students both urban and rural. This phenomenon was also reported by Alison Hill.[5]

Since the video recorder is usually in a family room with the television set it is strange that females should consistently report a lower ownership of videos than their male peers. One could make two possible assumptions from this:

1)   that families where the children are all or mainly boys are more likely to own video recorders;

2)   that in homes where there are recorders the video recorder is considered the exclusive property of one or more males in the family. It may not therefore be considered a family video recorder and may be in another room with a second television set.

The second assumption seems the more likely one. In discussions with students who had completed the questionnaire, some female students revealed that although their brothers owned a video, they

themselves had no access to it. In these cases, usually an older
working brother or brothers had bought the video. Other female
students said that although they had a family video it was used much
more by the males in the family.

The low reported ownership and under utilisation of video recorders
by females may be explained by the following reasons:

1)   It may be because as Ann Gray[6] puts it: "The VCR is purchased
      or rented for use within the already existing structures of
      power and authority relations between household members, with
      gender being one of the most significant variable .... women
      and men have different access to technology in general and to
      domestic technology in particular ... when a new piece of
      technology is purchased ... it is often already inscribed with
      gender expectations."

2)   The video recorder has been associated to a great extent with
      the watching of uncensored sex or "nasty" movies. For this
      reason, girls in a family may be "protected" from the
      influence of the video recorder. This may be particularly so
      in rural areas which are comparatively more conservative and
      more influenced by traditional religious attitudes than urban
      areas. This seems likely, especially since rural males so
      frequently cite sex videos on the questionnaires, while their
      female peers in the sub-groups do not.

<u>Computers</u>

All male sub-groups consistently reported higher ownership of computers than females. From Tables 3.1 and 3.2 it is clear that males seem twice as likely as females to own computers. This would accord with my own observations during ten years of teaching in a co-educational school.

Highest ownership of computers of any sub-group is reported by urban middle class males, 62% of whom in the 12-14 age group own a computer and 42% of whom in the 15-17 age group own a computer.

Compare these figures with the reported ownership of computers by the corresponding groups of urban middle class females at 20% and 16% ownership respectively.

There are three possible reasons for the imbalance in the ownership of computers.

1)   One may be the already discussed theory of Ann Gray[7] which argues that new technology is inscribed with gender expectations.

2)   Patricia Marks Greenfield[8] has pointed out that arcade video games are usually the introduction to computers for most children. Many of the most popular of these games are aggressive fantasy games which appeal to boys but turn girls off. It may be that girls are turned off computers by these games, long before they learn to put a computer to any

meaningful use. Boys, on the other hand, having enjoyed the
arcade games are likely to agitate for a home computer to
continue to play the aggressive fantasy games.

3)   There is still a market for toys advertised and packaged in a
      sexist way as a walk through any toy store will reveal.
      Computers intended for home use and particularly for use by
      children are usually sold with computer games. Even if the
      computer itself is not marketed in a sexist way the games
      usually are and seem to suggest that computers are suitable
      for boys.

The consequences of this imbalance for the future employment
prospects of girls is obvious. In a society which is increasingly
computer orientated, if males have greater access to and ownership
of computers during their formative years, the gap in employment
prospects between males and females is likely to widen considerably.

Ownership of Multiple Television Sets
As can be seen from Tables 2.1 and 2.2, 50% of respondents have more
than one television set in the home. This trend is highest in urban
middle class homes and lowest in rural working class homes. Middle
class urban males in the 12-14 age group report that 72% of them
have more than one television. Since they are also the group who
report the highest ownership of computers, the second television set
may be for use in conjunction with the computer. However, other
groups who do not report high ownership of computers, do report high
ownership of second televisions. There seems to be a correlation

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between ownership of a video recorder and ownership of a second
television set. For instance, urban middle class females in the 15-
17 age group report a higher than average ownership of videos at 30%
and they also report a high ownership of a second television set at
73%. On the other hand, rural working class females in the same age
group report a lower than average ownership of videos at 15% and
also a lower than average ownership of a second television set at
36%. Of course, economic factors probably contribute to the
differences here too since middle class urban people are likely to
have more disposable income than rural working class people. This
is obvious from the Household Budget Survey 1981.[9]

It would seem that television ownership in Ireland is now moving
towards multiple set ownership. A survey by the Book Marketing
Council of the Publishers Association of Great Britain[10] found a
similar trend in London. Half of the group they surveyed had two
television sets and one fifth of the group had three.

The importance of the fact that 50% of students report having more
than one television set should not be overlooked. It means that in
Ireland, family viewing now occurs as often in a multiple set
environment as it does in a single set environment. As Camstock,
Chaffee et al[11] have pointed out, that means that research when the
single set was strongly predominant may no longer be fully relevant.
Viewing behaviour tends to differ between single set and multi-set
households.

Because this is such a recent trend, very little research has been

done on it. It is not so much that access to a second television set means that there will be a great difference in what young people view. There is little evidence to suggest this. But much of the "effects" research suggests that any effect of television representation on the attitudes and behaviour of young people is partly dependent on the implied or direct interpretation by parents or other adults. For example, a young child may be terrified by a violent scene in a programme, but if an adult explains that the violence is not real the child will be less affected by the experience. Ownership of multiple sets may minimise adult comment and interpretation of what young people view.

In spite of the trend towards multi-set households 84% of the students surveyed say that they usually watch television with the family and only 11% say that they watch alone.

Location of Family Television Set

Perhaps one of the reasons that the majority of students watch television with their family is the location of the family television set. The majority - 71% report that the family television set is situated "In the room where we relax" while only 8% have a separate TV room and that 8% tends to be among the middle class students. The kitchen as a location for the TV is named by 8% and they tend to be rural. This probably reflects the larger kitchen-cum-living room in many rural homes. An all-purpose room "The room where we relax and eat" is the location of the family TV for 13% of students and they tend to be urban. This probably reflects the dining-cum-sitting room type lounge, common in suburban

homes.

Control of Television Viewing

Irene Goodman,[12] a psychologist interested in family studies agrees
with James Lull[13] on the many functions of the television set within
the family as "companion, scapegoat, mediator, boundary-marker
between family members, to schedule their other activities, as a
reward or punishment, as a bartering agent. She sees television as
"a tool for understanding family interaction". She also points out
that family processes tend to be consistent across different areas
of activity. Therefore it is likely that the decision making and
control of television within the family will be indicative of
decision making and control in other areas of family life.

Viewed from Goodman's angle, questions of power and control in the
area of television viewing assume great importance since they may be
indicative of questions of power and control in other areas of
family life.

The amount of time spent watching TV seems to be controlled very
little by either parent. Mother controls the time spent viewing for
16% and Father for 7%. Only urban working class male students
report Father controlling television more than Mother. Mother seems
to have most control over time spent viewing among rural middle
class students.

The students themselves control the time spent viewing according to
43% and 34% say that no-one controls the time they spend viewing.

Predictably, the older age group of students report less control of time spent viewing by parents and more control by themselves than their counterparts in the 12-14 age group.

If Goodman[14] is right and questions of power and control in the area of television viewing indicate attitudes to power and control in other areas of family life, how are we to interpret the 43% of students who say that they control their own viewing or the 34% who say that no-one controls the time they spend viewing? Does it mean that 77% of students control other areas of their lives with no parental interference? This hardly seems likely. Students may not be willing to admit that parents control their television viewing. There may very well be no overt rules in some families about television viewing but other family rules may have the effect of controlling television viewing to some extent. For instance, insistence on eating in another room or with the television turned off, rules about homework or bedtimes will all indirectly affect television viewing.

We should also remember that it has already been shown that most viewing is done as part of a family and that, in itself, places its own restrictions on each individual's viewing. It seems unlikely that the children always choose what the family views and much more likely that the parents impose their choice on the rest of the family. Therefore we may interpret these findings to suggest that although there are no overt rules about television viewing, there are accepted rules of behaviour within the family which affect television viewing.

The fact that the only sub-group reporting Father controlling
television viewing more than Mother is the urban working class
males, suggests that Goodman's thesis is right. Traditional gender
roles still dominate the working class to a great extent and
therefore one would expect that within the group Father would have
more power than Mother.

Newspapers

Questions 20 and 22 referred to newspapers in the home. Students
were asked to name the Sunday newspaper which they got. Asking them
to name daily newspapers would have presented difficulties because
of the variety of morning and evening newspapers both Irish and
English which are available. Also because of time and space
restraints in the questionnaire, it was not possible to include a
question on both the daily newspapers and the Sunday newspapers. I
regret now not including a question on daily newspapers because it
might have revealed more about families' uses of newspapers. For
example, families who get a morning newspaper could be considered to
be using the newspaper for "hard news" whereas the evening newspaper
is more likely to be used for entertainment, information on TV and
films, etc. or sports results.

However, the questions I asked are quite revealing in that they show
quite a high daily readership of newspapers which is fairly constant
throughout the sub-groups. The answers also reveal that location
and class are the important variables when it comes to choosing a
Sunday newspaper.

Newspapers in the Home

Newspapers are bought everyday by 82% of the families. 11% of students said that they sometimes get a newspaper while 5% only get one on Sundays. Less than 1% said that they never get a newspaper.

Students were asked to name the Sunday newspaper which their family buys. The Sunday World was named by 31%. Joint second were the Sunday Independent and the Sunday Press at 28%. Fourth was the News of the World at 17%. Also named were The Tribute 10%, The People 8%, The Mirror 8% and various "quality" newspapers at 5%. Many students named more than one newspaper.

Choice of Newspaper, Location and Socio-Economic Group

These were important variables in the choice of newspapers. The Sunday World appeared in first or second place in the favourite Sunday newspapers in all working class sub-groups. Urban working class sub-groups also tended to place The News of the World in their top three choices.

The Sunday Independent was favoured by middle class urban groups while middle class rural tended to favour The Sunday Press.

Middle class urban groups tended to place The Sunday Tribune in their top three.

This bears out the actual breakdown of circulation at the time of the survey.

Homework

In question 12 students were asked how many hours they would spend on homework each weekday.

One hour or less was devoted to homework by 30%, two hours by 41%, three hours by 22% and 4 hours or more by 7%.

Hours Spent on Homework and Age Group

One would have expected that the older age group would spend considerably more time on homework than would the younger age group. However, this does not seem to be the case. It must be remembered that none of the older students surveyed were in the sixth year class. Almost all of them were in fifth year and a few in Inter Cert or transition year. Therefore, the figures would not reflect the extra time and energy that is expended by students in the race to get points.

There is little difference in the time spent on homework between the two age groups except that in most sub-groups a higher percentage of the older students say that they spend one hour or less on homework than do their counterparts in the 12-14 age group. The exception to this is the urban working class students both male and female who actually do spend more time on homework as they get older. This may be explained by the fact that the less academically successful students who are working class usually leave school after Inter Cert or Group, while the more ambitious stay on and see hard work in school as the way to upward class mobility.

The main difference here is that the older age group generally has a higher percentage of students who work for three hours or more every night.

The small differences between the two age groups in terms of hours spent studying may be explained by the following factors:

1)   Fifth year is generally considered by the students themselves to be a "doss" year and only the really ambitious work hard.

2)   At this age many students have part-time jobs in the evenings which encroaches on time available for studying.

3)   After the age of fifteen most students would have more freedom to go out in the evenings and be involved in leisure time activities.

4)   Older students are more likely to spend time on homework at the weekend and that is not accounted for in these figures.

Hours Spent on Homework and Gender

Generally, females seem to spend more time on homework that their male counterparts. Only rural middle class students are an exception to this and both genders in this location and class seem to spend an equal amount of time on homework. This may be because there are fewer distractions from study in rural areas. There is also the fact that rural middle class students are traditionally high achievers in State exams and tend to form a high percentage in

any third level college. Therefore they would feel pressure from
themselves, their parents and their schools to study.

In a comprehensive analysis of national and county participation
rates in Higher Education,[15] it was shown that Dublin at 19.9% had
the lowest rate of admission to Higher Education while Sligo and
Kerry had the highest at 35% and Leitrim had a rate of 34%.

Hours Spent on Homework and Hours Spent Watching Television
If Tables 6.1 and 6.2 in the chapter on Television are compared with
Tables 6.3 and 6.4 it can be seen that there is a strong inverse
relationship between hours spent watching television on weekdays and
the number of hours spent doing homework on weekdays.

Overall, girls spent more time on homework than boys in the same
sub-group which is the opposite in the case of television viewing.
The differences are most apparent in the younger age group.

Working class males both urban and rural, in the 12-14 age group,
consistently showed the highest number of hours spent viewing. They
also spend the least amount of time on homework.

Middle class urban females in the 12-14 age group spent the least
time viewing and the most hours doing homework.

Gender, and to a lesser extent, social class seem to be the most
important variables in this relationship. The exception to this is
working class girls in the 15-17 age group. As we have seen before

they tend to be a-typical of their class because if they have stayed on in school to Senior Cycle they are "successful" and more likely to conform to the middle class values of the school.

Hours Spent on Homework and Gender

Overall, girls spent more time on homework than their male peers. A number of factors may contribute to this.

1)   Girls may have less confidence in themselves in academic achievement. Hannan et al[16] showed that, despite the fact that girls appeared to have been far more successfully integrated into school-life than boys, they had lower levels of academic or education self-confidence than boys.

2)   Girls are expected to conform in school to a greater extent than boys. Teachers' expectations of the two genders seem to be different as Davies and Merghan[17] have shown. Girls therefore would be expected to complete homework whereas boys will get away with incomplete or inadequate homework.

3)   Girls are probably not allowed as much freedom to go out as their male counterparts. They therefore have more time at home and more time available for homework.

Hours Spent doing Homework & Socio-Economic Group

Class is an important variable on this issue within the younger age group. However, the differences are not so obvious in the older age group. This is probably because the least successful working class

students have left school by the age of fifteen and those who are still in school are the more academically successful. They also have more choice than their middle-class counterparts about leaving school. Therefore, they are in school because they want to be. As Michele Dillon[18] found "working class successful pupils ... appeared to have allegiance to the "school knowledge paradigm."

The element of choice about whether to stay on at school is rapidly being eroded by lack of employment or training opportunities for early school leavers. This is now forcing more and more students to stay on at school. However, even a few short years ago when this survey was carried out, there was still that element of choice.

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TABLE 2.1: Home Ownership of the Media among 12-14 year olds.

	MALES %				FEMALES %				Total % Population
	URBAN		RURAL		URBAN		RURAL		
	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	
One television	99	98	100	100	100	100	98	100	99
Record player	99	96	80	.74	97	92	78	90	90
Video	30	32	30	33	27	25	18	17	24
Radio	100	98	97	100	100	100	100	100	99
Cassetts player	100	90	90	87	100	93	94	83	93
Computer	62	38	43	21	20	11	39	24	24
More than one television	72	70	50	31	53	63	49	45	50

TABLE 2.2:   Home Ownership of the Media among 15-17 year olds.

	MALES %				FEMALES %				Total %
	URBAN		RURAL		URBAN		RURAL		
	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	
At least one television	100	98	100	100	100	100	100	100	99
Record player	70	97	90	94	93	96	93	96	90
Video	33	29	18	25	30	21	13	15	24
Radio	100	98	100	100	100	100	98	100	99
Cassette player	99	97	97	97	98	96	96	96	93
Computer	42	32	33	11	16	18	18	5	24
More than one television	63	53	45	42	73	42	50	36	50

TABLE 2.3:   Hours Spent doing Homework on Weekdays by 12-14 year olds.

	MALES %				FEMALES %				Total %
	URBAN		RURAL		URBAN		RURAL		
	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	
1 hour or less	15	60	13	49	7	43	18	31	30
2 hours	79	20	73	38	53	45	59	48	41
3 hours	6	15	13	13	37	11	22	21	22
4 hours or more	O	5	O	O	3	1	2	O	7

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TABLE 2.4:   Hours spent doing homework on weekdays by 15-17 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | Total % |
	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	
1 hour or less	22	33	24	50	14	19	16	23	30
2 hours	43	35	45	33	46	33	23	38	41
3 hours	18	26	24	17	20	30	52	36	22
4 hours or more	16	6	6	0	20	18	1	4	7

School and the Media

In Chapter 6 it can be seen that young people in this survey spend
an average of 23 hours per week looking at television. It is
obviously a very important part of their lives. As The Bullock
Report[1] in it's conclusions and recommendations put it: "Television
is now part of our culture and therefore a legitimate study for
schools. The school has an important part to play in promoting a
discriminatory approach to it, but it is equally important that
children should learn to appreciate the positive values and the
variety of experiences the medium can provide".

The questions on school and the media, questions 13 to 19 inclusive
were designed to elicit information on students' own attitudes to
television as a potential educator, on the students' perceptions of
the attitudes to the media of teachers and the actual use of media
in the schools.

Students were asked firstly about the relevance of what they learn
in school to ordinary life since the complaint is often heard that
much of what they learn in school is irrelevant. Conversely, they
often remark on the relevance of topics that are dealt with on
television, so they were asked whether they considered that they
learned from television.

The Relevance of What is Learned in School
Of the total population, 74% think that some of what they learn in

school is relevant but only 16% answer with a positive yes. A
negative answer is given by 6% while 3% do not know whether it is
relevant or not.

The older age group of both males and females is noticeably less
enthusiastic than their younger counterparts, about the relevance of
what they learn in school to ordinary life. Urban middle class
males are the most likely to say yes to this question. Least likely
to say yes are the older female urban students of both classes.

Urban middle class males may very well be mostly "successful"
students in that they will finish their second level education and
go on to further education of some kind. They certainly have the
best education and career opportunities simply by virtue of the fact
that they are male, middle class and living in the city. They may
very well see that school prepares them for these opportunities and
that therefore what they learn in school is relevant.

Urban 15-17 year old girls, on the other hand, seeing the
conflicting roles that society demands of women, particularly
successful women, may very well feel that school does not prepare
them for these demands. It is also likely that some of these girls
see their future in terms of being wives and mothers and would see
what they learn in school as irrelevant to ordinary life. This may
be particularly true of the 15-17 year old urban working class girl,
taught in the main by middle-class women who have little idea of the
realities of life for working class women.

The 12-14 year olds are noticeably more enthusiastic about the relevance of what they learn in school. But at that age as most teachers are aware they are enthusiastic about most things, and have not yet begun to critically examine the world about them. At this age too, school work is not as exam oriented as for the older group, and thus may seem more relevant because it is learned for its own sake rather than for exams.

Learning from Television

The majority of students, 72% are aware that they learn a certain amount from television, while 13% feel that they learn a lot. Very little is learned from television according to 12% while 2% feel that they learn nothing from television.

It can be seen from Tables 3.1 and 3.2 that all of the female sub-groups are more likely to say that they learn a certain amount from television. The exception to this is 12-14 year old working class girls who have the lowest percentage of any sub-group at 61% who think that you learn a certain amount from television. If we look at the chapter on television it might clarify the reasons why girls are more likely to say that they learn a certain amount from television. Girls say that they like escapist serials for the humour, the inter-personal relationships and for the way that people deal with everyday problems. These then are possibly the things that they feel they learn from television.

The 12-14 year old urban working class girl may not relate to the many programmes on television which have a middle class bias. If

she stays on in school after fifteen, she is more likely to be a "successful" working class girl and will then possibly relate more to the middle class value of most television programmes.

Middle class 15-17 year old males both urban and rural also have quite a high percentage at 15% who think that you learn very little from television. But as can be seen in the chapter on television these two groups are among the lightest users of television. They are also likely to be "successful" students and so more likely to subscribe to the values of the school.

Teachers and Television

"The child who is watching 25 hours of television a week is spending almost as much time in front of a set as he spends in a classroom. That fact lone makes it a part of his experience so influential as to generate serious obligations on the part of those who provide it".[2] This excerpt from the Bullock Report seems to be stating the obvious. It would seem that if children and teenagers are spending an average of 23 hours per week watching television and many more hours in contact with the other media, then parents and educators have a serious obligation to first of all recognise the centrality of the media in the lives of the young people in their care and secondly, to educate them to be discerning and appreciative consumers of the media.

The researcher felt that if teachers recognised the importance of television in the lives of their students they would at least

discuss television programmes with them. Of course these discussions might not always be constructive - they could even be inoculative! But at least discussing television, even if in a critical or negative way, in itself affirms television's central place in the lives of most of us.

Even Neil Postman,[3] who sees the new media as trivialising and debasing society says:

> "The fact that the new media are inseparable from the changes occurring in the environment require that the school's virtually exclusive concern will prevent literacy being extended to include these new forms; in other words, the magnitude of the effect of new media, still in the process of being assessed, requires that any attempt to increase the relevance of education include substantive consideration of them."

Students were asked "Are television programmes discussed in class?"

Television programmes are sometimes discussed in class with 74% of all of the respondents. 9% said that television programmes were discussed frequently but 17% said that television programmes were never discussed in class.

Once again, the group least likely to have television programmes discussed with them in class are male urban middle class 15-17 year olds. As we see in Chapter 4, this group is one of the lightest users of television. They also spend a considerable amount of time

doing homework (see Chapter 2). The majority of this group would go
on to third level education and so would be under pressure to work
hard at school. These factors may very well explain the non-
discussion of television programmes with them. But it is also
possible that television programmes are not discussed in class
because they are considered trivial in comparison with school work
by both these students and their teachers. This indeed has been the
personal experience of the researcher while teaching media
education. Students are quite enthusiastic about media education
when it involves something that sounds intellectual like the
psychology of advertising. But they become insulted if the teacher
wants to analyse "Minder" or "Eastenders" in class. It would seem
that by the age of 15, the "successful" students at least have
absorbed ideas of high and low culture from the school. Since much
of what is on television would be considered popular or low culture,
they consider it beneath consideration as a subject for study.

