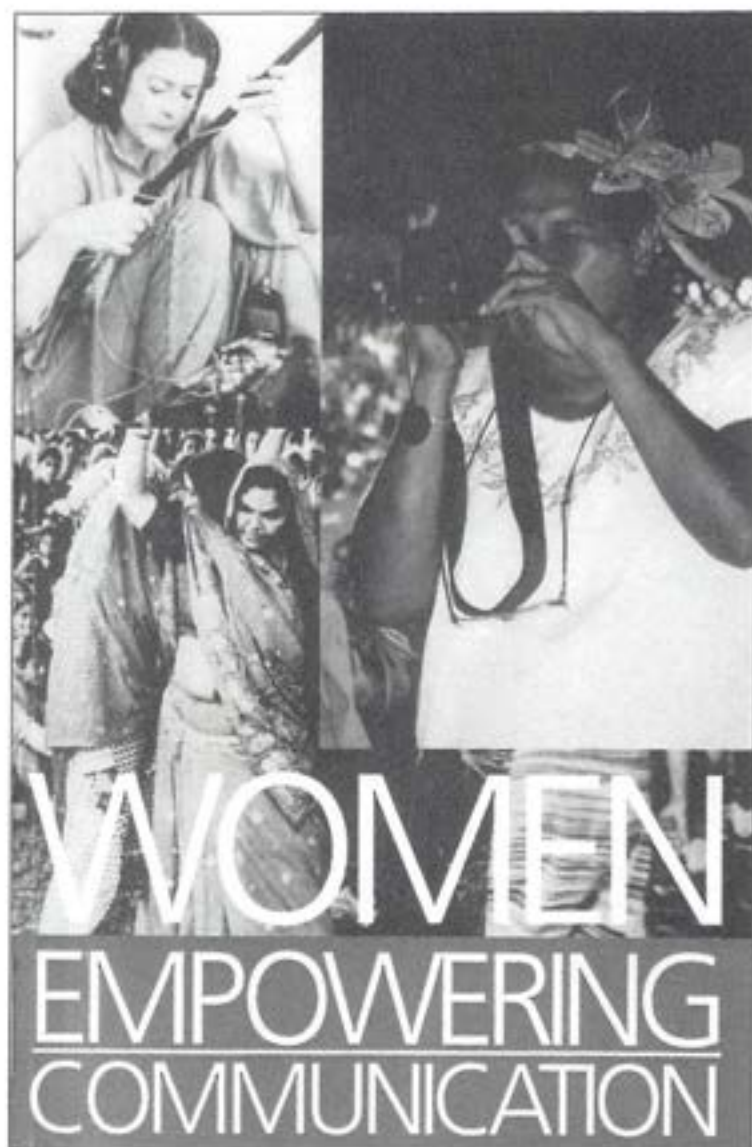


Media Development

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A Resource Book on Women and the Globalisation of Media

edited by Margaret Gallagher and Lilia Quindoza-Santiago

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- * Indigenous Social Norms and Women in Asian Media
- * Mass Media in the English Caribbean
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- * Recovery of a Lost Decade: Women and Media in Latin America
- * Among Veils and Walls: Women and Media in the Middle East
- * Women in Media, Women's Media: The Search for Linkages in North America
- * Bridging Women Across the Pacific

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3 Women empowering communication - the conference experience

Teresita Hermans

4 Women and communication alternatives: hope for the next century

Kamla Bhasin

8 Women, media and power: a time of crisis

Michèle Mattelart

12 Women, communication and development: changing dominant structures

Noeleen Heyzer

15 Women, communication and socio-cultural identity: creating a common vision

Brigalia Bam

18 Women organise for alternative media

Communication models

25 The Bangkok Declaration

27 Women, democracy and media in South Africa

Alison Gillwald

33 Replacing false images

Melanie A. May

38 Women and minorities on TV: A study in casting and fate

George Gerbner

45 The Warsaw Statement on 'Free Media'

46 The Honolulu Statement of the MacBride Round Table

48 Ethnic minority media in the UK - access and control

Patrick Ismond

51 On the screen . . .

56 On the page . . .

Technopoly, the Surrender of Culture to Technology, by Neil Postman;
Apprendre avec l'actualité. Théorie et pédagogie de l'événement, by Christian
Hermelin; *Los directores del cine argentino; Las mentiras de una guerra:*
Desinformación y censura en el conflicto del Golfo; Words Like Colored Glass,
by Daniel K. Berman; *A Passion for Radio*, by Bruce Girard; *Getting the*
Message: News, Truth and Power, edited by John Eldridge.

In the next issue

The 3/94 issue of *Media Development* will take the theme of 'Religious
broadcasting - the future', discussing the role of religious broadcasting in the
context of changes in broadcast legislation and the emergence of multi-faith
societies.



Women call for democratisation of media

'Communication Empowering Women' was one of the first suggestions for the theme of the international women's conference in Bangkok. The theme finally chosen, however, was 'Women Empowering Communication'. The first version was women-centred, suggesting that all that women needed was communication power. The second emphasized the contributions, or the difference, which women could make to our media environment.

The second wording of the theme was well borne out during the women's conference from 12 to 17 February 1994. It demonstrated that women were not primarily concerned about their own power, important though it is, but much more about the world in which we, women, men and children are living. The Bangkok Declaration starts with the lapidary sentence: 'Our goal is a more just, people-centred and sustainable world order.' The Declaration's second paragraph begins with the statement, 'Women are concerned with the basic needs of our societies, with the creation of life and the preservation of the environment...'

This broad but deep concern for life on earth was echoed in many speeches, most of them spontaneous, and in theatrical presentations, video shows and discussion groups. Of course, there was the realisation that the ruling hierarchies, consisting mainly of men, have messed up life (including women's own), and the created order, for too long. If men cannot work out a 'sustainable world order', let them be joined by women who, as Bangkok showed, have plenty of ideas of their own.

However, the women also realised that equality and equal participation were not sufficient to change the characteristically male-created structures. One speaker, addressing the media situation, declared: 'We have come to understand that the women-media relationship can only be analyzed, and successful strategies for changing it can only be developed, if we take account of the entire cultural, political and ideological spectrum and study the eco-

nomic context in which this particular relationship (between women and the media) is created and takes shape' (Noeleen Heyzer).

Clothes, dance, music - rooted in culture

The visual contrast to the usual international conference could not have been greater. Instead of mostly men in grey suits and uniform ties, there were the flowing saris of South Asia, and the brightly coloured gowns of women from Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. Instead of polite applause at the end of presentations, there was spontaneous appreciation and audience participation - in some instances, women broke into song and dance.

Clothes, music and dance came to symbolize women's rootedness in their own cultures. Could it be that women value their cultures more than men do? Yes, in a certain sense. No love was lost, though, by the women at Bangkok for the repressive patriarchal structures of culture. But they were concerned about the current onslaught on cultures by transnational mass media. Women from Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America were particularly worried about television's effects on their cultures. What they said about CNN, Star TV and even the BBC's World Service television was less than complimentary. No, this is not the much vaunted brave new world of television. The long-term consequences of the steadily growing stream of audio-visual productions now swamping the cities of Asia are still unknown. But it will certainly alter the cultural consciousness of millions of people.

Women's concern for their cultural environment should not come as a surprise. They have taught us the deepest embodiment of all culture, and the principal means of communication: our mother tongues.

Women's networks - dialogue and action

The current so-called democratic structures of societies have been of little

direct benefit to the majority of women, almost anywhere in the world. Women are still 'at the bottom of all hierarchies' (as the Bangkok Declaration says). 'If our interests are met, the interests of all humanity will also be satisfied.' Speaker after speaker called for an ongoing process of democratization, a part of which is the democratization of the mass media themselves.

Transnational media, the women noted, were accountable to no one, and thus veritable obstacles to democratic processes. Participants working for mainstream media, while admitting their less than democratic structures, still held out hopes for their reform. Others had given up such hopes. They emphasized alternative or people's media, specifically women's media. They wish (from the Bangkok Declaration) 'to create media that encourage dialogue and debate; media that advance women's and people's creativity; media that reaffirm women's wisdom and knowledge, and that make people into subjects rather than objects and targets of communication. Media which are responsive to people's needs.'

Network of networks

The outward expression for this type of media was the communication of which women are the experts: networking. It was one of the most frequently used terms at the Bangkok conference. Women's networks are democratic and dialogical institutions par excellence. They avoid hierarchies but are linkages between individuals and institutions on equal terms.

In that sense the 430 participants who gathered in Bangkok formed a large network of networks existing in 80 countries. As one of them remarked: 'Listening to these women, moving among them, sharing stories and views, was in itself an empowering and heady experience.' There is no doubt. Women's networks have been strengthened in Bangkok and will grow as a result of it. Whatever fundamental changes ensue may well come from women's networks. ■

Women empowering communication – the conference experience

The road that led to Bangkok started more than three years ago. After sponsoring and organising numerous regional and national consultations on women and the media, the World Association for Christian Communication proposed a global women's conference to reassess the communication developments and strategies of the last decade and plan new lines of action for the future. WACC approached two women's information networks, Isis International, based in Manila, and the International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC), in New York, to co-organise the conference. Three planning committee meetings were held, attended by staff of the three organisations and media consultants Margaret Gallagher and Doris Hess. A local host committee was formed in Thailand, composed of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), which was to be the venue, and women's groups in Bangkok, led by Friends of Women Foundation.

The conference was opened by Khurying Supatra Masdit, convenor of the 1995 NGO Forum in Beijing, who spoke of the challenges confronting women's groups worldwide. There were also greetings from Dr Iam Chaya-Ngam, president of STOU, Rev Carlos Valle, general secretary of WACC, and from the staff of Isis and IWTC.

The programme was structured so that each day had a sub-theme which was explored through a more theoretical keynote speech, two actual case studies or 'communication models' and an audio-visual presentation, followed by separate working groups. Interfaith meditation sessions preceded the plenaries each morning and media showcases were held in the evening. A media resource fair showed women's publications and other displays. Field trips to one of eight women's groups in Bangkok were arranged at the start of the conference. Features and reports of these activities were carried by the daily newsletter *WECommunicate*.

The first day presentations on the theme of Media and Power were led by Michèle Mattelart. She focused on the internal debates within feminism as they relate to critical media theory. Presentations of two practical mass media experiments by women's groups followed: Women's Feature Service and the Feminist International Radio Endeavour. A presentation of women's perspectives in film was made by Sylvia Spring of Mediawatch Canada, who described the work of Kathleen Shannon, founder of Studio D of the National Film Board of Canada.

The theme of Communication Alternatives was examined in the keynote speech of Kamla Bhasin. She challenged prevailing dominant structures of media and society and warned against the trends of centralisation, monopolisation and globalisation. Communication models from Tanzania Media Women's Association and Kali for Women Publishers (India) showed examples of alternative media. A presentation on women's alternative cinema was also given by Patricia Alvear of Cine Mujer, Colombia.

Expounding on the theme of Communication and Development, Noeleen Heyzer stressed the need to counter gender

stereotypes and western male domination of global media. Development Through Radio in Zimbabwe and Friends of Women in Thailand were presented as models for the use of media for development.

The pulsating beat of drums filled the plenary hall as Sistren Women's Theatre Collective from Jamaica presented excerpts from three of its plays. Sistren used traditional songs, dances and humour to highlight issues of gender stereotyping and inequality.

The final day's session on the theme of Communication and Socio-Cultural Identity was led by Brigalia Bam. An active proponent of peace and human rights in South Africa, Brigalia urged women to develop a common identity, and challenged them to seek communication between people, not machines. The need to make the women's movement truly international was emphasised by the network Women Living Under Muslim Laws. Another model presented was the work of women's health and environment networks REDEH and Rede Mulher in Brazil. The final presentation came from the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA). Through excerpts from its various plays, the PETA women highlighted dramatic cases of women's oppression.

The afternoon working groups examined the daily themes further with more case studies and discussions. Forty working groups in all met over four days and produced resolutions. These were then reformulated by a drafting committee chaired by Joan Ross Frankson and presented in the closing plenary. These resolutions, framed within a broad statement of principles, became the Bangkok Declaration.

The closing programme was a celebration of women's creativity in communication. Through slides, songs, poetry and dances, regional presentations reflected the solidarity and spontaneous spirit of the conference.

A majority of participants stayed for the 1½-day Post-Conference Workshops, which offered a change of pace and a focus on skills. The workshops were on such wide-ranging topics as batik-making, desktop publishing, women's theatre, e-mail, and media literacy.

Kamla Bhasin described the conference experience aptly when she called it a much-needed 'stop-over' for women like her – often working in isolation. The opportunity to meet people from all over the world committed to the same goals, to touch base, to share and discuss, to listen and learn, to reflect and plan, to affirm and be affirmed – perhaps this is what real networking is all about. We found it empowering. ■

Condensed from the conference report by Teresita Hermano. The Conference was made possible by grants from: AIDAB, Australia; Brot für Alle, Switzerland; Church of Sweden Mission; CIDA, Canada (through ASEAN Section, Philippines); DANIDA, Denmark; EMW, Germany; EZE, Germany; ICCO, Netherlands; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands; SIDA, Sweden; UNIFEM, USA; United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, USA; United Board for Higher Christian Education in Asia, USA; WACC, England; World Council of Churches, Switzerland.

Women and communication alternatives: hope for the next century

The opening paragraph of the brochure of this conference states that 'One of the most exciting development in the past two decades has been the tremendous growth in women's networking and communications activities . . . These activities have led to much higher profile for the concerns of women. The questions that remain to be answered however, are: has this higher profile resulted in significant changes in women's lives? Or has it just given rise to the false impression that the real problems have been solved?'

These indeed are the most crucial questions for women because as feminists we are not just concerned with how women are portrayed in the media or how many women work in the media. We are also concerned about what kind of lives they lead, what status they have, and what kind of society we have. The answers to these questions will determine our future strategies for communication and networking. Communication alternatives therefore need to emerge from our critique of the present world order and our vision of the future.

Let us briefly look at what 'development' has been doing not only to women, but also to the majority of the people in the world and to Nature. I am going to say this using expressions from the Minamata Declaration, which had the support of over 100,000 people from all over the world. I was one of them.

- 'Minamata, Bhopal and Chernobyl, symbolise to all of us development at its most murderous.'
- 'But these are not the only symbols of the disaster that "progress" has been. For the indigenous peoples, disaster came with confiscation and exploitation of their lands and resources, and destruction and disruption of their way of life.'
- 'For women, development has meant disempowerment of all kinds. They have been marginalized and subordinated by male religions, male science and knowledge, and male mal-development. The billion dollar pornography and sex industry has reduced them to mere commodities. At the same time, they continue to be subordinated within their own homes.'
- 'For the poor of the Third World, development has meant less and less control over their own resources and lives. Their struggle to survive has become more difficult, their existence has become more precarious. There has indeed been progress and development, but only for the few. The rest are paying for this development by sacrificing their lives, cultures, values.'
- 'Development has meant increasing centralisation of

power. The more the word "democracy" has been used, the less has been its practice. For indigenous people and for minorities, democracy has meant the tyranny of the majority. For the poor in the Third World, democracy has meant the rule of the powerful, a very small elite. Both development and democracy have become dirty words for the oppressed because, in reality they have come to mean impoverishment and disempowerment. The gap between rich and poor, North and South, has been increasing. In the last two decades, more wealth and resources have been extracted from the Third World than in the entire previous century. The coming decades are likely to witness more rapid accumulation, concentration and centralisation of power in the North. Debt payments, profits, royalties, capital flight, deterioration of the terms and trade are among the mechanisms of imperialist exploitation. This unjust, vulgar and ugly development has also created a South in the North, with the terrible living conditions of indigenous people, racial minorities, migrant workers, and the unemployed.'

- 'The 20th century has brought us more, and more murderous wars than at any other time in history. The technology of killing has advanced beyond the wildest imaginations of any previous era. The state, which was supposed to be our great protector, has turned out to be the greatest killer, killing not only foreigners in wars, but also killing its own citizens in unprecedented numbers. The 20th century has perpetuated and intensified the practices of genocide, ethnocide, ecocide and femicide. These practices have occurred in the name of what we have called "progress" and "development" (from the Minamata Declaration).

Media: Tools of the powerful

Ours is indeed the age of communication but more access to information has not made us more just, concerned or more creative. In this 'global village' we are much more selfish, self-centred, brutal and patriarchal than are most villagers.

Mainstream media are a tool to propagate the mainstream paradigm of development, a tool to strengthen the existing status quo and power structure; a tool to increase disparities, to turn people into consumers of goods and ideologies.

Globalisation of media, is absolutely and closely linked with the globalisation of economy. In India, for example, it was our economy which was gradually opened-up and then our airwaves were opened to CNN, BBC to XYZ, you name the acronyms and they are all there. It was when Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola entered (after having been thrown out of India ten years ago) that we had the media wars of these two companies playing havoc in our homes. Their annual advertising budgets are several hundred-million rupees. It is when multinationals enter that you need aggressive advertising to lure people to buy more. The two go hand in hand and you cannot fight one without fighting the other.

I believe, as feminists our concerns are not limited to improving the portrayal of women in the media, we are



Kamla Bhasin, spoke on 'Women and Communication Alternatives'.

concerned with changing the condition and position of women, with reducing poverty, strengthening democratic forces, averting ecological disasters etc. If these are our concerns then our strategies cannot be focused just on media.

We have to deal with larger questions like: Do we believe that liberalisation, globalisation of the economy, opening of the markets are going to solve our problems? Do we believe that men and women in our poor countries will all be able to live like people in the US, Japan or Singapore? Do we believe these economic, political and media trends are improving women's condition and position?

I feel our first strategy should be to have a collective analysis and common understanding of these issues, so that our actions can challenge forces which are anti-people, anti-women and anti-nature. I am not sure how powerful we are really to overcome these things but at least let us be aware of the task at hand. As for me, I am convinced that the present path of 'development' is unsustainable. I believe that Mother Earth cannot sustain the lifestyles of the kind flashed on our television everyday. We will die of lack of oxygen if every woman in India and China started flying and driving. I believe that what Mahatma Gandhi said sixty years ago is more relevant today than it was in his time. He was asked by a British journalist, 'Mr. Gandhi would you like India to have the same standard of living as that of Britain?' Gandhi said 'Sir, that tiny country Britain needed to exploit half the globe to have its standard of living. How many globes will India need to exploit to have the same standard of living?'

The present changing media scenario is linked to the

changing economic and political scenario and in both these the key concepts are liberalisation, free markets, free economies, laissez-faire (let things be, do not interfere, let individuals take care of their profit motives). The market is the god, and it is all powerful. The trends are centralisation, monopolisation, globalisation.

Globalisation means . . .

Let me just share some thoughts on what globalisation both of media and of the economy means. It means profit is paramount. For profit anything will be made and sold: armaments, pornography, junk drinks and food, violence, just anything. Globalisation means consumerism of the worst kind and plunder of nature. Globalisation means centralisation of control over resources and decision making. Globalisation also means lack of popular participation. How do I participate in a dialogue with CNN and BBC if I dislike their programmes today? How do I influence them? Ten years ago when there was only Doordarshan (Indian TV) in India, we could protest against the Government and even be heard. Today with dozens of channels doing precisely what they want to, to women and children, what and how do media activists function?

Globalisation means an attack on diversity whether it is agricultural diversity (instead of hundreds of varieties of wheat or rice, we now have just a few varieties which can be grown only with the help of bought seeds, fertilisers and pesticides) or cultural diversity. Donald Ducks become our ducks. We have to know them. Julius Nyerere is supposed to have said once, 'It's very unfair that we Tanzanians and Africans cannot vote for the President of the US because we hear about his elections twenty four hours a day, as much as an American does.' But the Americans probably don't even know who Julius Nyerere is. This is globalisation.

At the national level in India globalisation means Hindi or North Indian hegemony. It means Hindu hegemony. Globalisation means the culture of the rich and powerful becomes the culture of the others.

Globalisation also means increase in violence and militarisation because, if you as a country want to control petroleum in the Near East, how do you do it? Only with missiles. If you want to exploit other people you need armies. If you want to contain popular unrest against inequality, unjust relations, you need violence. During the last five years the security industry has become the largest employer in India. Every rich home in Delhi now has higher fences and full-time guards like in Manila and Bangkok.

Globalisation also means patriarchy becoming more powerful, more entrenched.

In this global village control over knowledge and information is an important source of power and that is where media are relevant. The Pentagon, I understand, has its fingers in ABC and CNN. Why? So that it can influence how the Iraq war is portrayed, how US interventions in other countries are represented. Eighty percent of the big news agencies of the world are in the hands of four countries, most of the large television networks are in the hands of the same countries and most of the global trade and global economy is controlled by these very countries.

Need for connections and alliances

We cannot look at mainstream media without making these connections. I believe we cannot really challenge and change media without challenging and changing the overall economic

and political system. Therefore I believe we need networks not only among media activists, amongst women in communication, but we need networking across movements. Media activists need to be even more closely linked to the larger feminist movement. We need to have closer links with the environment and ecology movement, human rights and peace movements. While talking of mainstreaming gender, I think, we need to also talk of mainstreaming environment, mainstreaming ecology, we need to mainstream people's subsistence strategies, people's wisdom. We have to think ecologically, making these connections, looking at things in an integral way, and our actions have to be synergetic.

There is some hope for the world and for us, hope which comes from the fact that the consumer culture has still not been able to reach millions of poor people. It comes from the fact that millions are still living in very ecological ways and I believe we need to have a closer partnership with these so-called marginal people. It is their life styles which will have to become our models if we want to survive. We have to learn simplicity from them instead of forcing unsustainable lifestyles on them.

We must get linked to the extraordinary struggles being waged by these ordinary people against patenting of seeds, against big dams, against invasive technologies and other manifestations of mal-development.

Alternative communication: Why and what?

