OPEN LECTURE

TELEVISION

NEOPHOBIA

III

SPECTATOR + AUDIENCE

NOT concerned with 'audience research' as such, though perceptions grow out of that.

QUOTE Halloran, effect - P.14

- Research on "mass communications". Background character - some evidence.

- 'what people do with television'. Needs they bring satisfaction they derive, consequences in terms of behaviour + values. Schramm used H-P20

- to reinforce ways of life + attitudes already held... through a process of mediating factors + influence P27

- children in stable environment do not confuse make believe world of TV with real experience

P23-4

but

- provide "models" + norms

- within limits defined except natural can act as an obstacle to real solution of problem, ~~under~~

- violence does not reduce aggression vicariously

No 'catharsis', either in the Aristotelian sense, or the Freudian 'transfer + sublimation' sense, or in the 'working off vicariously' behavioral sense.

Either for good or bad reasons, these 'effects' are described in terms of the audience-response. Assumed that audience is related to what it hears + sees through a broad structure - social background, interests, character orientations, interests + attitudes, + that it sees selectively, taking that which reinforces or supports.

No proof of direct mediation of attitudes + values

Reinforcement a stray hair in the chain of social change.

MERTON + LAZARSFELD: 'what is not said' - same point.

Is this different from the relationships involved in the role of the onlooker + spectator as we know it in other situations? I.e. do we 'read' the mass media or we receive 'real life', simply it around or selective perceptions + our interests, or as we receive fiction, a 'deliberate "as if"' with a 'suspension of disbelief'?

The 'onlooker' has an 'active role' too. He attends (finds it interesting). He evaluates (faint dislike or intense response - interest, censured, respectful, horror, pity). An interest (welcoming or not). Expression of sentiment (an 'ending important to evaluate some object or class of objects in a particular way').

The 'event' for the onlooker reflects the existing bent, direction, structure of interests: it also extends or reinforces or modifies. How?

(5A)

More detail about

- learning
- reinforcing
- sympathising, feeling with

Role of onlooker —

(1) interest that this is happening to fellow human beings.

(2) possibilities of one's own life brought to mind because of an extension of insight into the kinds of experience, needs, satisfactions which can be gained. — how it works.

(3) learn the kinds of satisfaction which can be had.

HARDING: 'a deep and extensive influence on our systems of value'.

(4) spectators in memory or imagination. Hence the 'experiences' are new, and of the pattern of response is not.

(5) look at ourselves in the imagined situation - but a <u>little less</u> we are <u>distanced</u> from it, hence less buffeted by it: and both <u>participants</u> & <u>spectators</u>.

(6) Within 'make believe' situations some of the conditions of life are suspended so that the underlying structure & meaning of the event is more sharp. The reader or spectator is <u>held</u> between imaginative insight (not mere projection or identification)

with what is going on
(work appropriate extension &
feeling) and an understanding
of what it means (a capacity
to 'weigh it up', not to lose
oneself in it, and to evaluate
it. - Specialised form of
evaluation - as given as PS

In 'fictional situations', the
shape is 'imposed'.
JAMES: 'where life is all
confusion & inclusion,
art is all selection &
exclusion'

Selective aspect highlighted
by the form. Author not only
reports selectively, but conveys
'an appropriate attitude to
what he saw'.

The suspension of disbelief between empathic identification + understanding is the essence of Aristotle's catharsis.

'what we see is 'represented life' – what Aristotle calls imitation. NOT reproduced life – an action or praxis

PERCUSSION: Pg. 9

The identification = pathos = pity

The understanding = judgement = fear. JOYCE

redefinition of catharsis

The form can permit this process because it is 'probable' or because it deliberately chooses

to "suspend disbelief" —
(Keaton, Jarry, Roy, Malabaliue)
in order to express 'real
preoccupations, fears & desires'.

Technique of presentation
— Westerns

The use of conventions —
agreed terms for suspending or
distorting reality — is a
complex procedure for compelling
certain 'extension of sympathy'
or permissive orientation from the
audience.

Complex because author must
compel thus & then, with the
form, convince. The convention is
not = to life, but to a semblance
of life (verisimilitude). Or to
carry its own conviction.

The style + the form, then, constantly modify the content. They make us in control our selective responses, carry with them their own interpretation (which sometimes we accept, sometimes repulse), redistribute emphasis. Precise control over our feelings

~~LADY CHATTERLEY~~

HARDING: 'fiction is a recognized mode of communication for discussing the choices of life'.

Like the onlooker (12)

The reader/discriminates at some level all the time. According to the consistency of the presentation, & the appropriate attitudes carried in style, and the selection offered carried in the form. Or disrupting. Constant process of evaluation — partly because of the structure of subverts is the reader is touched partly because 'real' preoccupations Therefore suspended. May never be more formulated than 'that's silly' or 'stop prodding me - I see it differently' or 'I wonder whether or the part the castle is a symbol ...' or 'yes, I am convinced.'

(12A)

Aristotle's 'recognition'
is a form of evaluation.

NOT a simple 'loss to the material' - identification. Rather, a spectrum of responses:

- imagine ourselves in situations other than the one we are in
- see resemblances, only to reject them, to recognise the persona as 'other'.
- work formulation or the definition of desires within a designed context.
- multifarious possibilities of life.
- empathic or projected insight into another's dilemma - sympathy.
- loss of self to the character. (disrupting or crew of the action).

(K)

HARDING : in Othello

murder of Desdemona, not simply feeling what he feels, but feeling pity for him.

Hoping for as well as with the hero.

All this presupposes a complex interaction between spectator and material, in which directly mediated values are only one aspect.

The basis is the capacity to conduct one's dialogue with the art, and consists of manipulating the distances between spectator – work – author. Assumes that the author achieves (expresses, creates) some part of what he would say: that the work carries its own connections (items) and that the characters have their intended consistency (within a praxis or play) and exist as objects: and that the spectator is in some possession of himself, and only

In the rarest instances 'lost', 'out of himself' in the 'author's hands'.

The mass media are essentially <u>visual</u> media. The cinematic arts / photography the 'capture of nature'. Popular fiction - strip cartoon effects, or the literal presentation of the event. Television - communication by images. Advertising - the subordination of language to image, photo, design. Cinema - the imposed rhythms of editing, montage, juxtaposition.

In the photographic media,

the distances between author - work - spectator are drastically manipulated.

DANIEL BELL: "The eclipse of distance".

In action painting, the 'frame' and the 'subject' have collapsed. The painting is an act, a process, and it is the process we are asked to judge.

ROSENBERG: P27 / P29

Television
Pop music
} are often events

Our response is the response of the onlooker rather than the spectator

Most TV is
'recreated life' half-way
between the 'as if'
situation and the situation
in 'real life'.

Documentary + actuality =
television. The significance of
the form + presentation of
reality. Yet the interest is
in the real event. We look
for information as onlookers
~~spectators~~ but we are
offered material as if we
were an audience. An
art of communication with
a supposed form.
Serial images. Distracted
viewing. The literalness +
overmodelling of detail

why the distances should have so collapsed, whether or not an act which is also an event can be evaluated for its intrinsic meaning or only as an content + value, ~~if impact is immediate or~~ ~~the effects we don't know.~~ event, we don't yet know

not an information media.

ATTENTION : P 17

But the real question begins from this relationship, + not from the end of the scale defined as "effects" in a sociological sense.