It can be seen from Tables 3.3 and 3.4 that rural students are more
likely to report that television programmes are discussed frequently
in class. This may be because there is not such a cultural chasm
between rural students and their teachers as there appears to be
between urban students, especially working class and their teachers.
J Pritchard[4] in a comparative study of the status of teachers in
Ireland and Germany found that "many Dublin teachers came from
farming families" Morgan and Dunn[5] have established that rural
student teachers enjoy a numerical predominance which the population
distribution does not seem to warrant.

The cultural dichotomy between city and county in Ireland has often been observed. Dick Walsh of the Irish Times has written succinctly on this theme.[6] The opponents of change in Ireland he says "locate the threat to traditional values in parts of Dublin, meaning the middle class reaches of the Southside, among Dublin-based journalists and the minority of politicians who reflect liberal or left-wing tendencies". The media and television in particular, because it is seen to emanate from Dublin, have been viewed with suspicion as proponents of change and part of the urbanisation of Ireland. This attitude is epitomised in an article in the Irish Times of June 16th 1986 by John Healy[7] in his "Sounding Off" column. He wrote:

"Television marked the end of the old peasant society and its values. The Consumer Society had arrived with its counter-values. Instead of restraint it created desire. Instead of a sense of belonging to your parish, it offered you an identity in what you eat; you were the car you drove and the gratification of all the senses, with subliminal sexual undertones.

And where once you took your place in the helpful meitheal you were now advised to screw Jones who was trying to keep up with you. The ads said "Go on - spoil yourself". Let yourself go. And to hell with self-discipline.

That's been my constant theme since the mid-1960's when I first isolated the clash of the cultures".

This suspicion of the media and the cultural divide between urban and rural people obviously extends into the classrooms of urban schools. It must inevitably create difficulties of communication between middle class urban students and their teachers who are largely from a traditional rural background. The difficulties must be further exacerbated when a middle class rural teacher faces working class urban students.

In England, Murdock and Phelps[8] also found that the social position and social formation of most teachers is very different to that of the students they teach and that therefore their choice of, use of, and attitude to, the media is likely also to be very different. In Britain it is possible for a working class student to get a third level education because grants are relatively generous there. So much so that since Britain's Universities and Colleges allowed EEC residents the same privileges as their own students in terms of fee being paid for by local authorities, there has been a stream of Irish students going to Britain to get a third level education which they could not afford in their own country.[9]

In Ireland, for economic reasons as well as others, it is becoming increasingly difficult for working class students to get a third level education. Therefore it is likely that the cultural divide between teachers and taught will widen still further in the years ahead.

In the chapter on Television it can be seen that working class urban students showed different preferences to the majority of students in

the choice of most watched station. ITV was nominated by 40% of
that sub-group as the most watched station BBC1 was next with 28%
and RTE1 third with 24%. In that chapter these differences were
explained by the following hypotheses.

1) Urban working class students perceive ITV as an entertainment
   channel.

2) BBC1 and RTE1 are perceived as information and education
   channels.

3) RTE1 epitomises a rural Irish culture to which urban working
   class students do not subscribe.

Therefore the problem seems to be not just that teachers do not
discuss television programmes in class but that even if they do in
the case of urban working class students they would have few
programmes in common to discuss.

The Use of TV/Video in Schools
Television/video is used in class every day for less than 1% of
students, once a week for 12%, occasionally for 67% and never for
19%. Yet 93% of students say that they would like television and
video to be used more in school.

From the data it is clear that TV/video is used more frequently with
the older students of 15-17 years. It is also clear that TV/video
is used more frequently with urban students. The highest
percentages who report never having TV/video used in class is among

rural students and particularly working class rural students.

The higher frequency of use of TV/video with older students is probably due to the fact that there is more suitable material available for older students. Apart from commercially produced material such as Shakespearean plays or science programmes, many ordinary programmes are also suitable for use with older students. These would include documentaries, religious discussion programmes, plays and films, current affairs, etc. Teachers also tend to devote more time to preparation of materials for older students who would be in Leaving Cert classes and so are more likely to record off air for them in their own free time.

The higher frequency of use of TV/video with urban students is probably due to the fact that ownership of videos is higher in urban areas and so teachers themselves are more likely to own a video and record for their students. Secondly, urban schools tend to be much larger than rural schools and particularly in middle class areas, would find raising funds for such equipment as videos much easier than their rural counterparts.

Rural working class students, who are the least likely to have TV/video used in class usually attend small vocational schools which might not have the resources to buy a television and video.

The low usage of television and video in schools may be explained by some of the following factors:

1) Since television and videos are not supplied by the Department of Education, some schools, particularly smaller ones may not have either. This would seem to be the case in rural areas where schools tend to be smaller and the usage of the two media is lowest.

2) Even where the equipment is available, it may be under-utilised because some of the teachers are unfamiliar with it.

3) Using electronic media in schools usually involves moving classes or equipment and a certain amount of forward planning. Some teachers may not be willing to disrupt their day in this way.

4) There is a dearth of suitable video materials for use in the classroom. What is available is expensive. The alternative is for a teacher to record and adapt from television. This is very time-consuming and means that the teacher needs a video recorder at home.

5) Many teachers, having been educated themselves in the belief in the primacy of print, have an antipathy towards the electronic media and see them as a negative force in education. They believe that children see quite enough television and video at home without bringing it into the classroom. Until media studies becomes a part of teacher training, there will always be a large number of teachers who hold these views for years to come.

This seems a pity since teachers are losing out on the opportunity to teach cross curricular skills by using the familiar medium of television. Too often, when television is used for instance to teach a Shakespearean play, it is used in a passive fashion. Without any initial skills to assess a television programme the result will be the same as those of students who have no literary critical skills. Students will simply learn the story line. This point is graphically made by two recent pieces of research. The first analysed teenagers' responses to a school's television programme about AIDS. Most students reacted to the storyline in terms of liking characters but few showed any analysis of the stylistic aspects of the programme. The researcher concluded that analytical skills for television need to be taught for television just as much as for the print media.[10]

The second experiment was with junior school children. Their teacher taught them plot comprehension by focusing on conflict as the key to plot structure. From television programmes the children went on to apply the same techniques to film, plays and stories. The researcher found that the newly learned skills were transferred to the less familiar media with ease.[11]

The Use of Newspapers in Schools

Newspapers, being a print medium and long-established, would seem to be a more acceptable medium for classroom use and are certainly more accessible than the electronic media. Yet 45% of students say that they never use newspapers for work in school, 21% use them only occasionally, 29% use them sometimes and 5% use them frequently.

Low usage of newspapers in the classroom cannot be explained by lack of equipment or training or the hostility of teachers to a new medium. It would seem that many teachers are very traditional in their approach to teaching and prefer to use set text books rather than look for alternative and complementary sources in media other than text books.

As was found with the usage of TV/video, newspapers tend to be used in the classroom much more with middle class students and in urban areas. This can partly be explained by the greater variety of newspapers available in urban areas and the fact that middle class urban students are more likely to be doing subjects like Economics which demand a certain use of newspapers. However, it seems incredible that 64% of rural working class boys and 61% of urban working class boys in the 15-17 year old age group report that they never used a newspaper in class. Girls, on the other hand, seem to use a newspaper in class more frequently than boys. This could be because some subjects traditionally taken by greater numbers of girls such as Home Economics or Business Organisation encourage the use of newspapers in class. It could also reflect the greater involvement in debating of girls' schools, particularly the convent schools.

But the most likely explanation of why newspapers are used much more with middle class students than with working class students is that the former would be familiar with the newspapers favoured or considered "useful" by their middle class teachers. The latter group, on the other hand, would be likely to be as unfamiliar with

these newspapers as they would with unfamiliar textbooks. The papers they would be familiar with - the tabloids - would be considered "useless" or at least unsuitable for classroom use. So the antipathy of teachers to the electronic media also seems to extend to new media such as the tabloid newspaper.

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TABLE 3.1:   Learning in School and from Television   -   15-17 year olds.

		MALES %				FEMALES %				
		URBAN		RURAL		URBAN		RURAL		
		MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL POPULATION
Do you think that what you learn in school is relevant to ordinary life?	Yes	18	9	12	14	1	1	14	6	16
	Some of it	70	76	70	81	82	89	80	83	74
	No	10	9	18	6	7	4	5	11	7
	Don't know	2	6	0	0	4	0	0	0	3
Do you learn from television?	A lot	10	17	9	19	11	6	9	15	13
	Very little	15	11	15	11	9	14	11	4	12
	Certain amount	73	73	76	69	75	80	80	81	73
	Nothing	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	2

TABLE 3.2:   Learning in School and from Television - 12-14 year olds.

| | | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
		MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL POPULATION
Do you think that what you learn in school is relevant to ordinary life?	Yes	15	28	20	36	17	19	18	21	16
	Some of it	79	65	63	59	70	77	76	72	74
	No	6	2	10	0	7	0	4	3	7
	Don't know	0	5	7	5	7	4	2	3	3
Do you learn from television?	A lot	20	17	27	8	7	13	12	17	13
	Very little	6	10	7	13	13	21	16	7	12
	Certain amount	70	72	67	77	80	61	71	76	73
	Nothing	3	1	0	3	0	4	2	0	2

TABLE 3.3:   Teachers and Television - 15-17 year olds.

| | | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | % OF |
		MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL POPULATION
Are television	Never	33	23	15	17	23	11	18	11	17
programmes discussed	Frequently	9	6	15	14	9	9	11	6	9
in class?	Sometimes	58	71	70	69	68	70	71	83	74
Do	Yes	22	11	24	22	20	28	27	13	17
teachers like	Don't know	48	55	36	39	40	33	28	45	41
television?	Some do	30	33	39	36	46	39	45	42	41
	No	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	1

TABLE 3.4:   Teachers and Television -   12-14 year olds.

| | | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | % OF TOTAL POPULATION |
| | | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
		MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	
Are television programmes discussed in class?	Never	10	15	7	21	20	20	16	14	17
	Frequently	6	12	7	15	3	7	18	7	9
	Sometimes	83	73	86	64	77	73	66	79	74
Do teachers like television?	Yes	21	12	23	15	7	13	24	17	17
	Don't know	28	55	27	54	47	52	25	34	41
	Some do	49	32	50	31	47	35	51	48	41
	No	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

CHAPTER 4

Patterns of Reading

Much of the research devoted to young people and reading has focused
on levels of attainment. This study concentrates on the frequency
of reading of the different print media, the amount of money spent
on them, favourite comics and magazines and library membership. It
could therefore more accurately be described as an exploration of
reading interest among young people since it refers to time spent
reading voluntarily or for pleasure and to reading material chosen
by the students themselves.

Studies of reading habits in Ireland[1] and in Britain[2] have shown
that reading for pleasure is the most popular motive for leisure
reading among young people. The need for information can be another
motivation. It is clear from research that there are a number of
factors which contribute to a child's perception of reading as a
pleasurable activity. They are:

1)   (a)   How reading is taught at school. Most children are
           taught to read at school by the "decoding" or phonic
           method or by the "meaning" or global method of teaching
           children to read, or sometimes by a combination of those
           two. Current research suggests that whereas the phonic
           system produces better word recognition and better
           reading comprehension in young children effective
           written language teaching should incorporate both
           featural and functional aspects of written language.[3]

     (b)   Another aspect of how learning to read affects reading

for pleasure is whether students are taught using an
individualised approach to reading, where the student is
free to select her own class reading materials, or by
the traditional method using a class reader. Both
methods were shown to have the same effect where reading
comprehension, spelling and word variety were concerned,
but the individual method produced much more of an
interest in reading.[4]

2) Parental attitudes to reading. Many studies have concentrated
on the correlation between reading attainment and social class
but Greaney and Hegarty[5] suggest that it is more a question of
what parents do than what they are. In other words, if
parents themselves read, read to their children, listen to
their children read aloud, then the children are likely to
perceive reading as a pleasurable activity.

3) The availability of books. This is usually related to class.[6]

4) Membership of a library has been shown to have a strong
relationship with leisure reading.[7]

5) A suitable environment for reading. Greany[8] reported that 50%
of leisure reading by young people was carried out in bed.[8]
If students are living in over-crowded conditions of sharing a
bedroom with much younger siblings, then opportunities for
reading in bed will be limited.

The Findings

In this section of the questionnaire students were asked questions about the frequency of reading books and newspapers, the frequency of buying books, comics and magazines, membership of a library other than the school library, favourite comics or magazines and how much money students would spend on comics and magazines. The frequency of buying newspapers in the home and favourite newspapers are dealt with in Chapter 2 Home and the Media.

Newspapers

A newspaper is ready every day by 39% of the students, sometimes by 52% on Sunday only by 6% and never by 2%. Readership of a newspaper on a regular basis is higher in the older age group of both sexes and highest among older males. Sharon[9] also found that males aged 16 or older tended to read more newspapers and magazines than females. Working class males, both urban and rural, show the highest readership of newspapers with 59% and 64% respectively saying that they read a newspaper every day. This may be due to (a) a keen interest in sport, especially soccer or (b) it could suggest that they are using newspapers to look for a job or (c) they are using newspapers as a source of general information. Female rural students of both age groups show the lowest regular readership of newspapers with 22% to 29% saying that they read a newspaper every day. In a study conducted by Greaney and Clarke on 18-19 year old Irish males they found 75% had spent more than one half hour reading newspapers over a three day period.[10]

Membership of a Library

Membership of a library other than the school one is claimed by 48% of students. Library membership is highest among the younger females and lowest among the older males. In the 12-14 year old females 57%-76% say they belong to a library. In the 15-17 year old males 27%-41% say they belong to a library. Gender is obviously an important variable here. However, socio economic group does not appear to be relevant to this question. There appears to be a strong correlation between membership of a library and amount of reading. This relationship was also found in Greaney's study.[11]

Who Buys Books?

When asked if they bought books, 6% of students said that they bought books very often, 8% said that they bought them often, 52% said sometimes and 34% said never. The habit of buying books on a regular basis was highest among both age groups of girls and lowest among males in the 15-17 year old age group. Only 14%-36% of all of the girls stated that they never buy books while 27%-58% of all the males made the same statement. Most likely to buy books are rural middle class girls in the 15-17 year old age group. Again, in this question gender was an important variable but socio economic group was not. The expenditure analysis in the CJMR Survey[12] shows that of young people between 12 and 17 years of age, 52% say that they spend nothing on books every week. The discrepancy between this figure and my figure of 34% maybe explained by the following items. The CJMR Survey used a population of school goers and non-school goers. It also asked about expenditure during a particular week. This study used school goers only, who may be more likely to buy books. It also asked about general book buying habits rather than

about a specific week.

How much Reading is Done

More than 4 books were read during the previous month by 18% of
students between 2 and 4 books by 27%, 1 book only by 26% and no
books at all were ready by 28% of students. Regular book reading is
highest among the younger females and lowest among older males.
This,in fact, is the reverse situation of newspaper reading. Middle
class urban males are the least likely to read books and in the 15-
17 year old group 54% said they had read no books during the
previous month. The findings on numbers of books read would accord
with those of Whitehead et al[13] who found that children read
approximately 3 books per month.   They also found that girls read
more books than boys.

Who buys Comics and Magazines

Comics and magazines were bought very often by 18% of students,
often by 12%, sometimes by 45% and never by 24%. The percentage of
students buying comics and magazines was uniformly high across the
different age, class and gender groups. The percentage was highest
among urban middle class girls in the 12-14 age group who mostly
favoured magazines and lowest among urban middle class boys in the
older age group, 45% of whom said they never buy comics or
magazines. Boys in the younger age group favoured comics. Both
these findings accord with those of Greaney.[14]

Favourite Comics and Magazines

Students were asked to name their favour comics and magazines and

the results were then categorised and coded. The categories are:

1)   Teenage girls' comics such as Jackie,

2)   Computer magazines,

3)   Hobby magazines,

4)   Funny comics (Beano, etc),

5)   Violent comics,

6)   War magazines,

7)   Pop music magazines,

8)   Love comics,

9)   Women's magazines,

10.   Sport magazines.

The rank order of preference was:

1)   Teenage girls',

2)   Pop music magazines,

3)   Funny comics,

4)   Sport magazines

5)   Love comics,

6)   Computer magazines,

7)   War magazines,

8)   Women's magazines,

9)   Hobby magazines,

10)   Violent comics.

Choice of Comic or Magazine and Gender

Gender was a major factor in choice of comic or magazine.

Teenage girls' magazines were the most popular with girls in the 12-

14 group with pop music magazines a close second. The girls in the
15-17 age group showed the same preferences except that the rural
girls placed Love comics in second place.

Boys in the 12-14 age group placed Funny comics in first place
followed by Sports magazines. The boys in the 15-17 group placed
Sport magazines in first place and Pop Music magazines in second
place. Male urban students were most likely to name computer
magazines as their choice and this is not surprising since they are
the most likely group to own computers.

Money Spent on Comics or Magazines

The majority of students (82%) spend £1 or less per week on comics
or magazines while 11% say that they would spend about £2.

Possible Reasons for Gender Differences in Reading Patterns

1) Males read newspapers more frequently than females. This
    could be explained by the amount of sports coverage given in
    newspapers. It is obvious from magazine preferences that
    reading about sport is popular with boys. They may be using
    newspapers in the same way. Boys also tend to show a greater
    interest in current affairs as can be seen in Chapter 6
    Patterns of Television Viewing. This may also encourage them
    to read newspapers more.

2) Females read books more frequently than males. As the Book
    Marketing Council[15] point out, although it is often thought
    that boys prefer non-fiction and girls prefer fiction, this

idea does not seem to be valid. They point out that fiction
is the most attractive category of books for boys although
they do also like non-fiction more than girls do. However,
the teenage girls' reading market is rather better provided
for than the boys'. Mills and Boon, Danielle Steel and
Virginia Andrews between them provide a huge amount of
escapist, romantic fiction which is read by teenage girls as
well as older women. Boys on the other hand, once they have
outgrown boys adventure stories, find no bridge between them
and adult fiction. It is also possible that because reading
is perceived to be a passive activity, males prefer to be
involved in something more active such as sport. It may be
also that girls have a stronger need for escapist literature
because of the restrictions in their own lives.

Is there cause for concern?

From my survey it is clear that 72% of students had read at least
one book in the previous month and only 28% had read no book at all.
These figures are heartening for those who believe that reading for
pleasure is becoming a thing of the past.

However, one thing is clear from the figures which is worrying: that
is, that teenagers read less as they get older. This could be
explained by saying that they have more homework and more
commitments generally as they get older and this in turn leads to
less time for reading. That may be a factor but this researcher
believes that there are other factors which make reading less
popular with older teenagers. They are:

(a) The way reading is taught in school and the way texts are used may very well be a turn-off from reading.

(b) The pressure of learning for exams and the connection between exams and books.

(c) The lack of a suitable range of books for teenagers in school and public libraries. Too often what is provided is what adults feel teenagers should read rather than what they want to read. Teenagers, like children, use fiction to learn about social situations and sexual behaviour, for instance. Yet adults often prevent them from gaining access to this very type of book.

(d) Lack of guidance when choosing books is also likely to make it difficult for the younger reader to make the transition from children's books to teenage or adult books.

(e) Peer group pressure which does not see reading as a "cool" past-time. O'Rourke[16] has shown that whereas parents are the main influence in reading choices while a child is in primary school, in secondary school the dominant influence is the peer group.

The Effect of Television on Reading

It is often believed that television viewing has an adverse effect upon reading habits. Many people believe that television has displaced reading, particularly in the lives of young people. At first glance, the statistics from this survey would seem to support that thesis. In Chapter 6 - Television, it was found that boys view television more than girls. The figures in this chapter show that girls read books much more than boys. It could then be argued that

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there is an inverse relationship between hours spent viewing and hours spent reading, as Whitehead et al have argued.[17] But of course what we don't know is whether boys would read more if there was no television. We know that they are not averse to reading as such because they read newspapers more than girls. There are many reasons other than television why they do not read as has already been discussed, and, without the benefit of measures of reading prior to television, it is difficult to measure the displacement effect of television. Working class males, both urban and rural, consistently showed the highest number of hours spent viewing. This may very well displace reading to some extent. But it could be argued that the reason they view more and read less is because they have less access to books. Books may not be available in the home. Books for these students may be associated with school and learning rather than with leisure activities. In the review of the research at the beginning of Chapter 1, little evidence was found to connect television viewing with reading habits. From this survey it could be concluded that we must look to other factors to explain why teenage boys do so little reading since heavy television viewing is not a satisfactory explanation.

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CHAPTER 5

Patterns of Listening

When designing the questions on listening for the questionnaire, the mistake was made of thinking that because music is such an integral part of youth culture, therefore all young people must listen to the radio, buy records, and tapes, etc. Obviously, this was wrong, because in this section of the questionnaire there were a small number of students who did not reply to some of the questions, particularly questions 33, 34 and 35. Because it was presumed that all teenagers buy records and tapes and spend some time every day listening to music, there was no response on the questionnaire which a student could choose, who did not buy records or tapes or listen to music. It would seem that these students who did not respond do not buy records or tapes nor spend any time listening to them. Some students did not answer the questions about the purchase of records or tapes but did respond to questions about the time they spent listening to music. Such students, while they do not buy records or tapes, probably have access to them through brothers or sisters and do spend a certain amount of time listening to them. Percentages given refer to percentages of the surveyed population and not just to percentages of those who answered all the questions in this section.

Since this survey was complete many changes have taken place in radio in Ireland. At the time of the survey most students had access to RTE1, RTE2 and a multitude of local "pirate" stations and the British radio stations. Many of the former "pirates" are now

legitimately licensed stations. The changed status of radio
stations makes no difference however to the use young people make of
radio and their preferences seem to be just as fickle now as they
were in the days of the "pirate" stations, as Century radio has
discovered.