Feminists all over have always resisted the stifling of women's voices and choices, the crushing of their expressions and creativity. In spite of suppression, for centuries individual women have sung, narrated or written to express themselves, to counter male-views. Our search today for alternatives is in the same tradition. We have been talking of alternatives because we have problems with the mainstream communication media. Therefore, before speaking about alternatives it is important to state our problems with mainstream media. As I understand them the main problems are the following

- Mainstream media are first of all man stream. By and large, they are owned and controlled by and oriented to men. They are patriarchal in nature, which can mean anything – stereotyping of gender-roles, commodification of women, woman-hatred; veiling of women's contributions to society, violence against women etc.
- They are the tools of countries and people who have grabbed economic and political power, to maximise their power and profits to perpetuate the status quo.
- The increasing outreach of media, their globalisation, is another problem. This is linked to centralisation of control. A few media magnates now control the world. CNN, BBC, STAR TV etc. decide what we see and how we interpret and understand reality.

Diversity of cultures, of images and views is getting wiped out. Dominant ideology, culture and economics are becoming even more omniscient and omnipresent. Indians, Bangladeshis and others are devouring Santa Barbara, *Bold & Beautiful*, playing with Barbie dolls and Superman. People's own creativity and expressions are being curbed. Messages are being created only by experts. People are expected only to consume pre-packaged messages and ideologies, to accept other people's interpretations.

Media have an element of propaganda and use monologue. They are wiping out dialogue, discussion, people's participation and weakening civil societies. People are becoming passive consumers of news and views rather than

active citizens.

Increasing violence in media is killing people's sensibilities and making violence a way of life. The linking of sex and violence is even more pernicious and dangerous.

So when we talk of alternative communication we will have to challenge all these aspects of mainstream media. The communication media we create will not only have to be anti-patriarchal and gender just but they will have to be anti-establishment, challenging dominant ideology and hegemonic economic and political structures.

Our feminist media should strive to be decentralised, democratic, and as far as possible to use low-cost technology. Their content, form and organisation will have to be such that they encourage dialogue, debate and people's creativity; reaffirm women's wisdom and knowledge; make people into subjects rather than objects or targets of communication.

We need to strengthen forms of communication that project reality from the perspective of people and strengthen people's struggles against all aspects of mal-development; media



Thai dancing during the first day's presentations.

which can be controlled by people, which are responsive to people's needs.

All over the world women have been creating such alternatives. It is time to take stock of our experiments, to evaluate them. It is important to ask, for example, whether in the hands of feminists high-tech, (relatively) big-finance, large markets are or can be participatory, non-exploitative, feminist in relationships and processes? Have we focused enough on people's/folk media like – *melas* (fairs), *jatras* (cultural walks), songs, theatre, wall writings etc.

I feel, feminist media initiatives using high-tech and requiring substantial finance (like films, videos, high quality publishing, international networks) are indeed necessary, but we have to be constantly vigilant about them because such initiatives are likely to become top-down, undemocratic, elitist and cut-off from real struggles. Because they are forced to survive in the market they have to follow the logic of the market. Both their production and distribution starts getting determined by what will sell and who will/can pay. For example, some good feminist films by Third World women are sold to and shown much more in industrialised countries than in their own. A lot of them are not even shown to those women on whose lives and struggles they were based.

Similarly, some feminist books are international success stories, but reach very few people at home; they are translated into foreign languages but not into national languages in our countries. These market dictated trends turn such media

into 'products' rather than potent instruments for change. These products go to those who can pay higher prices (dollars are always better than rupees) rather than to those who need them to strengthen their struggles. We need to find ways to be successful in the mainstream without losing contact with the issues and struggles of women, because commitment to change is an essential part of feminism.

A personal story

Technology and the nature of outreach also impose their own conditionalities. Take for example, my participation in this conference. I was asked to give a key-note speech which I happily agreed to do. Much later I received a letter saying I must give my speech in writing (oral medium being converted into literate/written medium) two months before the conference so that it can be printed, translated etc. I understood the need for all this but I suddenly found myself uncomfortable and out of my depth because I do not like writing speeches, at least not two months before the event. I felt guilty and incompetent when I could not submit my 'speech' on time. I felt weepy and disempowered. Not a good way to start, is it?

I normally develop my thoughts while travelling to a conference and at the conference itself in response to the atmosphere, in interaction with other participants, their views and concerns. When I speak like that there is spontaneity, reciprocity, some electricity and creativity. All this is totally absent when I am forced to write something months before the event, when my heart is not in it.

When someone like me experiences this even after 20 years of floating around in the literate world, can you imagine what village women go through when they enter our 'literate' worlds, and confront our 'communication'? We must find ways to communicate which will be more inclusive, which will allow us to have key-note speakers who do not write or even talk like you and I do. Why can't we have key-note songs or dances?

Global sisterhood, I feel, also has its dangers because it is only the literate, the well connected and endowed who can make it to events like this. People like me become self-appointed spokespersons for others. Even if a few women from the so-called 'grass-roots' are brought in, their participation is seldom beyond tokenism, because the language, the idiom, the intellectual debates, and the overall atmosphere are all foreign if not hostile to them. We middle class, literate feminists need to be constantly vigilant to ensure that we do not impose our 'communication' on other women. I feel we also need to review our language again, especially words like - 'upper' class - 'lower' class, 'upper' caste - 'lower' caste, rich - poor, educated - uneducated etc., because these are all value-laden terms.

Strengthening media built on oral traditions

For building genuine partnerships with people, for being part of and supporting people's struggles, for strengthening grass-root level democracies, for encouraging women's creativity, there is no alternative to face-to-face communication and people's media. We must learn from and strengthen those media which are built on oral traditions, are low cost and require low technology inputs. Supporting people's oral traditions will ensure that we build on the past, learn from and affirm people's knowledge and skills, develop dialogue and equal relationships, and remain rooted. Working with oral traditions will ensure that we do not marginalise the 'illiterate'; that 'media makers' do not get separated from 'media-consumers'.

My main involvement with feminist media has been as a song-writer. Songs have always been used by people to express their concerns, to rejoice and celebrate, to accompany household and agricultural chores etc. We find lots of folk songs expressing anger against husbands and other in-laws. The Sufi poetry and songs are full of scathing critique of bigotry of Pandits and Mullahs, the hollowness of institutionalised religions. Religious and other movements have also used songs and community singing to convey their messages and to build a feeling of community. Our use of songs, I suppose, carries the same tradition forward.

I do not know music, meaning I do not have any (conscious) knowledge of musical notes etc. However, I know folk-songs learnt in my childhood and am able to pick up new ones when I am with folks who still sing. I write lyrics to fit popular folk tunes. The theme of the songs can be anything which is of concern at that particular moment, e.g. violence against women, unfair laws and legal system, burden of household work or even structural adjustment programme and its impact on the working classes. The theme can also be rejoicing solidarity, dreams of a just society, birth of a girl child.

The ideas and inspiration for all my songs come from the movement. I catch the sentiments and the words floating around during heated discussions or preparations for a demonstration and weave them together in a song. I try and put the complex analysis into simple words. Emotion and passion are added to turn the cold analysis into a strong statement. While the song is being written, it is shared with others and almost always altered. Women and men change these songs, add or delete, to suit their own needs and environment.

Singing, I find, is the only medium where others can join in almost immediately, where all voices become one and powerful, which empowers everyone, creates a sense of community. The rational and the emotional merge, the body and the mind merge, fun and seriousness merge. Music manages to transcend language barriers. There are no hierarchies left when you sing, specially when I sing, because I am not a good singer. In every group there are better singers and dancers and they take over. The divide between the singers and non-singers is gone, the literate and the illiterate is gone. Suddenly new leaders emerge, those who were quiet during discussions show their singing and dancing skills. Often some women start creating new songs. A lot of creativity is unleashed.

Jagori Women's Resource and Training Centre in New Delhi has printed song books and produced audio-cassettes to share these songs with others. In other South Asian countries as well women's groups have created and used songs, produced audiocassettes, for example, WAF, Aurat Foundation and Himmat Society in Pakistan; ABC and Women's Awareness Centre in Nepal; Saheli and Manushi in India.

Let the halls of this conference also be filled with songs. Let there be creativity, joy and togetherness along with speeches and discussions. I am looking forward to hearing about women empowering media, about media challenging hierarchies, inequality, injustice, unsustainability. ■

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Women, media and power: a time of crisis

The title Women/Power/Media emphasises the crucial importance that the women's movement, in becoming aware of its specific oppression, has given to the themes and actions built around the representation given to woman's image in the dominant systems of communication and cultural diffusion. It reveals an enduring preoccupation which is still being written about today. The present demands new rallying calls insofar as they are capable of offering new promises. It also demands ceaseless vigilance against the threat of confirming or strengthening already dark trends.

Unanimous recognition of the legitimacy of the theme Women/Media does not mean that it avoided the divergences between traditions, heuristic processes, political sensitivity and strategic appreciation, expressed in feminist ranks. A faint, very dim trace of those still latent tensions is visible in the conference programme, indicated by the question marks after certain sub-themes: for example, 'Women in mass media: making a difference?' A question which implies that the theme of equality of access to controlling positions (which was the focus of the claims of a generation of feminists and which continues to rally us) has been overtaken by the new question of meaning and difference, of the production of difference.

Today, the debate within feminism encounters a question which, for a number of years, has been pursued in critical media theory. The stakes for these debates are situated around the question of media power, the power of the images, the models, which the media carry; around the relation between subject and text, of the status of the subject in the production of meaning. Feminist studies have had an innovative impact on this new set of problems.

We have to stress the increasing complexity of this theme, which is affected by the profound upheavals that have marked both the field of critical media theory and that of feminist praxis and studies in the past few years. Above all, we have to reflect on the ambiguities surrounding the new conceptual questions of media power; ambiguities that are intimately linked, in the context of post-structuralism, post-feminism and post-modernism, with the crisis of social utopias and the idea of emancipation, and thus with the crisis of identities and models of identification, and finally with the crisis of modes of legitimising knowledge and action.

Images and effects of meaning

As the point of departure for my reflections, I would like to compare two events and make that comparison meaningful. The first is the huge student movement of November 1986 which took to the streets of Paris to protest against a decree affecting university selection. Among the movement's leaders

were many young women who cheekily burst onto the media. They were everywhere defending their movement, on radio and on television. At that time, TV commercials were more than ever before used to promote women's traditional roles and their bodies as a way to sell products.

How can we not evoke, on the other hand, another student movement, that of May 1968, when all the leaders were men? Not one female face appeared on the forefront of the public stage, while, carried by structuralist critiques of the consumer society, the ideology of advertising and the sexist mythology of media modernity were continually disparaged.

In compensation, in 1986, those equally overtly sexist commercials, at least according to the denunciatory discourse of the 1960s, were never the object of criticism organised by a feminist movement in crisis.

Let's pursue this comparison further. The grassroots of the May '68 movement expressed itself by rejecting the media institution and by creating its own means of expression; but the young people of '86 appropriated the media scene, simultaneously abetting and ignoring its codes and its way of using images. With its spirit of playfulness, which made it dress up the inspirations of the media environment, 1986 marked the death of a kind of political idea of militant culture. The vitality of their expressions shows the rift between the dramatisation strategy of May 1968 and the de-dramatisation tactics that characterised the events of 1986.

This scenario of comparison leads me to ask the following question: What did the young women leaders of 1986 make of those images, of those sexist commercials? By asking this question ('What did they make of them?'), in putting the accent on making and on the women actors in this event, I am echoing the change of perception that has taken place in critical media theory. The latter, after having perceived what was called 'the consumer mass' as an inert and inevitably manipulated object, is today in agreement on the active status of the receiver-consumer as a producer of meaning.

This return to the men and women on the receiving end of media, gains its whole prominence in contrast to the studies of the effects of power which were based on the media, on their actions and points of view and not on those women/men who were its objects.

What did those young women, spokespersons of a movement, make of those sexist images? In response, I shall say that the discrepancy between the way the image is presented and women themselves defines the field in which the reproduction of the dominant order is played out. To define the power of the image, its effect, I shall say that it makes itself felt in a game of comings and goings that does not take place solely in the imposition of the media's advertising norms, but also makes itself felt in a game of comings and goings into which step subjects, actors and actresses with sexes, who have real lives, practical experience, who comment by gesture and language on the difference between the sexes and the terms of domination.

Saying this – which allows us to grasp meaning as a process of negotiation carried out by a subject, in all the richness of his/her sociality – does not exhaust the question of the power of the image and of sexist representation. The reaction of advertisers themselves should suffice to convince us of this: one commercial on French television which was particularly degrading to the image of women was the object of a demand at the beginning of 1989 for withdrawal by Yvette Roudy, former minister for Women's Rights. The Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, a regulatory body for audiovisual institutions, did not uphold the complaint and refused to ban the offending commercial. The commercial's director had defended it in these terms: 'Women are now liberated enough not to feel threatened by a simple advertising image.' Here we have an indication of the ambivalence of this new paradigm of the return to the consumer, to his/her power and his/her free will, when it is manipulated by the champions of the patriarchal order in its neo-liberal context.

Sex/genre

By giving the 'women's genre' specific characteristics, the dominant communication media are powerful agents in the production and constant reinforcement of the 'imaginary meaning' of the female sex. An imaginary meaning that has concrete effects on various social practices.

Recent debates on the 'subject' of feminism have criticised feminist essentialism, sticking to the idea of an original sexual division represented a posteriori in social practices. In this light, the oppression of women should no longer be perceived as a pre-constituted category, whether its cause is found in the

family or in the mode of production. Instead, one should analyse the autonomy and the unequal development of the various practices that contribute to concrete forms of subordination. The positions that seem to me most convincing in this discussion are those that have shown that, if as a first step one can admit that the oppression of women can no longer be perceived as a pre-constituted category, it is then necessary as a second step to insist on a strict correlation between 'subordination' as a general category informing all the meanings that make up 'femininity' and the autonomy and unequal development of the various practices that make up the concrete forms of subordination.

Brazilian film maker Suzanna Amaral, director of *A Hora da Estrela* (The Hour of the Star), after the book by the Brazilian woman novelist Clarice Lispector, describes that 'subordination' as a general category informing all the meanings that make up femininity. When women in the audience hailed her film as 'a beautiful women's film', she replied: 'No, it's a person's film', that's to say an individual's film, thus opposing the idea that her film, in its symbolic value as a creative act, carried a connotation of inferiority as 'women's' genre. She was not disowning her sex as a woman but the sex/genre system at work in our societies by virtue of which all constructions of sexual difference invariably construe the feminine as a pole subordinate to the masculine.

Before the Berlin Wall fell and with it the regimes of 'socialist realism', we had gone beyond a compartmentalised view of studying the situation of women in capitalist and other countries where 'objective conditions for the liberation of women' were said to exist. The set of problems surrounding image and representation, linked to the order of the imaginary and the symbolic, showed that nothing positive existed which had been constituted and acquired. What comes from the symbolic order is not automatically articulated in changes in the order of production and organisation of social roles.

Pleasure and identification

Feminism of equality and feminism of difference: the two poles between which women's struggles have oscillated have often been qualified in this way. Two poles that have symbolic faces and actions. Two poles that are also identifiable to generations of feminists.

Both the suffragettes' struggle on the one hand and the conflict of existential feminists on the other, represent the first generation of the women's movement which aspired to insert itself into the historical moment, into the project and action of history. The political demands of women, the struggle for equality in wages and jobs, for decision-making positions in social institutions with the same rights as men, fall within this logic of identification which is some times accompanied by a rejection of those attributes traditionally called feminine or maternal.

Western socialism, in its infancy shaken by the egalitarian or discriminatory demands of its women (among whom, for example, Flora Tristan) quickly got rid of those among them that aspired to recognition of anything specific in women's roles in society and culture, only to retain, in the egalitarian and universalist spirit of the humanism of the Enlightenment, the idea of necessary identification between the sexes as the sole, unique means of liberation for the 'second sex'.

The next generation was qualitatively different from the first, as Julia Kristeva has analysed with regard to Europe, and is linked on the one hand to women who came to feminism after May 1968, and on the other to women who have had an



Michèle Mattelart, spoke on 'Women, Media and Power'.



During the conference, the Philippine Educational Theatre Association (PETA) dramatically portrayed the pain, strength and resistance of women world-wide. Against a backdrop of negative images of women, the group presented three short plays, after which the actors symbolically ripped away words of oppression. The audience was invited to replace words such as 'violence', 'rape', 'battered wife' with positive words of their own choice. 'Power', 'freedom', 'strength', 'co-operation' and 'enlightenment' were favourites.

aesthetic or psychoanalytical experience. Even if it acknowledges its indebtedness to the struggle of the earlier women for their socio-cultural recognition, it no longer accepts sacrificing certain aspects of women's being in order to gain a political dimension for which it only feels exacerbated mistrust. The struggle no longer lies in the search for equality but for difference, specificity. And it is at this point in the sequence that the new generation encounters the question that we can label 'symbolic'. The feminist subversion brought by the new generation was henceforward based on the inseparable conjunction of the sexual and the symbolic.

The media research trends that relate to this new feminist sensitivity go beyond the pitfall of those content-analyses of media programmes that limit themselves to identifying sexism by counting the number of women's roles on the screen, qualifying those images as 'positive' or 'negative' according to whether they corresponded to a traditional profile (negative) or an emancipated profile (positive). This kind of feminist critique tells us little or nothing about the ways these images offer meaning. The interpretative scheme that underlies them tends to function according to the behaviouralist model of stimulus-response that skips the complexity of processes of identification and outward manifestations.

The idea that 'women's images' can be judged as a reflection or distortion of reality is giving way to another approach in which the media are profoundly implicated in the definition of reality itself and in the representation of women.

At the confluence of film theory, structural theory of ideology, of semiology and psychoanalysis, new sets of problems will arise that will explore how the media 'construct' definitions of femininity and also how those definitions create specific subjective positions with which women viewers or listeners can identify. The influential essays of Laura Mulvey and Tania Modleski, to cite only these two, are useful here.

To understand media as a system of representation is to ask oneself questions about cultural reading and cultural struggle in the creation of alternative modes of narration, production and distribution of the image. Here many examples must be cited, both of theoretical studies and media productions (cinema and video in particular) which reveal how women as spectators of their own image have been colonised by male voyeurism, and which try to shape that part of our subjective experience left mute by the earlier culture.

In the field of women's studies of television, the need to re-evaluate the way of looking at those genres that have largely been accepted by women has also been expressed. This step also received inspiration from an attempt at and/or desire for reconciliation with the experiences of the ordinary woman, in daily life, with her own temporality, her power relationships, her pleasures and neuroses.

Until recently, the greater part of critical studies dealt with, in the framework of ideological analysis, the demolition of the many subtle mechanisms at play in the form/content of those radio and TV programmes aimed at women. By dissimilar mechanisms suited to fragmentation, they eclipsed and made a mystery of the reality lived by women (see my *Women, Media, Crisis: Femininity and Disorder*, 1986). These ideological readings, I must stress this point, are always necessary. They must now, of course, include other questions: the gratification experienced by women viewers – even when they are perfectly aware of the mechanisms by which the alienating force of these programmes is expressed – indicates the need for deeper analysis of the ways in which women internalise media content.

The new approaches seek to understand how the 'genre' of the mass industrial culture aimed at women (soap operas, melodramatic serials, telenovelas) builds its mode of address on the expectations of the women's 'genre': that is to say, defines its contract of meaning with the woman viewer on the basis of women's abilities traditionally associated with responsibility for running the sphere of private life. Seeking to avoid the essentialist trap that such abilities are natural to women, the women and men who do such studies rather see women as socially constructed in order to possess such abilities through their enrolment in the ideological and normative framework of love life, of marriage and family life.

These studies are organised or were organised around the desire to understand how women's subjectivity and their way of looking at themselves was/is stamped by the patriarchal social and symbolic code.

Egalitarianism's traps

This leads us directly to the next question: what is symbolic change?

In many countries, women have reached the highest points of visibility in the media. In France, a woman journalist like

Christine Ockrent was able to find celebrity at the zenith of television stardom and became the highest paid figure on the small screen. Her highly professional performance was reckoned to be the basis of her success and was used to legitimise her advantageous position in relation to her male colleagues.

The question raised by women's groups in this regard turns on the value of that image of woman, high priestess of the small screen at the ritual news hour. The two poles I mentioned earlier, the feminism of equality and the feminism of difference, provide criteria by which to evaluate the meaning of that image and career for a woman. Without doubt they satisfy the yearnings for equality of access to the profession, via the perfect mastery of its codes. Professional codes said to be 'neutral', specifying universalism and objectivity.

In the sphere of Gulf War operations (February 1991), young women reporters (very few) were victorious in passing the barrage of tests to get into the journalists' news pools under the control of the American armed forces. One of them expressed her joy in this way: 'It's more exhilarating than covering the Debutantes' Ball.' Maybe. But such an exclamation adds another dimension to the meaning of an equality literally rooted in the limitations of that victory: putting on the uniform of a soldier to take part in the world of men par excellence. To be party to a war whose technical perfection the Western media went out of their way to describe. Unisex uniform. Professionally yours.

What do we have to gain from these exacerbated victories of egalitarianism – crudely revealed by the precise circumstance of war elevated into a spectacle – which threaten to turn us quite simply into the strongest redeemers of patriarchy? Servants of its sacrificial order, we lose our identity as women in relation to power, to life, and to death. ■

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Michèle Mattelart, communication theorist, lived and taught in Santiago, Chile, for a number of years before moving to Paris, France. She is the author of many works and articles on the themes of women, culture and politics and on media theory. Her books include *Women, Media, Crisis: Femininity and Disorder* (1986); *Le Carnaval des Images*; and *Penser les Médias*.

In memory of a feminist activist

Maria Elena Moyano, Peruvian activist, community organizer and feminist, was murdered by a *comando de aniquilamiento* (death squad) of the group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) on 15 February 1992 in Lima. A 33 year old black woman, she was the mother of two young boys. The Conference on 'Women Empowering Communication' paid tribute to her courage and achievements.

Moyano was the founding president of the *Federación Popular de Mujeres de Villa El Salvador* (People's Federation of Women of Villa El Salvador), one of the most vibrant grassroots organizations in the largest shanty town on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. As head of the organization, she played a key role in the establishment of hundreds of social programmes attending to the basic needs of an increasingly impoverished population.