Radio Stations

Pirate radio stations are the most popular with 59% of students.
RTE2 is the most popular with 28% and RTE1 with 3%. While pirate
stations are very popular in urban areas, RTE2 tends to be more
popular in rural areas. It is impossible to say if this is a matter
of choice or not since pirate stations are not accessible in many
rural areas. At the time of the survey Q 102 was the most popular
pirate station with Sunshine a close second. However, the
popularity of various pirate stations with young people seem to wax
and wane for no apparent reason. Allegiance to a particular station
seems, from talking to the students, to be like belonging to a club,
and knowing which station was the "In" station was very important.
This would support Frith's[1] contention that young people move in and
out of music cultures.

Listening-Times

Night-time is the favourite listening time for 45% of students and
weekends are preferred by 25%. Morning listening is popular with
18% and 11% listening after school. The older age group listen to
radio more than the young group. This may reflect the fact that
radio is often used as a background to doing homework and the older
age group would spend more time doing homework. It probably also

reflects the need that adolescents need, at about 15, to have their own space, which means that they move away from the family group around the television to the privacy of their bedroom or wherever they can be alone. Girls in both age groups spend more time listening to the radio than boys in their peer-group. Overall, less than 1 hour per day is spent listening by 37%, 23% spend 1 hour and 19% spend 2 hours or more listening to the radio. Roe[2] also found that girls listen to radio more than boys.

How Students Use Radio

The times at which students like to listen to the radio are an indication of how students use radio. Roe[3] found three distinct ways in which young people use music. They were:

1)   to create atmosphere and to control mood,

2)   for silence filling and passing the time,

3)   to listen to the lyrics.

In the question on favourite times for listening students were given four possible answers (1) at night (2) after school (3) in the morning and (4) at the weekend. It seems likely that if students are using radio to listen to the lyrics of music, they would do so at night when they are least likely to be disturbed by other people or activities. If, on the other hand, they are using music to pass the time or to fill silences, they would be equally likely to listen at any of the given times. If they are using radio to create atmosphere or to control mood then they would be most likely to listen at weekends or at night. If this supposition is reasonable then we can see that the genders use radio differently. Boys,

particularly older boys, showed a marked preference for listening to the radio at night and little interest in listening to the radio at any other time. They may of course be using radio as a background to doing homework but it seems to me that they must also be listening to the lyrics. Girls, on the whole, also tended to like listening at night, but also liked to listen at any other time. This would suggest that they are using radio for all three purposes. These findings are similar to those of Dillon[4] who found the majority of young people listened to radio for 1 1/4 hours, that the majority favoured pirate stations and that girls listened more than boys.

Listening to Records and Tapes

The majority of students 68% spend one hour or more listening to records or tapes while 20% two hours or more. More than 3 hours are spent listening to records or tapes by 9%. Male urban working class students spend the most time and female rural middle class students the least time. Males spend marginally more time listening to tapes and records than females. Since radio stations tend to play mainstream pop, using tapes and records can be seen as selecting other types of music. Roe[5] found that girls favoured mainstream pop whereas boys tended to prefer rock.

Money spent on Records and Tapes

Males spend more money on these items than females, probably because they tend to buy LP's and the females tend to favour single records. This again seems to indicate the females' preference for mainstream pop, which,being ephemeral, is bought on single records. The

majority of students, 50% spend between £1 and £2 per week on records and tapes while 5% spend between £2 and £3 and 4% spend between £3 and £4. More than £4 per week is spent by 7%.

Less than half the students, 42%, buy singles rather than LP's and these tend to be female students. Working class students tend to spend more money on records and tapes than middle class students.

How Students Use Records and Tapes

How students use records and tapes is indicated to some extent by their preference for single records or LP's. Single record tend to be mainstream pop music. Mainstream pop music is on the whole, that seen on Top of the Pops - the music which features in the Top Twenty. It is changing and ephemeral, therefore bought in singles. McRobbie[6] claims that there is a culture of femininity which is based on the ideology of romance and the attraction of marriage for young working class girls who accept the social and material limitations of their sub-ordinate class and gender position in society. She suggests that these girls orient themselves to an adult world by identification with mainstream pop music which is largely concerned with themes of romance. McRobbie's thesis seems reasonable except that in Ireland there are other cultural and religious factors to be considered. The gap found between the use which working class girls make of records and tapes and that of middle class girls is not so wide as to suggest that the middle class girls do not also subscribe to the culture of femininity. The high status accorded to marriage and motherhood in a Catholic society may very well explain why Irish middle class girls seem in

some ways to subscribe to the culture of femininity.

Boys, on the other hand show a much greater tendency to buy LP's in preference to singles. In the 12-14 year age group this trend is strongest among middle class boys but in the 15-17 year old age group all the male sub-groups show a tendency to prefer LP's to singles. This seems to indicate that they prefer non- mainstream pop music such as new wave. The fact that working class boys in the younger age group seem to like mainstream pop music yet the same group in the older age group seem to prefer anti-mainstream music could be explained by the fact that working class boys who stay on in school after 15 could be termed "successful" so that they are likely to conform to the ideas of the middle class peer group. Murdock and Phelps[7] also found that anti-mainstream music supporters are more likely to be middle class than working class. They explained this by arguing that

> "because middle class students are largely cut off from
> the situational working class street cultures, they will
> tend to turn to pop as a source of those values, roles
> and meanings which the school undervalues. Working
> class pupils, on the other hand, are able to derive their
> alternative meanings from street peer groups rooted in
> the situational cultures of working class
> neighbourhoods; and consequently, for them, pop music is
> likely to be either something which is part of the taken
> for granted of group activities or else part of the
> small coin of social exchange."

Roe[8] on the other hand suggests that music preferences are not so
much a factor of one's social class as much as where one is bound.
He found that boys who prefer socially disapproved of music
anticipated getting lower status jobs after school. Anti-mainstream
music is of course not all socially disapproved of. Whereas punk
music is widely disapproved of by adults, groups such as the House
Martens, are perceived to be acceptable.

The contention that middle class male students turn to pop as a
source of values, roles and meanings would seem to be supported by
the fact that middle class boys, particularly those in urban areas,
are the ones who spend the most money on records and tapes although
in the older age group, urban working class boys are the biggest
spenders with 40% of them spending £2 or more on records or tapes
every week.

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CHAPTER 6

Patterns of Television Viewing

The Irish national television station, RTE, began broadcasting on 31st December 1961. At this time, over 30% of homes in areas where signals could be picked up were already receiving BBC1 and ITV from Britain. The birth of the national station stimulated a controversy over the role of television in Irish society. As McLoone[1] has pointed out, Ireland at this time was just emerging from a period of economic and social conservatism which dated back to the beginning of the state. It was also isolated, geographically, from the rest of Europe. Conservatives were concerned that television would have an adverse effect on Irish culture and society, particularly since the infant station relied heavily on imported programmes from Britain and America. The rich literary and dramatic culture of Ireland tended to deny recognition to other forms of culture, or to impose traditional literary cultural approaches on any type of popular culture, especially television. This attitude led to television being seen by conservative people as, at best, a trivialising influence and, at worst, a corrupter of morals. As we shall see in the chapter on video, the arrival of each new medium causes a moral panic. However, in Ireland, it also caused a cultural panic since most of the material on the national station originated in either Britain or America.

Maurice Earls[2] has shown that "serious" programmes were tightly controlled and maintained. However, the Late, Late, Show perhaps because it was perceived as lightweight became "an outlet for

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popular impatience with the unyielding cultural dogma of de Valera's
Ireland." In its long and still vibrant life, the Late, Late, Show
has been seen as the enemy of the Irish Catholic conservative view
of the world. Yet, as Earls has points out, the programme is itself
conservative, although committed to a more liberal view of society.
In a way, it has become a microcosm of Irish society, displaying an
affable liberalism which conceals a fundamental conservatism. Its
popularity can be gauged from the fact that it is usually at, or near,
the top of the Tam ratings.

Like the Late, Late, Show, television has become increasingly
popular over the years and as we saw in Chapter 2 almost every home
has at least one television. Watching television has become a major
national past-time.

Television also appears to be the medium which dominates the leisure
time of young people. The Final Report of the National Youth Policy
Committee 1984[3] found that watching television was the most popular
leisure time activity among all demographic groups in the survey.
The fact that television is the most dominant medium in the lives of
young people is reflected in the balance of questions in the
questionnaire which was administered. Of the total 66 questions, 33
deal directly or indirectly with television. Eighteen of those
questions are dealt with in this chapter. They are questions 35-60
and 54, 59 and 60. Students were surveyed on their choice of
television station, the hours they spent viewing, their reasons for
watching television, favourite programmes, the soaps and serials
they watch most, whether they see a need for programmes specifically

aimed at young people, their attitudes to violence on television and whether or not they view news or current affairs programmes.

From the questionnaires[4] returned it was found that RTE1 was the television station watched most by 36% of the students, ITV was second with 29% and the third was BBC1 with 24%. RTE2 was the most watched station with 5% of students and BBC2 with 2%.

Class and location seem to be important variables in the choice of most watched station. Working class urban students showed different preferences to the majority in the choice of most watched station. Of that sub-group 40% nominated ITV as the most watched station, BBC1 was next with 28% and RTE1 third with 24%. The placing of the three channels in order of preference was consistent across the age groups and genders within the urban working class group.

This accords with the findings of Bradley S. Greenberg.[4] He found that working class British teenagers preferred ITV while their middle class peers watched BBC1 the most. It seems likely that, in Britain, BBC and in Ireland, RTE, may be perceived as information and educational channels because of their public service tradition whereas ITV is seen as an entertainment channel. In Ireland, RTE may also be perceived as epitomising a rural culture to which urban working class people do not subscribe. Martin McLoone[5] has discussed this opposition between rural/traditional society and urban/modern society and shown that it was not until the screening of Strumpet City in 1980 that the urban working class was given any sort of recognition in the nationalist consensus.

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Channel preferences obviously have to do with factors other than programme preferences, because at least the top five favourite television programmes named by all respondents were on RTE1.

David Morley in "Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure"[6] found that men tended to say that they preferred BBC1 while women preferred ITV. He points out that the only time that this tendency is reversed is where the wife is, because of her educational background, in the more dominant or "masculine" position. Morley found gender an important variable in choice of channels. This researcher did not. He, however, was dealing with adults where gender roles are more defined rather than teenagers, still at school and therefore playing less defined gender roles. It is clear from his research that educational background has an influence on channel choice. In Ireland, educational background is an important determinant of class. Therefore, it is no surprise to find that class is an important variable in choice of television channel.

Hours Spent Viewing

Since the Bullock Report[7] in Britain in 1975, it has become a cliche to say that students spend more time looking at television than they do in school. However, the cliche does seem to be true of many Irish students too. On a weekday, 44% of students say that they spend three hours or more watching television. On Saturday or Sunday, 50% spend four hours or more on each of those days. That means that almost half the students surveyed spend about 23 hours per week watching television. Taking into account that this survey

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was done during the months of April and May when the days are long and the evenings bright, the figure of 23 hours spent viewing may be a conservative one. Even if one allows that during some of those hours, watching television may be a secondary or tertiary activity, the fact remains, that for 23 hours per week, half of the students are absorbing television messages. This surely makes it an influential factor in the socialising of young people.

Hours Spent Viewing and Age

Age of respondent seems to be of little significance, especially where weekend viewing is concerned. Monday to Friday viewing is indulged in slightly less by the older age group, perhaps reflecting more time spent on study, part-time jobs or outside social activities. One would have expected the older age group to do less viewing at weekends because of greater involvement with the social life of the peer group. But it would seem that this age group does their viewing during the afternoons or early evenings before going out on a Saturday of Sunday.

Hours Spent Viewing and Gender

On average, boys spent more time viewing than girls of the same age and social group. However, the overall relationship between gender and hours spent viewing was not significant. This would accord with the findings of John Quinn[8] in Ireland and Himmelweit et al[9] in Britain. David Morley[10] found that, among the adults he interviewed in Britain, although women talked more about television, they actually viewed less than men.

Hours Spent Viewing and Social Class

The relationship between social class and hours spent viewing were consistent and significant for both age groups. Working class males both urban and rural, consistently showed the highest number of hours spent viewing. This was not so significant for weekend viewing but highly significant for mid-week viewing. The difference was more marked in the younger age group. This suggests that middle class boys spend more time on other activities, thus restricting television time. It should be remembered that this group has the highest ownership of computers. It is likely that there is more pressure on them to study and perform well in school and they may also be more involved in sport.

There is likely to be less pressure and less emphasis on study for working class boys. The fact that the difference between the classes narrows in the older age group suggests that working class boys who stay on in school, come under more pressure to succeed from teachers, parents and possibly themselves, than they did up to the age of fifteen.

John Quinn[11] found no significant relationship between hours spent viewing and social class. But it must be remembered that his study was based on a group of children whose mean age was 11 years 7 months in fifth class in primary school. Children at that age and level of schooling are not yet under the same pressure of exams and the need to succeed as are students in second level schools. His study was done in 1976 when there was much lower unemployment and before second level schooling had become the race for points which

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it is now.

Himmelweit et al[12] also found that social class differences had only slight influence on the amount of viewing. But their study was also based on 11 year olds and was done even long before John Quinn's - in 1958.

Among the girls in this survey, class differences in time spent viewing are less obvious. This may be because girls, whatever their class, are usually expected to help with domestic duties. It is also likely that, even today, there is not the same pressure on girls as there is on boys to succeed in school. The experience of most teachers would bear this out, even very academic successful girls are kept at home in minor emergencies, whilst their brothers are not. It should also be remembered that this study found that girls read more than boys, thus leaving less time available for viewing.

No difference in viewing hours was found between respondents in single-channel and multi-channel areas. This suggests that more channels available does not mean more hours spent viewing, simply greater selectivity.

Location was not found to be a significant variable.

Reasons for Watching Television

Overwhelmingly, respondents saw television as an entertainment medium. When asked "Why do you watch television?" 77% chose the

response "for entertainment" 13% said "To pass the time". Only 3% said they watch "to learn about the world" and 6% didn't know why they watch.

This general perception of television as an entertainment medium creates its own constraints and inevitably affects the representation on television of everything from the news to political broadcasts. More and more channels to choose from and the use of the remote control button mean that programmes have about ten seconds to grab the viewer's attention before he "zaps" into something less demanding and more entertaining. Paradoxically, the more sophisticated pure entertainment becomes on television, the more we demand the same entertainment standards from the documentary or the newscast. Even the weather on television has to entertain.

Just because the majority of people will say that they watch television for entertainment, it would be wrong to think that they did not use television in other ways as well. In Chapter 2 Home and the Media, we saw that 71% of respondents say that the television is "in the room where we relax". This suggests that they do not really have a choice in the first place about whether to watch television or not. Secondly, what they watch may be chosen by someone else and their choice of programmes may also be affected by factors such as the times at which they are free to view. For instance, most students in the 15-17 age group viewed for an hour or two in the late evening after they had finished studying on week-days. Since the majority of students watch television as part of a family group, they may see programmes which otherwise they would not choose to

watch. A good example of this would be "The Late, Late, Show" which
is watched by 70% of students yet not mentioned by any student in
the context of favourite programmes.

Favourite Television Programmes

It is reasonable to suppose that if students are asked to name their
favourite television programmes they will nominate programmes that
they choose to watch themselves. Even here though, there are
factors other than personal choice at work. If, for instance,
"Miami Vice" becomes fashionable within the peer group, then it is
imperative for the teenager to watch it so that he/she will be able
to discuss it with friends. It is also important for the teenager
to watch music programmes such as "Top of the Pops" or "MT USA" so
as to keep up with current fashions and trends in pop music. For
those girls who subscribe to "the culture of femininity" as
McRobbie[13] has called it, it is also important to watch the soap
operas for role models in fashion, glamour and perhaps even personal
relationships.

Each student was asked to name his/her two favourite programmes.
There was quite a range and diversity in programme choice. All
respondents named two programmes. A choice had to be made between
categorising all the named programmes and simply listing the
favourite categories or listing the top ten favourite programmes.
The latter choice was made, because, in spite of the diversity of
programmes, certain programmes were clear favourites. For the
purposes of this study, it was also better to know the actual
programmes which students chose rather than just the categories.

The rank order of programme preferences were as follows:

1) Miami Vice,

2) Top of the Pops,

3) Dallas,

4) Hill Street Blues,

5) Sports Programmes,

6) Grange Hill,

7) Dynasty,

8) The Young Ones,

9) MT USA,

10) Coronation Street.

Number 5 "Sports Programmes" is actually a category rather than an individual programme but that is how most respondents labelled their choice rather than "Grandstand" or "Match of the Day".

Miami Vice is at number 1 because it was the favourite with all male sub-groups. Females students are split in their choice by age. All females in the 15-17 age group preferred Top of the Pops while the younger girls like Dallas best. Hill Street Blues was also very popular with 15-17 urban male students. Sports programmes were popular with most of the older males. Urban males in the 12-14 age group liked Grange Hill. Dynasty was popular with 15-17 year old females both urban and rural and the urban girls in this age group also like Coronation Street. The Young Ones was popular with males both urban and rural.

Being in a single or multi-channel area made little difference to

the choice of favourite programme. Students in single channel areas chose the same top five programmes as their peers in multi-channel areas.

Programme Preferences and Gender

Gender is an important variable in programme preferences as can be seen from the following table. Girls tended to prefer serials or music programmes while boys preferred crime dramas, sport and comedy.

Favourite Categories of Programmes

It is interesting to note the favourite categories of programmes from the top ten choice of programmes. Number 1 Miami Vice and Number 4 Hill Street Blues are both crime/detective series and were the most popular category, accounting for 25% of the vote. John Quinn[14] in his study found similarly that crime/detective series accounted for almost 22% of programme preferences.

TABLE 6.3: Programme Preference and Gender

15-17 Year Old Males

Urban		Rural	
1.	Miami Vice	1.	Miami Vice
2.	Hill Street Blues	2.	Top of the Pops
3.	Top of the Pops	3.	Sport

15-17 Year Old Females

Urban	Rural

1.	Top of the Pops	1.	Top of the Pops
2.	Miami Vice	2.	Dallas
3.	Dallas	3.	Miami Vice

12-14 Year Old Males

Urban		Rural	
1.	Miami Vice	1.	Miami Vice
2.	Sport	2.	Sport
3.	Grange Hill	3.	Top of the Pops

12-14 Year Old Females

Urban		Rural	
1.	Dallas	1.	Top of the Pops
2.	Miami Vice	2.	Dallas
3.	Top of the Pops	3.	Miami Vice

Top of the Pops number 2 and MT USA number 9 are both music programmes aimed specifically at teenagers and between them account for 17% of the vote. In John Quinn's study, the Music/variety category accounts for only 4% of the total vote. Obviously, teenagers are more interested in pop music and pop culture than children under 12 so it is not surprising the percentage in my survey should be much greater.

Dallas number 3, Dynasty number 7 and number 10 Coronation Street are all soap operas and between them account for 16% of the vote. In John Quinn's[15] study soap operas or serial dramas accounted for 11.5% of the total vote.

Sports programmes number 5 accounted for only 4% of the vote. This is marginally higher than John Quinn's[16] figure of 3.4%.

Grange Hill, a serial for children and teenagers set in a school in London accounts for 4% of the vote and The Young Ones, the only comedy in the top ten favourite programmes at number 8 represents 3% of the total vote.

Altogether, the top ten programmes represent 69% of the total vote. The other 31% was spread over a wide variety of programmes from wild life to films. However, in spite of the diversity of programmes mentioned, the unanimity of young people on their favourite programmes is quite striking.

Comment

There are a number of observations to be made on the choices of favourite programmes.

1) None of these programmes, with the exception of sports programmes, is home produced. Yet the students surveyed obviously felt a need for home produced programmes. Answering open-ended questions on the soaps and serials, many of them said that the reason that they liked Glenroe was because it is an Irish programme and reflects Irish life-styles and values. Glenroe, however, reflects the rural Irish life-style and values, leaving urban people uncatered for. This may very well explain the popularity of Coronation Street and more recently, of Eastenders, which was only just beginning when

this survey was conducted. Since Tolka Row, no major Irish drama or serial on RTE has reflected urban culture. "Inside" certainly reflected a section of urban culture but it could hardly be seen as representative.

2. The Young Ones, which appealed most to 15-17 year old males, could be described as an anti-establishment, zany type of comedy. The world it portrays is disorderly, iconoclastic and highly irreverent. In my experience , many adults dislike it and this is particularly true of teachers. This may be because a comedy programme of this kind may seem to threaten and certainly pokes fun at an orderly predictable world. This also may be the very reason for it's popularity among young males. It may serve as a vicarious, safe form of rebellion against society without putting the viewer in any danger of losing his place in that society.

3. Grange Hill may have the same kind of appeal for younger males. The behaviour of the students and sometimes of the teachers in this series is often much more extreme than one is likely to encounter in most Irish schools. Grange Hill may be offering an outlet for anti-school feelings which could not be vented safely in the real school situation.

4. Of the ten programmes, only three, Grange Hill, Top of the Pops and MT USA are programmes made specifically for young people. With the exception of sports programmes, the others are adult programmes, most of which are shown after nine

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o'clock in the evening. It is clear then, that young people watch more television which is aimed at an adult or general audience than television which is targeted specifically at young people.

Soaps and Serials
Students were asked to indicate from a list of soaps and serials which they watch or have watched regularly. Dallas was watched regularly by 70% of students and Glenroe by 69%. Coronation Street came next with 57% and Dynasty with 55%. Falcon Crest was next with 45% followed by Emmerdale Farm with 23%. Brookside was watched regularly by 21% and Crossroads by 14%.