The women's organization started by Maria Elena Moyano came together in their struggle for autonomy from all kinds of political manipulation and evolved into a powerful and independent women's Federation, the first of its kind. As President of the group, Moyano publicly opposed all attempts by Shining Path to penetrate the community, denouncing its terrorist methods of trying to control the population by fear. She believed the only response to Shining Path's terrorism was to create awareness among the population, speak up against it and provide an avenue for people's participation in the direction of their communities.

On 14 February, Shining Path called for an 'armed strike' aimed at bringing Lima, the capital of Peru, to a halt. They warned they would kill anyone who attempted to come out of their homes.

On the evening of Saturday February 15, Moyano attended a community celebration to raise funds for the women's Glass of Milk programme. At the event she was surrounded by a woman and four men who shot her twice, in the chest and in the head.

After she fell down the killers ordered everybody to leave, shooting anyone who tried to assist Moyano. The squad ordered a teenage boy to tie five kilos of dynamite to her body, blowing her to pieces in front of her children and other women from the organizations, and wounding eight other people. They further threatened to blow up her tomb if she was buried in the district's cemetery.

The murder of Maria Elena Moyano was one of the most ferocious attacks in the relentless and bloody violence perpetrated by Shining Path in the 14 years it has been terrorizing Peru. It is ironic that Shining Path targets popular leaders of the very communities in whose name it claims to act. Shining Path has justified its violent acts on the grounds that they will lead to revolution and the destruction of the State. They are especially brutal to those who are trying to better the conditions of the poor, accusing them of collusion with the State. What is most distressing is how their claims find a sympathetic ear among uninformed people in the industrialized world who see them as revolutionaries. ■

Women, communication and development: changing dominant structures

The key issues related to the theme 'women, communication and development' are embedded in the context of structures and processes of power and powerlessness, of wealth and poverty, of growing inequalities, tensions and imbalances in the creation and flow of information and knowledge at national and international levels. The author focuses on women's own analysis of their place in the world of communication and development and calls for a new code of conduct for media workers.

The global domination of communication (in news, popular culture, technology and language) is, in general, Western. The influence of Western, especially American, pop culture is easy to see. It is visible on any TV screen in the world, audible on almost any radio, and expressed in the appearance of teenagers. Equally of concern is the male centredness of information. The definitions of problems, their analysis and their solutions are still in the control of men. There is no doubt that cultural images reflect and promote the values of the powerful. Satellite transmissions which cross national boundaries mean that in many countries control over information and programmes is in the hands of a small number of male-controlled multinationals. In other words, the globalization of news and the shaping of world opinion and behaviour are in the hands of Western male dominated businesses and banks, especially in America.

I will concentrate on two major consequences for women of this scenario and the need for interventions. They can be classified in the following ways.

Direction of values, ideas and action

There has been much concern expressed and documented on the way in which media influence values, ideas and actions in society. For women, media generally reinforce existing attitudes and role expectations which can be a barrier to their advancement, weakening women's position and limiting their participation in the development of society. Media as powerful shapers of behaviour, however, also have the potential for setting new standards of action which can be used by women to their advantage.

A vast amount of research on the portrayal of women in print and electronic media has been carried out by women and media organizations. These studies have shown that women are usually portrayed in traditional roles, as wives and mothers, emphasizing characteristics of passivity, dependence and subservience in images that focus on physical attractiveness or sexuality.

The reality of most women's lives, particularly the problems of poor women who work in partnership with men to support their families, is not presented. The strength and capability of

these women through their own stories is missing, as media focus more on urban women and women who are better off. Media stories and reports of women which de-emphasize the actual contribution of women's work, reinforce dramatically the constant underplaying of women's roles in society. Inaccurate images of women influence societal consciousness and public opinion, in turn affecting government policy makers and policy needs.

Concern for the issue of women and media in the Asia-Pacific region has led to women's organizations initiating research, lobbying media organizations, creating alternative forms of media and organizing to work together. The Women and Media Network for Asia and Pacific which was formed in 1988 and is temporarily located in the Asian and Pacific Development Center (APDC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is one of these initiatives. The network aims to build up connections through which people who are producing, critiquing or monitoring media towards a more positive portrayal of women, can link up, share, learn and strengthen their approaches and skills towards the empowerment of women.

The first programme activity of the Women and Media Network was a workshop 'Changing the Images of Women in Media: Strategies and Action in Asia and the Pacific' held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15-18 May 1989, organized collaboratively by the Women and Development Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat, London and the APDC Women in Development (WID) Programme.

The second programme activity, was a seminar on 'Sensitizing the Media to Development Issues on Women' held 20-24 January 1992. Recently, the Women and Media Network worked with UNESCO on a seminar-workshop entitled 'Women and Media in Central Asia', held 7-10 September 1993 at the Lenin National Museum in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. This resulted in the formation of a Central Asian Women and Media Network as part of the larger Women and Media Network for Asia and the Pacific. The Network is also currently preparing the Asian and Pacific Resource and Action Series on Media.

Impact of technological development

We are currently in the midst of a communication revolution with the development of satellite broadcasting, cable distribution and new communication technology. One of the first things to bear in mind about this new communication revolution is that satellite broadcasting, which spans all nations escapes national control. The second point to think about is the number of channels which any one satellite may carry. While we are used to thinking about national broadcasting systems in terms of one, two or maybe three channels, satellite systems can distribute 30 or more. Margaret Gallagher in a paper to APDC describes the situation in Europe:

In the 12 countries of the European community in 1983, there were 24 TV channels. Today, there are 61. By 1992, it is estimated that, in addition to these, we will have 150

satellite TV channels. To fill our existing channels, we need about 125,000 hours of programming per year. By 1995, that figure could reach 300,000 hours per year. Present production capacity in Europe is less than 20,000 hours per year, that is, we can produce less than 7% of the programmes we shall need to fill the channels that will exist in a few years' time. Obviously, most of the rest will have to be imported. And obviously, most of these will come from the US. Clearly, the whole issue of cultural identity is at stake.

This technological development in media is part of a wider revolution in information technology which is seen as the key to industrial growth. What has happened is the conversion of information into a commodity and a very expensive one at that. Given the already existing imbalances in the generation and control of information and knowledge, the gaps between the information 'haves' (mainly men) and the information 'have nots' (mainly women) will increase.

Context for interventions

In designing interventions, it is important that women locate their concerns within a framework that acknowledges the increasing global, economic and political interests which are at play.

Firstly, we must move away from unsophisticated statements in which we criticized the media for trivializing women, but without really getting to grips with how and why certain images of women – and of men – are constructed; or how and why they persist – in other words, why people seem to enjoy them. We have moved on from naive statements in which we called for more women to be appointed to creative and decision-making positions in the media, but we did not think through the practical strategies – which actually need to be extremely elaborate – that might enable this to happen; and which, in any case, assumed (again naively) that simply having more women in such posts would, by itself, actually make a difference.

Over the past decade, our analysis has deepened and sharpened. We know now that 'Women and the Media' is not an isolated, compartmentalized topic. We have come to understand that the women-media relationship can only be analyzed, and successful strategies for changing it can only be developed, if we take account of the entire cultural, political, and ideological spectrum and study the economic context in which this particular relationship (between women and the media) is created and takes shape.

We also know that it is a relationship which on the one hand is deeply resistant to fundamental change; while on the other hand, almost paradoxically its superficial characteristics are always changing. In other words, the images may change, but the basic message does not. Although the original mandate of many broadcasting systems in the region stressed education and information, there is an increasing trend towards commercialization.

In terms of content, it is not simply what the media say, or how they say it, that creates stereotypical perceptions of women. Equally important is what they do not say. There are at least two ways in which 'absences' in media content affect our understanding of the world, and women's place in it.

One kind of absence is the entire 'blanking out' of vast areas of experience and life which never find their way into mainstream media output. Where are the stories of the rural or urban poor women? Of the women who face 'everyday' problems such as sexual harassment at work, or the difficulty of combining family life with paid employment? Of the



Noeleen Heyzer, spoke on 'Women, Communication and Development'.

women faced with more dramatic problems such as violence in marriage, enforced abortion, or infertility? Where is the information which would help to empower women, telling them about their legal rights, about their bodies, about their potential for economic independence? Why do so many programmes directed specifically at women stay within the tired old formats, offering nothing more innovative than a new way of cooking chicken, or a new way of applying makeup? While it is true that different approaches have begun to emerge, they are, relatively speaking, still a drop in the ocean.

Another kind of absence in media output is the unasked question, the unexplored line of investigation, the unchallenged assumption. Almost any issue taken up in the media could be approached from at least several starting points, any of which would leave the audience with a different set of impressions. The way in which the issue is tackled – how it is researched, which aspects are singled out, which people are consulted as experts, what questions are asked, how they are framed – all these result in the 'story' which is finally packaged for us. Generally speaking, these stories reflect a male view of the world.

Need for a women's perspective in the media

One of the conclusions which we have arrived at, over the past decade, is that a 'women's perspective' on issues – and not simply those which have traditionally been seen as 'women's concerns' – is needed if some of the existing absences in media output are to be filled. This is beginning to happen, with more experienced women moving into the profession as writers, producers, directors; and with more of these easing their way out of the so-called 'lipstick beat' – the coverage of home and society, fashion and food, education and human interest. But there is still a long way to go. Men in the media also need to re-evaluate their standard approaches

and characterizations. We all need to stand back from media content and look at its often unspoken messages about the status of women and men in society.

Clearly, the 'window on the world' provided to us by the media is a predominantly male window. It is a prism through which we see things from a male perspective. But what does this actually mean, and how does or would a female perspective differ?

Not all women see the world differently from men. Most women and most men share common cultural perspectives, having been socialized through the same mechanisms and institutions. So the challenge, within media organizations, is not simply to bring more women into media employment, and especially into key decision-making positions. It is also to change perceptions of both male and female staff about what and who is important, and to revalue women and women's concerns.

Making a programme from a 'woman's point of view' means something more than simply being sympathetic to women. Basically, it could affect either the choice of subject-matter for a programme, or the way the subject-matter is handled, or both. On some occasions it might mean that the camera is placed with (i.e. behind) the woman so that the audience literally sees events from the position of a woman's character. On other occasions it might mean that a woman is the protagonist in a story: she initiates the action, asks the questions and provides the answers. We see and hear things from her point of view, in her own words. It might mean that different kinds of issue and lines of investigation are emphasized in a story, or it might mean that the viewer is clearly addressed as a woman and not simply as part of a family – the media's usual conception of its audience. Women present a different 'window on the world'.

Key interventions

The last decade has seen the rapid growth of women's networks at local, national, regional and international levels. This trend signals an important development: women are becoming less and less isolated, and more and more part of an international community, talking, sharing and supporting one another in the shaping of the direction of development and of their society. While all the above social changes have occurred, mainstream media tends to lag behind rather than keep pace with it, especially in the ways women are portrayed by the mass media. There is plenty of evidence that the mass media under-represent women in terms of proportion of workforce, in various age and class categories in all parts of the world; they also tend to misrepresent women in terms of characteristics, attitudes and behaviour. Women are shown occupying less central roles than they do; marriage and parenthood are considered more important to women than to men; the traditional division of labour is shown as typical in marriage; employed women are shown in traditionally female occupations, as subordinates to men, with little status; women are more passive than men; media until recently ignored or distorted the women's movement; news coverage of issues affecting women are minimal compared to other issues, e.g. sports.

A consistent picture emerges, based on research studies in the Asian Pacific region. The media's portrayal of women at best is narrow, at worst unrealistic, demeaning and damaging especially in advertising. In the present situation, the following key interventions are recommended.

- While the existing codes on media ethics call for respect

for all persons, no codes refer to women who comprise half of humanity even though women are more invisible except in certain roles. Recommendation: Need to make women more visible, to make their voices heard and viewed. Issues and events concerning women should be part of mainstream news, not only confined to women's or lifestyle; refrain from reinforcing stereotypes of women; recognize and respect diversity of women – urban, rural, marital status, physical attributes, age, occupation.

- Sexuality should not be exploited or sensationalized. This means uncalled for exploitation of the human body to sell a product or attract an audience.
- Present women and men of different ages, appearances, opinions and interests in variety and diversity of activities and roles, including non-traditional ones, in an equitable manner.
- Ensure that language respects the principle of equality between women and men.
- Strive to reach a balance in the use of resources for women and men, and seek the opinion of both women and men on the full range of public issues.
- Both women and men should be portrayed as decision-makers, portraying women as persons who have professions, expertise, authority and skills in a range of circumstances, activities and settings. Portray women and men as equal partners in sharing responsibilities and in family formation and family life. Equal dignity should be given to domestic and wage-earning roles. Non-traditional households (childless couples, senior citizen households) must be recognised beside the nuclear family unit.
- Address obstacles in the recruitment, employment and promotion of women and the professional development of women in media. Affirmative measures for women should be taken such as training opportunities and internships, job rotating schemes to facilitate career development, to equip women for higher positions in media organizations.

Most of the interventions and activities with regard to mainstream media of the network rest on the belief that the existing media systems and structures which at present disadvantage women are in the long run responsive and amenable to change. There is also the effort at creating alternative media and different types of information and news and disseminate these to as many people as possible.

Finally, I would like once again to congratulate the organizers of this meeting for providing us with the opportunity to dialogue and to share our experiences in the shaping of women empowering communication as we prepare for the World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. ■

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Women, communication and socio-cultural identity: creating a common vision

In a country which is emerging from the longest spell of colonialism and the most comprehensive and intense system of racial domination, socio-cultural identity is a major issue. For women in South Africa, it is a crucial time for women's rights activists to reassess, stimulate, identify, explore and encourage the empowerment of women in communication.

In South Africa we are considering the possible role that modern electronic media can play in unifying the country despite its 11 official languages. This is a challenge to South Africans to grasp opportunities offered by the flux of the post-apartheid reconstruction of society. Our media and policy have potential in building a hegemonous post-apartheid society. The policy and kind of communication system that will be developed during the transition and reconstruction phase will have a profound impact on the future of South Africa. I hope that South African blacks, women in particular, will not be incorporated into the neo-colonial system, but will fight for 'participation', 'development' and 'media/communication' in a single programme for building a post-apartheid South Africa. The challenge is not merely that of benefiting from the latest socio-technological developments, but also of potentially enhancing democracy in South Africa by creatively using the latest media technology.

Women's oppression continues

'Whatever you do, do not be ladylike - God Almighty created a woman and the Rockefeller band of thieves created a lady.' These were the words of an American women's rights campaigner. As we assess the impact of initiatives such as the UN Women's Decade and the ecumenical decade in solidarity with women, we cannot afford to be ladylike. It is my contention that very little progress has been made. The rise of religious and ethnic fundamentalism has reinforced oppression of women in many countries. Even in Europe and the USA the women's movement is on the retreat as conservatism of all guises rises.

The United Nations Decade for Women made some achievements, though in some quarters it fell short in its goals. One of the most important achievements is that it moved a number of governments and non-governmental organisations to take action or initiate programmes that benefit women. The information that had been researched, compiled and published on women in their respective societies helped in creating better understanding among women. There is a better awareness, for example, of the ways in which global economic and political issues directly affect the lives of women. Elimination of discrimination against women cannot be fully realised when there is inequality among members within a society, which in turn is partly the cause of unequal

relations among nations. The media exposed customs that violate women's rights, for example, exploitation of unskilled female labour in export processing zones, destructive forces devastating the lives of women and their families in countries of political tensions and military conflicts.

The condition of women in today's world is that of greater and subtler subjugation of women. The media play a very important role in this subjugation. We must, however, locate the untenable condition experienced by women in the context of the crisis in which many societies find themselves. Current civilization is tottering because it is built on a reckless disregard for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. In fact it vigorously negates these essential elements. As Aime Cesaire said in his discourse on colonialism: 'A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization. A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization. A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization.'

On the question of the subjugation of women the current civilization is guilty on all three counts. An important consequence of this analysis is that the predicament of women in today's world must be defined as part of the crisis of our civilization. In other words, there is no hope for the present civilization unless and until women are free from oppression. Bourgeois civilization has resorted to a redefinition of both the woman and the family. This was done initially in response to the contradictions and conflicts thrown up by the industrial revolution. According to Ehrenreich and English:

Man must have a refuge from the savage scramble of the Market, he must have consolation for his lonely quest as 'economic man'. Sexual romanticism asserts that the home will be that refuge, women will be that consolation.

It is again women and family that modern capitalist society appeals to when crisis hits. An attempt is made according to Michèle Mattelart, to reinstate the times 'when the women-family within the social body assured the serene permanence of everyone's role, thus acting as home-port for the adult and juvenile expeditions of men.'

It is this consideration that has largely informed the socialization of women and their representation in the media. This was reinforced through the colonization of leisure time. In South Africa today you cannot telephone most women between 17.00 and 18.00 hours when soaps such as 'The Bold and the Beautiful' and 'Loving' are being broadcast by local television stations.

Beyond criticism

'To cast the enemy in the role of the devil is to conceal the weakness and lack of perspective in one's own agitation,' argues Hans-Magnus Enzensberger. We cannot blame all our failure to move women from the periphery into the centre of society on the overwhelming power of the media. Mattelart and Enzensberger make the observation that the left, includ-

ing the women's movement, has failed to develop an alternative theory in the media. Ways in which dominated classes such as women decode and assimilate cultural messages of the dominant class are seldom put under scrutiny. A terrain of struggle is thus left out of consideration. In emphasising the importance of this site of struggle Mattelart argues: 'In the hierarchy of struggles, this form of defensive resistance guarantees, prepares and supports other responses to the hegemonic culture, which constitute an offensive resistance.'

I was happy to note that most of the time in this conference is devoted to the search for and sharing of practical alternatives to the current media approach rather than to chronicling how the media abuse women. Enzensberger argues further that our 'social usefulness can best be measured by the degree to which [we are] capable of using the liberating factors in the media and bring them to fruition.'

No community without communication

The ability to communicate is God's greatest gift to humankind. There can be no community without communication. If communication is imperfect, hegemonic and dominating the resulting community will reflect these imperfections. Randy Naylor captures the essence of my argument when he says: 'It is not enough to see the story of my neighbour's life. Communication demands that my neighbour and I enter into one another's stories and thereby discover community.'

Although communication technology offers us unlimited possibilities of improving the quality of our communication it does not allow us to discover community. In order to address this situation, WACC called on the World Council of Churches' Seventh General Assembly to 'restore justice and integrity to the communication environment.'

There is more to communication than women merely occupying positions of power in the communications industry. In the particular case of South Africa, there is need to look not just at the role of the communication industry in the apartheid era but at its ownership as well. Perhaps the role is supposed to have changed but has the ownership changed? What is the aim of that ownership? We must always bear in mind that it is the communication of people, not machines, that we want to facilitate.

As things stand the communication of the ruling classes drowns out the voices of the dominated, particularly the voice of women. A natural reaction is to try to become the voice of those we believe to be voiceless. The fact of the matter is that they are not voiceless; their voices have been silenced. What we are in fact called upon to do is to provide a clearing in the communication environment in which those voices can be heard. For most women the provision of such a clearing implies the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy. In other words, they need to be brought into the global village and enabled to discover community as defined by Naylor.

One of the most ridiculous signs of the oppression of women lies in preventing women from acquiring knowledge and then accusing them of being ignorant. Societies have always been able to create disabilities and then ask to be praised for attempting to cure them. This ridiculous situation must be exposed and fought if there is to be any possibility of creating a communication environment which empowers women. The explosion of information in the world today makes it necessary for women to define long beforehand what type of knowledge they are going to attempt to acquire. The surprise that awaits women is that having determined beforehand what type of information and knowledge they



Brigalia Bam spoke on 'Women and Socio-Cultural Identity'.

wish to be in possession of, they discover that such information, such knowledge, is not in fact freely available, and if it is available not easily accessible.

It becomes the responsibility of women, once more, to seek and compile such information and knowledge so that those who follow them will not have to start from scratch. One of the most critical areas of communication needing women's empowerment is in self-knowledge, the need for women to know and understand the day-to-day national and global economic policies and the impact on their lives. Self-knowledge is the challenge for the 21st century.

We are at last facing the liberation of our country. This liberation has to be seen within the context of the liberation of all the peoples of South Africa, particularly black women who were the most deprived by the colonial and apartheid system. The issue of self-knowledge therefore, has to be on the top of our agenda as feminists and as contributors to a more human global community.

Our experience in Africa has shown the difficult and compromised situations women have found themselves in through lack of knowledge of realities of post-independent agreements that are made between the formerly colonised nation and the colonial master. In my opinion there is a similarity with the crisis of identity after independence. We all witness situations where we boycott the West but then we implement structural adjustment programmes of the very countries we boycott. Women are affected by this as we operate in global structures of unequal relationships. We have to be aware of becoming implementers of colonial imperialism.

African TV stations are occupied by and large by Western productions which do nothing to empower women of the

Third World. The challenge is how do women work together from the South and North for those things they want to preserve in their culture and tradition. The onus lies on the women of the Third World to create space for knowledge and more South/South dialogue.

Jürgen Habermas argues that no one can construct a social identity independent of the identities others give them. The power of the media in controlling socio-cultural identity is as obvious as it is pervasive. When we consider socio-cultural identity we have to move way beyond the media into the production of children's toys, into Disneyland and into children's books and television. These are reinforced in the school system.

It is at this early stage that women are put into what in Afrikaans is called *straat loop dood* (cul-de-sac). By the time women become adults they are prepared through this socialisation process for manipulation by the media. Their ability to analyse their predicament and to devise strategies of addressing it is blunted by the limitations imposed by their socialisation. Women have not taken this domination passively. There are many outstanding women who are evidence of what is possible if women resist such socio-cultural subjugation.

Creating a common vision and culture

One goal of a broadcasting policy is to create a broadcasting system that is dynamic, so that listeners' and viewers' needs and desires change. These policies, of course, are limited by several factors like wealth, population, cultural and linguistic composition of any given society. Moreover, culture and cultural identities are not fixed, they are dynamic. Research shows that there is a preference for domestic production. I will not attempt to prescribe for any country a formula for cultural preservation. The most important thing is for women to understand rather than accumulate knowledge of culture.

Julius Nyerere once asked a very simple but profound question 'Is it legitimate to base a whole socio-economic system on selfishness?' He was reacting to a theory that 'self-serving motivation in individuals can be dynamic, cumulatively productive and ultimately beneficial to all members of the society.' We are living at a time dominated by a single global ideology following the collapse of totalitarian communism. Africa may have started a process also of shedding its ideology of socio-cultural heritage which may transform its people into an individualistic way of life. Quoting President Clinton on his election campaign may illustrate the scope of the paradigm and help us to think: 'Must science and technology continue to feed the historical cycle of more economic disparity? Or can our research lead us out of that cycle and launch us into a new trajectory of cultural evolution?'

In Beijing in 1995 we will launch a new era of development. Develop we must, but for what end? What purpose? What kind of development? Must development lead to environmental degradation? What can women of the world contribute to create new socio-cultural values? Can our values, perspectives, skills as women make a difference? Can we use the media to support women acting as catalysts for fundamental change?

There is a need to consider the possible role that modern media can play in creating a common vision, common culture and identity for women. We are moving beyond a culture in which the print media are dominant. Is it possible that the media may offer women a number of opportunities for developing a unified global culture based on concern for people,

life and environment? How do we reconcile the prevailing free market individualism with African socialist collectivism? This question does not apply to Africa only but other nations committed to other value systems.

Conclusion

This conference gives me much needed hope in the struggle for the empowerment of women. If the five objectives of the conference are achieved we will move beyond the point of putting our concerns on the agenda. The salvation of humankind, and not only women, depends on women making progress in this struggle for empowerment. This conference and the energy it is going to inject in our struggle is a clear signal that women have arrived.

The challenges facing us are many but I have a conviction that we will get there. This conviction comes from the fact that the majority of us want to be, and are, committed to be the conscience of our time and have chosen to move away from the protected conventional and unquestioning safe media interpretations that block its lenses to our sculptures, beadwork, patchwork, our books, our magazine and newspaper columns and our real content. Our failure to understand the relationship between economic and political power and media control cannot be allowed to go on. Our exclusion from media research, media theory development and lack of editorial control cannot go on.

To conclude, I would like to share with you an excerpt from a book that will be published soon, written by one of the few Black South African television producers/directors/script writers, Tintswalo Manganyi:

'The gender struggle in the work is born of necessity by women being appointed to positions of power by men. This already undermines a woman's potential for optimum performance. Women should empower women! Women have knowledge which is little appreciated or unknown. This makes them a threat. Take your knowledge to the boardroom and let them speak. When they are through, present your case and never say "As a woman" or "Women think." You will fail. Say "I", that makes you an equal. Be gender conscious but in addressing egotistical males, be careful to say "I think", better "I know". Knowledge is justified true belief. I never allow men to make me feel or look like a "woman". I force them to treat me as an equal. I command. I reject lines of gender oriented acceptability. Women have the means and the desire to confront and challenge stereotypes. Self knowledge is inherent to every woman. Why wait for things to happen? Women can and must take control. Women fail because women accept that men wield more power and they wait. Refuse to be addressed as a "woman". Be known by your name.' ■

Brigalia Bam, deputy General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, worked in teaching, health education and youth work before being banned from South Africa. She gained international recognition for her work with the early women's department and programme of the World Council of Churches before returning to South Africa where she is a leading proponent of human rights and peace.

Women organise for alternative media

The conference on 'Women Empowering Communication' included a number of communication models offered as examples of innovative approaches which have been successfully used in women's work. The following are highlights from some of those models.

The Women's Feature Service, New Delhi, India

Initiatives implemented by Unesco and the UN Decade for Women resulted in a rather unusual project. Several Women's Feature Services were created to project women's voices into mainstream media. Unesco requested UNFPA to provide a grant of USD 132,600 for the period 1977-78 to 'promote world-wide action aimed at the advancement of women, with special reference to their right to determine fertility and their fuller involvement in political, social and cultural life, and in the development process.'

The funding was to serve as seed money for a five-year period for five women's feature services designed to be controlled and operated by women within existing news agencies. The purpose was to disseminate information to mainstream media outlets (newspapers, radio and television). The main target were opinion leaders and policy makers in major organisations that could influence policy related to women and development.

Unesco contracted five news agencies for this work. In 1978, Inter Press Service (IPS) a Third World news agency headquartered in Rome, Italy, agreed to experiment with a service from Latin America which came to be the *Oficina Informativa de la Mujer* (OIM). A year later, through their office in Nairobi, IPS took on the work of Africa Women's Feature Service (AWFS).

In 1978 Unesco also contracted the Christian Action for Development Agency in Barbados, to sponsor the Caribbean Women's Feature Service (CWFS) which would be distributed by the Caribbean News Agency (CANA). In the same year Unesco approached and reached an agreement with the Press Foundation of Asia's Depthnews Feature Service to create a women's feature service.

In 1979 Unesco entered into a contract with the Regional Arab Centre for Information Studies on Population, Development and Construction (ACISPDC) based in Cairo. The agreement was short-lived and the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) took on this work. The Arab States Women's Feature Service (ASWFS) was the fifth and last such service to be established by Unesco.

The services normally operated with a regional co-ordinator who was responsible for recruiting women to write for the service. Unesco often underwrote training programmes for the co-ordinators and writers.

By 1994, of the five started, the feature service sponsored

by Inter Press Service and Depthnews were the only ones still to exist. The former became an independent organisation in January 1991 with an international service, and the latter continues under the sponsorship of the Press Foundation of Asia, with a select service from the region.

What is the Women's Feature Service?

The WFS offers to mainstream media a syndicated feature service, written by almost 130 women journalists in the North and South. Its focus is development, with a progressive women's perspective. The WFS defines development as a social, political and economic process of change, which to be just and sustainable, must ensure the participation of all class, race and gender groups.

As such the WFS does not have topics, issues or themes, but chooses to report on the processes of development that seem to be suggested by the change in societies, from the micro to the macro level.

The primary aim of the WFS is to provide mainstream media with features that are thought-provoking enough to suggest policy – in terms of initiation or change. Some subjects that the WFS commissions have already been covered by correspondents, but the WFS attempts a gender perspective, which makes it different.

The writing and editing styles adopted and encouraged by the WFS are those that tend to colour, depth, freshness and away from the hackneyed, clichéd and predictable. The WFS attempts to move away from stereotyping and negative portrayals – towards viewing processes through a positive lens. It encourages and challenges its correspondents to reach high standards. As a syndicated service the WFS has the expertise and experience to determine how best the material can be placed in mainstream media without distorting the content and the spirit of the writing.

Commissioning, editing and translating are all part of the WFS training programme. A feature idea is discussed with a correspondent, received by the WFS editor, edited, and if need be the correspondent is consulted for information, clarification and changes. The material is sent to the clients and if used, the pick-up clip sent to the regional office and correspondent. The WFS considers this its responsibility to the correspondents as well as a part of its mandate – to promote the writing of women journalists in mainstream media.

The WFS also trains journalists in national and regional workshops it organises, comprising theoretical and practical curricula on development journalism from a gender perspective. In 1994 it hopes to complete a kit (a video cassette and a manual) on this training.

Writing from a progressive women's perspective for a local audience is demanding, and even more so for an international audience where nuances such as language, customs and concepts have to be explained clearly and creatively. Besides the challenge of writing from a progressive women's perspective, writing about issues that women feel strongly

about and that will be accepted in mainstream media locally, regionally and internationally, is difficult.

Feminists reject, often rightly, the reality of the media and insist that the media need to be more women-friendly, as they see it. This insistence, and the reality of the media, often make it difficult for progressive women to have an impact on mainstream media. To reverse this, progressive writing will have to fit into the norms of mainstream media, which does not mean that the norms have to be bought into. And media will have to change their perception of their rules making way for new and creative ways of expression. Without this, there can be no visible and lasting impact of feminist writing on mainstream media.

Given the reality North and South, how can feminists bring about change? The present feminist structures or non-structures that exist are inadequate to take on mainstream media. The resources and political clout required to make such a change are limited. Unless there is a more deliberate and planned attempt to put feminist news and analyses into mainstream media, it will remain marginal.

Feminist groups and efforts are mostly non-commercial and alternative. Bringing feminist news and analyses to mainstream media requires a unique blend of the politically correct and the commercially viable. It means taking risks, thinking big and acting smart. While this is not impossible for feminists, it is a little against the grain. In the women's movement the struggle for change – to develop different ways of working and thinking – has been from the outside. Therefore, it is difficult to work with or within a system for which there is little respect. It's safer working on the outside.

But change should be about more than safety. Feminists in and outside the system have shown over the last two decades that they can make a difference. The feminist movement, must take on the mainstream, which is different from being mainstreamed. For the mainstream has the power through newspaper, radio and television, to transform people's opinions overnight. The mainstream has also the power to legitimise the small, the insignificant and the most noteworthy. What the feminist and women's movements have achieved since the sixties can be brought to the public eye and there is no reason why it should not.

What was once the strength of the women's movement – small-scale, local, responding to needs, making connections between the micro and the macro, taking on power and authority – needs to continue. After every such effort comes a time when it needs to reach out and project itself to the world – not out there, in enemy territory – but around us, which is reachable and possible.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Anita Anand. The Women's Feature Service can be reached at: 49 Golf Links, New Delhi 110 003, India. Fax: (91) 11 4629886.

The Development Through Radio Project, Harare, Zimbabwe

The Development through Radio (DTR) Project of Zimbabwe is a rural radio listening club project initiated by the Federation of African Media Women-Zimbabwe (FAMWZ). The project currently has 45 radio listening or DTR clubs in four (out of nine) provinces of Zimbabwe. Though the clubs welcome and have a few male members, the pattern of living and community activity in rural areas in Zimbabwe is such that the over-

whelming majority of members are women.

The project, which has been operational since 1988, seeks to provide rural dwellers with access to national radio by giving them the opportunity to participate actively in the preparation of development-oriented programmes based on their own needs, concerns and priorities. These programmes comprise part of the regular broadcast schedule of Radio 4, the national education and development channel of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC).

The broad scenario of women and rural development in Zimbabwe is characterized by an imbalance in the distribution of and access to resources from land through to decision-making processes. This imbalance and lack of access apply also to communication resources. As an organization of media women committed to development, the question for FAMWZ was: Could greater access to communication be used as a wedge to promote greater access to other resources? And if so, which communication medium in Zimbabwe potentially lent itself most readily to providing such access? The answer lay in radio.

Led by monitors (or group leaders) trained by the project, members of the DTR listening clubs gather weekly around a radio receiver/cassette recorder to listen to a purpose-produced half-hour programme broadcast by ZBC Radio 4 every Monday in Mashonaland and every Wednesday in Matabeleland. Essentially, what they listen to is what ordinary people have had to say about issues and concerns and their responses.

Having listened to the programme, the DTR club members discuss their problems and other issues of interest in the community and record their deliberations. Because the content is led by the DTR members, it is as varied as the day-to-day aspects of their lives: a recorded discussion may, for example, be a grievance on the lack of water or transport (the two most common problems in the rural areas) or a question on how to resolve the tension between mothers- and daughters-in-law or information on various ways tried by members to alleviate the ill effects of high blood pressure. Non-club members may join the clubs in listening to the programme and recording their discussions. Many clubs also go out of their way to record viewpoints of other members in their respective communities.

The recorded tapes are collected by the DTR Co-ordinator/Producer, who is a staff member of ZBC Radio 4 – one for Mashonaland and one for Matabeleland. He listens to the recordings and arranges to record appropriate responses, which naturally depend on the content of the original recording by the DTR clubs. Respondents featured on the DTR programmes have included the Vice-President of Zimbabwe and other top government officials, private businessmen, donor agency representatives, extension workers and other DTR clubs.

The Co-ordinator/Producer then packages the DTR members' inputs and the recorded responses to produce the programme which the DTR members gather to listen to weekly. And so the cycle continues.

The DTR project has received many requests for the expansion of the project, which it has resisted pending the results of a recently completed evaluation. That evaluation shows that the success of the project merits its expansion. The DTR project has every intention of acting on this mandate. However, it is already clear that such expansion will overstretch the project's present delivery and field management systems; even if more staff were to be recruited, more equipment provided, etc.



Mavis Moyo, chairperson of FAMWZ and founder of the Development Through Radio Project, shows members of a club in Matabeleland how to operate a radio cassette recorder.

A very strong rationale among present and would-be constituents for expansion is the project's success as an 'action line'. Planning to continue to meet this expectation solely through existing arrangements may, however, potentially overload not only the project's own systems but eventually also the response mechanisms of traditional resource centres – thus leading to a perception of failure of the project. Although the evaluation indicates that DTR members recognize that external assistance should be accompanied by self-help, continuing care needs to be taken that sustaining this function of the project leads to greater community initiative and responsibility rather than dependence.

For a variety of reasons, among which is their own initiative, some DTR clubs have had greater success than others in utilizing the project to start or build on development, particularly income-generating, activities. This can be, and is, a motivating factor for other clubs. However, the DTR project and its clubs and communities need to continue to be vigilant to ensure that the success of individual clubs is also that of their communities.

The predominantly 'female environment' of the DTR clubs has provided for a degree of 'grassroots affirmative action'. The gains made for the empowerment of women need to be preserved and strengthened. However, as the DTR members themselves have pointed out, there is a need to involve the men remaining in their communities in the development of the DTR clubs and, through them, of their communities. While their age range is extremely wide, DTR members are mainly adult, an impassioned case was made at one evaluation workshop for the inclusion of adolescents, perhaps even through the formation of their own clubs.

The very success of the DTR project thus poses challenges for its future that suggest the need not only for improving individual operational measures but, in a more far-reaching way, for introducing certain design changes, adaptations or additions.

The DTR project has already taken root in communal areas

in Zimbabwe. As it looks towards extending itself to other areas of the country, it will build on the sense of ownership among DTR club members by devolving functions and seeking other ways of institutionalizing ever greater community responsibility for the management and operations of the project.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Mavis Moyo and Wilna W. Quarmayne. The Development Through Radio Project can be reached at: Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe, PO Box UA 439, Union Avenue, Harare, Zimbabwe. Fax: (22263) 4 729253.

Kali for Women, New Delhi, India

Kali for Women was started in 1984 by two women who were publishing professionals and had over 10 years hands-on experience in every aspect of the business, except marketing. Both had worked on a wide range of books – academic, trade, general interest, mass market – and, specifically, books on women. Both were actively involved in the women's movement, so that setting up Kali was a happy conjunction of their professional, personal and political interests.

From the outset, two things were clear: (a) Kali would only seek funding for projects, not for organisational support; and (b) Kali would be self-supporting within five years. In order to generate money for office expenses, modest honoraria and low office overheads, we offered our own editing and production skills to other organisations and plough the fees back into Kali. For example, we produced a diary for UNICEF, promotion and information materials for the Ministry of Women, etc.

In the meantime, as Kali's books were published and started selling, income steadily accumulated and now, ten years later, publications are financed entirely by income generated from sales. We still occasionally accept a grant or subsidy for a particular project, but we no longer depend on such support.

Kali's stated purpose is to publish books on and primarily by women in the Third World on a range of issues and in a variety of forms. These reflect a political perspective as well as the concerns of the women's movement and, hopefully, contribute to ongoing debates in theory and practice of women's studies and women's activism in the region. To the extent that we consider a feminist publisher to be an active participant and mediator in the shaping of discourse and the generation of alternative paradigms, we see Kali as playing a political and ideological role. As feminists and publishers in the non-West, with its long history of colonial publishing, we are seeking to reverse the flow of information from North to South and the import of materials published outside the country and region.

In practical terms, this sets Kali apart from mainstream publishing in three important ways: publishing priorities; publishing decisions; and relations with authors. Kali's publishing priority has been to provide a print forum for the totality of women's experiences and endeavours: in other words, the broad field of women's studies. We work very closely with authors and editors in developing ideas, identifying writers and preparing texts. We believe that this interaction makes a qualitative difference to the final product.

To distribute the books, we use a combination of trade, alternative and direct mail book supply within India, and a combination of trade export and sale of reprint rights outside

the country. Broadly speaking, the trade takes care of institutional demands (universities, libraries, government departments, subscriptions, etc.) and retail outlets. The alternative sector has been invaluable in reaching NGOs, women's organisations, concerned and interested individuals and groups in South Asia. Direct mail is used in remote areas where there are no bookshops but only a good postal system.

Kali collaborates with a range of publishers overseas. The normal arrangement is for a local publisher to agree to re-publish and sell in a defined market on payment of a mutually agreed sum. Sometimes we supply finished copies of a book if that is preferred or we sell the right to translate. Conversely, we sometimes buy the right to publish a particularly interesting or useful book in India.

In a country with over 20 major languages, we opted to publish primarily in English, and occasionally in Hindi. The reasons were that all higher education in India, and, consequently, most academic writing and research, is done in English. It is also the common language between different language groups.

After ten years of publishing, we have found a way to negotiate the space between alternative and mainstream publishing at practically every level in order to maintain and strengthen our commitment to the women's movement and to ensure the future viability of Kali. When all is said and done, we want to remain around long enough to make a difference.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Ritu Menon and Urvashi Butalia. Kali for Women can be reached at: A36 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110 049, India. Fax: (91) 11 6866720.

The Friends of Women Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand

Established in Thailand towards the end of 1980, the Friends of Women Foundation (FOW) is a feminist organisation which aims to raise social consciousness about the rights of women and their struggle for equality. Different sections of FOW specialise in certain activities.

- The Women's Rights Protection Section provides legal aid services for women and is engaged in a programme of law reform relating to sexual violence, domestic conflicts and labour problems.
- The Women Workers' Section organises study groups among women workers to stimulate interest in the Thai labour movement, civil liberties and gender issues.
- The Documentation, Campaign and Publicity Section is responsible for maintaining a documentation centre and the public image of FOW.
- The FOW Health Centre provides consultation services on natural health care, including family planning.
- Friends of Women in Asia (FOWIA) offers legal and social services for women working in other Asian countries, and publicises information within Thailand about the living and working conditions of Thai migrants.
- The Gender Analysis in Development Project (GAD) aims to stimulate interest by NGOs in gender issues. It is organising regional workshops in which policy-planners and development workers will participate.

FOW has three regular publications: *Satree-Tat* (Women's View), a bi-monthly magazine aimed at middle-class intellectuals and development workers; *Ying-Klaw-Klai* (Women's Progressive Steps), a bi-monthly newspaper for rural women

and workers; and the bi-annual *FOW Newsletter* (in English), for international friends and women's networks.

Legal literacy

Experiences gathered from providing legal aid services on gender issues have led to legal literacy workshops which FOW organizes for different women groups in different regions. This is an ongoing programme aimed at building a network among women's organizations specializing in providing legal literacy programmes for women. The length of the workshops is very flexible. The contents are mixed between topics which FOW has prepared beforehand and topics of specific interest to the target groups. Examples of prepared topics are 'The Relationship between Law and Politics with Special Emphasis on the Legal Status of Women', 'Women and Family Inheritance Laws', 'Women and Sexual Crimes', 'Land Ownership' etc. Topics to suit specific needs of particular target groups may range from Environmental Law, Consumer Protection Law, Labour Law or Law on Business Legal Entity. About 4-5 trainers are needed in this type of workshop and we try to use local dialects as much as possible.

In addition to organizing our own legal literacy workshop, FOW is frequently invited to speak on certain legal and political topics in activities organized by various organizations. Common topics are 'The Legal Status of Thai Women', 'Women and the Family Law', 'Women and Sexual Violence', 'Women and Democracy', etc. The speakers try to encourage participation by the audience as much as possible and to share with them interesting cases which we have experienced.

FOW in collaboration with the Women and Development Consortium in Thailand (WIDCIT) have invented a participatory training programme called 'Problems and Prospects for Improving the Quality of Life of Factory Women Workers'. WIDCIT is a linkage programme between Thai and Canadian Universities, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This training programme was built on FOW's long experience of women workers' issues and its series of needs identification workshops.

The effectiveness of all of these activities depends largely on the qualifications and commitment of the resource persons. At present the numbers of qualified resource persons are still limited. So one of the most challenging tasks of FOW is to increase their number through activities such as training of trainers. Additionally, training methods as well as effective training media should also be developed.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Malee Prukongsawalee of the Friends of Women Foundation, which can be reached at: 1379/30 Soi Praditthai, Phaholyothin Road, Bangkok, Thailand.

Women Living Under Muslim Laws, France

Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) is a network that links together women from around the world whose lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by laws, both written and unwritten, drawn from interpretations of the Qur'an and tied up with local traditions as they are selectively used by political forces. Therefore WLUML is not a network of Muslim women (though many of us may be believers). It is the socio-political context that we have in common. Through the provision of information, solidarity and support, WLUML

seeks to enable women in Muslim countries and communities to understand and analyze, from multiple perspectives, the forces that shape their existence as women; and to develop from within their own specific contexts the strategies that will allow them greater autonomy in defining themselves and the paths that their lives will take.

What women in most Muslim societies share in common, is the cultural articulation of patriarchy in which structures, social mores, laws and political power are all justified by reference to Islam and Islamic doctrine, a task facilitated by Islam's central role in the self-definition and cultural reality of Muslims at large, and in which legal systems – as a basic organizational tool of society – play an important part.

Bearing this in mind, WLUML is premised on the knowledge that 'Muslim laws' extend well beyond legal rights in the personal sphere to govern the relationship of the individual with the socio-economic and political environment in which they are concentrically located. Hence, people's lives in general, but women's particularly, are shaped, conditioned or governed by practices, customs and laws synthesised into one cohesive whole in which no distinction is made between laws actually derived from Islamic doctrine and those borrowed from outside. In each society this corpus of formal and informal laws in large measure defines the possible and the improbable in women's everyday lives at the personal, community, and national levels.