Although Glenroe was watched regularly by 69% it did not figure in the top ten favourite programmes. This suggests that Glenroe and other programmes such as Falcon Crest are watched simply because some adult in the house turns it on and the teenager has no other choice but to watch it. Or it could be that they watch it because it is home-produced and therefore they relate to it. But because home-produced programmes are not fashionable among the peer group they do not name it as a favourite.

Why Students like the Soaps and Serials
The students were asked to say what it is about the soaps and serials that they like, if they liked them. This question was answered by 73% of the respondents which suggests that that percentage like serials. The most popular reason given for liking them was that they are "Realistic" and this answer was given by 19%

of students. Many who gave this answer also named Glenroe and Coronation Street as being realistic. The serials were found to be interesting by 13% and some of these respondents qualified their answer by saying that the serials dealt with issues of everyday life. Another 13% found the serials to be "escapist" and generally named Dallas, Dynasty and Falcon Crest in this category. Many of them said that watching escapist serials helped them to forget their everyday worries. "Exciting" was the verdict of 11% who enjoyed the suspense of waiting to see what will happen next week. "Funny" was the answer given by 9% and it usually referred to Glenroe or Coronation Street. "Something to look forward to" was the response of 5% and only 3% gave the clothes and glamour of Dallas and Dynasty as their reason for enjoying the serials. These answers are very similar to those given to Barbara O'Connor[17] by adult women in a study of their use of television.

Serials Viewed and Age of Respondents

Age was not found to be a significant factor in the watching of serials. The younger age group seemed to have a slightly higher percentage who viewed series regularly - this was more noticeable in the less popular serials such as Falcon Crest or Emmerdale Farm. This slight difference is probably due to the pressures of school work and an increased social life outside the home of 15-17 year olds.

There was little difference between the two age groups when it came to the most popular serials like Glenroe and Dallas, which suggests that the older age group make time to see these.

Reasons given for liking the serials were similar except that the older age group was more likely to say that they liked the serials because they were escapist.

Serials Viewed and Gender of Respondents

Gender was found to be a significant factor in the viewing patterns of all serials in the 15-17 age group except Glenroe. In the younger age group, the exceptions were Glenroe and Dallas.

For clues as to why Dallas and Glenroe seem to evade the gender barriers which are usually associated with the viewing of serials, we must look at the reasons which the students give for liking serials. Most students said that they liked Glenroe because it was realistic but many males students said that they liked it because it was funny. When asked in another question about favourite characters in the serials, Miley and Dinny came out on top, again because of their humour. Humour, at first glance, is hardly a quality that could be applied to Dallas. But funny is a term that many students applied to J.R. They seem to find amusement in his manipulative ways. They often apply the term "Mischievous" to J.R. and he is the second most popular character in the serials.

Serials Viewed and Location

Location was not found to be a significant factor. Rural students tended to view the two rural serials, Glenroe and Emmerdale Farm slightly more than urban students. However, the converse is not true and rural students viewed the urban serials, Coronation Street and Brookside as much as urban students. Heaviest viewers of the

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serials were rural working class girls in the 15-17 age group, who may very well be using the serials to learn about urban social mores and manners.

Viewing of Serials and Social Class

Class is not a significant factor among females as far as viewing soaps is concerned.

Lightest viewers of serials are 15-17 year old middle class boys. As we have already seen, middle class boys are under considerable pressure to succeed in school and spend the least time of any group looking at television they are also likely to subscribe to the type of intellectual snobbery which David Morley[18] found in his interviews with adult men, who found it difficult to admit to watching anything that wasn't of intellectual benefit.

Realism and Escapism

Respondents themselves used the terms escapist or realistic or similar terms when discussing the reasons they enjoyed the serials. Obviously, the majority differentiate quite clearly between the two types of serials and their use of them because 79% thought that the characters in Glenroe were realistic while only 24% thought that the characters in Dallas were realistic.

Favourite Characters in the Serials

When asked for their favourite characters in the named serials, 22% chose Miley from Glenroe, 16% chose J.R. from Dallas, 10% chose Dinny also from Glenroe, 6% chose Hilda Ogden from Coronation

Street, 5% chose Bobby from Dallas, 4% chose Pam also from Dallas and 4% chose Alexis from Dynasty. That accounts for 67% of the respondents. Another 10% chose various other characters. Altogether 77% of students answered this question.

"Humorous" was the reason given for their choice of favourite character from the serials by 26% of respondents. Presumably, this applied to Miley, Dinny and Hilda Ogden. "I like the way he/she creates mischief" or words to that effect was the reason given by 14%. This seems to apply to J.R. and Alexis. "Good looking" was the reason given by 12% and applies to Bobby, Pam and Alexis. "He/she acts the part well" was the reason given by 10%.

Comment

Four of the top five places in the list of favourite characters were taken by male characters. Of the 67% who voted for the top seven characters, 53% voted for a male and 14% for a female. The students surveyed were 51% female and 49% male. A feature of soaps and serials is that they feature as many if not more female characters than male, unlike the average television programme where the breakdown is more likely to be one woman to every three men. The imbalance in the voting is not due to a lack of female characters. It could be that girls do not vote for female characters because they do not like the role assigned to them. In most soaps and serials the female characters are important only through their relationship to the male characters and seem to live their lives through men. In the odd case where they have the power and do the manipulating, such as Alexis or Angela Channing, they are older

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women and young girls are less likely to relate to them.

If we relate the reasons given for liking characters to the voting pattern, it can be seen that the most important quality "humour" is usually assigned to male characters in serials. The "mischief-maker" too is usually a male, although Alexis is clearly an exception to this.

Programmes for Young People

The majority of students 82% think that teenagers need their own programmes. Yet of the ten favourite programmes only three could be called "Young Peoples' Programmes". It would seem that young people like programmes which are for general consumption just as much as and sometimes more than, those specifically targeted at their own age group.

It is interesting to compare viewing patterns for programmes aimed at young people with viewing patterns of programmes aimed at a family or adult audience. The students were asked which of the following programmes they watch or have watched regularly. The following are the percentages who regularly watch these programmes.

Top of the Pops - 88%

MT USA - 85%

Fame - 54%

Grange Hill - 53%

Top Club - 44%

Swalk - 7%.

They were then asked which of three family or adult programmes they watched regularly. The percentages were as follows:

The Late, Late, Show - 70%
Murphy's Micro Quiz-M - 65%
The Women's programme - 15%

The Late, Late, Show had almost as many of the students viewing it as the two music programmes and Murphy's Quiz-M had a higher percentage of viewers than Grange Hill which was one of the top ten favourite programmes. Only The Women's programme had a low percentage of students who viewed it. This may be because much of the content of the programme could be perceived as purely of interest to women. The content might also be thought to be unsuitable for family viewing. The equivalent programme on the radio used to be broadcast at 2 pm every day, a time when most of its listeners were women working in the home. Yet the programme frequently received complaints when it raised delicate problems of sexuality. It would appear that an Irish audience can accept television programmes which depict women being assaulted or raped but cannot deal with serious discussions about infertility or women's sexual fulfilment, in the context of family viewing.

It is important to realise that what young people say are their favourite programmes on television and what they actually view, are not quite the same thing. As we saw in Chapter 2, Home and the Media, most young people look at television with the family. So what they view is affected by many factors such as the time they

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have free for viewing, the taste of other family members as well as their personal choice.

Most of the top ten favourite programmes are either programmes which are enjoyed just as much by other members of the family such as Miami Vice or Dallas or else are on at a time when the rest of the family is unlikely to be viewing such as Grange Hill.

News and Current Affairs

Viewing in the context of the family probably also accounts for the high percentage (83%) who watch the news regularly. Today, Tonight is watched regularly by 49%.

Girls were slightly more likely than boys to watch News and Current Affairs programmes. This contradicts David Morley's[19] findings on families in London. He found that "masculinity was primarily identified with a strong preference for factual programmes (news, current affairs and documentaries) and femininity identified with a preference for fictional programmes". Of course, Morley is talking about programme preferences and earlier in this chapter it was noted that indeed, gender is a strong variable in programme choice, although both genders showed a preference for fiction.

The fact that girls are more likely to watch news and current affairs programmes may be explained by the following:

1)   Girls tend to mature faster than boys at least up to the age of 17. Therefore, they may become more interested in what is

going on in the world before the males in their peer group.

2)   They possible have no say in what is viewed at prime time
       viewing, therefore if their parents watch news and current
       affairs, so do they.

3)   Girls usually spend more time at home than boys of the same
       age, therefore they have more opportunity to see news
       programmes.

4)   Since girls are less likely to read newspapers then boys it
       may be that girls are using television as their primary source
       of news and current affairs.

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TABLE 6.1: Hours spent per day looking at Television by 12-14 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL %
WEEK-DAYS									
1 or less	23	13	33	10	43	17	24	21	24
2	37	17	43	26	30	27	29	40	32
3	23	18	13	21	17	13	27	21	18
4 or more	18	52	10	44	10	43	20	21	26
Saturday or Sunday									
1 or less	6	7	3	13	3	9	9	7	10
2	18	8	17	10	20	15	16	21	16
3	31	15	30	18	43	21	39	24	24
4 or more	45	70	50	56	33	55	35	48	50

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TABLE 6.2: Hours spent per day looking at television by 15-17 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL %
Weekdays:									
1 or less	34	20	12	8	36	19	46	30	24
2	31	35	42	31	38	28	30	51	32
3	12	15	21	30	20	40	7	9	18
4 or more	22	30	24	31	7	19	17	10	26
Saturdays and Sunday									
1 or less	10	3	15	11	14	9	20	13	10
2	15	20	18	11	21	21	12	12	16
3	21	24	30	22	32	19	27	28	24
4 or more	54	53	36	56	32	51	41	48	50

CHAPTER 7

Violence on Television

One of the difficulties of discussing violence on television, as the various studies on the topic have made clear, is in defining what we mean by that term. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines violence as "violent conduct or treatment, outrage, injury" or "the unlawful exercise of physical force, intimidation by exhibition of this". If we accept the first definition, then violence on television would include many popular sports such as boxing or rugby, cartoons, even documentaries and news programmes.

The second definition seems more acceptable, since, as Denis McQuail[1] has pointed out many societies admire violence, aggression and competition as long as they are used in the "correct" way. Only the uncontrolled and non-institutionalised forms of violence are disapproved of by the majority. Maybe that is why much television violence happens within the confines of crime/detective drama. The detective or policeman is per se within the letter of the law and licensed by an institution which is allowed, even encouraged, to use violence.

Crime drama has always been a popular form of entertainment in books, films and television but it was not always as overtly violent as it is now. Those of us who recall the genre on BBC in the 60's or on RTE in its infancy will remember programmes such as Dixon of Dock Green or Ironside. These programmes were cosy, moralistic, slow-moving, lacking in violence and featured middle-aged or old men

as heroes. They were based on a simple narrative line of crime, chase and arrest or crime, arrest and trial. These programmes were full of certainties and one knew that by the end of the episode, order would be restored to a briefly disordered world.

Alan Clarke[2] has documented the profound change which took place in the presentation of crime in American television in the late 60's. The development was due to the introduction of three new elements into crime drama. These were violence, action sequences and the increasingly prominent role accorded to music in the development of the narrative, especially to create a sense of urgency. Clarke links the introduction of overt violence to crime drama with the "spaghetti westerns" which made violence a pre-requisite for realism. He illustrates the contrast by comparing the gangster movies of the 1930's with the gory Bonnie and Clyde of 1967.

Up to this "clean violence" had existed in movies and television. Now, the consequences of violence were shown and the good were shown to suffer by it as well as the bad. The situation of the policeman has changed. No longer was he the friendly elderly copper to whom one turned in difficulty but a beleaguered, fast-moving, hard-hitting young man who fought a rising tide of crime and lawlessness, a Robin Hood who sometimes bent the law a little to help the weak. This change in the crime dramas on television simply reflected what was happening in society where crime was becoming increasingly organised and violent. So, the crime dramas took their themes from the drug world or organised crime rather than the everyday concerns of George Dixon or the marital infidelities or clinical murders of

Ironside.   This type of crime drama is probably epitomised by

"Starsky and Hutch" a series considered so violent by RTE that they

refused to buy it.

Once again in the 1980's there has been a change in the crime drama.

There is almost as much violence in them as ever, but what has

changed in the presentation of the central characters. Even the

chaotic disordered world of Hill St Blues is a warmer, friendlier

place than ever Starsky and Hutch frequented. The re-introduction

of women, absent from the genre during the 70's, allows for a more

gentle, caring attitude. Hill St features two such women in strong

roles. The very popular Cagney and Lacey, stars two women in a

series that seems to combine the best features of the crime dramas

of the 60's and 70's. Mary Beth Lacey is the cop with a social

conscience, a caring individual with a home and family, in short, a

latter day George Dixon. Christine Cagney is loud-mouthed,

streetwise and sharp-witted and would be at home on the set of

Starsky and Hutch.   Even Sonny Crockett in Miami Vice is seen to

have a social conscience. But this new softening of the

crime/drama, the fore-fronting of women characters and the caring

attitudes does not lessen the concern that people feel about the

violence in these programmes.   Many people feel that by making

these dramas more human and more realistic the producers have simply

made the violence more frightening and traumatic for the average

person. Others feel that these programmes glamorise violence and

thereby encourage it in our society. Yet others feel that these

programmes are representative of aspects of our society, aspects

with which we may feel uncomfortable but which we should know about.

There is no doubt about the popularity of crime drama on television among adults as well as teenagers. Two, Miami Vice and Hill St Blues featured in the ten favourite programmes. To find out the extent of their popularity and which crime dramas students favoured they were given a list of nine crime dramas and asked to indicate which of them they watched regularly.

Percentages of Students who Watch Crime Dramas Regularly

Miami Vice 74%

Remington Steel 64%

Hill St Blues 63%

Hardcastle and McCormick 62%

A Team 61%

T J Hooker 45%

Hawaiian Heat 45%

Starsky and Hutch 39%

Bergerac 34%

Miami Vice was the most watched crime/detective programme. It was the almost unanimous favourite with all students in the older age group except for rural middle class females who placed it second. Perhaps because of the late hour at which it is shown, Miami Vice is less popular with the younger age group, although they too consistently placed it in the first four places.

Remington Steel was popular with girls in both age groups, who, consistently placed it in the top three most watched crime/detective programmes.

Hill St Blues was popular with all males in the older age group and also with urban females in that age group. Urban males in the 12-14 age group also liked it.

Hardcastle and McCormick was popular with all males.

The A Team, although not strictly speaking a crime/detective drama was included in the list because it shares many of the characteristics previously discussed of the crime drama. It was popular with girls in the 12-14 year old age group who, also favoured T J Hooker.

Hawaiian Heat and Starsky and Hutch are more popular with males than with females.

Bergerac was the least watched crime drama with almost every group and was consistently placed in eighth or ninth place.

Crime/Detective Drama and Gender

Gender is an important variable in the audience of this genre. The one programme of the nine listed which seems to appeal to both genders is Miami Vice. Perhaps this is because it combines elements of escapist fantasy and realism. The programme is set in an exotic location - Miami. The two protagonists, Crockett and Tibbs are young, handsome, trendily dressed and drive expensive, fast cars. Crockett does not "use" women. From time to time he has a "meaningful" relationship but the woman is usually killed or has to go away for some reason. So he has the appeal of an attractive man

who treats women well but is available because he is unlucky in love. All of these romance factors will appeal to the females.

For the males there is the excitement of frequent car chases, violent encounters and beautiful women. The music, which is an integral part of the programme, appeals to both genders.

This researcher would argue that the romantic, escapist fantasy appeal of crime/detective dramas is very important. Bergerac, arguably the most realistic of the genre on television, is also the least watched of the listed nine programmes. This programme is set on the island of Jersey and features a copy who is a recovered alcoholic. It lacks the excitement of Miami Vice and also lacks much of the violence.

On the whole, girls tend to watch the programmes which have the least overt violence such as Remington Steel and T J Hooker. Both these programmes also feature women in strong roles. Girls also favour programmes which have a strong element of escapist fantasy such as Miami Vice or the A Team.

Boys, on the other hand, seem to favour programmes with more violence in them such as Hill St Blues or Hardcastle and McCormick. However, two fairly violent programmes, Starsky and Hutch and Hawaiian Heat are not very popular with the boys. Perhaps what is lacking from the two last named is the strong element of realism which permeates Hill St Blues and, to a lesser extent, Hardcastle and McCormick.

Students' Attitudes to Violence on Television

In view of the ongoing debate about the amount of violence on television and its effect on young people, it is interesting to note the young people's own attitude to violence. Students were asked how they felt about the violence in the nine named programmes. They had a choice of responses. "Don't mind it" was chosen by 47%, 18% said "It's not real", 6% said "Sometimes it upsets me", and 26% said "I like it".

Attitudes to violence on television and gender

Boys are far more likely to say that they like the violence in the crime/detective dramas. The boys in the 12-14 age group had 37% to 51% who said that they liked the violence. In the older age group there is still 33% to 42% who say this. Within the younger age group of girls 7% to 22% say they like the violence while in the older age group of girls only 1% to 17% say this.

Girls were more likely to say that they were upset by the violence. Of the younger group of girls, 10% to 24% and of the older age group 12% to 23% said that the violence in these programmes upsets them.

The violence upsets 2% to 7% of the 12-14 year old boys. No-one admits to being upset by the violence in the older age group of boys except for 4% of the urban middle class boys.

Girls were more likely to say that the violence is not real since 13% to 35% of them say so while 10% to 17% of the boys said the same.

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Possible reasons for the Differing Gender Attitudes to Violence

1) In our society, girls are conditioned to be more passive and
    boys to be more aggressive.

2) On television, violent characters are usually male, therefore,
    boys will identify with them.

3) Victims of violence are very often young females and girls may
    identify with them and feel upset by the violence.

4) The ability to watch extreme violence on video has become a
    test of virility among teenage boys as can be seen from the
    chapter on Cinema and Video. Watching violence on television
    may serve the same purpose. This seems likely, since virtually
    none of the boys in the older age group is willing to admit to
    being upset by violence on television.

Is There Cause for Concern?

A number of points emerge from my study which are disquieting.

1) A sizeable minority of girls (up to 24%) said that they were
    upset by the violence on television.   Although they are
    mostly in the age group who are the lightest users of
    television, it is clear from the chapter on video, that they
    are among the heaviest users of video. Therefore, they must
    be exposed to a lot of violence between the two media. This
    surely must be damaging in some way.

2) The majority of boys do not admit to being upset by the

violence on television. There seems to be a polarisation of the genders on this issue. This cannot be good for communications or relationships between the sexes.

3)   We have seen that more channels and more choice does not lead to viewing a wider variety of programmes. On the contrary, the viewer can select one type of programme and be able to view his preference on at least one channel most of the time. Since he can with video, also time-shift his favourite programmes and hire video films of the same type, he could confine his viewing to one type of programme only. If that one type of programme is violent, research suggests that this type of reinforcement may be damaging.

4)   The public service tradition of broadcasting in Ireland as in Britain seems to have protected us to some extent from the excesses of violence on American television. With satellite television already available in most of Ireland and the promise of many more stations to come, whatever protection public service broadcasting gave is being quickly eroded. Soon it will be impossible for any government to control what is being beamed from satellites in the sky.

5)   Since violence seems to be universally popular, it seems likely that commercial stations will give the public more of what it seems to want, ie more violence. This is likely to have some effect on society, even if it only convinces people that there is more violence in real life than is actually the

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case.

However, it must be remembered that violence is not new in our society. It has always been part of it. Using violent, events for entertainment is not new either. Many of the great poets, writers and dramatists down through the ages have made violence an integral part of their work, as it is an integral part of life. The description of the birth of Sin in Paradise Lost is violent and graphic. Irish and Greek mythology glorify war and are often very blood-thirsty. Some of Grimm's Fairy Tales are horrific. A recent production of Tom Murphy's "A Whistle in the Dark" was chilling in its portrayal of violence in an Irish emigrant family.

What is new about violence on television, or indeed on video, is the fact that it invades our homes, often unexpectedly and uninvited. Another thing which is new is the amount of time it is possible to spend looking at scenes of violence, much more time than it would be possible to view the same scenes in the theatre or cinema, or even to read about them in a book. This availability of violence around the clock may very well bring about an obsession with violence in some people. It must be said that the majority of young people seem to view quite a variety of programmes on television even if violent programmes are very popular. From the research it is clear that there is little evidence to suggest that violence on television is harmful to the majority of people. On the other hand, there is no evidence to suggest that violence on television has no effect. The research would seem to suggest that it has some effect, even if only that of re-enforcing certain attitudes, ie that of the male as

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aggressor or the female as victim or prey.

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CHAPTER 8

Cinema and Video

Since no clear figures are available for cinema attendance in
Ireland, it is difficult to establish changes in cinema-going habits
since the advent of television. Sean Day-Lewis[1] sees 1988,
designated as European Year of Cinema and Television, as a watershed
for the film industry in Britain. He shows that cinema attendance
in Britain grew from 52.7 million in 1984 to 78.4 million in 1988.
Whereas up to 1984, cinema attendances were declining, from that year
on they are certainly increasing. There are a number of factors
which encouraged the temporary decline of cinema going.

1)   Television had the advantage of appearing to give the
      individual more control over the time and place of viewing
      even though Williams'[2] idea of "television flow" contradicts
      this.

2)   It was less expensive for a family to rent or buy on hire
      purchase a television set, than to go to the cinema.

3)   The virtual monopoly of two companies, Cannon and Odeon, who
      own most of the cinemas throughout Britain and Ireland means
      that there is sometimes little choice in cinemas, with many
      cinemas showing the same film.