Where challenging the existing laws is a means of challenging the identity imposed on women in the specificity of their own context, this is only possible if women are able first to distinguish and then analyse the different strands that have been intertwined in the definition imposed on them in their countries/communities. It is in unravelling these strands, that women find the space in which to conceive of new self definitions and dream of different realities.

Human rights as women's rights

WLUML was formed in response to situations which required urgent action. It continues to receive appeals, respond to and initiate campaigns pertaining to violations of human rights. This remains a critical component. All requests from groups or individuals representing varied opinions and currents from within the movement for reform or defence of women's rights seeking support and urgent action are forwarded throughout the network.

Such requests include campaigns for repeal of discriminatory laws; abolition of repressive practices; enactment or enforcement of legislation favourable to women; and campaigns against systematised or generalised violations of human rights. The groups also takes up individual cases where, for example, inhuman sentences have been given; women have been forcibly married against their will; fathers have abducted children; and women whose lives are threatened.

The activities of the network include documenting and disseminating information and organising common projects for women. Where campaigns are a response to immediate needs, sharing information and common projects achieve several things:

- Forming contacts and exchanging necessary knowledge multiplies the effectiveness of individuals and groups.
- Expanding the creative use of scarce resources.

Doing the above strengthens local struggles by providing support at the regional and international levels, at the same time that local struggles strengthen the regional and international women's movement in a mutually supportive process.

The WLUML network believes that the sharing of knowledge, information, contacts, ideas and strategies enables an increasing number of women in the Muslim world to work and act locally, with their own priorities, relevant to their specific national or community context.

Our different realities range from being strictly closeted, isolated and voiceless within four walls, subjected to public floggings and condemned to death for presumed adultery (which is considered a crime against the state), and forcibly given in marriage as a child, to situations where women have a far greater degree of freedom of movement and interaction: the right to work, to participate in public affairs and also to exercise a far greater control over their own lives.

Under these circumstances, meeting other women living under Muslim laws is a means to raise consciousness. Furthermore, sharing and living a different Muslim reality is in itself a liberating experience. Interactions among networkers accelerate the process of directing and, if necessary, redirecting, the focus of the network's collective activities in response to priorities expressed by participants or to changing circumstances. And, this is precisely the manner in which WLUML has developed in the past, learning from and guided by our interaction with each other and using each of the collective projects as building blocks.

Networks rely on the optimistic but unrealistic assumption that there are enough activists who want to change the world. A network shares a common vision but it is left to each group to decide on the best way to implement the vision. Networks have no blueprints; they consider their diversity, within common values, as part of their richness and complementarity. For WLUML, as for other networks, the more communication, the more exchange, the better it functions and the better it serves women's aims.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Mariémé Hélie-Lucas of Women Living Under Muslim Laws, which can be reached at: BP 23, Grabels 34790, France. Fax: (67) 109 167.

Feminist International Radio Endeavour, Colón City, Costa Rica

The Women's International Radio Programme has studied how society works, and which institutions promote discrimination against women. Women are the survivors of a system that for centuries has tried to mutilate and silence us.

Our work with the women's movement, from the perspective of their personal experiences and attempts to find strategies to survive, transform and provide answers to our real needs, has clearly shown that this kind of communication does not give the channels, space, means, or the power that women need to express their ideas in the context of their realities and differences. Women need media that allow them to inform, transform, face obstacles, search for strategies and answers, media that empower them with communication created from their roots and identities.

Women are very sure of the kind of communication we want, because we have always worked for the ability to confront the communication system, and to change the power structures that are present not only in the communication institutions, but also in other institutions in society.

The Feminist International Radio Endeavour's team in Costa Rica consists of four women, three of whom work full-time and the fourth changes her post every three months. Another

woman is paid to do special projects.

We broadcast for two hours daily, one hour in Spanish and the other in English, but that doesn't mean that the programmes are the same or translated. The programmes are repeated in the afternoon and at night. We also do 'live broadcasts' from different places, regions and countries, when we are invited to participate. We write scripts, we produce, we train, we are technicians and we even do the cleaning.

At the Women and Radio workshop, during the 6th Feminist Meeting, held in November 1993, we said that we understand radio communication not in the mass broadcast sense but as a means and as an end, as a process of meeting, dialogue, participation, with other women and with ourselves. Our commitment to women in radio communications is not only to feminise radio but the adoption of a whole new philosophy of transformation and empowerment that affects all our lives.

We found that women use 'personal testimony' as the most valuable means of describing their lives from their own points of view, without having to conform to traditional or predetermined formats. In this way we get closer to ensuring that the audience – mainly women and invited public – can identify with particular situations and can show that the violence suffered by women is universal.

We decided not to put too much emphasis on established formats, because they may restrict women's work in communication. We try to show what is not visible in our patriarchal society and through traditional means of communication: that we women have ideas, feelings, values, identities, dreams, a history; that we have had to learn to survive. This is why so-called 'objectivity' in communications does not exist for us.

Our language is clear and we cannot, nor do we wish to, stop using it, as we were told in traditional communications. In what other ways can we express with all our feelings everything that has happened – and that continues to happen – to us? It is unacceptable and immoral that we women, the poorest of the poor, have to bear the burden of 'neoliberal policies' and 'structural readjustments'. In what other words can we tell the world about the violations and atrocities that we are subjected to, if it is not with terms such as 'unacceptable' and 'immoral', adjectives that are not objective but very subjective and very true?

We have been told that in radio or in communications you never improvise. But in the continual struggle that we women have to survive, we have to make a thousand and one improvisations.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Nancy Vargas of Programa Radio Internacional Feminista, which can be reached at: Radio Paz Internacional, Apdo 88, Santa Ana, Costa Rica. Fax: (506) 491 095.

Tanzania Media Women's Association, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Communication very often is seen as the domain of the 'haves' whereby in this day and age it refers to either telecommunications, satellites, E-mail, computers, travelling etc. and what is beamed from up there to down here. Often the basis of this communication remains unexposed or little thought of – a people's communication. Worse still, women's communication channels remain little written about or acknowledged by society. Yet as women, these skills and mediums play important roles in our day-to-day lives.

When the mouthpiece of the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) was being launched, we decided on the name *Sauti Ya Siti* (Voice of Women) for two reasons. One, *Siti* in Swahili means woman and secondly, *Siti binti Saad* was one of the first woman communicators who lived in the 19th century.

Siti sang as she sold her claypots and once the Sultan heard her voice, he invited her to the palace to be the entertainer of the Sultans. An Indian producer also heard her and took her to India to record her on His Master's Voice. Taarab music on the east coast of Africa, which is famous for its lyrics and rhythm, was born with *Siti*. Yet it took a hundred years after her death for *Siti* to be officially recognised for her contribution to our culture.

Through her art *Siti* visited and sang in parties fully veiled. One day she witnessed the rape of a woman by fourteen men who were taking revenge of the woman's husband's business dishonesty. The woman died and the case was brought to the Sultan's court who passed judgement that a driver who had collected the woman was to hang.

That day *Siti* threw away her veil and lamented in the Sultan's court that justice was not for the poor; it protected the rich. *Siti* was thrown out of the palace and died a pauper for standing up for justice. We called our magazine *Sauti Ya Siti* after her stand. It is not enough to be just a woman but you have to be a woman with social justice at heart and have the guts to speak out.

Thus, when we speak of communication models, it is these kinds of histories we have to research and through the use of information technology disseminate them to create positive images of women and our role in society.

Siti has become a symbol around which all sorts of communication models have been created. But the question remains: How do we use quality research through information technology to mobilize a community and feed back that history to the community it originated from?

In 1994 TAMWA is launching a big festival in recognition of the role that women played and continue to play in the struggle for social justice. Media are powerful tools and their use must include participatory methods that allow the people to come to terms and to own their history. We, the makers of our history, should be the ones to tell the real stories to the world: stories of human beings trying to create a world with dignity.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Fatma Alloo of the Tanzania Media Women's Association, which can be reached at: PO Box 6143, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Fax: (255) 41905 or 29347.

Women's communication networks in Brazil

What is the role of communication in the context of the international political agenda of the women's movement of the 1990s? In what ways can media empower the struggles of women?

Two main orientations can be visualized as crucial:

- Creating spaces in the media in which to set before a broad public the visions, strategies and values originating in the experiences of women.
- Training women in order that they can understand in what ways their specific and local struggles are linked and connected to questions that are global.



As part of the closing ceremony, African women joined each other on stage in poetry and song giving an eloquent display of the solidarity felt by all conference participants.

The mainstream of the dominant culture requires the strategies of women's struggles to be global too. To illustrate this, a group that works against air pollution at the level of a local community has to be in contact with networks that have the means and the power to pressure national and even international institutions. This group needs to know about the existence of a Climate Change Convention that has been signed by governments during the UNCED conference.

In order to cope with these needs, Brazilian organizations such as Rede Mulher, REDEH, CEMINA, WEDO, and the International Women's Tribune Centre have incorporated in their work agenda two perspectives: methodologies for building up women's skills and capabilities to negotiate their local and specific demands at the global level.

In Brazil, the Women's Radio Programme *Fala Mulher* (Woman Speaks) responds to the fact that radio is a powerful communication tool used by women in their political work. Brazil has 60 million radio sets and 2,900 stations. There is one radio set between three people. Women are great radio listeners, especially housewives or maids who constitute a large category of women workers throughout Latin America. It is low-cost and easy to handle, and requires very few resources actually to broadcast. Participation in radio programmes is also very easy: all you need is a telephone line and the listener can be part of the programme.

For women in Brazil, radio also has political significance. Because it is relatively unimportant in the context of modern communication technology, it is subject to less control and access to it is not covered by too many preconditions. We should give much more attention in our region to radio.

Fala Mulher began in 1988 in Rio de Janeiro. In its first year, the programme was presented one hour weekly. One year later, thanks to a small grant, the programme started to be broadcast daily. Since 1992, it has been broadcast to millions of people from Monday to Friday.

From the experience of the radio programme it was possible to advance in other directions. In 1992 four

women's organizations: began a project on 'Women, Environment and Development' that covers policy, training, income generation and communications. The communication unit of the project publicises information about activities generated in all areas of the project. It also produces special radio programmes that are distributed to stations all over Brazil. There are also educational spots distributed to commercial radio stations. These special programmes are also a way to tell a large public about environmental issues with which women are very concerned: recycling of garbage, women and the earth, water as the source of life, our bodies as the first environment to be preserved.

In collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund, *Fala Mulher* produces a weekly programme that is broadcast to the Amazon region. This programme, called *Nature Women*, is for many women that live in the region the only source of communication that reaches them.

It is important to stress certain points to which women should pay particular attention.

- Communication is fundamental for the construction of the democratic process. Women have to participate as historical subjects in this process.
- Women's struggles in the broad framework of social justice and quality of life have to be incorporated in the political agenda of the international women's movement.
- It is crucial that we concentrate resources and other efforts to train women in the communication field.
- Communication policies should guarantee spaces and provide the necessary information for women to understand the reality in which they live. All these efforts should allow women from all races, all over the world to be subjects and not objects of history in the next century.

The above is a summary of the communication model presented by Thaís Corral of Rede Mulher, which can be reached at: Rua Barão do Flamengo 23/304, CEP 22220 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Fax: (21) 556 3383. ■

The Bangkok Declaration

Over four hundred women communicators from media organizations and networks in more than 80 countries in all continents of the world met in Bangkok, Thailand, 12-17 February 1994, to discuss issues related to the theme of 'Women Empowering Communication'. The conference was organized by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), London, Isis International, Manila, and International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC), New York. The following is the final statement approved by participants.

Our goal is a more just, people-centred and sustainable world order. We are concerned about development trends: globalisation of economies and the media. This is leading to centralisation of control over both resources and decision-making, with the result that one culture dominates and marginalises women, nature, minorities and indigenous and Third World peoples.

Women are concerned with the basic needs of our societies, with the creation of life and the preservation of the environment, but we are at the bottom of all hierarchies including religious bodies. If our interests are met, the interests of all humanity will also be satisfied.

As women working in communication, we see our role as one of ensuring that women's interests, aspirations and visions are centrally located and disseminated.

The so-called 'mainstream' media are a male-dominated tool used by those in power. At the global level they are controlled by the North; nationally they are in the hands of the local elite. As they are now structured, the media propagate unsustainable lifestyles, militarism, growing pauperisation and consumption patterns which turn people into consumers not only of goods but of ideas and ideologies: women, children and the majority of men are invisible and their voices are unheard. There is particular lack of respect for the integrity and dignity of women: stereotyped and dehumanised, we have been turned into commodities. The excessive use of violence in these media is destroying the sensibilities of all humanity.

For all these reasons, it is essential to promote forms of communication that not only challenge the patriarchal nature of media but strive to decentralise and democratise them: to create media that encourage dialogue and debate; media that advance women and peoples' creativity; media that reaffirm women's wisdom and knowledge, and that make people into subjects rather than objects or targets of communication. Media which are responsive to people's needs.

In the years since the Nairobi World Conference on Women, which closed the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985, our networks and levels of organisation have grown. We have made many interventions and taken

many actions at all levels: local, national, regional and international. Yet despite our achievements, negative global trends have become more powerful.

In this context, we examined various strategies aimed at strengthening and empowering our communications. They include:

- Strengthening peoples', and more specifically women's media, including story-telling, visual and performances arts, which build on their knowledge, wisdom and creativity.
- The integration of humane values into our media creations such as harmony with nature, co-operation, nurturing, caring, love and compassion, and our struggles for freedom, to ensure that our alternatives do not become hierarchical, undemocratic and elitist.
- Education and training methodologies to access existing media for women's organisations and community groups in order that they can effectively communicate their own messages and concerns.
- Increased opportunities for technical training for women in the area of communications.
- The incorporation of gender sensitivity, local history and cultural diversity in the education and training of professionals in the field of communications.
- The development of national curricula that encourage critical thinking among future generations through formal and non-formal education.
- The expansion of gender specific media research and documentation at the local level.
- Promoting lobbies and campaigns directed at opinion makers and media consumers to raise public awareness on how issues of development affect women.
- Strengthening monitoring networks with legal backing to guarantee the democratic functioning of media.
- Networking.
- Strengthening our linkages with potential allies throughout hierarchies (government, politicians, corporations, donors, media managers) to turn strategies into concrete actions.
- Building links and solidarity between women and gender sensitive men working in media at all levels and in all conditions.
- Continuing to build links among women's networks and forge broader links with other people-oriented networks.
- Pinpointing special networking considerations and strengthening information exchanges: between urban and rural groups and organisations, across language barriers, at varied levels of consciousness and access to technology, in oppressive conditions.
- Ensuring the widest and most appropriate dissemination of information related to United Nations meetings that concern people's lives and future, including training in methodologies on how to use this information.
- Women's participation and the inclusion of women's perspectives to be assured in all stages of the preparatory process of these meetings.

- We also called on the conference organisers to spearhead the following activities:
- A world-wide effort to document all forms of women's communication practices, and organise workshops on how they can be used effectively.
- Explore possibilities for establishing a women's satellite network.
- Ensure swift global dissemination of women's views at the 1995 World Conference on Women and NGO Forum in Beijing via satellite communications.
- Organise a video production on women's lives around the world for viewing and dissemination at Beijing.
- Build support for one day during the Beijing conference when media houses world-wide promote programming by and about women.
- Organise one day at the start of 1995 for the monitoring of all media and use data as the basis for an analysis of where women are.
- Build support for 1996 to be declared International Year of Women Communicating.

We further recognise that to achieve our goal of social justice and participatory democracy, we shall have to bring pressure to bear on those who now hold power:

Governments and Policy-Makers

To implement the numerous international conventions and

agreements relating to women including the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, Agenda 21.

Funding Organisations

To re-examine their funding policies giving priority to strengthening women's media and communications networks through support that is relevant, practical and substantial.

Addendum

Further expressions of concern and various calls were made at the final plenary session of the Conference. They are:

- Concern for increasing religious fundamentalism with its accompanying violence and suppression of women's voices.
- Recognition that women have a right to control their sexuality and that in our role as communicators we should not perpetuate the invisibility of lesbians, nor assume that all persons are heterosexuals.
- A call on all governments to release writers and journalists who are political prisoners.
- Concern about the exploitation of young girls and women in the sex industries. ■

Bangkok, Thailand, 17 February 1994.

There were plenty of opportunities during the conference for group discussions, for commenting on presentations and for asking questions. Here, participants queue to take the microphone during the time allowed after each plenary to raise issues for debate.



Despite being a conference for and about women, men were permitted to attend the event and even to speak during it. Here, Carlos Valle (General Secretary of WACC) and Randy Naylor (President of WACC), on the right of the photo, and Dr Iam Chaya-Ngam (President of Sukhotai Thammathirat Open University), at the end of the table, look on with interest.

Women, democracy and media in South Africa



While women will make up more than 50% of the electorate in the first democratic elections in South Africa to be held in April 1994, they are generally absent from public politics and the plethora of political reporting in the press or on television and radio. The invisibility of women in politics and the media – the contemporary public sphere places a question mark over the attainment of the fundamental democratic principles of equity, participation and representation, without which the political process is rendered undemocratic. The equal right to vote does not guarantee all citizens the equal opportunity to influence political decisions.

Democracy is dependent on the availability of public information. The degree to which the mass media function as a public sphere, representative of the citizenry and accessible to all is a barometer of democracy within a polity. This will determine to what degree the citizenry can take actions based on informed decisions and make government accountable. Access to information has increasingly become one of the factors determining power in society. This article examines the exclusion of women from this major resource for effective citizenship.

The focus on women in this article merely reflects a limitation of the study and should not be understood as a rejection of the binary relationship of domination and subordination in gender relationships. In relation to democracy, the issues are raised in the context of ongoing debates on how to extend constitutional or formal rights into substantive rights. Having identified the ideals, on the question of policy, my concerns are with the ways in which practical proposals to realise gender equality are feasible in the context of a mixed economy and liberal democratic political dispensation that has been negotiated in South Africa.¹

Gender and power

Existing social theory can be used to examine the ways in which gender and power are intertwined and to reveal the complex and diverse ways in which sexual inequality is produced in and from the media. Aafke Komter points out that like an examination of other types of power relations such as class or ethnicity this requires 'investigating the inequality in social resources, social position and political and cultural influence; of opportunities to use resources; of rights and duties; in standards of judgements resulting in differential

treatment; inequality of cultural representations (stereotyping); psychological consequences and social and cultural tendency to minimise or deny power inequality which is presented as normal' (Komter 1991:52).

This inequality in power relations in regard to the media operates at a number of strongly interrelated levels: the audience, the professional level and at the level of content. While women are great consumers of entertainment media, readership profiles indicate that women in general and black women in particular are low users of news media in South Africa. Men outnumber women two to one as readers of daily newspapers and in specialist publications such as financial magazines which tend to offer the most serious political analysis, the proportion of women readers drops to about a third. For black women as a separate category these figures are even lower. Even for a popular black newspaper such as *New Nation*, with a non-racist, non-sexist policy, although this is not evident in their employment practice or their content, women represent less than a third of the male readership (All Media Products Survey 1991-1992).

However the problem does not end here at the level of reception. If it did the solution simply would be the extension of information to more women. Far more difficult to resolve is the fact that the information itself is not gender-sensitive and this relates to another level of inaccessibility. Women are absent from decision-making processes that determine the nature of information and placing more women in the process of production is no remedy in itself. Even where women are represented in mass media employment they are integrated into a masculine constructions of reality and purpose. Unwritten rules, journalistic practice and news room conventions all work to reinforce patriarchal values and concerns.

Komter argues that this apparent consensus can usefully be understood through Gramsci's notion of ideological hegemony, though it remains difficult to pinpoint in practice. It results from a slow social process in which consensus is developed between dominant and subordinate groups and is 'expressed in approval by subordinate groups of dominant values, symbols, beliefs and opinions'. The mass media are crucial in this 'evolution of a social consensus' (1991:57). Public opinion and the prevailing cultural climate make actions performed by subordinate groups appear as free will, whereas in fact they reflect a necessity resulting from existing relationships of dominance. Necessity is presented as 'freedom' as particular interest of dominant groups are experienced as general interest and accepted by the subordinate groups (1991:58).

The power of 'ideological hegemony' should not be overemphasized or seen as a single explanation for gender inequality but in limited interviews with women journalists on the metropolitan papers, few journalists, even those dissatisfied with discriminatory allocation of news stories, were aware of the 'male-centricity' of what they saw as standard journalistic practice – news worthiness, readability, public interest.² Some

women especially those who had penetrated decision-making positions, often actively defended the consensus and used the example of themselves to do so. Even among journalists campaigning for equal rights and opportunities attitudes reflect what Phillips and others have called 'domesticated feminism'. Relations between the sexes is seen as something to be incorporated into existing ideas – the existing ideas themselves are not challenged (1991:6).

So while participation in decision-making remains an important indicator of power it needs to be qualified by identifying the structural character of unequal division of power resources by men and women which 'assumes equal chance of getting the most advantageous outcomes in negotiations'. Komter suggests a focus on power mechanisms and processes rather than outcomes is a way of overcoming this. She identifies five elements in power processes: the desire for change, structural or psychological impediments, reaction to change, strategies to realise or prevent change; conflicts that may arise in process of change (1991:59).

Drawing on Komter's application of Steven Lukes three-dimensional view of power, the different ways in which issues are kept out of the arena of conflict through individual decisions, operations of dominant values and institutional procedures can be conceptualised. Komter distinguishes three levels at which power operates. Manifest power surfaces in attempts at change, strategies and conflicts. Latent power results from the needs and wishes of the power person being anticipated and change not being attempted. Invisible power refers to 'the social and psychological mechanisms that are not necessarily in overt behaviour that manifest in systematic sex differences of culture, self-esteem, opinions, perceptions and legitimisation of everyday reality' that generally escape awareness (1991:59-61).

In the interviews with women journalists it appeared that manifest power was not perceived to be a barrier to women. In fact as Susan Crean has pointed out, in a 'working environment where overt sexism is no longer acceptable, a good deal of it has gone underground' and is more likely to be reflected in omission than commission, in opportunities not offered and promotions not given (1987:110-111). However many were keenly aware of latent power and resisted initiating change for fear of ridicule, being labelled aggressive or penalised in some way.

Invisible power is all pervasive and is evident in the acceptance by large numbers of women journalists in limited career paths and the tolerance of patriarchal and macho attitudes. The fact the white women in South Africa dominate the news room is not a triumph for women but has accompanied the financial rationalisation of the industry and the juniorisation of news room and to a lesser extent sub desks. The large scale use of women has not resulted in improved status of women in the industry or social perception but the loss of status for the profession.

So invisible power which reflects values, opinion and attitudes can be made visible and measured to some degree in the gross inequality in pay structures between men and women and their absence from certain positions. The South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ) recently commissioned a national salary survey in which in all six professional media occupations there were obvious sexual discrepancies, women's salaries were lower than those of men. Female editorial executives earn 84% of the median male wage, and experience even a greater disparity than their male counterparts in the first eight years of employment. It is only at mid-

career that there is any parity. There is also a greater differential in women journalist salaries in various occupations such as reporters and editorial executives, where at the lower end women often fall below the median. When race differentiation is taken in to account women earn less than men in each instance, with white women earning more than African men but less than Indian men and women and Coloured men.

It is at the sub desk though that the power of selection and presentation traditionally lies. Because of the complex legacy of apartheid and Bantu education African men are the top earners among sub-editors. However the numbers of African and Indian women subs is so little or non-existent as to be statistically insignificant.³

An obvious area of caution in the application of hegemonic analysis is against viewing the monolithic dominance of male patriarchy in relation to acquiescent passivity of female subordinates. This forecloses on opportunities created by vulnerabilities within the dominant group and perpetuates notions of women as compliant and as being acted upon.

However a power relations analysis goes some way to explaining the factors in relation to the media which work to exclude and marginalise women from the democratic process. The absence of women from the forums of public influence undermines the philosophy of consent and participation on which democracy is traditionally based (Pateman 1979). Women, the poor and blacks in large numbers do not participate in formal politics or in the media in South Africa, nor can they consent therefore to be ruled. As Colin Sparks has argued in relation to elites but applicable to gender: 'The modern public sphere seemingly recalls the representativeness of publicness of the middle ages, where elites display themselves for the masses simultaneously using the forum to communicate among themselves' (1992:44).

Liberal theory

From a traditional liberal position the public sphere is an arena between the distinct areas of state and civil society that guarantees the protection of the individual. The public sphere is sharply distinguished from the private sphere. Liberal theory equates the public sphere with the political domain and the public role of the media is defined in government. The liberal belief in the virtue of the market is applied to the media where it is viewed as the mechanism best suited to meeting the information needs of society. But far from providing a free market of diverse and competing ideas, the contemporary media market is characterised by monopolisation of ownership and inaccessibility. In South Africa where a liberal position has always been strongly represented by the English language commercial press, 95% of the newspaper industry is controlled by four conglomerates and together they own the only pay channel television.

The further the market commands information flows through conglomeration, privatisation and deregulation – the further it fails to fulfil democratic ideals of equal accessibility and independence. A liberal view, for James Curran (1991:29) fails to take account of the way in which power is exercised through capitalist and patriarchal structures. This is particularly significant in the light of the lack of progress made by women in the economic realm despite the liberal gains in the political realm. Political equality rests on substantial social and economic conditions and the increase in women's representation, though still not proportionate to their number, is undermined by the stagnant position of women in the labour market (Phillips 1991:9). What we see in newsrooms is what Phillips

calls 'domesticated feminism' (1991:6) where relations between the sexes is seen as something to be incorporate into existing ideas – the existing ideas themselves are not challenged.

In the area that determines the nature and the flow of information, the economic realm, women are not decision makers. A survey of Natal Newspapers a subsidiary of the giant media cartel, Argus Printing and Publishing, demonstrates that while [white] women dominate the news rooms, they are absent from decision-making positions, editorial or managerial.⁴ Their dominance of junior positions has not influenced the kind of the news covered or the way in which it is done. As Lana Rakow has pointed out women do not dominate news rooms – they are simply the majority in them (1989:305).

Participatory democracy

It is precisely on these grounds that participatory democracy challenges liberal democracy. Political equality offered by liberal theory is inconsistent with social arrangements that deprive many of the chance to make decisions. Participatory theorists reject the liberal distinction between public and private realms. Anne Phillips has argued that the failure to explore the nature of the private sphere is a failure in democratic theory. The separation between the private and public is reconstituted as a sexual division within civil society itself (1991:29) 'The exclusion of the domestic from the realm of civil society creates a private individual which is abstracted from familial relations, and it is largely because of this that he can venture forth into the political arena' (Phillips 1991:31).

The requirements of participatory democracy extend beyond crossing a ballot paper every five years. There should be constant participation by those affected by the outcomes of decision-making and access to the necessary information for them to reach their decisions (Pateman 1973:69-71). Although many theorists envisaged the realisation of this through industrial democracy and participation in the workplace, this has seldom been attempted in the media industry and is particularly problematic in developing economies. The importance for participatory theorists of the workplace as the major area of participation and the value attached to paid work, excludes many women. In a country such as South Africa with unemployment figures around 50% and above 80% among certain peripheral urban and rural concentrations of black South Africans, the opportunities for participation through industrial democracy are closed to the most marginalised of the unemployed, women.

Rather the media strategy that has accompanied participatory theory of democracy is that of community media. These localised, small scale, community-driven media are seen as providing the accessibility and independence that would allow direct participation in decision-making. However as Anne Phillips points out such initiatives fail to recognise the additional burden on women's time. Women's lives make direct democracy difficult. 'In societies where the division of labour is ordered by sex (that is every society we know), time becomes a crucial constraint on women and meetings an additional burden' (1991:21). Certainly the experience of community papers and organisations during the states of emergency in the 1980s and those that have remained bear testimony to this. The All African Zulu language newspaper *Umfrika* still run from the Marianhill Mission in Natal and launched to present a progressive alternative to the Inkatha Freedom Party publication in the eighties, has no women reporters. The New African and Concord News Agencies

established as participatory co-operative ventures at the same time, only had one woman reporter.

Civic republican democracy

Civic republicanism, another major democratic theory critical of liberal theory and its subsequent pluralist qualifications, reasserts the distinction between private and public. For Hannah Arendt, a major proponent of this position, power is not 'the instrumentalisation of another's will but the formation of a common will in a communication directed to reaching agreement' (Habermas 1986:78). She insists that a public political realm can produce legitimate power only while 'structures of undistorted communication find their expression in it'. She identifies the collapse of the public realm as the cause of the crisis of democracy in the modern world. Liberalism 'turned the activities of citizenship to the service of private interest and emptied politics of its importance' (Phillips 1991:16).

While civic republicanism strongly advocates participation, it is unconvinced by the democratic potential of 'micro-participation' of community democracy, which works against the realisation of humanist and universalist ideals. The more local the participation, the more likely is it to produce interest group politics and 'leave us stuck in our own backyard' (Phillips 1991:49). 'The solution is not to spread democracy around into more and more corners of our everyday life, but to re-establish the political as what makes us human and free' (Phillips, 1991:16).

However Hannah Pitkin contends that civic republicanism seems specifically to appeal to the patriarchal values and has often set up the feminine as the realm from which politics must escape. 'From the political ideals of ancient Athens to their recent revival by Hannah Arendt, republican activism seems linked to "manly" heroism and military glory and to disdain for the household, the private, the personal and the sensual ...' (Pitkin in Phillips 1991:45-46).

Civic republican thinking is compatible with public service media, committed to the ideals of public provision and rational development. Public service media in South Africa, have tended to ghettoise or ignore women both as audiences and in their employment within organisations.⁵ Where programming is geared toward women the focus is domestic and seldom empowering. The kind of issues debated on the SABC in its infrequent forays into gender concerns are not those that preoccupy the mass of women, who are concerned with survival. While undeniably affected by the questions of equality in the workplace and abortion on demand, they are primarily concerned with the socio-economic issues of poverty and unemployment.

On the employment front profiles for public service radio shadow the profiles of commercial publications. While women make up over a third of the general editorial staffers at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (radio), they constitute only 22% of junior management, 6% of middle management and are not represented in senior management at all (SABC Radio Manpower and Gender Profiles 1993).

However, as I argue later on, the very nature of public service provision makes it the obvious forum to tackle national policy issues such as gender. While women are under represented in broadcasting, which in South Africa is overwhelmingly public service, it is the major mass medium for the bulk of the population and unlike print is used almost as much by women as by men – around 60% for radio and 40% for television – although for different purposes (All Media

Products Survey, 1991).

Although the liberal, participatory and civic republican democratic theories cannot directly or exclusively be linked to commercial, community and public service media respectively, there is historical and theoretical justification for examining the media and their democratic imperatives from this perspective.

Media and democracy

The major theories of democracy have ignored the ways in which women are structurally excluded from participation in the public sphere and the gendered nature of the public sphere itself. The effect of this is that these theories are not able to fulfil their own democratic requirements.

It is precisely with the barriers to participation and representation that the challenge lies for the media. Citizens of the new democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa, will be far from equal in their ability to participate in the public sphere.

What is required of the media for them to fulfil their democratic functions? To be broadly representative of the entire spectrum of the citizenry, the mass media should be diverse, accessible, accountable and equitable. Conditions for diversity need to be developed, in particular the reflection of female perceptions, interests and concerns as well as men's. Privatisation is not the solution and tends to create more of the same rather than a diversity of ideas and practices. To fulfil the democratic requirement of participation the media should be highly accessible to all citizens, men and women, both at the level of reception and dissemination. Who is represented in the public sphere and the depth of their participation in decision-making, will determine to whom the media are accountable.

While the concepts of diversity, accessibility and accountability are crucial to the realisation of democracy they do not fulfil the democratic notion of equity, which requires a redistribution of the media resources. As demonstrated with concentration of commercial ownership, state control of public broadcasting, the paucity of resources in community media, and the skewed media consumption patterns, the media system in South Africa public service, commercial and community – fails dismally to meet democratic requirements. Furthermore policy proposals from various political parties and media groupings fail to rectify the gender imbalances within the system. As Curran points out, 'the media should do more than reflect the prevailing balances of forces in society. It should redress imbalances of power through broadening access to the public domain (by) compensating for inferior resources and skills' (1991:30).

Media policy

To begin to realise these aims requires a national media policy which confronts the structural limitations to women influence of the public sphere. Without a sustained and planned policy, efforts to align political equality with substantive equality will remain limited to the pockets of women engaged in this struggle.

This could be attempted through the a policy which seeks to reconcile the direct involvement and diversity of participatory media with equity and civic concern of public media. Such a policy should be concerned with developing processes and structures to ensure the provision of public information for women, reflect women's interests in society, encourage women to participate in public policy making and

redress the imbalances of power through employment and training.

What might a media system, given the national multi-party agreement on a mixed economy, feasibly look like? The media system would comprise public, civic and market sectors.

Commercial media

The context of mixed-economy and the problems of balancing growth and equity that policy formulators face in South Africa, mean that commercially motivated media are a reality in any media plan. Besides the economic reality, segments of the commercial press historically have played an important oppositional role to the apartheid state and are likely to continue to play such a role under a post-apartheid dispensation. This makes their contribution to the diversity of ideas significant however their inability to fulfil democratic requirements of diversity, accessibility and accountability need to be understood.

The commercial media, predominantly press, represents a powerful concentration of interests which crossover the communication and non-communication industry. Anti-monopoly legislation could go some way to rectifying the imbalances in this important field. Specifically in relation to women's issues, anti-discrimination legislation and binding affirmative action programmes or targets are essential. However, with the absorption of patriarchal values and practices referred to earlier this may not effect substantive change.

Somewhere between the massive commercial conglomerates and community papers is the fledgling independent press. It consists essentially of those 'alternative' papers who survived the repression of that state during the 1980s and who managed to secure the dwindling foreign funding following the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC. However all, as indicated earlier, have predominantly male readerships. Radio appears to have more balanced listenership but because of the repressive licensing laws, no community radio operates regularly.

To redress the inadequacy of gender representation and to realise participation and accessibility two complementary processes have to be implemented – subsidisation and representative public provision. A national subsidisation structure and process needs to be established that facilitates the setting up and operating of a range of media, including women's media. Arguments against subsidisation on the grounds of limited resources and more pressing priorities in the South African context, ignore the fundamental role that the media should play in policy formation in relation to those priorities. Policy decisions on housing, health, education are all areas that profoundly affect women's lives yet they are largely excluded from them.

Colin Sparks goes further by arguing that a public subsidy has to be considered as a short-term antidote to the anti-democratic tendencies of the market. He contends that a central problem for realising democratic ideals in the media arises from audience segmentation. Newspapers have different balances between public information and other material. Elite media carry far more of the serious information necessary for informed citizenship, though this itself is a gendered assumption drawing on male values of rationality and competition.⁶ Even when the popular press does address the same kind of public information as the quality press, it does so in different ways. These tend to simplify, personalise, dramatise and obscure the public information content (1991:

44]. The distinction between information and entertainment evident in quality publications becomes blurred in popular publications.

This class analysis is equally apposite to gender. In South Africa the readership profiles indicate that very few women read news publications even fewer read specialist publications. As much as 76% of readers of the leading independent national newspaper are men (*The Weekly Mail & Guardian Weekly Readers Survey 1993*).

The effect of this in relation to advertising revenue is a highly selective subsidy directed at information provision for male readers. Of course in the area of women's magazines the elite subsidy also works in favour of wealthier women, but these magazines carry little information on the public realm. By definition their major concern is with the private realm. Not that non-news media genres should be ignored in transforming the gendered nature of media. The media does not just reflect reality, it operates at a far more fundamental level to legitimise existing social relations, indeed to create reality.⁷

Sparks acknowledges the danger of abuse. 'An information subsidy cannot substitute for a democratic culture, but it can go some way toward sustaining one' (1992:48).

In terms of fiscal logistics, media subsidies do not have to draw on the traditional tax sources of the state. The media industry represents an enormous concentration of wealth. The financial basis for a subsidy system could be derived from %age taxes on advertising or on the massive profits of media houses. The allocation of subsidies does not have to be tied to the state. A simple formula applied by an independent body involves a set-up subsidy up to a certain circulation level which suggests economic viability (Gillwald 1993:75).

Women's publication and television and radio listener clubs for women in Japan, Australia and Zimbabwe have helped counter the isolation of domesticity and sometimes consciously have prepared women for participation in industry.⁸ Through such popular magazines and programmes the media have already gone some way to revealing the hidden issues of the private sphere. However, while this may encourage diversity and some accessibility, as Phillips contends, democratising the corners of the private realm is not the solution to democratising society. The solution, she argues, is 'to re-establish the political as what makes us human and free' (1991:16).

Public service

It is primarily in public service broadcasting with its imperative to provide the information necessary for effective citizenship to all, that existing inequities can be redressed. If current audience profiles of the commercial media are any indication, the lauded deregulation and privatisation initiatives underway at the moment, hold no hope of greater inclusion of women or their issues in the public sphere. As the SABC has shifted to a more commercialised and privatised motivation, so the elite subsidy referred to in relation to print begins to influence programming in favour of audiences with the most disposable income, in South Africa, specifically white men.

Through the introduction of an active gender policy for public service broadcasting operating at national, regional and local level, gender representation and participation can be developed in a sustained and effective way and the concepts of citizenship and information provision expanded. This will require representative mechanisms that acknowledge gender differences and gender inequalities to ensure a new

proportionality between the sexes (Phillips 1991:7). However until there are mechanisms through which women can formulate their policies and interests such representation is unlikely to change dramatically the nature of information.

While no social system can ever guarantee that equal voting rights will be accompanied by equal influence on political outcomes, any system which systematically excludes, by omission or by practice, vast number of people from public communication by their gender can hardly be called democratic. ■

1 I would like to thank Robert Morrell, Julie Fredrickse and Graeme Addison for their comments on this paper. I would also like to thank the SAUJ, the *Weekly Mail*, *Vrye Weekblad* and *Radio 702* for providing me with information.

2 These were conducted in preparation for a national survey which unfortunately has not been completed.

3 SAUJ Salary Survey, 1993.

4 Racial and gender survey of employment of journalists at Natal Newspapers, 1992, conducted by students of the Department of Journalism and Public Relations, Technikon Natal.

5 Broadcasting is predominantly state-controlled in the form of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, which has three television channels, originally for whites, blacks and an fledgling educational-documentary channel. M-Net, the commercial pay-channel, was the result of a deal struck by the big four newspaper groups and the state. They would be able to reclaim some of the advertising they claimed to have lost to television and they would agree not to programme any news. In this way capital was able to get what it wants from the media industry, profits from advertising and the state was able to continue its grip on the flow of public information. Public radio consists of widely used network of 23 ethnic programmes and two independent stations which were able to operate from the so called 'independent' homelands of Transkei and Bophuthatswana.

6 See Anne Phillips, drawing on Carole Pateman and Iris Young contest the assumption of a non-gendered, abstract citizenship as something that operates to centre the male. Democracy has been identified with activities that have been historically associated with men. See also critique of Habermas' celebration of liberal public sphere as being far from universal, but restricted to bourgeois males in Garnham 1986:43.

7 Michèle Mattelart identifies the soap opera as the epitome of this. She argues that it is in the everyday time of domestic life that the fundamental discrimination of sex roles is expressed, the separation between public and private, production and reproduction. 'The sphere of public interests and production is assigned to men, that of private life and reproduction to women. Positive values are attached to masculine time and negative values are attached to feminine time which, despite its potential richness is internalised as repetitious and monotonous' (1986).

8 See Mattelart (1986) who describes how the Japanese state broadcasting authority following the Second World War, brought women out of virtual confinement within the family as part of their policy of modernisation, by group-listening of education programmes geared exclusively for women. She notes that by bringing women together, the media played a role analogous to work, until economic development made paid work possible. The duality of this

however was evident in the perpetuation of stereotypical images of women as obedient and subservient, which reinforced traditional social norms.

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Criticising the myth of progress

In the short run, it is clear that North and South are instinctively nursing two opposing attitudes towards History and hence towards progress. Orphaned by the present, the 'South', unable to take refuge in a past that only evokes worse conditions, turns its eyes towards the future, which is identified with a better life. Orphaned by the future, the North has refocused on its present, which it no longer sees by the light of Utopia but by that of the past, glorifying memory above all other civic virtues. Europe is passionately building up its archives, recording everything, creating museums of all kinds and exulting in commemorations and anniversaries. Yesterday's forward-looking and messianic outlook has been replaced by a backward-looking or antiquarian view of history, in which we are no longer active participants but nostalgic, wistful onlookers.

Nature was once a 'conservative' value opposed to History. Ecology, the only new or rising political movement, mythologises nature to rally support. Back to the land, to local communities, traditions and threatened ways of life is the order of the day. Even the idea of the Republic, as the author of these lines upholds it in the French context, can be interpreted as a form of 'return to the past' in the face of the communalist and mercantile tendencies of the now dominant, devastating Anglo-Saxon model of democracy. 'Preserving' is once again a positive, even chic if not avant-garde term.

The solution doubtless lies not in creating yet another utopia or a new secular messianism, but perhaps in waging a series of specific, single-minded, ethically-based struggles, if not to achieve the ideal best, then at least to steer clear of the real worst. And today the worst seems to us to be the very dilemma that the course of events would like to lock us into: either, in the name of modernity, to transform the planet into a supermarket, subjecting all public and private human activity to the law of supply and demand; or, in the name of identity, to shut ourselves off in vindictive fantasies of a return to some lost purity, to the exclusion of those who are different from ourselves, and to the integrity of an ideology, community or religious belief.

To exchange the technocratic myth that technological progress is all it takes to solve political and cultural problems, for the ideocratic frenzy that claims a fine-sounding moral norm can take the place of economic and technological solutions, would simply be to exchange a caricature from the North for a caricature from the South. Another kind of public life could be reinvented in the middle ground between the politics of the dollar and the various politics of God, that would be worthy of the Enlightenment philosophers but without their illusions, and that would combine the pessimism of intelligence with the optimism of the will. The lie must, in short, be given to all those who believe that every criticism of the myth of progress is necessarily reactionary. ■

From 'A Western Myth', by Régis Debray, in *The Unesco Courier*, December 1993.

Replacing false images



There is little debate about the fact that the media form and inform American culture – constituted as a complex bulwark of beliefs, ideals and ideologies, and biases – and so contribute to the articulation of values. There is, however, considerable debate about the extent to which and the ways in which the media exert this formative and informative influence, as well as to whether this influence is for good or ill. The following article explores these influences in terms of sociocultural privilege and genuine Christian witness.

Do the media, extensions of our sensory apparatus according to Marshall McLuhan (1964:19) connect us across class and race and gender barriers, as well as across the miles, binding us closer to one another in a global village? Or do the media turn us into increasingly inert spectators, effectively separating us one from another and so stifling engagement? And then there is, of course, the tangle of vexed topics discussed in terms of censorship and freedom of expression and correctness, political and otherwise. Amid today's media maze, conversation among Christians most often turns to talk about the alarming increase and intensification of violent, nude, and not so subtle sexual imagery saturating our society, exploding in print and on the screen all around us.

In the following I want to examine the thesis that we must 'understand how institutional power, social hegemony, and corporate interests combine to determine what is seen, heard, thought, and even felt in American society,' in the words of cultural critic Michael Eric Dyson (1993:75). Too often Christians are tempted to moralize relative to the violent, nude, and sexually explicit imagery rather than to wrestle with this imagery as symptomatic of profound evil endemic to our media-made and media-mad sociocultural setting. For the profound evil, I am convinced, is that the media have been and are dedicated to the manufacture of 'unimportant people' (Chomsky, 1991:69) in order to preserve the privilege of a few.