4)   Choice was also limited by the fact that a successful film
      might run for months. A government draft order, under the
      Fair Trading Act, restricted the practice of exclusive film

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runs to four weeks from March 1988.

5)   The growth of television diverted money and talent from the
       film industry,to the detriment of local film making.

The consequences of this are that the teenager of today grew up
without a tradition of cinema going.   The data in the survey,
conducted in the spring of 1985, before the upswing in cinema
attendance documented in Britain, shows that, at the time, cinema
was not important in the lives of young people.

Patterns of Cinema Visits

From Table 8.1 and 8.2 it can be seen that going to the cinema had
become a very infrequent occurrence for young people, at the time of
this survey.   Only 3% of respondents reported visiting a cinema once
a week and 12% once a month.   An occasional visit was the norm for
74% while 11% said that they never visit the cinema.   These findings
are fairly consistent across the various sub-groups.

It would seem that the cinema is slightly more popular in rural
areas, particularly with male students.   Rural working class males
in both age groups reported 10-11% of them going to the cinema once
a week when the average weekly attendance was 3%.   Rural middle
class males of both age groups seem also more likely to go to the
cinema since 20-27% of them said that they go once a month.   The
relative popularity of cinema with rural males may possibly be
accounted for by the following:

1)   Leisure time pursuits attractive to teenagers such as discos, disco-bars or snooker halls may be limited in rural areas.

2)   Ownership of videos is lower in rural areas as chapter 2 shows, and access to video shops more difficult.

3)   These sub-groups show a preference for sexually explicit and violent videos. They may also be using cinema in order to see more of this type of programme than they would see on television, which is a family based medium.

Overall, cinema seems to have lost its attraction for young people and appears to have been replaced at least in urban areas by video. This trend would seem to echo that reported in Britain by the Book Marketing Council[3] who say that 20% of the 11-15 age group have abandoned the cinema and that two out of three of those who do visit go fewer than four time a year. This trend may very well have changed since 1985 but there is no statistical data available to establish this.

Video

Video in its turn has displaced television as a source of entertainment for many people. Like television it appears to give the viewer control over time and place of viewing. It has the added benefit of "time-shifting" so that it is possible to record programmes off air and view them when it suits the individual. The control of content is far greater too, since videos,though now censored, offers a greater choice of violent and sexually explicit

films.

So video can be seen as simply a logical step further along the continuum of choice and control which began with television.

The Special Attraction of Video for Young People

1) The most obvious attraction is that it is cheap and easily available. The average cost of hiring a video cassette in Dublin at the time of writing is £1. Since video viewing is usually done by groups, as we shall see, the cost may be shared. Compared with this, going to the cinema is expensive and would probably also involve bus fares. Even cut-prices in cinemas are not usually available when young people would normally go out eg Saturday night. Other forms of entertainment favoured by young people such as discos or snooker clubs are also relatively expensive and may not be easily accessible. Centres of large urban populations such as Tallaght or Coolock have no local cinema or disco.

2) Video viewing provides a focus for the peer group. It only needs one set of parents to be absent for a group of friends to view undisturbed and, more importantly, uncontrolled by parents or anyone else.

3) As Willis[4] has shown, most media are "policed" by the dominant culture. This is especially true in Ireland. A new medium can escape the notice of the dominant cultural group for a while. So far, video has been free of the cultural and

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religious controls imposed on the existing media. But already there are moves to control the video market. In the meantime, young people are attracted to the only medium that is still relatively free of adult control.

4) Video viewing serves as a form of machismo or test of manliness for male adolescents. Roe and Salomonsson[5] have shown that this aspect plays an important role in explaining why some boys watch the extremely violent videos even though they may not really like them. It is the same phenomenon as makes teenage boys prove their manhood by drinking too much or riding a motorbike in a death-defying way.

5) Viewing undesirable videos can be a way of defying the establishment. It is likely to be used in this way by those who are labelled failures by the school. Roe[6] found a strong tendency for low achievers to use video more than high achievers. He also found violence, war films and horror films were all clearly associated with low achievement. Video cannot be blamed for causing low achievement, however, because today teenage low achievers were already labelled as such before video was common in Ireland. But it would seem that video appeals to and is used more by low achievers.

Video Ownership

Video viewing appears not only to have replaced the cinema in the lives of young people but looks like displacing ordinary television viewing as well. All over the world sales of video cassette

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recorders, commonly called VCR's, are booming. Time Magazine[7]
reported that by the end of 1984, the VCR population in the USA
would reach nearly 17 million, one for every five homes with a
television set. Britain and Sweden have the highest ownership for
Europe at about 33%, according to an article in the Irish Times on
17 June 1986.[8] In the same article Tony Fahy of RTE is reported as
saying that "ownership of VCR's in Ireland is 12% and will be 20-25%
by the end of the decade."

According to my survey 24% of the respondents have a VCR in their
homes. British figures for VCR ownership show similar discrepancies
and for similar reasons. In "Video Violence and Children"[9] the
Video Violence Study which involved both children and parents showed
40.9% of the homes had a VCR. Yet the International Institute of
Communications found 30.1% of homes in Britain had VCR's. It was
concluded by the writers that families with children are more likely
to have videos. That would also explain the discrepancy between my
figures and those of Tony Fahy of RTE. Keith Roe[10] also found that
families with children and younger households in Sweden were most
likely to possess a video.

Where Ownership of Videos is Highest
Males consistently reported higher ownership of videos than females.
Highest reported ownership of videos at 33% was reported by 15-17
year old urban middle class males. Close behind at 32% was 12-14
year old urban working class males. On the whole ownership of
videos was much higher in urban areas. The Video Violence[11] study
in Britain reported similar findings. They found that ownership of

VCR's was highest in middle class urban areas and almost as high in
inner city working class areas.

Where Ownership of Videos is Lowest

Least likely to own videos are rural middle class students with the
notable exception of 12-14 year old rural middle class males who
report 30% ownership. This exception could be explained by the fact
that one middle class boys' school surveyed was very near to the
Border with Northern Ireland and consequently videos are to be had
quite cheaply there. It seems likely that ownership of electronic
equipment in general would be higher in an area where they are more
cheaply available.

It is not surprising that it is the rural middle class student who
report the lowest ownership of videos. This section of our society
tends to be the most conservative as can be seen by the voting
patterns of the two recent referendii.[12] As can be seen from the
relevant chapters on radio and television, rural middle class
students also show a greater preference for RTE radio and
television. Urban students on the other hand, show an alienation
from RTE to a great extent. They are also probably more
sophisticated in their use of television insofar as multi-channel
choice has been available to them for some years now. John Quinn[13]
in his study of children's viewing habits found that children in
single channel areas view more than those in multi-channel areas.
The latter, with more choice, were more selective in their viewing.
It would seem that as television viewers became more sophisticated,
they wished to exercise more control over time and content. Video

viewing gives the optimum amount of control over individual viewing.

Access to Video Cassette Recorders

Although only 24% of all respondents have a video in their home, 56% say that they watch video in other people's homes. The Video Violence Study in Britain[14] found that 80% of its respondents watched video in other homes. Since there is a higher ownership of videos in Britain at 33% and video has been established there for a longer period one would expect a higher percentage of young people in Britain to view video in other homes. There are also social differences. More working mothers, one-parent families and smaller families would mean that the home is more likely to be free of adults more frequently.

The age group 15-17 of both genders are particularly prone to watch in other homes and up to 69% of them report doing so. Once again, the exceptions are the rural middle class students of both genders of whom only 45-46% report viewing in other homes.

These findings also emphasise the major difference between television viewing and video viewing. Television is viewed with the family by 84% of respondents. However, video viewing is obviously a peer group activity. Keith Roe[15] showed that in Sweden among 15 year olds only 2% reported watching video with their parents while 77% reported watching with friends. He also found that viewing is usually done when parents are not present.

What Young People Watch on Video

Much of the research done on young people and video has concentrated on finding out whether they had seen the so-called "Video Nasties". It is very tempting in a questionnaire to ask respondents whether they have seen particular videos. But this researcher did not because it is all too easy to say that you have seen something when it is named. Also many of the horror videos have similar sounding names using Cannibal or Zombie for instance. Some of these are quite horrifying and others fairly innocuous. The Parliamentary Group enquiring in Video Violence was criticised for naming videos and asking respondents to rate those which they had seen.[16] So the researcher contented herself with asking two questions:

"Name the last two videos you saw" and

"Name the best two videos you saw".

The named videos were then grouped into the following categories:

1)   Children's films such as "Annie",

2)   Adult Comedy (comedies containing a large amount of sex),

3)   Comedy,

4)   Western,

5)   Horror,

6)   Music, (musical films and music videos made by pop stars),

7)   Adult Sex (such as Emmanuelle),

8)   General, ie films on general release in the Irish cinema not falling into the above categories,

9)   War,

10)   Adult General, ie films with an 18's certificate not falling into the above categories.

What 15-17 year olds Watch on Video

Urban males from 15-17 of both social classes named Horror Films in first place for both their last seen and best seen videos. Their rural counterparts on the other hand favoured Adult Sex videos as well as General and Horror.

Urban females from 15-17 favoured General and Adult Comedy before Horror. Their rural counterparts also favoured General except for the working class girls who placed Horror first in the best seen videos. Both groups of rural girls also mentioned Adult Sex videos among their favourites.

The apparently more repressive attitude to sex in rural areas obviously makes adult sex movies attractive whereas urban students show little interest in this type of video and seem to prefer to get their kicks out of Horror videos.

What 12-14 year olds Watch on Video

Female rural students in this age group show a preference for General, Children's and Music videos before Horror with the working class girls evidencing a slightly stronger interest in Horror. The urban girls also showed a strong interest in these categories but the working class urban girls showed a far stronger interest in Horror videos than the other three groups. The male urban students in this group, especially the working class, showed a strong preference for Horror while their rural counterparts seemed more interested in General and Comedy although there was some interest also in Horror.

It would be easy to get carried away by the number of times the Horror category appears in the lists of preferences. However, it must be remembered that "Horror" includes a wide range of films ranging from the downright silly to the truly horrific. It should also be noted the number of times films on general release feature on the lists - they are obviously the most popular with 12-14 year olds. It should also be remembered that there may be a tendency to name films in the "Horror" category out of a sense of bravado, especially among male students. For the same reason, Adult Sex Movies may be named. On balance, it would appear that quite a wide variety of films on video are viewed by young people. Why then the moral panic about video and young people and is there cause for concern? These questions will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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TABLE 8.1:   The Frequency of Attendance at the Cinema of 12-14 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL %
Once a week	2	2	3	10	0	5	0	0	3
Occasion- ally	80	75	70	64	80	68	51	79	74
Once a month	10	13	20	13	7	15	14	7	13
Never	7	8	7	13	13	11	10	14	10
Total %	99	98	100	100	100	99	100	100	100
Number of students in group	71	60	30	39	30	75	51	29	385
Missing cases	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3

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TABLE 8.2: The Frequency of Attendance at the Cinema of 15-17 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL %
Once a week	1	0	9	11	2	0	7	2	3
Occasion-ally	70	76	58	67	86	74	81	79	75
Once a month	15	12	27	11	5	12	5	8	11
Never	14	12	6	11	7	14	7	11	11
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of Students in Group	67	66	33	36	56	57	56	53	424
Missing Cases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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TABLE 8.3: Access to Video of 12-14 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL %
Own a Video	30	32	30	33	27	25	18	17	26.5
Watch in other homes	61	55	23	33	37	51	53	38	44.0

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TABLE 8.4:   Access to Video of 15-17 year olds.

| | MALES % | | | | FEMALES % | | | | |
| | URBAN | | RURAL | | URBAN | | RURAL | | |
	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	WORKING CLASS	TOTAL %
Own a Video	33	29	18	25	30	21	13	15	23%
Watch in other homes	61	59	45	69	61	56	46	64	59%

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TABLE 8.5:   What 15-17 year olds Watch on Video:

	MALES %				FEMALES %			
	URBAN		RURAL		URBAN		RURAL	
	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS
TWO LAST SEEN	1)Horror	1)Horror	1)Ad.Sex	1)Ad.Sex	1)General	1)Horror	1)General	1)General
	2)Horror	2)Horror	2)General	2)Horror	2)General	2)General	2)General	2)Horror
TWO BEST SEEN	1)Horror	1)Horror	1)Ad.Comedy	1)Horror	1)Ad.Com	1)General	1)General	1)Horror
	2)Horror	2)Horror	2)Ad.Sex	2)Ad.Sex	2)General	2)General	2)Ad.Sex	2)Horror

TABLE 8.6:   What 12-14 year olds Watch on Video.

	MALES %				FEMALES %			
	URBAN		RURAL		URBAN		RURAL	
	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS:	WORKING CLASS
TWO LAST SEEN	1)General	1)Horror	1)General	1)Horror	1)Music	1)General	1)General	1)General
	2)Horror	2)Horror	2)General	2)General	2)Horror	2)Horror	2)General	2)General
TWO BEST SEEN	1)General	1)Horror	1)Comedy	1)Horror	1)Music	1)Horror	1)Music	1)General
	2)Horror	2)Horror	2)General	2)General	2)General	2)Children's	2)General	2)General

CHAPTER 9

The Moral Panic about Video

A moral panic happens when society or a section of society sees its culture and its future threatened by an apparent decline in moral values. This decline is usually associated with the rising generation and the most recent popular form of entertainment. The tendency for a new moral panic to erupt with the advent of a new form of entertainment was discussed in the chapter on Television. Moral panics are often based on unscientific assumptions and couched in prophetic or apocalyptic language. An excellent example of a moral panic based on unreliable evidence is that which followed the issuing of "Video Violence and Children" in November 1983 in Britain,[1] as discussed in Chapter 8.

Concern about the growing availability of videos to young people and the possible damage caused by them to young minds among conservative elements in English society, including some church groups, led to the setting up of the Parliamentary Group Video enquiry in June 1983. Brian Brown, head of the Television Research Unit at Oxford Polytechnic was a member of the group, representing the Methodist Church. He has described how his initial misgivings at the speed at which the enquiry was supposed to work changed to horror and repudiation of the misrepresentations and inaccuracies of the Report. Both the Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church withdrew their support from the enquiry in February. One week before the issuing of the Report, Brown and his research staff repudiated the framework, context and conclusions of the entire

document.[2]

In spite of the obvious flaws in the Report and its repudiation by
such eminent people as Brown and Nicholas Coote, the Roman Catholic
representative, its publication provoked a moral panic in Britain,
largely due to the representation of its findings by the tabloid
newspapers. The moral panic resulted in the easy passage of the
Video Recording Bill which requires that all films are classified
along the same lines as films for the cinema but using much stricter
criteria, since videos are shown in the home.

The moral panic in Britain inevitably sparked off a similar reaction
in Ireland. During late 1983 and early 1984, various letters and
articles appeared in the Irish newspapers, voicing concern about the
growing availability and popularity of the "video nasties". In
November 1984, Southside newspaper[3] described a campaign, started by
two Dublin County Councillors who are also teachers, Cllrs Tom Kitt
and Frank Buckley. The two men were concerned at the effect which
they saw video nasties having on school children, and described
parents as "frequently inadequate". Other groups and organisations
also spoke out against the widespread availability of violent and
pornographic videos. The Council for the Status of Women, at their
first Annual Conference in April 1986, said that they believed that
the easy availability of this type of video could be a contributory
factor in the incidence of rape and other forms of violence against
women and children.[4] The belief that there is a connection between
the popularity of "video nasties" and the growing crime rate seems
to be widespread. In 1984 a Dail committee was set up called the

Select Committee on Crime, Lawlessness and Vandalism. They issued a
number of reports the tenth of which was called "Controls on Video
Nasties" which urged the Minister for Justice to introduce
legislation to control availability of videos through a licensing
system for outlets and to prohibit the supply of violent and
pornographic films.[5]

A newspaper article at the time claimed that the committee's
proposals were in almost total conformity with the proposal put
forward by the Irish Videogramme Association, which represents most
of the internal video companies operating in Ireland. The
Association said that their industry was threatened by two major
problems, piracy and pornography, which emanated from the same
sources.[6]   Piracy will soon cease to be a major problem since the
recent invention of an anti-piracy process for video tapes by John
Ryan and his company Macrovision in the USA.   However, the
perennial problems of pornography and violence will still be with
us.[7]

The Minister for Justice proposed to introduce a bill to the Dail in
September or October 1987 which would control the availability of
videos.

What is a "Video Nasty"?

The Parliamentary Group Enquiry in Video Violence defined a video
nasty as "Those feature films that contain scenes of such violence
and sadism involving either human beings or animals that they would
not be granted a certificate by the British Board of Film Censors

for general release for public exhibition in Britain. Such films may be liable to prosecution by the Director of Public Prosecutions under the Obscene Publications Ave 1959, Section 2."[8]

If one accepts this definition, then one is considering a fairly limited number of videos, of which there are about 50 in circulation. Brian Brown[9] says that at the time of the video enquiry in Britain there were 46 such titles on the Public Prosecutor's list.[10]

Many people would not accept this definition of a video nasty because it is too limited and they would wish to include many other films, most of which would fit into the horror category. There are certain identifiable features of these films which make them objectionable to many people and therefore candidates for the label of "video nasty". It could be argued however, that these features are not unique to video nasties and therefore do not help to define them in any way. These features are:

1)   Woman is usually seen as the prey and the victim of man, animals, alien creatures, zombies and even plants. This accusation could equally be made about "Psycho" a classic of the horror genre.

2)   Sex is usually shown in the context of violence, pain and sadism. Rape frequently and is often shown to be invited by the woman and eventually enjoyed by her. But the use of women as sex objects and the degradation of women is not confined to

video nasties. Many films on general release such as the James Bond movies, are just as objectionable in this way. On the other hand, an infamous "nasty", "I Spit on your grave" features a woman who suffers multiple rapes but emerges as the final victor over her male aggressors.

3) Central human experiences such as the sex act or the act of giving birth are often parodied in a gruesome, brutal way. What particularly worries people about this is that these scenes may be the first sex education for many young people. Once again, this charge could be laid against the modern classic "Alien" or its sequel "Aliens". If these scenes are the first sex education for many young people, surely the fault lies with parents and educators who have not provided adequate sex education in the first place?

4) The action is usually seen from the point of view of the perpetrator of the violence. Little or no sympathy is felt for the victim. Violent films are sometimes defended on the basis that they are cathartic, but the cathartic effect of drama or film depends on the spectator identifying with the victim. This argument against video nasties does not stand up to scrutiny because more and more of the modern horror films are seen from the point of view of the victim or victims. An example of this would be "Hallowe'en". One of the most infamous of the nasties "The Evil Dead" is seen from the victim's point of view and we never even see the perpetrator of the violence.

5)   Gratuitous violence is the norm for these films with the
     camera lingering on severed limbs, gouged out eyes, spurting
     blood and putrefying bodies. The special effect techniques
     used in the nasties are also used in films which would not be
     so classified such as "Company of Wolves".

6)   These films represent the world as a place of anarchy where
     the only justice is revenge. But this is not unique to the
     nasties. It is a feature of many classical myths and the
     revenge theme has always been a part of the western and the
     gangster movie.

If these characteristics do not define video nasties, is it possible
to arrive at a definition at all? It is very difficult to define a
video nasty, simply because taste and levels of acceptability vary
so much from one section of the community to the other. What is
possible,is to look at what it is about video nasties which make
them different from horror movies of the past and which cause such
controversy.

As we have seen, most of the video nasties which are available
belong to the horror genre. Stephen King[11] argues that the horror
genre works on its audience on three distinct levels.

1)   The first level brings about a mental response of terror in
     the viewer, who waits in suspense to see what is merely
     suggested on the screen.

2)   The second level brings about a physical response of fear.
     This is a response to something we know to be physically wrong
     or threatening on the screen. This physical reaction
     Twitchell called "the creeps".[12]

3)   The third level brings about what King[13] calls "the gag reflex
     of revulsion". This would be the feeling induced by the
     vomiting sequence in "The Exorcist" or the chest bursting
     sequence in "Alien".

This researcher would argue that it is the third factor, the level
which produces revulsion, which is the problematic one for those who
condemn video nasties. Inducing revulsion is not new in cinematic
technique. The old Hammer horror movies induced revulsion in their
time. What is new in horror movies is the level and extent of the
special effects which are now possible. The first horror movie to
really employ these effects to spectacular dimensions was "The
Exorcist". It was also incidentally, the first horror movie to
locate evil in a suburban middle class family atmosphere. The new
technology which made these special effects possible changed the
horror film genre dramatically because as Monaco puts it "Every art
is shaped, not only by political, philosophical and economic
factors, but also by its technology."[14]

Mark Stewart[15] makes a very interesting distinction between what he
calls "pure" horror movies and "pure" terror movies. He says that
the object of terror in the latter type movie comes from real life
and therefore is capable of being rationalised and explained. The

object of horror in the horror movie comes from fantasy and therefore cannot be rationalised and has no limits. In the terror movie there is a feeling of closure, of mysteries being explained, loose ends tied up. In this type of horror film there is a feeling of indeterminacy. The researcher believes that the video nasties fit into Mark Stewart's definition of a horror movie. Therefore, it is possible to discern certain common characteristics of video nasties which earn them their name and which render them objectionable to many people.

Some Characteristics of a Video Nasty

1) It is usually a fantasy, so that the horror induces a feeling of indeterminacy, of uncertainty and of helplessness.

2) It induces terror.

3) It induces a feeling of "the creeps".

4) It induces a feeling of revulsion.

5) It very often involves suburban, middle class families.

6) It usually foreground adolescents or young adults.

7) Unlike the old horror films which were usually set in the dark and distant past, the modern horror, in spite of being a fantasy, is usually set in the present or in a future which seems fairly near.