Theologically put, media manufacture obliterates the *imago Dei* in some people who are considered to be 'unimportant people', countering the Christian confession that God creates all people to be *imago Dei*. Indeed, and therefore, this media manufacture is idolatrous. In so saying, I agree with Elizabeth Johnson (1992:14) who writes:

Because God is the creator, redeemer, lover of the world, God's own honour is at stake in human happiness. Wherever human beings are violated, diminished, or have their life drained away, God's glory is dimmed and dishonoured. Wherever human beings are quickened to fuller and richer life, God's glory is enhanced.

I am consequently convinced that we are called to witness in the world relative to this heart of the matter; it is not

sufficient merely to moralize regarding the symptoms thereof. Christians, this is to say, are called to witness to the confession that all women and men are created to be *imago Dei* and we are therefore called to wrestle with the radical and concrete implications of this confession in an age of 'unimportant people'. For, as Elizabeth Johnson puts it: 'Given the destructive power of evil and the anguish of radical suffering, both the mystery of God's glory and human flourishing are terrifyingly at risk in history.' What is at stake as we witness to and wrestle with the Christian confession of *imago Dei*, in short, is the glory of God as well as our neighbour's good.

My exploration of this thesis is fourfold. I will first explore the lie that is the very foundation of our society, the lie that legitimizes the endemic evil. I will then speak about the cover-up employed to avoid addressing the reality and results of the lie. Third, I will consider the rupture of imagination consequent to the lie and its cover-up. Finally, I will speak about how we may move to healing of our imagination, and accordingly the healing of the *imago Dei*, elaborating what I have so far sketched with regard to the witness to which Christians are called.

The lie

In her most recently published book of essays, Adrienne Rich wanders:

Is it possible that 1992 is to become a watershed, the year when the histories of the Americas begin to be told and listened to – not as the conqueror's narrative, but as the multiplicity of the real stories, the true voices of two continents? Is it possible that citizens of the United States, including the most recent immigrants, might turn and face the conditions on which this country was founded, the assumptions – often in the form of images and stories – never examined, the legacies we carry from 1492, from 1619, to begin with, that shaped the propertied-class revolt we call our revolution, the national slogans that the great immigrant waves of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries received along with citizenship? Could we, still, in the name of transforming ourselves as a people, make some national recognition of our past, of the lies we have been told and have told our children – could we then, as a people, break through despair? (1993: 17-18).

Rich's questions are hard to hear, if we are honest. We know but do not want to know the truth of which she speaks.

We live in the 'land of the free' and the 'home of the brave'. Or so the lyric of the song we have heard since earliest schools goes. But the freedom and bravery exhibited by this country's leadership, in recent years as in the founding of this republic, has most often been corrupted by the self-interest of a powerful and wealthy elite minority. And we the people live in a land of bondage laced by cowardice that matches the corruption. Most of us most of the time live diminished lives of bondage and cowardice. Lives characterized by violence and abuse, by plunder and poison, by despair and unhappiness. Evil and destruction and inhumanity hold

sway. We have not heard the Gospel, the Good News addressed to us, that the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth, and that truth – not treachery relative to public trust – sets free. We still have not been believers.¹

It is easier to account for the lie to which we are in bondage by moralizing about the media than to call ourselves to accountability, as if we still think we can change something other than ourselves. In this regard, I have been influenced by the insights of psychoanalyst Arno Gruen. He is convinced that as children we face a fundamental decision: whether we grow openly and freely, taking responsibility for the formation of our selves or whether we submit to the formative influences of others and abdicate responsibility for our selves. At the root of the violence and abuse, of the plunder and poison, of the despair and unhappiness, that characterize many contemporary western societies, he argues, is self-hatred resulting from the choice to surrender autonomy to the will of another. A surrender that is subsequently repressed in service of the fundamental power game: 'I will become the way you want me to be so that you'll take care of me. My submissiveness ensures my power over you from now on; with it I force you to take care of me.' (1992:4).

In this way, says Gruen, 'dependence becomes revenge for submissiveness.' (1992:4). A submissiveness that gives rise to self-contempt, to self-hatred. A submissiveness that accordingly gives rise to evil and destructiveness and inhumanity relative to others. Power politics – whether exercised by Hitler or by the US in Vietnam – Gruen believes, expresses inner emptiness. He goes on to say:

This is not just a case of repression but of a radical splitting off of awareness of our self-surrender and the resulting self-hatred, which then becomes a basic principle of our whole life. Such dissociation is maintained and abetted by a cultural ideology that equates obedience with responsibility: to be obedient is to be good and to be good is to be responsible. To be free, on the other hand, means being disobedient, and whoever is disobedient courts disapproval and jeopardizes the protection of the powerful and the chance of sharing their power, (1992:6).

So most of us most of the time choose to live lives of bondage to participate in our power-based culture. And we exercise revengeful and reproachful power over others – evil, destruction, inhumanity – to avoid the truth of our own self-betrayal: 'the early decision that made us relinquish our birthright to ourselves,' (1992:8). The late Audre Lorde has rendered and reckoned this reality in this poetic phrase:

if we do not stop killing
the other
in ourselves
the self that we hate
in others
soon we shall all lie
in the same direction
and Eshidale's priests will be very busy
they who alone can bury
all those who seek their own death
by jumping up from the ground
and landing upon their heads.²

Indebted as I am to Gruen's analysis, there is one point on which I wish to distinguish my thinking, at least linguistically, from his. Gruen speaks of taking responsibility for one's self

in terms of autonomous subjectivity. I believe that autonomy is an aspect of the sociocultural lie with which we live. The absence of connection, indeed the absence of presence, with and to one another is a matter to which I will speak more fully with regard to healing. Here I want to say I believe taking responsibility for one's self has to do with self-authorization rather than with any assumption of acting or being or living independent of or over others. Indeed, as poet and essayist June Jordan has stated so eloquently, the founding Fathers of this 'land of the free' and 'home of the brave' were interested in their own political autonomy precisely in order to perpetuate their elitist privileges at everyone else's expense.³ Autonomy is, in this sense, not only a lie; it is predicated on the bondage of others. Acknowledging that Gruen clearly connects the bondage of others to self-betrayal when he calls for autonomous subjectivity, I prefer to speak in terms of self-authorization. To this notion I will also return.

I think the lie with which we live has catalyzed a spiritual crisis. For I begin to believe our betrayal of ourselves, along with the unholiness of self-hatred and the inhumanity in relation to others that follows, is first and last a refusal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. A refusal of the Spirit that brooded over the waters at creation as God created us in God's image, a refusal of the Spirit that is the Spirit of life and of love, as well as of the truth that sets free. We have still not been believers.

The cover-up

And so we come to cover-up. In this regard, I have been influenced by the thinking of Noam Chomsky. Together with Herman, Chomsky articulates what he refers to as a 'propaganda model' relative to the media as follows:

A propaganda model focuses on [the] inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public (1988:2).

Accordingly, Chomsky identifies the major media as 'corporations "selling" privileged audiences to other businesses' and speaks of the concentration of media ownership that enforces media conformity to 'the requirements of the state-corporate nexus,' (1989:8).

Most disturbingly, Chomsky argues in the same book that this state-corporation control of the media is not contrary but essential to American democracy. He cites Edward Bernays, the leading figure of the public relations industry, who explains that "the very essence of the democratic process" is "the freedom to persuade and suggest", what he calls "the engineering of consent". "A leader", continues Bernays, "frequently cannot wait for the people to arrive at even general understanding . . . Democratic leaders must play their part in . . . engineering . . . consent to socially constructive goals and values . . ." Chomsky also cites Walter Lippmann in this regard. Indeed, it is from Lippmann that Chomsky gets the phrase 'the manufacture of consent'.

Lest Christian theologians leap to exempt ourselves, Chomsky continues this line of thought with reference to Reinhold Niebuhr, from whom Chomsky gets the phrase 'necessary illusion'. Niebuhr was therewith urging leaders, whom he describes as 'the cool observers', to see "the stupidity of the average man" and provide the "emotionally potent oversimplifications" required to keep the proletariat on course to create a new society . . . Chomsky further notes that these basic conceptions changed very little as Niebuhr became

"the official establishment theologian" (Richard Rovere), offering counsel to those who "face the responsibilities of power".

Chomsky is clear: to countenance this perceived need to deceive the public is not to charge that 'practitioners of the art are typically engaged in conscious deceit.' To the contrary, continues Chomsky: 'as the intellectuals pursue their grim and demanding vocation, they readily adopt beliefs that serve institutional needs; those who do not will have to seek employment elsewhere.' And so, Chomsky concludes, as does Dyson, what is most important for us to investigate are the 'institutional factors that constrain their actions and beliefs.'

It is a painfully short step from such practices formed to manufacture consent by means of control and deceit – in other words, cover-up – to practices that perform the manufacture of 'unimportant people'. Chomsky first explores this in terms of worthy and unworthy victims. He and Herman write:

A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients will be unworthy . . . While this differential treatment occurs on a large scale, the media, intellectuals, and public are able to remain unconscious of the fact and maintain a high moral and self-righteous tone. This is evidence of an extremely effective propaganda system (1988: 37).

Elsewhere Chomsky continues his exploration by considering the ways in which the protection of resources presumed to be the resources of a privileged American few meant the main threat to our interests were indigenous people and those who stood in solidarity with them – priests as well as protesters. Of these threats to privilege Chomsky says: 'Not only in the subject domains but at home as well, there are unimportant people who must be taught to submit with due humility . . .' (1991:74). And relative to the racist and reactionary and repressive results – the evil, destructiveness, inhumanity born of living with a lie – he asserts:

Throughout, the media, and the Western intellectual community generally, successfully concealed what was happening before their eyes, operating much in the style of a totalitarian state, though without the excuse of fear. As regularly in the past, the cost is paid in blood and misery by the unimportant people (1991:79).

In a startling sentence, Chomsky says, in short: 'The basic principle, rarely violated, is that what conflicts with the requirements of power and privilege does not exist.' An obliteration of the *imago Dei* indeed.

Adrienne Rich articulates the corporate and spiritual toll of living with a lie compounded by cover-up:

When a vast, stifling denial in the public realm is felt by every individual yet there is no language, no depiction, of what is being denied, it becomes for each his or her own anxious predicament, a daily struggle to act 'as if' everything were normal. Alcohol, drugs offer a reprieve – not ceremony or celebration, but a substitute for vital bonds of community and friendship, for collective memory and responsibility. Where there is no public face of interdependence, of justice and mercy, where there is no social language for 'picking up the pieces when we don't know what/where they are', anomie and amnesia, alcohol and drug abuse can work as social controls and, because they appear 'normal', can be more effective – in a very large country – than terrorization by a secret police (1993:78).

I would add that the intensification of images of the erotic and the violent are another symptom of the emptiness, public and personal, rampant all around. These images are, on the one hand, the only available depictions of the evil and

destructiveness and inhumanity about which we are deceived, and so are also reprieve. These images are, on the other hand, one more sort of anaesthesia to numb our anguished and alienated spirits.

The rupture

And so I reckon the rupture. Here again I turn to Adrienne Rich. Reflecting on our living in 'a tragic land, from the first invasion, the first arrogant claiming', she speaks of 'the great rip in the imaginative fabric of the country-to-be: the extraordinary cruelty, greed, and wilful obliteration on which the land of the free was founded,' of 'the rupture of imagination implicit in our history,' (1991: 121-2). This rupture of imagination is, as Rich recognizes, a 'spiritual rupture,' an obliteration of the *imago Dei* in all but the privileged few protected by state and corporate institutions, in whose service the media have been increasingly exclusively enlisted.

The rupture is real, rending. Our lives, corporately and individually, are leaking. Life-sustaining bonds between generations are becoming attenuated. Silences are simultaneously shrieking and being stifled. We are stupid, stupefied, slumped in a stupor. The vitality of day to day life is dissipating. We no longer entertain one another; we expect to be entertained. No more porch-sitting and listening to whip-poor-wills or singing around the piano or whistling wood or recitations or charades or races or pickup softball or basket weaving or talk around a quilting frame. I am not indulging in nostalgia. I am specifying the results of rupture, the shut down of our memory and our image and our meaning making, of our story-telling, and of the work of our hands engaged as we engage with one another.

I am addressing the ways in which we have become adapters to what is rather than imaginers of what can be. Marshall McLuhan has been helpful here. He notes the word *Narcissus*, from the Greek myth, is from the word *narcosis*, or numbness. Recalling his assertion that media are extensions of our own sensory apparatus, McLuhan then comments:

The youth *Narcissus* mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions until he became the servomechanism of his own extended or repeated image. The nymph *Echo* tried to win his love with fragments of his own speech, but in vain. He was numb. He had adapted to his extension of himself and had become a closed system (1964:51).

The numbness and attendant self-enclosure about which McLuhan spoke in the '60s is even more pronounced today. In this regard, I was struck by an article in the Rochester paper, the *Democrat and Chronicle*. The article addressed the omnipresent nudity appearing on magazine covers and in ads and on network television as imagery of our culture of narcissism. Taking as an example the naked models on a swing in the Calvin Klein ad for Obsession perfume, the editor remarks: 'This kind of nakedness is not particularly erotic. In fact, in its remote, frozen self-absorption, it is oddly autoerotic . . . The naked figures on the swing are a perfect emblem for the self-absorbed, commercial sexuality of the '90s. The image links narcissism – the seduction of the mirror – with consumerism, the seduction of products.'

Theologically rendered, the result of the rupture of our imagination, of our numbness, and our adaptation to a closed, self-absorbed system is another sort of idolatry. This perception is not lost on McLuhan. As he continues his consideration of *Narcissus* as 'narcosis' or numbness, McLuhan cites the 113th Psalm:

Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not;
Eyes they have, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not;
Noses have they, but they smell not;
They have hands, but they handle not;
Feet have they, but they walk not;
Neither speak they through their throat.
They that make them shall be like unto them;
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.

McLuhan then makes a critical connection:

The concept of 'idol' for the Hebrew Psalmist is much like that of Narcissus for the Greek myth maker. And the Psalmist insists that the *beholding* of idols, or the use of technology, conforms men to them. 'They that make them shall be like unto them,' (1964:55).

'This is a simple fact,' concludes McLuhan, 'of sense 'closure'.

As we consider the 'rupture of imagination', it is also significant that McLuhan moves to another critical connection, saying:

The poet Blake developed the Psalmist's ideas into an entire theory of communication and social change. It is in his long poem of *Jerusalem* that he explains why men have become what they have beheld. What they have says Blake, is 'the spectre of the Reasoning Power in Man' that has become fragmented and 'separated from Imagination and enclosing itself as in steel,' (1964:55).

Thus enclosed – fragmented and separated – our numbness is a signal of what Adrienne Rich says (1993:17) attends 'the failure of imagination': despair. All desire as all imagination is spent.

The healing

The first word about healing is what Paul Ricoeur spoke of as 'the grace of imagination,' (1978:217). In this time, as our hearts are on hold, Ricoeur's affirmation of 'the grace of imagination' as 'the upsurging of the possible' is a word able to move us from the realm of necessity ruled by what is – the lie and cover-up and the rupture – to the realm of freedom, wherein we are invited to speak the truth in love and so choose a new creation. And in hearing Ricoeur's word of healing I hear echoes of Samuel Taylor Coleridge who enunciated imagination – what he called 'secondary' imagination – as the capacity that 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create,' (1971:167). Accordingly, Joseph Sittler adds the theological twist: 'imagination is the name for that category transcending and fusing vision and speech which is proper to the given character of God's self-disclosure,' (1961:46). Imagination, I conclude, is an invitation to revelation.

Here the significance of McLuhan's mention of William Blake and his poem *Jerusalem* becomes plain. It is not at all accidental that it was a poet who took the Psalmist's perceptions and pronouncements about idolatry and elaborated their meaning for modernity.

Poetry pulls us from our spectator status, awakens us from the sleep of desire, restores voice and vision, and dares us to choose for creation, for new creation and for life abundant. Christians who are called to confession in our world are called to remember the poetic imagination permeating our tradition and to become co-creators of this art anew.

A second healing word calls us to restore to our lives,

corporately and personally, what Tom Driver (1991:13) calls 'not our "mother" but our "grandmother" tongue': ritual. This is a call to ritual re-enactment of the loss and lossiness we feel so we are not numbed by symptoms that otherwise surface.⁵ It is only too obvious that as a society, and as churches, we are ritual poor. There are so few ways in which we mark the transitions, let alone the traumas, of our lives. In this regard, Driver is clear:

To lose ritual is to lose the way. It is a condition not only painful and pathetic but also dangerous. Some people it destroys. As for the whole society, sooner or later it will find rituals again, but they may be of an oppressive rather than a liberating kind. Rituals have much to do with our fate (1991:4).

And Driver also says, as if in answer to Arno Gruen's analysis of our obedience and the consequences thereof:

The power of ritual is not only just as actual as the power of command but also as actual as the power to resist command when the latter is unacceptable. Rituals of disobedience are perhaps less frequent but no less significant than those which induce conformity (1991:173).

And again as if in answer to Gruen and our abdication of self-autonomy and responsibility and the resultant evil, destructiveness and inhumanity, Driver says ritual views the world spiritually and, accordingly, as a place pulsing with personal agency. What ritual does, Driver continues, is take 'reality as something to be enacted' or, conversely, 'ritual takes enactment as reality'.

As if for those of us from rather non-liturgical traditions, Driver adds: 'Hence in ritual . . . the most distinctive feature is not the repetitive pattern but the performance of direct address to the powers being confronted or invoked.' This perspective on ritual challenges us to consider whether we believe ours is a spirited world wherein we may still behold the glory of the Word become flesh and partake of glory's grace and truth that makes us free.

A third, and final, healing word is the word I articulated in my introduction. It is the more-radical-than-we-have-yet-imagined theological affirmation resounding from the first chapter of Genesis through the centuries of Christian history: all people – women and men, old and young, the rainbow of races, rich and poor, whatever our abilities or preferences or professions – are created to be *imago Dei*: created to be, as Elizabeth Johnson (1992:13) puts it, 'the grammar of God's self-utterance and participants in her liberating care for this conflictual world and all its creatures.'

I say this theological affirmation is more radical than we have yet imagined because I wonder: are we really ready to welcome all people into our lives, into our communities, into our churches? Jesus was. He did. Are we really ready to offer hospitality to the strangers on our streets – the prostitutes and the police, the drug dealers and drug abusers, the homeless and the hapless, the ones whose babble betrays the tenuousness of their lives, civic leaders who are not churchgoers, our next-door neighbours – and do we really believe we may thereby entertain angels unawares? Jesus did.

And are we ready to do more than open our doors and offer hospitality around our tables and on our terms? Jesus was. He did. Are we ready to engage the strangers on our streets as people created to be *imago Dei* – not at all 'unimportant people' – but people created to be co-creators with God and so to be partners with us? Jesus was. He did. Or do we harbour in our hearts self-absorbed assumptions about our superiority, moral and mental, racial and religious?

Do we hold onto our position and power and privilege as surely as the state and corporate purveyors of the propaganda model of media manufacture? What concretely and in particular does it mean for us Christians to confess all God's people are created to be *imago Dei*?

Elizabeth Johnson says that what is at stake in these troubling questions is 'simultaneously the freeing of both women and men from debilitating reality models and social roles, the birthing of new forms of saving relationship to all of creation, and indeed the very viability of the Christian tradition for present and coming generations.' (1992:15). I agree. Our Christian confession will have no credibility unless our words, like the Word, become flesh and live among all God's people, the strangers in our streets and the people living in lands beyond our shores. Our Christian confession, that is to say, will contribute to the lie and the cover-up and the rupture unless we can concretize and particularize our participation in freeing and engaging all God's people as our partners for a new creation.

Finally, I want to say a word about presence. In the *Democrat and Chronicle* article on nudity, I was struck by the refrain-like remarks that this nakedness conveyed a quality of remoteness and frozenness and solitude and separateness. I also noted the remark that American culture's obsession with 'fantasy bodies often can't accept real ones, including their own.' And I recalled the words of Asian theologian Chung Hyun Kyung (1990:111). She states: 'The text of God's revelation was, is, and will be written in our bodies and our peoples' everyday struggle for survival and liberation . . . The location of God's revelation is our life itself.' These words help me articulate a sense of revelation as our sense of presence one to another in our bodies and in our lives. And these words remind me that in our contemporary power-based culture - rent by evil and destruction and inhumanity - we are absent from one another. Even when we are together. We are not with one another any more than we are with our selves. But belonging is betrayed as surely as our selves.

We may yet claim responsibility for our childhood choice to 'relinquish our birthright to be ourselves,' (Gruen, 1992:8). Gertie, the uprooted but self-reliant and resilient woman in Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker* (1972:440) got it right referring to our birthright: 'I guess . . . we all sell our own - but allus it's easier to say somebody stole it.' But it is not too late to speak ourselves and tell our stories and testify to our spirits and so to see the glory full of grace and truth that sets free.

Glory is still possible in the public squares and in our streets and beyond our shores. Thereby we will all be freed to be believers. To receive revelation. Word become flesh and flesh become words. Free at last to be *imago Dei*, God's daring creatures courageously, imaginatively, spiritedly seeking new ways of being in the world God so loves. ■

Pantheon Books, 1992).

- 4 'Undressed for Success', *Democrat and Chronicle*, 24 October 1993, p. 4D.
- 5 See Judith Lewis Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: BasicBooks, 1992).

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- 1 This turn of phrase is a play on the title of James Evans' *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992). Evans, in turn, takes his title from Margaret Walker, who with this refrain recalls the roots of African-American faith, refined by the fires of oppression, and readied for rising up for freedom. See Evans, *We Have Been Believers*, p. viii.
- 2 Audre Lorde, 'Between Ourselves', cited in *The Nation* (1 February 1993, p. 132.)
- 3 See June Jordan, 'Inside America: "My Perfect Soul Shall Manifest Me Rightly"', in *Technical Difficulties: African American Notes on the State of the Union* (New York:

Women and minorities on TV: A study in casting and fate



A child today is born into a home in which television is on an average of seven hours a day. For the first time in human history, most of the stories about people, life and values are told not by parents, schools, churches, or others in the community who have something to tell, but by a group of distant conglomerates that have something to sell.