It would seem that it is the first, fourth and fifth of these characteristics which most offend those who label certain videos as "video nasties". Such people fear the effects of the video nasties because they "knock the adult props out from under us and tumble us back down the slide into childhood. And there our own shadow may once again become that of a mean dog, a gaping mouth or a beckoning dark figure."[16]

Images which produce revulsion in a movie usually mirror images from the dark side of our psyche. They also remind us of how frail our hold on sanity and life is. Most adults in our society habitually avoid such intimations of morality. Look how old people are segregated, for instance, or how death is given all kinds of euphemisms to render it less fearful. Adults are even more inclined to protect children from such knowledge. In suburban areas in Ireland, for instance, children and young teenagers are often kept away from funerals, even of relatives, for fear that it will upset them. We are warned before pictures of famine victims are shown on our screens, for fear that it will "upset" us!

As we have seen, a new development in the modern horror movie has been the location of evil right inside the bosom of the middle class family. Such a development may seem to some people to threaten the stability and values of the family itself and maybe even of society. Since late Victorian times, a sentimental picture of children has been developed which sees them as innocent and defenceless. At the same time, the term child has come to include almost anyone who is still at school or under the protection of their parents. Films

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which portray evil emanating from or surrounding children goes
against the prevailing perception of children. It may also be
unacceptable because it produces that very feeling of helplessness
which has been discussed and which makes adults feel helpless not
just to defend themselves but to protect their children.

Is there cause for Concern?

Patterns of video viewing indicate that the video is now an integral
part of the culture of young people in Ireland. The variety of
videos which they named show that they are watching a cross section
of types of films, most of which are completely acceptable to
anyone. From Table 8.6 it is clear that most of the 12-14 year olds
showed a preference for films which would be on general release in
the cinema. The exception to this was urban working class boys who
showed a strong preference for horror films.

The girls in the age groups 15-17 also favoured general release
films and adult comedies. Urban males 15-17 put horror films very
much in first place while their rural counterparts placed adult sex
videos before horror.

It is clear from this, that it is mainly urban males who have an
appetite for horror films while the older rural males like adult sex
films. It would be wrong to think that all of the horror sex films
named are harmful to young people. Some of them are fairly
innocuous and others downright silly. And the young people
themselves are often more sophisticated in their attitude to visual
material than adults give them credit for. Of all the named videos

only 7 were in the Public Prosecutor's List.[17] Others would be

objectionable to some people because of their attitude to women or

anti-social tendencies. Many of them cater to a taste for the

macabre and the occult. But a taste for the macabre or the occult

is not new in Ireland. There have been many famous Irish writers in

the horror genre, e.g. Bram Stoker and Sheridan Le Fanu. And moral

panics over new media are not new either as Geoffrey Pearson has

shown.[18] At different times there have been moral panics about

music halls, silent movies, Hollywood talkies, horror comics, and

television. Indeed there is still a moral panic about the effects

of television in Ireland, as has been discussed in the chapter on

Violence on Television.

It does not seem that the video viewing patterns revealed by this

survey give caused for alarm. It is clear from the data that the

young people of Ireland are not viewing an unadulterated diet of sex

and violence. But from my own experience as a teacher and a parent

of teenage children, from talking to other teachers and from

discussions with the students who responded to the questionnaires,

it would seem that there is a sizeable minority of young people who

are spending a large amount of their leisure time viewing videos

which have unacceptable levels of sex and violence. This may be a

cause for concern because these are the young people who are already

at risk in our Society. Many concerned groups are now calling for

censorship of videos in the same way as censorship operates in the

cinema. But the very factors which make video attractive to young

people also make it very difficult to control. Clearly it would be

very difficult to implement censorship of video, even if it were

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desirable. Age limits for the hire of videos would not work either, any more than age limits for the control of alcohol sales in this country do. Viewing of undesirable videos by young people is not a problem that can be solved by legislation. Legislation will simply drive these videos underground and thus make them more attractive. What then can be done to protect young people?

Media education seems to be a substantial part of the answer. If teachers and parents encourage, in a non-judgemental way, the young people to discuss the media and their use of them, to critically evaluate media messages, then this will lead to a more creative and selective use of the media in general. If teachers bring horror movies into the classroom as an interesting media product which is worthy of study because of its popularity rather than rail against the evils of the video nasty, they will be doing much more to educate their students. These movies would be studied from the point of view of the history and development of the genre, the use of special effects or the narrative technique. Fostering a critical appreciation of the classics of the genre will do more to combat any harm that might be done by viewing the more doubtful of the genre than a blanket denunciation of horror movies in general. Horror movies are not going to go away. Even if legislation removes some of the nasties from the shops, they will still be available underground. Some which are legitimately available will still be objectionable to some people. The desire to be entertained by being frightened is traditional and legitimate. Kael[19] has quoted William Friedkin as saying "People only go to the movies for three reasons, to laugh, cry, or be frightened". Good comedies, at any time, are

difficult to find. In our society, it is not generally acceptable
for males to cry. Is it any wonder then, that older male teenagers
show a strong preference for the horror genre?

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CHAPTER 10

Advertising

Advertising must be one of the most pervasive of the media. Yet
comparatively little research has been done on the effects of
advertising on young people compared say to the amount of research
which has been done on the effects of television violence on young
people. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that we
live in a capitalist society where most people accept that
advertising is a necessary and even good part of life. Of course
there are many ads which perform a social function and give us
information or advice. An example of this would be the Health
Education Bureau's ads which seek to inform and educate us about
such things as the necessity to inoculate young children against
measles, the dangers to health of cigarette smoking, or the criminal
lunacy of drinking and driving. Some purely commercial ads give us
information about the product while also persuading us to buy. It
could even be argued that cleanliness and personal hygiene in our
society have improved because of widescale advertising of soaps,
deodorants, toothpastes, etc. Even Vance Packard[1] in the first
best-selling broadside against advertising "The Hidden Persuaders"
admits that "Advertising, not only plays a vital role in promoting
our economic growth but is a colourful, diverting aspect of American
life and many of the creations of the ad men are tasteful, honest
works of artistry."

If this were all there is to advertising then there would be little
cause for concern about the effects of advertising on young people.

But Packard also quotes an ad executive who describes advertising as "the systematic creation of dissatisfaction".[2]

People are made to feel dissatisfied with themselves, their bodies, their lifestyles, their homes, their cars, even their husband, wife or children. The world of advertising promises that if they acquire X product they will become content, happy and desirable. When X product is superseded by new, improved Super X product, the whole cycle begins again. In a booming economy where people can afford a disposable lifestyle, this type of advertising may be defensible. But in the economic climate of today, with almost 20% of the population unemployed and many more barely existing on low wages, one must question the effects of such persuasive advertising. The whole rationale of the advertising industry is to persuade people to buy.

Does it then necessarily follow that if people cannot afford to buy, the effect must be to make them unhappy or discontented with their lot? Advertising holds up for admiration a world which most people can never achieve. Advertising works on our most basic psychological needs, eg the need to be loved or liked. It also works on guilt - particularly the guilt of mothers who can never attain the perfection of the ideal, unruffled mother of two who feeds her two happy children nutritious meals in their gleaming kitchen, while she looks out the window at the whiter than white washing and waits for her husband to return from work in his new car. What effect must this type of advertising have on the harassed mother of six who cannot afford nourishing food and whose husband is long-term

unemployed? How can the young boys or men living in areas of high
unemployment ever hope to experience one of the fast new cars which
are so enticingly displayed in ads? How else but by stealing or
joy-riding?

However, if advertising really had the above effect on people who
cannot afford to buy there would surely be a social revolution in
our society. But there isn't. Are we to conclude then that
advertising has no effects on those who cannot afford to buy? Logic
suggests that there must be some effects if only the reinforcement
of brand names or knowledge of the availability of new products.
The effects could also be the encouragement of consumerism. But
logic also suggests that for most adults, advertised products which
are beyond their financial reach, belong in the fantasy realm of
television with Dynasty and not in the realistic world of news or
East Enders. In other words, adults use television advertising in
much the same way as they use any other television product. They
take from it what is salient to them and either ignore or relegate
to the world of fantasy what is left.

The question then arises whether children and young people use
advertising in the same way. Henriksson[3] thinks that they do not:

> "There is a decided difference between the vulnerability
> of children and of adults. The causes are concerned
> with developmental psychology. Children live with
> fantasy figures in their everyday life and, unlike
> adults, cannot distinguish logically between fantasy and
> reality."

He goes on to argue that because adolescence is often dominated by

feelings of emptiness and uselessness, and that teenagers are

looking for a role in life, advertisers exploit these feelings and

provide a role for the young person, that of consumer. He also

feels that ads offer to young people identification models or idols.

But Hall and Whannel[4] have shown that there is nothing to indicate

that children believe the fantasy element of ads as if they were

real. Cullingford[5] has shown that children interpret "real" as the

actual existence of the product. Implied claims that a certain item

would improve your social life were seen as fantasy. In other

words, they differentiated between the availability of the

production - reality and the presentation of the product - fantasy.

Interestingly, he points out that as children get older they become

more interested in the style and presentation of the ad, and became

> "more able to see and express the dissociation between
>
> the product and its presentation."

He goes on to say that by the age of 12 less than half the children

in his sample believed even their favourite ad. He says that their

responses showed a complex reaction to ads.

> "a disbelief in the commercial appeal, a pleasure in the
>
> advertisement as fantasy, entertainment and the
>
> acceptance that all the advertiser is trying to say
>
> usually humorously is, that the product is available in
>
> the shops."

Advertising agencies do their own kind of "effects" research. If

the sales graph for the product rises, then the ad is having the desired effect - it is making people buy. If the sales graph is dropping, the effect is non-existent so the campaign is dropped and replaced with a new one. No-one to my knowledge has researched the effect of advertising on those who cannot afford to buy. Yet advertising should be the richest source of "effects" research, since advertising, if it is successful, must product effects.

Who likes Ads on Television

The section of the questionnaire dealing with advertising was limited to advertising on television and asked three questions. The first question asked whether students liked ads on television. Only 34% replied in the affirmative, while 66% said that they did not like ads on television. Females tended to say they liked ads more than males with working class females in both location and both age groups showing the greatest acceptance of ads on television. Almost 50% of the female working class group in both locations and both age groups said that they liked ads on television.

Least likely to say that they liked ads on television were working class males in the 15-17 year old age group.

Possible reasons for these findings are:
(a)   In Chapter 6, Patterns of Television Viewing, it is clear from stated channel preferences that working class students watch ITV more than any other channel. Therefore they are possibly exposed to more advertising than middle class students who prefer RTE1 and BBC1 and 2.

(b)   Females may like ads on television because many if not most of
        the ads are targeted at females, e.g. cosmetics, toiletries,
        detergents, baby goods, food, since they are the largest
        consumer group.

(c)   On television generally the ratio of men to women is generally
        accepted to be 3:1. Butler and Paisley[6] found that 72% if
        characters were male and 28% female on American television,
        the percentages in advertising for adults are 57% male and 43%
        female, except in ads for children where the ratios are 80%
        male 20% female. Ads may be seen to redress the male/female
        imbalance.

(d)   Males will perceive that most targeting of goods is aimed at
        females, therefore, they will not relate to the ads.

(e)   Whereas many items that are advertised for women are common to
        both middle and working class women, items which are targeted
        at men tend to be marketed with a middle class man in mind.
        Models in car ads, ads for male cosmetics look middle class
        and would be likely to turn off working class boys.

(f)   Working class boys in the 15-17 age group are among the
        lightest users of television and may be less exposed to
        advertising than other groups.

(g)   Girls are more conditioned to look at and read ads in comics
        and magazines for women and are therefore more likely to

accept them on television. As McRobbie has shown, they are already socialised into consumerism.[7]

Why they dislike Ads on Television

Two main reasons were given for disliking ads on television. All groups said that they disliked them because they broke the enjoyment of the programme. Some added that they were boring or time wasting. Some students said that the really boring ads were the voice-over with still pictures. Middle class females in the 15-17 year old age group felt that ads on television were untrue. This may reflect some consumer education or media education which tend to feature in middle class girls' school more than in any other type of school. It may also reflect studies done in Social and Scientific Home Economics. Answers were categorised into the following six groups:

1)   Breaks enjoyment;

2)   Boring;

3)   Waste of Time;

4)   Untrue;

5)   Too long;

6)   Annoying.

Why they like Ads on Television

Three main reasons were given for liking ads on television by all groups. They said that they are entertaining or funny, sometimes more so than the programmes which they interrupt. They also said that they like ads because they are informative. Answers were categorised into the following four:

1)   Entertaining;

2)   Funny;

3)   Informative;

4)   They give time to make coffee, etc.

These findings are almost identical to those of Cullingford[8] working
with 7-12 year olds.

Favourite Ads

Students were asked in the third question on advertising to name
their favourite ad. The named ads were then categorised into ten
types of ads. They were:

1)   Ads for Government or State Bodies such as Telecom ads;

2)   Car ads;

3)   Ads featuring babies;

4)   Ads for crisps, sweets or chocolate;

5)   Breakfast cereals;

6)   Ads featuring women in stereotypical roles, eg ads for Persil;

7)   Ads featuring young people such as the Coke or Fanta ads;

8)   Alcoholic drinks;

9)   Humorous ads;

10)   Ads featuring animals such as the Andrex ad.

Surprisingly, the favourite type of ad with the majority of the
groups was the category "Ads featuring babies". The almost
unanimity of this choice baffled researcher until she discovered an
interesting and apposite fact. At the time she was doing the
Survey, disposable nappies were being removed from the Blue Card.

Fearing that sales would drop, the ad companies mounted a blitz campaign for disposable babies nappies. Remembering the old Hollywood adage "Never accept a role in a film showing a child or a dog" it is not surprising that these ads made such an impact on the students. The ads were not only appealing but entertaining and funny too. But the fact that so many students were taken with this type of ad, even though they were not in the market for the product, surely goes to show the power of advertising and the effects of constant reinforcement of a message. These ads were popular with all of the groups but particularly popular with the older females, all of whom placed ads featuring babies in the first place.

The second most popular type of ad was "ads for alcohol drinks" and this category was in first place with all of the male groups. This second choice again was intriguing since the age group that was surveyed should not be targeted by ads for alcoholic drinks according to the rules for advertising standards.[9] From studying some of the named ads for alcoholics drinks it is clear that they have a number of features which would appeal to young people and perhaps young boys and teenage boys in particular. Many ads feature sport as an integral part of the ad. Young men are featured either going to or from a football match. It is as though the after match pint, is a part of the sport itself. Other ads for alcoholic drinks are attractive because they are humorous. An example of this would be the Smithwick's "Are you going for a pint?" ad which combines a type of Dublin Humour with an emphasis on being "one of the boys". Other ads for alcohol are less obviously attractive to

young people from an adult point of view but work on the young

people's sub-conscious through a combination of symbols which have

certain connotations only to young people and the use of music. One

frequently mentioned ad in this category was the ad for Bulmers

Cider. To an adult it seems to feature an antique car and some kind

of rock music and is not a particularly attractive ad. To a young

person the ad speaks through the music of ZZ Top and the old car

which is their symbol. This is an excellent example of how a

selected target group may be reached by using symbols which are only

decodeable by them. Although it is generally realised that young

people are the greatest consumers of cider, advertising laws forbid

the targeting of under age people by drink ads. Yet these laws are

being circumvented in a very subtle way.

Ads for crisps, chocolates and sweets were in third place with ads

featuring young people in fourth place. Fifth place was taken by

ads for State bodies such as the Telecom ads and sixth was ads for

breakfast cereals. Ads featuring women in stereotypical roles such

as washing powder ads were in seventh place while car ads were in

eight place. Ninth was ads featuring animals and tenth was humorous

ads. The ads in seventh place were puzzling since most students had

expressed a dislike of these. But since they are repeated

frequently, they are probably easily remembered.

An extensive study of Swedish young people described in "Not for

Sale - Young People in Society" revealed that 59% of young people

between 15 and 24 believe that advertising encourages unnecessary

consumption. Only 8% believe that it does not do so.[10] The authors

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of this study expressed concern at the way advertisements take advantage of the vulnerability of young people.

Many people in Ireland would share the same concern about the effects of advertising on young people. The rules for advertising laid down by the Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland are quite specific and strict yet they are being exploited as we saw, especially in the area of advertising alcoholic drinks. Even removing ads for alcoholic drinks from the screen is not the answer because the companies would simply turn to more and more sponsorship, as did the tobacco companies. That can lead to the even worse situation of cigarettes and alcohol constantly being seen in tandem with sport. What will give young people greater protection against unscrupulous advertising which takes advantage of their vulnerability is media education, health education and consumer education. This type of education will make young people aware and critical of the commercial pressure to which they are daily exposed and should be an integral part of the school curriculum.

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CHAPTER 11

The Influence and Credibility of the Media

In, Chapter 1 Research Design and Methodology McQuail's[1] four
distinct areas of research into the influence of the media or the
effects of the media on audiences were discussed. The four media
situations on which these areas of research have been based are:

1)   The campaign;

2)   The definition of social reality and the formation of social
      norms;

3)   Immediate Response and Reaction Effects;

4)   The consequences for other Social Institutions.

It can be seen that there is a large body of research into the
influence and credibility of the media and most social scientist
seen to agree that the media have great social power and influence.
It should therefore follow that Media Education or Media Studies
would have a major input to the education of children and young
people. This has not been the case either in Ireland or in Britain.
Educationalists in Britain recognized the central role of the media
in the lives of schoolchildren in the early 1960's.

The Newsom Report,[2] written in 1963, stated:

> "Here we should wish to add a strong claim for the study
> of film and television in their own right as powerful
> forces in our culture and significant sources of
> language and ideas."

The report goes on to point out that in the case of secondary school
students:

   "... television will be for most of them the most

   important source of knowledge about the outside world,

   outside the confines of their own experience."

While encouraging Media Education, the report gives credence to the
"inoculation theory"

   "Little as yet has been effectively undertaken in

   schools in the way of offering some counterbalancing

   assistance."

In fact, much of the experimentation which was taking place at this
time in media education agreed with this approach and brought
popular television and film into the classroom only to denigrate it
and point out its deficiencies to the students in an effort to make
them see the "superiority" of "good" television and cinema. This
attitude stemmed from people like F R Leavis[3] who originated the
"high Art/low art" debate and was possibly exacerbated by the fact
that many of the teachers who first became involved with Media
Studies were originally teachers of English Literature who brought
their literary critical skills with them. The same attitude
probably encouraged the development of Film Studies at the expense
of Television Studies because there was a discernible High Art in
films (especially foreign films) while television, being a mass
medium and accessible to all, was, by definition, low art. Film
could also be studied in the same way as literature, using
considerations of genre, author, symbol etc. There were also
practical difficulties with studying television at the time, eg the

difficulty of making off air recordings when many schools did not have video recording equipment. But whatever the reasons, the Newsom report helped to establish Film Studies in the educational system of the UK at the expense of Media Studies.

The prevailing liberal consensus in the UK in the 60's produced a unique opportunity for curriculum innovation and development. The factors which produced this opportunity may be considered under two headings, Educational Structures and Cultural Factors.

A.   Educational Structures.

1.   Local Authorities control education in the UK. This enabled
      an authority like the Inner London Education Authority to
      identify a need for a particular area of study and encourage,
      by means of financial and practical aid such as training
      courses, the growth of that particular area.

2.   Each school was free to devise its own curriculum within
      obvious constraints because there was no core curriculum.
      "The shape of the curriculum in any school depends on the
      balance between the pressure created by the examination system
      the teachers, parents and local interests."
      The only mandatory subject was Religious Education. The
      advantages of this particularly for non-academic students are
      obvious.

3.   The examination system is less restrictive than in Ireland.
      Fewer examination subjects are taken, as few as three or even

two at A levels. This leaves time for non examination subject
or modules.

4.   Examinations could be taken in different modes. The CSE, for
       example could be taken into one of three ways:
       Mode I in which the paper was set by external examiners and
       marked externally.
       Mode II in which the paper was set by the teacher of the class
       and then marked externally.
       Mode III in which the examinations were developed in a
       particular class or school and assessed by the class teacher
       under regional supervision.

5.   Students take fewer examination subjects. At A level three
       subjects are usually taken.

6.   The first three years in the junior cycle curriculum are free
       of examination pressures since most students did CSE or O
       levels at age 15 or 16.

7.   The school leaving age was raised to 16.

8.   The Schools Council was established with a majority of
       teachers.

Cultural Factors:

1.   A growing dissatisfaction with the social divisiveness of
       secondary education with its three tiered system led to a move

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towards comprehensive education. This expansion of educational opportunity for the majority, combined with the raising of the school leaving age to 16, made imperative the inclusion of new, less academic subjects in the curriculum.

2.   There was a growing awareness that the UK was now a pluralist society and that cognizance should be taken of minority cultures.

3.   Many teachers and educationists had a left-wing ideology which encouraged an appreciation of working class culture and values and a rejection of many class-ridden traditional subjects.

4.   There was a movement away from the more rigid subject disciplines to a holistic type of education.

5.   Many teachers were themselves of lower or working class origins, having received their education through the selection and grant system. Consequently, they were more sympathetic to an educational system that was not class-ridden or divisive.

6.   Many teachers were not of the elite, university educated but received their training at teacher training college, whose entry requirements were considerably lower than those of the universities.

7.   Teaching in the UK has not the status that it has in Ireland. It is not unusual to find a teacher there living in local

authority housing, whereas in Ireland, the same situation
would be most unlikely. Teachers in England do not see
themselves as necessarily middle class.

8.   The Times Educational Supplement was available as an open
      forum for discussion of current topics of educational
      interest, accessible to parents, teachers and academics alike.

9.   Academics in the UK often return to second level teaching as
      headmasters. Thus there is not the same division between
      teachers and academics as there is in Ireland.

10.   Proper promotional structures within the system mean that
      teachers do not have to leave the second level in order to be
      promoted. This keeps the best and most innovative teachers
      within the system.

In Media Education and the Secondary/FE Curriculum, David Lusted[4]
reviews the development of Media Education in the UK in the
seventies. He begins by tracing the development of Film Studies.
Until the late 60's, Film Studies was concerned with film as
technical skill or film appreciation. By the end of the 70's, Media
Studies had become the study of authorship, genre and industry. In
1972, the Associated Examining Board sets up the O Level GCE Mode
III syllabus in Film Studies. In 1976, about 1,000 candidates took
this examination but there has been little expansion since then.
Where there has been expansion is in the emergence of newly
constituted subjects like Television Studies, Media Studies and

Communication Studies, sometimes taken as modules or options and sometimes as examination subjects. It is clear that in the UK in the 70's there was increasing fragmentation of subjects within media education. There was also a dissemination of media subjects in the curriculum, mainly by teachers of English, Art and History, who recognized the relevance of media education in a contemporary audio-visual culture. Nicholas Garnham[5] argues that it is English Studies that has provided a principle foothold for the development and progressive institutionalization of Film and Media Studies in England and Wales.

According to Len Masterman[6] this involvement of teachers of other subjects in media education creates the problem of the teacher bringing "critical baggage" from their own discipline. The media have their own signifying practices. He sees work on media institutions as being difficult to manage successfully in the classroom because of the dearth of information, materials and imaginative pedagogic approaches. Another problem that he identifies is that educationists know little about how their students decode the media messages they receive. Yet the collection of such basic information is a pre-condition for any worthwhile media education. He saw a great need for teachers in the future to engage much more with subcultural decodings, than ever before.

Bob Ferguson[7] argues that because the tradition in media studies has been liberal and because of the notion that it was a fun subject, teaching strategies were adopted which prevented the students from developing structured critical skills. This led to media studies

being seen as a subject for the less able student. The A Level

Communications course has, he feels, been affected by this and the

fact that the examiners do not have a clear idea about what

constitutes the study of communications. The absence of any

intellectually demanding work led to the so-called creative work.

But in the context of an inner city comprehensive the problems of

lack of equipment, lack of motivation and poor discipline can soon

take the fun out of this creative work. Since media studies has

little value on the job market, once it becomes boring it is

dropped. Even when practical work is done with children of ability,

it is often seen as a diversion. This attitude can, to a degree, be

traced back to the Newsom Report[8] which saw making a film as an

interesting and unusual practical activity, especially for the less

academically able child.

Another difficulty for media education has been its association with

the political ideology of the left, as seen in the work of the

Glasgow Media Group.[9] It has also been seen as anarchic in that it

criticises our main institutions without offering alternatives.

Given the essentially upper middle class background of many of those

who control the media in the UK any attempt to expose the one-

dimension version of reality which they construct, or to redress the

balance in favour of minorities will be seen as subversive.

In 1974 the Bullock Report[10] in its conclusions and recommendations

stated. "Television is now part of our culture and therefore a

legitimate study for schools."

It also noted that: "The vocabulary of politics, popular music, space travel and industry is acquired by children, not through the adult programmes of news and comment but through cartoons, child's serials and tea-time entertainment programmes." However, it was not until the 80's that popular programmes such as Dallas or Crossroads are seen as being worthy of study, not just as part of a uses and gratification study, but in the context of myth and meaning.

Media Studies in the UK in the 90's is still characterised by its heterogeneity and the ad-hoc basis on which it appears in the secondary school curriculum. In the Report on the Media Education Conference 1981[11] the writers saw two main points emerging from the conference on which the future of the discipline would depend. The first was definition - the need to define clearly what constitutes Media Education. The second was institutionalisation - schools and colleges still had to fight for Media Education's place on the curriculum. They concluded that "Institutional acceptance of Media Education will depend on its definition."

In Ireland in the late 60's and early 70's, important developments in education took place. An intensive study of the system at primary and post-primary level, entitled "Investment in Education" was carried out jointly by the Department of Education and the OECD.[12] It was published in 1965. Its main findings were:

1.   That there were likely to be a shortage of persons with suitable qualifications for the jobs which would be available in the 70's.

2.   That there were inequalities based on social group and
      geographic location in the participation of children in post
      primary education.

3.   That the emphasis given to different subjects was not
      consistent with the careers subsequently followed by the
      students.

4.   That there were gaps in the efficiency of the educational
      system in terms of the pattern of use of existing educational
      resources.

These findings led to the establishment of Comprehensive schools and
in 1970 to Community schools. The school leaving age was raised to
15 in 1973. The vocational schools were encouraged to extend their
curriculum to include the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate
programmes. New examination subjects like Building Construction
were introduced. At the same time, Secondary schools were
encouraged to include practical subjects in their options. Some
did, but most were prevented from doing to by a combination of
parental pressure, lack of facilities and a shortage of teachers of
practical subjects. The new Comprehensive and Community schools
were meant to combine the traditions of the secondary and vocational
schools in a comprehensive type education. They were well equipped
to meet these demands. But since they were in many cases competing
with the secondary schools for pupils, they were forced into the
same examination dominated system. No changes were made in the
examination system itself except for some minor tinkering with

syllabi and the introduction of Oral Irish and French examinations. There was, at the time, little curricular innovation. The independent Curriculum Development Association was formed in 1972. The Curriculum Development Unit in Trinity College pioneered the Humanities Project and the ISCIP Science Project very successfully. They have also managed to have an element of teacher assessment and project work accepted as part of the examination at Group Cert and Inter Cert level. Apart from these noteworthy exceptions, the examination system changed little in the past 50 years until the mid 80's.

The first real opportunity for drastic reform of the secondary educational system came with the establishment of the Curriculum and Examinations Board by the Minister for Education Gemma Hussey in 1985. In its consultative document "Issues and structures in Education"[13] the Board sets down the main issues which it would consider and, in broad terms, its thinking on these issues. They were:

1.   A new unified assessment system for the junior cycle of second level schooling.

2.   A review of the Leaving Certificate as a measure of general education.

3.   A Matriculation Examination separate from the Leaving Cert.

4.   Alternative senior cycle programmes.

The document was positive, open and hopeful if a little vague at
this stage. Its authors were well aware however of the difficulties
facing them in implementing these ideas. Changes in governments and
Ministers since then have slowed down education change. In the
meantime, those interested in establishing Media Education in the
secondary curriculum are left with a system which has a number of
features which will make the acceptance of that subject difficult.
These obstacles may be considered under two headings Educational
Structures and Cultural Factors.

1.   The centralisation of the control of education in Ireland
      means that the same curriculum is set for all students, urban
      and rural. The present curriculum largely reflects the values
      of a rural society, and chooses to ignore the cultural changes
      brought about by the urbanisation of Ireland. Media
      Education, on the other hand would be seen as part of an urban
      culture since the media and television in particular are
      connected with the urbanisation of our society. Since many of
      the media and their products are foreign, they are often seen
      as a threat to our culture, that culture constructed on the
      twin foundations of ceili music and the GAA as Luke Gibbons[14]
      defined it. Discussing foreign media products in the
      classroom could be construed as a tacit approval and
      acceptance of a foreign culture.

2.   The Examination system restricts the amount of time available
      for new subjects or modules. The Inter and Leaving courses
      take two years to cover. This means that only first year is

free of examination pressures. The transition year, for
mainly financial reasons has been phased out by most schools.

3. The number of subjects taken by Irish students is a problem.
    Five subjects must be taken in both examinations while it is
    common for students to take eight or nine subjects in the
    Inter and six or seven in the Leaving. Educationally, the
    idea of giving students as broad an education as possible
    seems a sound one, especially when compared with the UK system
    of early specialisation but it means that the timetable is
    overburdened and it is impossible to fit in something like
    Media Education or Health Education or Peace Studies, all of
    which have made a claim for inclusion.

4. The compartmentalisation of education and the tendency of
    teachers to see themselves as subject specialists would make
    it difficult for Media Education as a cross-disciplinary
    subject to be accepted.

5. The lack of training for teachers in assessment procedures.

6. The "points system" of entrance to college encourages the
    assessment of subjects by students as potential points getters
    rather than for their intrinsic merit.

7. The lack of in-service training for teachers in new subject
    areas or new approaches. Many teachers at the moment never
    receive any other training once they have qualified, Sean

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O'Connor[15] says:

"The emergence of new concepts in science, the social and
technological changes - all are so profound and are happening
so rapidly, that, if the educational sector is to keep pace
with them, once-for-all training for the teacher can no longer
be tolerated. Many of the methods and skills he (sic) has
learned will become out of date in a short time. An adequate
course of initial training must be given ... but this should
be followed at stated intervals ... by intensive refresher
courses covering two to three months."

8.   The lack of facilities, equipment and suitable materials. The
      Department of Education does not supply televisions or videos
      to schools. There has also been a dearth of materials
      suitable in the Irish context. The CDU and the IFI have
      produced some materials but the teacher of media education is
      thrown very much on her own resources.

9.   Most secondary teachers hold a degree from a university and a
      higher diploma in Education from a School of Education within
      a university. This encourages specialisation and elitism and
      effectively precludes candidates from the working class
      because of the cost involved.

Cultural Factors.

1.   Teachers have traditionally been drawn from the farmer class
      or the middle class. But whatever their family background,
      possession of a university educations puts them into the

middle class and most espouse middle class culture and values.
The system encourages them to see themselves as a bulwark
against a lowering of cultural values. Helped by the middle
class ethos of the system they tend to impose their values on
the students they teach.

2.   There is also the complication that most teachers are from a
     rural background and urban working class values are alien to
     them. In the Leavisite tradition, if they do bring popular
     culture into the classroom, it is only to contrast it
     unfavourably with something more traditionally and culturally
     acceptable like Yeats or Shakespeare. Discussing Alan
     Bleasdale's "The Boys From the Black Stuff" would be seen as
     culturally and socially subversive no matter how relevant it
     might seem to the students in Tallaght or Coolock. Teachers
     in Ireland are privileged members of the status quo and as a
     body have never shown any desire for things to be different.

3.   Most teachers are now middle aged or older. The greatest
     expansion in teacher numbers happened in the early 70's. This
     means that most teachers grew up without television, they
     literally come from a different world to that of their
     students.

4.   Religious Orders have dominated Irish secondary education.
     Paradoxically, while being suspicious and even antagonistic to
     the media, they have been among the first to recognise the
     power of the media in our society and to equip themselves to

cope with the new demands. While encouraging media technology, they would be suspicious of any kind of media education which might be seen to be subversive.

5.   The high Art/low Art debate seems to be alive and well and living in Ireland judging from the reviews of one of the few Irish books on the media "Television and Irish Society".[16] These reviews epitomise the attitude of people who think that television, as a mass medium, is beneath the interest   of anyone with education.

6.   The media are thought to promote a consumerist immoral lifestyle by some people. Even home-produced programmes like the Late, Late, Show are accused of being an evil influence and of eroding our values. A recent article by John Healy in the Irish Times[17] epitomised this point of view.

While the Educational Structural Factors which might inhibit the development of Media Education could, conceivably, be changed or overcome, the cultural factors are not so easily resolved. The main opportunity for Media Education to become an integral part of the education system will come only if control is decentralised. Then those areas in which there is a perceived need and a desire for Media Education will pioneer its study, and,as is happening in the UK, other areas will eventually follow suite.

Ireland in the 80's was probably at the point in Media Education that the UK was at in the 60's. In second-level schools there was

some media education going on, but in an ad-hoc way and hampered by lack of equipment, materials and trained teachers. There was no agreement about what constitutes Media Education and a confusion with media technology.

But some excellent foundation work was being done by the Irish Film Institute, Ballyfermot Senior College and the Curriculum Development Unit in Trinity College Dublin as well as by individual teachers.

In June 1985 the first National Conference on Media Education was held in Dublin under the auspices of the Irish Film Institute, Ballyfermot Senior College and Radio Telefis Eireann. The findings from this research project were first presented at that conference. The conference was so successful that it led to the organisation of the Teachers' Association for Media Education with a membership in the first year of 200 teachers. In the same year a set of books for Irish teachers of media education were produced. The movement for media education in schools gained great impetus at that time but has since been hampered by accelerating change in other areas of education, cut-backs in the financing of education and low morale among teachers who expected to do training courses in their own time and very often at their own expense.

Media Studies is recognised in the new Junior cycle curriculum but is confined within the broad area of language and literature. There are still no guidelines on what areas of media and how they should be studied and the whole subject is still being taught in a very ad-hoc way. Some training courses for teachers are run by the

Department of Education but materials and equipment are still in short supply in schools. The demands made on teachers by the new curriculum are forcing media studies once more to a peripheral situation in the Irish educational scene. Yet, as the following data reveals, the media, particularly television, are very influential in the lives of young people and enjoy high credibility.

The Questionnaire

In the section of the questionnaire dealing with the influence and credibility of the media there are 5 questions: 51, 52, 53, 68 and 69.

The Media as a Source of Information

This researcher asked two questions which were also asked in the survey of adults for the Annan Report.[18] The first question was: "Where do you usually get most information about what is going on in this country and in the world today?" Students could opt for one of five possible answers – School, Friends or Relations, Radio, Newspapers, Television. The percentages who opted for each possible source of information were as follows:

School	8%	
Friends or Relations	3%	
Radio	23%)	
Newspapers	29%)	The combined media 89%
Television	37%)	

These figures surely show that the media are a major source of information for young people. The percentages opting for television

was fairly consistent across the sub-groups. The younger age group, both male and female, tended to rely more on school for information, while the older age group relied more on radio and newspapers.

The Credibility of the Media

From the above figures it is clear that 89% of the respondents relied on the media for information. This researcher then wanted to know, which of the media had the highest credibility. The second question asked: "If you got conflicting or different accounts of the same story from radio, TV and newspapers, which would you be most likely to believe?"

A massive 84% said that they would be most likely to believe television in this case. Only 8% said radio and another 8% said newspapers. Once again these percentages were fairly consistent right across the various sub-groups. The older group of students, both male and female were slightly more likely to say television than the younger age group. In similar type surveys in Israel,[19] 65% to 89% of students stated that they would believe television in the case of divergent information from various sources.

Why Television has such High Credibility

In order to understand why television has such high credibility, we must look at the reasons which students gave for choosing television as the most credible medium. The majority of students (52%) gave as their reason the idea that the camera doesn't lie, or seeing is believing, or words to that effect. Apparently dismissing radio altogether as a credible medium, 13% of students said that they

would believe television because newspapers tell lies. A third group (6%) said that they believe television because television couldn't afford to tell lies. (This group may have been influenced by a court case which was going on in Britain at the time of the survey involving Ester Ranzten and the "That's Life" team and a company which said that they had been lied about on her programme.) In the survey conducted in Israel 87% of the students believed that television presents reality as it is.[20]

Newspapers were nominated by 2% of students who said that they believe them because they sent their own reporters to the scene; 1% believed newspapers because they felt they could go back to a newspaper and read it again and another 1% believed that newspapers had more time to prepare new stories. The rest of the students gave a variety of responses but only 1% said that they would believe none of the media.

Here, it is interesting to consider what Klapper[21] said about media credibility:

> "Sources, or more precisely, the audience's image of sources, affects the audience's interpretation of the communication and its persuasive effectiveness. Sources regarded as credible, trustworthy or high in prestige apparently abet persuasion; while sources inspiring more negative images apparently hinder persuasion."

More than any other findings in the research, these two pieces of data are disquieting. The fact that young people use the combined

media as their main source of information on its own seems
reasonable. When they give such a high level of credibility to
television it should cause disquiet for the following reasons.

1)   They, according to the reasons given for believing television
        more than other medium, are seeing it as a window on the world
        and are not aware of the many agents which mediate between
        them and the original message.

2)   Television is capable of being used for propaganda purposes,
        as it has always been in totalitarian regimes. The
        effectiveness of Hitler's use of radio as an instrument of
        propaganda is historically appreciated. How much more
        effective television could be in the hands of a would-be
        dictator.

3)   Politicians in all countries are aware of the power of
        television and are taught to use it to its maximum benefit.
        As Klapper[22] says "The mass media are themselves regarded with
        awe and apparently confer status on the persons and concepts
        for which they are vehicles." If young people, or adults for
        that matter have no analytical skills where television is
        concerned, they are likely to be beguiled by the cult of the
        personality in politics, rather than be swayed by political
        policies. Luke Gibbons of Dublin City University conducted an
        interesting experiment with his students during the 1984
        General Election. One group of students listened to a debate
        between the leaders of the two parties, Mr Charles Haughey of
        Fianna Fail and Mr Garrett Fitzgerald of Fine Gael. Another

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group of students watched the debate on television. They were

then asked which leader in their opinion was the most

persuasive. The group listening to radio thought Fitzgerald

was the most persuasive because he had the best arguments.

The group watching television thought Mr Haughey was the most

persuasive. On analysis of the visual and oral recordings,

Gibbon came to the conclusion that Mr Haughey knew how to use

the television and exploited the medium to the full, whereas

Mr Fitzgerald paid little attention to the television camera

and behaved as though he was not being watched.

4)   These students are also likely to be unaware of the agenda

       setting power of the media especially television, and are

       likely to feel that what is important is that which television

       deems to be important.

       However, it must be remembered that television is very often a

       mirror of the more conservative values in our society and as

       McQuail[23] says can very often "reinforce cultural and

       institutional patterns." Added to that is the fact that young

       people are surrounded by mediating influences such as parents,

       teachers, friends, the community and the church. Klapper[24]

       put forward the thesis that ego-involved attitudes are

       peculiarly resistant to conversion by mass communication and

       gives religious and racial attitudes as examples of topics on

       which persuasive mass communication is particularly unlikely

       to produce conversions. The two recent referendums in Ireland

       could be seen as proof of this thesis since, in spite of a

trenchant media campaign to change public attitudes, the
general public dug in their heels and remained entrenched in
traditional attitudes.

Role Models on Television

If television has such high credibility amongst young people, it may
very well be providing role models. The fourth question asked the
students: "What character on television would you like to be like?"
They were then asked to give reasons for their choice. The rank
order of characters was as follows:

(1)   Nobody

(2)   Pam Ewing in Dallas

(3)   Tubbs or Crickett in Miami Vice

(4)   A Male Film Start, e.g. Clint Eastwood.

(5)   Amanda Carrington in Dynasty

(6)   Bobby Ewing in Dallas

(7)   J R Ewing in Dallas

(8)   Krystal Carrington in Dynasty.

Quite a sizeable number (15%) said that they did not wish to be like
anybody on television. This could either be interpreted as a very
healthy attitude meaning that they do not look to the unreal world
of television for role models, or it could mean that they do not
relate to the type of role models on television. The older group of
students both male and female were more likely to say this than the
younger group. There was little difference in the gender responses
to this question among those who answered "Nobody". Pam Ewing was
the second favourite with the girls and the reasons they gave for

this was her looks. Second favourite with the boys was Tubbs or Crockett in Miami Vice and they were chosen for their lifestyle, their money and their attraction to the opposite sex. The boys also favoured various male film starts for the same reasons. Amanda and Krystal were the next choices for the girls and one again they were chosen for their looks and their lifestyle. Bobby and JR were the next choices of the boys and they were chosen for their money, possessions, power. Howitt and Cumberbatch[25] had similar findings. Almost all of the characters mentioned were from the top ten favourite programmes and the majority of them from Dallas and Dynasty. All of the characters were from what could be called fantasy or escapist programmes. The male characters are admired for their money, possessions, power and lifestyle, while the females are admired mainly for their looks. As we saw in the chapter on Television, students distinguish realistic programmes from escapist ones. Students from another era might have admired Robin Hood or the Chalet Girls but they didn't necessarily emulate them in real life. There is no evidence to suggest that because students admire particular characters or even say that they would like to be like them, that they use them as role models. All of the characters chosen are from escapist programmes, and are obviously clearly seen as inhabitants of a fantasy world.

However, it means a worrying feature of television that it portrays such a small and stereotypical image of female characters. Since it is obvious that children use television for information and for learning about things which are outside their own experience, it is important that they should have a wide range of possible role models

to choose from. For females, in particular, television portrays
mainly stereotypical images of women, who are seen only in relation
to men and who are important mainly for their looks. Girls' comics
and magazines also reinforce this image of women. The more media
which portray stereotypical images of women, the more influence this
image is likely to have on girls and young women. Durkin[26] discussed
a number of experiments which seem to show that stereotypical
messages on television do have short term effects. But, as he
points out, little research has been done to discover the more long
term effects of overt or covert sex stereotyping on television.

From the discussions in this and previous chapters, it is clear that
research to date has shown that the media certainly influence
people. What is not so clear is the nature and extent of that
influence on individuals and on society. That the media, especially
television enjoy such high credibility among young people, is a
cause for concern. Television by its very nature is a glamorous,
authoritative medium. It needs to be demystified and deglamourised
for young people so that they will learn to treat it with the same
healthy scepticism that they have for the other media. The only way
to do this is by Media Education which will give to young people the
critical tools for evaluating all of the media but especially the
most credible and influential one - television.

Schnellor[27] has shown that it is possible to develop critical and
discriminating TV viewing, countering the formation of externally
controlled uniform thought presented by the media: it is also
interesting to note that the greatest change towards critical

viewing occurred among pupils of medium learning ability. The most

effective methods for the development of discriminating TV viewing

was found to be the fostering of analytical critical skills.

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SUMMARY

Home and the Media

Ownership

It is clear from the results of this survey that the media are an
integral and important part of the lives of young people. Home
ownership of the media is high - 98% of all respondents had at least
one television, while 50% had more than one. Gender was found to be
an important variable in the ownership of two media, computers an
video. This was particularly noticeable with computers where males
were twice as likely to own a computer as females. Males also
reported a higher ownership of videos.

Control

The television is situated "in the room where we relax" for 71% of
students, so that there seems little choice in whether to view or
not for individual members of the family. There seems to be little
over control of television viewing with only 23% reporting control
by parents.

Newspapers

Newspapers are bought every day by 82% of families although only 39%
of students read one every day. However, 52% of students
"sometimes" read the newspaper. Class and location were variables
in choice of Sunday newspaper. The Sunday World was favoured by
31%, mainly working class students. The Sunday Independent and the
Sunday Press were joint second, each with 24%. The former was
favoured by middle class urban groups and the latter, by middle

class rural groups.

Homework

The majority of students spent two hours per day or less on homework
and girls tended to spend more time than boys. There is a strong
inverse relationship between hours spent watching television during
the week and hours spent doing homework. While class is an
important variable in hours spent on homework in the younger age
group, it is not important in the older group.

School and the Media

Learning Sources

The majority of students think that some of what they learn in
school is relevant, with the older group rather less enthusiastic
than the younger ones. The majority is also aware that they learn a
certain amount from television. Television programmes are discussed
in class by 74% of students. Rural students are more likely to
report television being discussed in class while middle class urban
students are least likely. Only 17% answered "yes" to the question
"Do teachers like television?" This suggests that students perceive
teachers to have a negative attitude to television.

Use of Media in Schools

TV/Video is used in school occasionally for 67% of students and
every day for less than 1% of students. Urban students report
higher usage of TV/Video in school.

Newspapers are never used in school for 45% of students, and only 5% use them frequently. Middle class urban students report the highest usage of newspapers in school. Girls seem to use a newspaper in school more frequently than boys.

Reading

Membership of a Library

48% of students are members of a library. Membership is higher among younger females and lowest among the older males.

Books

52% said they often buy books and 34% said they never buy books. Girls were most likely to buy books. Least likely were older males. Class was not found to be an important variable.

Regular book reading is highest among younger females and lowest among older males, which is the reverse of newspaper reading patterns. More than two books had been read by 35% of students in the previous month, whilst 28% had read no books at all during that period.

Comics and Magazines

Comics and magazines were bought often by 30% of students, never by 24% and sometimes by 45%. Gender was a major factor in choice of comic or magazine. Teenage magazines, pop music and love magazines were popular with the girls while boys favoured funny comics, sports, pop music and computer magazines.

Radio Stations

Pirate stations were the most popular with 59%, RTE2 with 28% and RTE1 with 3%. Urban students favour pirate stations while rural students favour RTE1, but this choice may be affected by accessibility, or the lack of it, to a variety of stations.

Listening Times

Most students, 45% listen at night while 25% prefer weekends; 18% listen in the morning while 11% listen after school. Radio is more popular with the older age group in both genders. Girls tend to spend more time listening to radio than boys. One hour or less is spent listening to radio by 60% while 19% spend two hours or more.

Records and Tapes

Boys spend more time listening to records and tapes than girls. The majority of students, 68%, spend one hour or more listening to records or tapes, while 20% spend two hours or more.

Buying Patterns

Males spend more on records and tapes than females and tend to buy LP's while girls favour single records. Working class students spend more money on records and tapes than middle class students. The majority of students spend between £1 and £2 per week on records and tapes.

Television Viewing

Most Watched Stations

RTE1 was most watched by 36% of students, ITV second with 29% and BBC1 third with 24%. Class and location were found to be important variables in the choice of most watched station. Working class urban students showed different preferences to the majority. Of that sub-group 40% nominated ITV as the most watched station, BBC1 next with 28% and RTE1 third with 24%.

Hours Spent Viewing

On a weekday, 44% of students say that they spend three hours or more watching television. On Saturday and Sunday, 50% say they spend four hours or more on each day. That means that almost half the students surveyed spent about 23 hours per week watching television. Age was not found to be an important variable. Boys spent more time than girls viewing but the difference was not significant.

Social class was found to be a significant factor in hours spent viewing. Working class males, both urban and rural, spent the most hours viewing. No difference was found in viewing hours between single-channel and multi-channel areas.

Reasons for Watching Television

"Entertainment" was the reason given by 77% of students. "To pass the time" was the reason given by 13%.

Favourite Programmes

Gender is an important variable in programme preference. Miami Vice
was the favourite with all male sub-groups. Older females liked Top
of the Pops while younger females preferred Dallas. Hill St Blues
and Sports programmes were also popular with older males as was The
Young Ones. Older females also like Dynasty and Coronation Street.
No differences were found between single and multi-channel areas.
None of the favourite programmes was home-produced with the possible
exception of Sports programmes.

Soaps and Serials

Gender was found to be an important variable in the viewing of all
serials and soaps except Glenroe. Dallas was watched regularly by
70% of students and Glenroe by 69%, Coronation Street was watched
regularly by 57%, Dynasty by 55%, Falcon Crest by 45%, Emmerdale
Farm by 23%, Brookside by 21% and Crossroads by 14%.

Reasons for Liking Soaps and Serials

19% of students said it was because they were "realistic", because
they were "interesting" said 13%, "escapist" according to another
13%, "exciting" was the reason for 11% and "funny" said 9%.

Location and class were not found to be significant variables in
response to questions on soaps.

Realism and Escapism

Characters in Glenroe were thought to be realistic by 79% while 24%
thought the characters in Dallas were realistic.

Favourite Characters in Soaps

Miley of Glenroe was chosen by 22%, J R from Dallas by 16%. Dinney from Glenroe by 10%, Hilda Ogden from Coronation Street by 6%, Bobby from Dallas 5%, Pam from Dallas 4% and Alexis from Dynasty 4%.

"Humorous" was the reason given for their choice by 26%, "I like the way he/she creates mischief" by 14%, "good looking" by 12%, acts the part well by 10%.

Programmes for Young People

According to 82% of the students teenagers need their own programmes. Yet of the ten favourite programmes, only three could be termed young people's.

What they Actually View

What young people say are their favourite programmes and what they actually view are not quite the same thing. The Late, Late, Show had almost as many students viewing it as MT USA or Top of the Pops, yet it is not mentioned in the list of favourite programmes. What they view is governed by many factors other than personal choice.

News and Current Affairs

The News is watched regularly by 83% and Today, Tonight by 49%. Girls tended to watch news programmes slightly more than boys.

Crime Drama

Miami Vice was watched regularly by 74%, Remington Steele by 64%, Hill St Blues by 63%, Hardcastle and McCormick 62%, The A Team by

61%, T J Hooker by 45%, Hawaiian Heat by 45%, Starsky and Hutch by 39% and Bergerac by 34%.

Gender is an important variable in the audience of this genre. Only Miami Vice appeals to both genders. Generally girls choose the crime dramas which have the least overt violence, whereas boys tend to favour the more violent programmes.

Attitudes to Violence on Television

The response "I don't mind it" was chosen by 47%, 18% chose "It's not real", 26% chose "I like it" and 6% "Sometimes it upsets me".

Girls are much more likely to say that they are upset by the violence or that it is not real. Boys don't admit that it upsets them and are much more likely to say that they like it.

Cinema and Video

Cinema

An occasional visit to the cinema is the norm for 74% of students, 12% say they go once a month, 11% never go to the cinema and 3% go once a week. Cinema is slightly more popular in rural areas.

Access to Video Cassette Recorders

Although only 24% of students have a video in their home, 56% say that they watch videos in other people's homes. The older age group of both genders are particularly likely to watch in other homes. Whilst 84% of students report watching television as part of a family group, video watching is obviously a peer group activity.

Favourite Types of Videos

Horror videos were the most popular type overall, particularly with male students. However, most students viewed quite a wide variety of other types of videos.

Advertising

The majority of students, 66%, said that they did not like ads on television. Gender was an important variable in this case. Females were more likely to like ads than males and working class females showed the greatest acceptance of ads. Least likely to like ads were older, working class males.

Disliking Ads

The main reasons given for disliking ads were that they broke the enjoyment of a programme or that they were boring or time-wasting.

Liking Ads

The 34% who said that they like ads on television gave the reason that ads are entertaining or funny. Some said that they were informative or gave time to make coffee during a programme.

Favourite Ads

The most popular type of ad with all sub-groups was ads featuring babies, which was due to a strong advertising campaign of the time for disposable nappies.

Second most popular type was ads for alcoholic drinks, many of which

use symbols which can only be decoded by young people. Other ads

for alcoholic drinks are popular because they feature sport.

Third most popular type of ad were ads for crisps, chocolate and

sweets. Ads featuring young people were in fourth place.

Influence and Credibility

A Source of Information

Most students, 89%, rely on the media as their main source of

information. Television was the main source for 37%, newspapers

29%, radio 23%, while only 8% relied on school and 3% on friends and

relations.

Credibility of the Different Media

Television enjoys the highest credibility of any of the media, as

far as young people are concerned. In the case of conflicting

accounts of the same story from radio, TV and newspapers,84% said

that they would believe television,while 8% opted for radio and

another 8% for newspapers.

Reasons for the High Credibility of Television

The reason given by 52% of students was the idea that the camera

doesn't lie.

Admired Characters on Television

When asked which character on television they would like to be in

life, 15% said that they did not wish to be like anyone. The older

group of both genders were most likely to say this. Pam Ewing from
Dallas was the favourite with the girls and Tubbs or Crockett from
Miami Vice with the boys. Most of the characters chosen were from
soaps or fantasy.

Conclusions

From the results of this survey and reading of the relevant
research, the following conclusions may be drawn.

1) The media are an integral part of the lives of young people.
    They are a major and important source of entertainment and
    information.

2) Different media assume different degrees of important at
    different stages of the adolescent cycle. The dominant medium
    for the 12-14 year old appears to be the television. For the
    15-17 year old the music media and video assume greater
    important because of their centrality in the social life of
    the peer group. Television, however, still retains some
    importance at this stage. Advertising is, perhaps, the medium
    to which the young are most vulnerable, since it is the only
    medium which sets out to persuade rather than to inform or
    entertain. Reading and the print media in general are less
    important than the electronic media in the lives of most young
    people. Although girls tend to read more books than boys,
    much of the reading they do may have a negative effect since
    their reading matter appears to be so stereotyped.

3)   Young people are not a homogenous mass who all use the media
     in the same way. There are gender, age and class differences
     in their use of the media. In fact, there may be as many
     differences between any two sub-groups of young people and
     their use of the media as there is likely to be between young
     people and adults and their use of the media.

4)   Young people use the media in a different way to adults. An
     example of this would be the use they make of video horror
     films as a test of machismo, or the silence filling use they
     make of pop music. They may also derive different meanings
     from the media than adults but there is little research in
     this area.

5)   Parents seem to exert little authority in the home where the
     media are concerned. Most adolescents in the survey seemed to
     have free access to the media and few homes seemed to have any
     rules concerning the use of the media. However, where parents
     may have an effect is on how their children interpret the
     media. Television is viewed by most adolescents from within
     the family circle therefore parents may interpret or mediate
     between media messages and their children.

6)   In spite of the centrality of the media in the lives of young
     people, schools almost ignore the media, with the obvious
     exception of books. Even in the case of books, schools may
     very well have a role in putting young people off reading by
     their methods of teaching and by the lack of guidance and lack

of provision of enjoyable books for teenagers. Newspapers are used in a minority of classes. Students do not seem to think that their teachers approve of television. The electronic media are little used as teaching aids in schools even where they are available. Some teachers discuss the media in schools but some of this discussion is likely to be inoculative.

7) Television enjoys high credibility amongst young people and is probably the most influential medium in their lives. Whereas they tend to treat the other media with some suspicion or cynicism, they take television, especially television news, at face value. The potential of television is obvious here for propaganda purposes.

8) There is quite a difference between students' declared preferences in television programmes and what they actually view. They are watching a far greater range of programmes than their declared preferences would suggest. This of course, enhances the educational value of television, since young people are introduced to a wide range of topics, situations and characters with whom they might not normally come in contact. But multiple television sets in the home, time shifting by video and more and more television stations available via satellite may mean that young people will become more selective in their viewing. This means that they may only choose to watch the familiar and the favourite, thus narrowing the range of programmes to which they are exposed.

9) Many of the most popular television programmes and video
    cassettes are very violent. A sizeable number of young people
    enjoy scenes of violence. There is no clear evidence to
    suggest that viewing violence has an adverse effect on young
    people. However it is clear from this survey that this
    violence upsets many young people, especially girls. It is
    also clear from the research that viewing violence may have an
    adverse effect on young people who are already at risk. Most
    research has concentrated on the short-term effects of
    violence on television and little is known about the long-term
    effects of such viewing.

10) Pop music, which is so ubiquitous and so central to the lives
    of most young people has been little researched, perhaps
    because of the ephemeral nature of the medium. Not only is it
    important in itself because of the use which young people make
    of it, but it is becoming more and more important as an
    integral part of advertising, film and television programming.
    It has also spawned a new medium of its own, the pop video.
    The response of the different gender, age and social group of
    young people to pop music are very different as are the uses
    that they make of the various music media.

11) The widespread use of video and the advent of satellite
    television has made the control of what young people view
    almost impossible, even if one considered it desirable. Even
    the Video Recordings Bill gives little real protection, since
    it will probably just drive the offensive videos underground.

Uncontrolled violence and pornography are just two areas of concern for those involved with young people. There is also the potential of television for propaganda which has already been adverted to.

The only real protection for young people is to be educated to be constructively critical of the media. However, Media Education, when this research project began in 1985, was gaining momentum in Irish second level schools, helped by the Teachers' Association for Media Education and organisations such as the Irish Film Institute. Now, because of educational cutbacks and loss of morale it has lost ground in the fight for a place in the curriculum. Many young people are not receiving any media education and are unlikely to do so in the near future.

Recommendations for Future Research

1) The use of the media as an indicator of power and control in the home.

2) The effects of the use of television and video in schools.

3) An exploratory study of the book-reading habits of Irish adolescents.

4) An investigation of the meanings that young people derive from different forms of music.

5)   The effects of advertising on those who cannot afford to buy.

6)   A comparison of the level of credibility of the media before
       and after a series of media education classes.

7)   The influence of media campaigns on young people's attitude to
       health issues.

QUESTIONNAIRE
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1. Age   12 - 14   □   15 - 17   □

2. Gender   Male   □   Female   □

3. Type of School   Secondary   □   Vocational   □
                                Community   □   Comprehensive □

4. Location   Urban   □   Rural   □

5. Do you live in an area
    which receives   R.T.E. Only   □   Multi-Channel □

6. Do you intend to leave
    School   after Group   □   after Inter   □
                                after Leaving   □   go on to Third
                                                    Level Education □

7. Is your father   Employed   □   Unemployed   □
                                Not Living at   □   Deceased   □
                                Home

8. If he is employed, say
    what his job is exactly   ....

9. Does your mother work   Does not work   □   Works part-time □
    outside the home   outside the home
                                Works full-time □

10. Put a tick against any
    of the following which
    you have in your home.   Television   □   Radio   □
                                Record Player   □   Cassette Player □
                                Video   □   Computer   □

11. Have you more than one
    television at home ?   Yes   □   No   □

12. How many hours do you   1 hour or less □   2 hours   □
    spend on homework each
    week-day ?   3 hours   □   4 hours or more □

13. Do you think that what   Yes   □   No   □
    you learn in school
    is relevant to ordinary   Some of it   □   Don't know   □
    life?

14. Are television programmes   Never   □   Sometimes   □
    discussed in class ?
                                Frequently   □

15. Do you learn from television ?

A lot ☐   A certain amount ☐

Very little ☐   Nothing

16. Do teachers like television?

Yes ☐   Some do ☐

Don't know ☐   No

17. How often is TV/Video used in class ?

Every day ☐   Once a week ☐

Occasionally ☐   Never

18. Would you like TV/Video to be used more in school

Yes ☐   No ☐

19. Do you ever use newspapers for work in school ?

Frequently ☐   Sometimes ☐

Occasionally ☐   Never

20. Do you get a newspaper in your Home ?

Every day ☐   Sometimes ☐

Sundays only ☐   Never

21. Do you read the newspaper?

Every day ☐   Sometimes ☐

Sundays only ☐   Never

22. Write the name of the Sunday newspaper which you get in your home.

....

23. How many books have you read in the last month?

More than 4 ☐   2 - 4 ☐

1 only ☐   None

24. Do you belong to a library other than the school one?

Yes ☐   No ☐

25. Do you buy books?

Very often ☐   Often ☐

Sometimes ☐   Never

26. Do you buy comics or magazines?

Very often ☐   Often ☐

Sometimes ☐   Never

27. If you do, name your favourites.

....

....

....

28. How much money per week would you spend on comics or magazines ?

£1 or less ☐ £2 ☐

£3 ☐ More than £3 ☐

29. How often do you go to the cinema?

Once a week ☐ Once a Month ☐

Occasionally ☐ Never ☐

30. How many hours per day do you spend listening to the radio?

Less than 1 ☐ 1 Hour ☐

2 hours ☐ 3 hours or more ☐

31. At what time of the day do you listen to the radio most

At night ☐ In the morning ☐

After School ☐ Week-ends ☐

32. Name the radio station you listen to most often

....

33. How much money per week would you spend on records or tapes?

£1 - £2 ☐ £2 - £3 ☐

£3 - £4 ☐ More than £4 ☐

34. Do you usually buy singles or LPs?

Singles ☐ LPs ☐

35. How much time every day would you spend listening to records or tapes?

1 hour or less ☐ 2 Hours ☐

3 Hours ☐ 4 Hours or more ☐

36. How many hours would you spend on a weekday watching television

1 hour or less ☐ 2 Hours ☐

3 Hours ☐ 4 Hours or more ☐

37. How many hours would you spend on Saturday or Sunday watching television?

1 hour or less ☐ 2 Hours ☐

3 hours ☐ 4 hours or more ☐

38. Put a tick against any of the following programmes which you watch or have watched regularly.

Glenroe ☐ Dynasty ☐

Coronation St. ☐ Dallas ☐

Falcon Crest ☐ Brookside ☐

Crossroads ☐ Emmerdale Farm ☐

39. If you like serials such as the above, say what it is about them that you like.

....

....

....

....

40. Which character in the serials
    do you like best?   ....

41. Why do you like that character?   ....

                                         ....

                                         ....

42. Do you think that the characters
    in Dallas are realistic?   Yes [ ] No [ ]

43. Do you think that the characters
    in Coronation Street are
    realistic?   Yes [ ] No [ ]

44. Do you think that the characters
    in Glenroe are realistic?   Yes [ ] No [ ]

45. Put a tick against any of the   Miami Vice   [ ] Hill St.Blues   [ ]
    following programmes which
    you watch or have watched   Hardcastle   [ ] The A-Team
    regularly.   & McCormick
                                         T.J. Hooker   [ ] Bergerac
                                         Hawaiian Heat   [ ] Remington
                                                               Steele
                                         Starsky &   [ ]
                                         Hutch

46. How do you feel about the   Don't mind it [ ] Sometimes it   [ ]
    violence in these programmes.   upsets me
                                         It's not real [ ] I like it   [ ]

47. Put a tick against any of the   The Late,   [ ] Murphy's Micro   [ ]
    following programmes which   Late Show   Quiz-M.
    you watch or have watched   The Women's   [ ]
    regularly.   Programme

48. Put a tick against any of the   MT U.S.A.   [ ] Top of the Pops   [ ]
    following programmes which
    you watch or have watched   Swalk   [ ] Fame   [ ]
    regularaly.   Grange Hill   [ ] Top Club   [ ]

49. Do you think that teenagers
    need their own special
    TV programmes   Yes [ ] No [ ]

0.   Put a tick against any of the
     following programmes which you
     watch or have watched regularly.

The News	☐	Today Tonight	☐
Newsnight RTE 2	☐	Newsnight BBC 2	☐
Panorama	☐	World in Action	☐

1.   Where do you usually get most
     information about what is going
     on in this country and in the
     world today?

School	☐	Friends or Relations	☐
Radio	☐	Television	☐
Newspapers	☐		

2.   If you got different or
     conflicting accounts of the
     same story from radio, TV and
     newspapers, which would you
     be most likely to believe?

| Newspapers | ☐ | Television | ☐ |
| Radio | ☐ | | |

3.   Give reasons for your answer
     to Q. 52.

     ....

     ....

     ....

     ....

4.   Which television station
     do you watch most?

RTE 1	☐	RTE 2	☐
BBC 1	☐	BBC 2	☐
ITV	☐	Channel 4	☐

5.   Who chooses the station
     for the family to watch?

Mother	☐	Father	☐
Sister/ Brother	☐	You	☐
By agreement	☐		

6.   Where is the family
     television situation
     in the house?

| In a separate TV room | ☐ | In kitchen | ☐ |
| In the room where we relax | ☐ | In the room where we relax and eat | ☐ |

7.   Who controls the amount of
     time you spend watching TV

| Mother | ☐ | Father | ☐ |
| Yourself | ☐ | No-one | ☐ |

58. Do you usually watch television with

Family ☐ Friends ☐

Alone ☐

59. Name your two favourite television programmes

1. ....

2. ....

60. Why do you watch television?

For enter-tainment ☐ To pass time ☐

To learn about the world ☐ Don't know ☐

61. Do you ever watch video in other people's houses?

Yes ☐ No ☐

62. Name the last two video films you saw

....

....

63. Name the best two video films you saw

....

....

64. Do you like advertisements on television

Yes ☐ No ☐

65. Give reasons for your answer to Q.64

....

....

....

66. What is your favourite advertisement on television

....

....

67. What character on television
    would you like to be like?   ....

68. Give your reasons for your
    answer to Q.67.   ....

                                      ....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.