This is a radical change in the way we employ creative talent and the way we cast the symbolic environment. The roles we grow into and the ways others see us are no longer home-made, hand-crafted, community-inspired. They are products of a complex manufacturing and marketing process. We are usually not aware of the relative shadings of each role because each is rationalized by the particular plot, the selected news event, the conventional-rules of the game. We are even less aware of the associations common to large numbers of characterizations that we do not perceive to be parts of a wider pattern. That is why the following study was necessary.

The report was commissioned by the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists in connection with their continuing campaign to ensure that media decision makers reflect more fairly the diversity of the 'American Scene' by broadening the range of images and increasing the presence of women, racial and ethnic groups, seniors and people with disabilities in television, film, commercials and all broadcasting and cable.

The study was conducted by the Cultural Indicators research team at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication.¹ It was designed to investigate patterns of televised messages and images presented to large and diverse publics over long periods of time.

The focus is on the basic building-blocks of story-telling: casting and fate. Casting the symbolic world defines the pool of human characterizations from which stories and images are drawn. Fate is the destiny associated with different social types. Who are the characters that populate the world of television? How are women and minorities (seniors, racial and ethnic groups, poor and disabled persons, etc.) represented? And, finally, how do they fare in that world?

The special concerns of this study have been the recurrent and inescapable images that cultivate conceptions of majority and minority status and the corresponding calculus of visibility, power, and risk. Inescapable also are the implications for the television industry – the people who sponsor it, run it, write, produce and direct its programmes, and act in it.

The results are based on the analysis of 19,642 speaking parts appearing in 1,371 television programmes in 8 samples. Each season's programming, except cable-originated, is represented by a solid week's sample from the Cultural Indicators data base. Cable-originated programme samples varied from two to three weeks. The following is a list of samples, chosen to avoid seasonal, holiday, or other deviations from normal programming:

- Ten seasons of major network (ABC, CBS, NBC) prime time (8 to 11 p.m., EST) dramatic programmes, 1982-83 through 1991-92; 675 programmes, 30% 'mostly humorous'.
- Nine seasons of major network Saturday morning (8 a.m. to 2 p.m.) dramatic (mostly cartoon) programmes, same as above with the exception of 1989-90; 394 programmes, 50% 'mostly humorous'.
- Major network daytime serial drama for the week of 20 April 1992; 60 programmes, 7% 'mostly humorous'.
- Fox network dramatic programmes for the week of 20 April 1992; 13 programmes, 46% 'mostly humorous'.
- Cable-originated general dramatic programs transmitted by 11 major cable networks at different times during 1991 and 1992; 119 full-length programmes, 53 comedy skits; 30% 'mostly humorous'.
- Cable-originated children's dramatic (including cartoon) programmes transmitted during 1991; 26 programmes, 35% 'mostly humorous'.
- Major network game shows for the week of 20 April 1992; 26 programmes.
- Major network news; 10 weekday daytime local news for 20-24 April 1992 and 21 national evening national news programmes for 16-22 April 1992.

'Dramatic' was defined as fictional programmes with a story-line or plot, including series, films, cartoons and other clearly fictional programs shown on television. 'Cable-originated' was defined as those programmes, including feature movies, in whose production the 11 major cable networks had a substantial financial interest.

All programmes were screened and coded by trained analysts using an extensively tested instrument of analysis. The procedure requires the reliable observation by multiple independent coders of programmes and characters in the samples. Further methodological details can be found in publications listed in the bibliography.

The report presents the highlights of the findings drawn from the tables indicated.

Casting and demographic cross-section

Americans spend one-third of their freely disposable time with television. That is more than the next ten highest-ranked leisure-time activities put together. During that time the average viewer of a major network station is exposed to an average of 355 characters playing speaking parts each week in prime-time dramatic programmes, 353 in daytime dramatic

series, 138 in Saturday morning (children's) programmes, 51 in game shows, and 209 news professionals (including repeated appearances) delivering the local and national news. During the sample periods the Fox network showed 149 dramatic characters, and the 11 cable-networks originated programmes together presented 624 characters in adult drama and 66 in children's dramatic programmes. Overall, about one out of five characters play major roles.

Although the coming of television introduced changes that are still sweeping the cultural landscape, the demography of the world on television is impressive in its repetitiveness and stability. Table 1 displays the results. Here we summarize selected highlights only.

Women comprise one-third or less of the characters in all samples except daytime serials where they are 45.5% and in game shows where they are 55.3%. The smallest percentage of women is in the news (27.8%) and in children's programmes (23.4%). As major characters, women's roles shrink in children's programmes to 18%.

Age was observed in two ways. 'Elderly' was a casting term for characters who definitely looked and acted old. Chronological age was also estimated. Table 1 shows the number and % of 'elderly' and separately of 'seniors' judged to be 60 and over. While all seniors are greatly underrepresented, visibly old people are almost invisible on television. Their representation ranges from none on the youth-oriented Fox network and about 1% on network daytime series to less than 3% in other samples.

African-Americans are most visible on Fox and in game shows. On major network prime-time programmes they are 10.8% and on daytime serials 8.8% of all characters. They are least visible Saturday morning children's programmes (partly because identification of race and colour is least reliable in cartoons).

Latino/Hispanic characters are rarely seen. Only in game shows do they rise significantly above 1% representation. Americans of Asian/Pacific origin and Native Americans ('Indians') are the most conspicuous by their absence. Less than 1% (in the case of Native Americans 0.3%) is their general proportion in most samples.

Almost as invisible are members of the 'lower classes' (judged by a three-way classification of the socio-economic status of major characters). Although the US census classifies more than 13% of the population (and one-third of African-Americans) as 'poor', and many more as low-income wage-earners, on network television they make up only 1.3% of major characters in prime time, 1.2% in daytime, half that (0.6%) in children's programmes, and 0.2% in the news.

Disability was recorded for major characters only. Physical disability is portrayed in 1.5% and mental illness in 3.7% of major characters in prime-time programmes.

Next we take a closer look at prime-time, daytime, children's, Fox and cable-originated dramatic programmes and news.

Prime-time dramatic programmes on major networks

Annual trends for all seasons studied have been tabulated and can be seen in Tables 2-4. Here we shall highlight and compare major network samples with Fox and cable-originated samples. (The latter were not all necessarily aired in prime time.)

Despite changes in styles, stars, and formats, prime-time network dramatic television presents a remarkably stable cast.

TABLE 1: WOMEN AND MINORITIES: ALL SAMPLES

| | | Dramatic programmes | | | | | Game shows | News |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|---------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------|
| | | Major nets | Fox net | Cable orig. | Day Time serial Maj. n. | Child. prog. Major nets | | |
| Women | % | 33.3 | 32.2 | 28.5 | 45.5 | 23.4 | 55.2 | 27.8 |
| | N | (3534) | (48) | (530) | (481) | (832) | (85) | (508) |
| 'Elderly' | % | 2.1 | 0.0 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | N | (223) | | (25) | (9) | (87) | (5) | |
| Age 60+ | % | 5.4 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 4.0 | 5.7 | 10.4 | 6.0 |
| | N | (558) | (7) | (90) | (42) | (103) | (3) | (109) |
| All chars. of colour | % | 13.2 | 21.4 | 9.0 | 10.2 | 4.7 | 15.6 | 12.9 |
| | N | (1403) | (32) | (159) | (106) | (175) | (13) | (24) |
| African-American ¹ | % | 10.8 | 19.4 | 4.7 | 8.8 | 2.9 | 15.7 | 11.9 |
| | N | (1155) | (29) | (83) | (93) | (110) | (5) | (24) |
| Latino/Hispanic ¹ | % | 1.1 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 3.3 | 1.3 |
| | N | (119) | (1) | (18) | (12) | (18) | (5) | (22) |
| Asian/Pacific ² | % | 0.8 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 1.1 |
| | N | (89) | (1) | (26) | (7) | (11) | | (19) |
| Native Amer. (Indian) ¹ | % | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | N | (31) | | (7) | (4) | (3) | | |
| 'Lower class' ³ | % | 1.3 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| | N | (77) | | (46) | (13) | (10) | (4) | (4) |
| Physical disability ¹ | % | 1.5 | 8.3 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| | N | (28) | (2) | (5) | | (13) | | (3) |
| Physical illness ¹ | % | 6.5 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 3.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | N | (125) | | (10) | (3) | (29) | (1) | |
| Physical injury ¹ | % | 7.1 | 16.7 | 9.4 | 1.9 | 3.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | N | (137) | (4) | (38) | (4) | (31) | (2) | |
| Mental illness ¹ | % | 3.7 | 8.3 | 4.4 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| | N | (71) | (2) | (18) | (1) | (6) | (3) | (5) |
| Any and all disability ¹ | % | 11.2 | 29.2 | 16.7 | 3.8 | 4.9 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| | N | (218) | (7) | (68) | (8) | (49) | (6) | (9) |

¹ Not coded

² U.S. only

³ Major characters in dramatic programmes

As we have noted, two-thirds of the cast are men. The gender imbalance was virtually the same in the 1982-83 as in the 1991-92 season (35.0% and 33.9%, respectively). There is no clear overall difference in gender representation between major and minor characters.

Young and middle-aged adults dominate the cast of prime-time characters with more than 8 out of 10 (Table 5). 'Elderly' characters are 2.5% (the real-life proportion is more than 12%). 'Elderly' characters tend to decline in their proportion of the prime-time population, a trend contrary to real life.

Females 'age faster' on television than males. Women tend to be concentrated in the younger age groups. Their proportion of 'settled adults' declines significantly more than men's.

Romance may be rampant on prime-time but marriage is not. Only one in ten characters is married. Marriage is a more defining circumstance for women than it is for men. Almost two-thirds of all men but only 43.7% of women appear in roles whose marital status is undefined. Women are almost twice as likely to play the role of wife as men are to play the role of husband. One-third of all characters but nearly half of all married characters are women.

The population of prime-time television drama is overwhelmingly 'middle class'. About 9 out of ten characters are so classified each year and, if anything, their proportion increased recently. As already noted, 'lower class' characters make up 1.3% of the prime-time population; three times as many were 'upper class' (Table 7). Women, who hold most of

the lower-paid jobs in real life, are even more invisible. Their percentage of lower-class characters is 0.9% of all characters and 0.5% of major characters.

Race and ethnicity of prime-time characters is as skewed as gender, age and class. All people of colour are 13.2%, African-Americans about 10.8% of the prime-time population. These percentages fluctuated between 6 and 16%, with no clear tendency since 1982-83. In the 1991-92 season African-Americans were 12.4%.

Latino/Hispanic characters are 1.1% of the prime-time population, Asian/Pacific 0.8% and Native American ('Indian') 0.3% (Table 8). All seasonal fluctuations are within 1% of the 10-season average.

Some form of disability, as we have seen before, strikes 11.2% of prime-time major characters. Seasonal fluctuations range between 7 and 17% (Table 8). Physical injury afflicts about 8% of men and 7% of women (despite the fact that 49% of men and 31% of women suffer some violence). Physical illness strikes almost as many, and mental illness nearly 4%.

Fox and cable-originated programmes

Fox network programming targets young viewers; their average age is 27. The average age of characters on Fox is 31 – the youngest of all dramatic programmes. (The average age of characters in major network and cable-originated dramatic programmes is 35.) Fox is also heavily comedy and action-oriented, as is cable-originated programming. Consequently, more men and fewer women are cast in major roles. Seniors are fewer and those cast play mostly minor roles. On Fox, and to a lesser extent on cable-originated programmes, more characters are observed as unmarried and as injured than on the other networks.

Daytime is serious business, mostly sexual and marital. Only 7% of daytime drama was judged to be 'mostly humorous', far below the prime time 30%. Daytime is the only part of the day where the number of women almost equals that of men (45%) and where almost many women (49%) as men play major roles.

Male hegemony is again preserved, if barely, in age-casting. Daytime favours men with a longer mid-life span, as does prime time. However, the age distribution is little more even-handed than in prime time. The daytime cast is also more clearly and evenly defined along marital lines. The world of daytime serial drama has less use for maritally undefined men and more need for married men and women.

The class and race structure of daytime is similar to that of prime-time, and, if anything, more 'white'. There are no characters with physical handicaps. Illness or injury are rare and seem to afflict mostly men.

Women are less than one-fourth (23.4%) of the Saturday morning cast. Their percentage ranges between 16 and 27%, with no clear tendency over time. (In 1991-92 they were 21.7%.) As major characters, their percentage goes down to 18; it ranges between 15 and 24, again with no clear trend over the 9 seasons.

Cartoon characters make up most of the Saturday morning cast. Anthropomorphic animals and other creatures are not easily classified. Two out of 10 are 'ageless', compared to only 2 out of 100 in prime time. 'Elderly' characters are as invisible as on prime time. Their percentage was 1.8 in 1982-83 and 1.7 in 1991-92; the 9-year average is 2.3.

Importance declines with age, as well as with gender. Children and adolescents play a larger role than in prime time.

TABLE 2: PRIME TIME CHARACTERS: ROLE AND GENDER BY SEASON

| | MAJOR CHARACTERS | | | MINOR CHARACTERS | | | ALL CHARACTERS | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------|-----------|------------------|--------|-----------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| | Male | Female | Row Total | Male | Female | Row Total | Male | Female | Row Total |
| 1982-83 | 156 | 88 | 244 | 647 | 344 | 991 | 803 | 432 | 1235 |
| | 63.9 | 36.1 | 12.6 | 65.3 | 34.7 | 11.4 | 65.0 | 35.0 | 11.6 |
| 1983-84 | 123 | 72 | 195 | 638 | 291 | 929 | 761 | 363 | 1124 |
| | 63.1 | 36.9 | 10.1 | 68.7 | 31.3 | 10.7 | 67.7 | 32.3 | 10.6 |
| 1984-85 | 152 | 69 | 221 | 628 | 281 | 909 | 780 | 350 | 1130 |
| | 68.8 | 31.2 | 11.4 | 69.1 | 30.9 | 10.5 | 69.0 | 31.0 | 10.6 |
| 1985-86 | 138 | 78 | 216 | 645 | 294 | 939 | 783 | 372 | 1155 |
| | 63.9 | 36.1 | 11.2 | 68.7 | 31.3 | 10.8 | 67.8 | 32.2 | 10.9 |
| 1986-87 | 106 | 72 | 178 | 642 | 269 | 911 | 748 | 341 | 1089 |
| | 59.6 | 40.4 | 9.2 | 70.5 | 29.5 | 10.5 | 68.7 | 31.3 | 10.3 |
| 1987-88 | 127 | 61 | 188 | 533 | 278 | 811 | 660 | 339 | 999 |
| | 67.6 | 32.4 | 9.7 | 65.7 | 34.3 | 9.3 | 66.1 | 33.9 | 9.4 |
| 1988-89 | 129 | 63 | 192 | 626 | 312 | 938 | 755 | 375 | 1130 |
| | 67.2 | 32.8 | 9.9 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 10.8 | 66.8 | 33.2 | 10.6 |
| 1989-90 | 119 | 55 | 174 | 543 | 279 | 822 | 662 | 334 | 996 |
| | 68.4 | 31.6 | 9.0 | 66.1 | 33.9 | 9.5 | 66.5 | 33.5 | 9.4 |
| 1990-91 | 100 | 59 | 159 | 392 | 238 | 630 | 492 | 297 | 789 |
| | 62.9 | 37.1 | 8.2 | 62.2 | 37.8 | 7.2 | 62.4 | 37.6 | 7.4 |
| 1991-92 | 104 | 62 | 166 | 541 | 269 | 810 | 645 | 331 | 976 |
| | 62.7 | 37.3 | 8.6 | 66.8 | 33.2 | 9.3 | 66.1 | 33.9 | 9.2 |
| Column Total | 1254 | 679 | 1933 | 5835 | 2855 | 8690 | 7089 | 3534 | 10623 |
| | 64.9 | 35.1 | 100.0 | 67.1 | 32.9 | 100.0 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 100.0 |

Number of Missing Observations: 24

TABLE 3: PRIME TIME CHARACTERS: SOCIAL CLASS BY SEASON¹

| | SOCIAL CLASS | | | | Row Total |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------|---------------|-----------|
| | CANNOT CODE | CLEARLY UPPER | MIDDLE | CLEARLY LOWER | |
| 1986-87 | 34 | 80 | 964 | 12 | 1090 |
| | 3.1 | 7.3 | 88.4 | 1.1 | 18.2 |
| 1987-88 | 28 | 29 | 935 | 9 | 1001 |
| | 2.8 | 2.9 | 93.4 | 0.9 | 16.7 |
| 1988-89 | 39 | 16 | 1079 | | 1134 |
| | 3.4 | 1.4 | 95.1 | | 18.9 |
| 1989-90 | 17 | 56 | 892 | 31 | 996 |
| | 1.7 | 5.6 | 89.6 | 3.1 | 16.6 |
| 1990-91 | 24 | 40 | 709 | 17 | 790 |
| | 3.0 | 5.1 | 89.7 | 2.2 | 13.2 |
| 1991-92 | 5 | 16 | 949 | 8 | 978 |
| | 0.5 | 1.6 | 97.0 | 0.8 | 16.3 |
| COLUMN TOTAL | 147 | 237 | 5528 | 77 | 5989 |
| | 2.5 | 4.0 | 92.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |

Number of Missing Observations: 4658

¹ Social Class was not coded for minor characters prior to 1986.

More than 4 out of 10 female parts are young girls. As age increases, the percentage of major compared to minor roles drops, especially for women.

Curiously for children's programmes, married characters, potential father and mother images, are less than half their prime time proportions. Saturday morning shuns married women: they play 20% of major female roles in prime time but only 3% in children's programmes.

Social class, when it can be observed, is as skewed in children's as in prime-time programmes. The child viewer of Saturday morning major network programmes would see, on

the average, one lower class character every three weeks, usually in a minor role.

With more than half of all characters unclassifiable by race, people of colour make up less than 5% of the Saturday morning programme population. African-Americans average 2.9%, though their proportion varies greatly, reaching 6.9% in 1991-92. Hispanics are seen, on the average, once every two weeks (0.5%) and Asian/Pacific Americans once every three weeks (0.3%), and mostly in minor roles. In the nine Saturday morning three-network samples, only 3 Native Americans appeared (0.1%).

Despite all the mayhem, only 3.2% of Saturday morning characters suffer any injury (in the 1991-92 none seemed injured) and 4.9% exhibit signs of any disability (in 1991-92 2.3%).

Cable-originated children's programmes present a slightly more equitable gender, race and disability character distribution, but otherwise they resemble the Saturday morning cast.

Major network game shows and news programmes

Game shows feature a populist patriarchy. The contestants are more diverse than the casts of other programmes. Women are 58%, African-Americans 18.3%, Latino/Hispanics 4.6% – more than on any other programme – and they tend to win more often than the others. The ringmasters, however, are all men. Women who are not contestants are young assistants to the hosts. Three out of 4 assistants are seen but not heard.

The thematic structure of television news items provides the context within which the selection of persons takes place. The news item was defined by the newscaster's announcement of the topic. Each new topic started a new unit. A total of 434 news items was analyzed. Of 50 different themes coded, including political, economic, and human interest, the only issues judged to be a significant or the main topics in more than 15% of the news items were issues of power: who has it, who uses it, who seeks it, and, most of all, who are threats to life, limb, and the social order.

Criminal activities and health issues each attract major attention in 18% of the items; law enforcement and other legal issues 16% each; and death and dying 15%. Women's rights attract major attention only in connection with abortion, in 6% of the items. Other minority groups, people or rights together are featured in only 3%.

That is the context of topics in which 1,825 persons appear either as delivering the news, cited in the news, or making news. Next to game show hosts, the world of newsmakers is the most male-dominated. The mean age of those in the news is 41, the highest of all except game show hosts. Men are 64.3% of those delivering the news 80% of those cited as authorities, and 81.9% of those making news. Women are most visible (35.4%) as news deliverers. As authorities cited, they drop to 20% and as newsmakers to 17.4%.

Productive ageing in the news, even more than in other types of programmes, is a privilege of men and majorities. Newsmakers over 60 are 12% of men, 6% of women, and 1% or less of other minorities.

African-Americans are most visible (14.2%) as news-deliverers. They are 7.8% of newsmakers, and 4% of those cited in the news as spokespersons or authorities. Americans of Asian/Pacific origin are most likely to appear as sources cited (4.0%) and as delivering the news (2.3%). Latino/Hispanics make 1.5% of news, or less, in any category.

Government officials (including law enforcement) are 43%

TABLE 4: PRIME TIME CHARACTERS: CHARACTER TYPE BY SEASON

| | CHARACTER TYPE | | | | Row Total |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| | CANNOT CODE | GOOD | MIXED | BAD | |
| 1982-83 | 69 5.5 | 279 22.4 | 760 61.1 | 136 10.9 | 1244 11.7 |
| 1983-84 | 3 0.3 | 269 23.9 | 735 65.4 | 117 10.4 | 1124 10.6 |
| 1984-85 | 76 6.7 | 282 25.0 | 650 57.5 | 122 10.8 | 1130 10.6 |
| 1985-86 | 35 3.0 | 257 22.2 | 730 62.9 | 138 11.9 | 1160 10.9 |
| 1986-87 | 42 3.9 | 317 29.1 | 589 54.0 | 142 13.0 | 1090 10.2 |
| 1987-88 | 136 13.6 | 273 27.3 | 496 49.6 | 96 9.6 | 1001 9.4 |
| 1988-89 | 6 0.5 | 317 28.0 | 660 58.2 | 151 13.3 | 1134 10.7 |
| 1989-90 | 36 3.6 | 319 32.0 | 551 55.3 | 90 9.0 | 996 9.4 |
| 1990-91 | 1 0.1 | 99 12.5 | 640 81.0 | 50 6.3 | 790 7.4 |
| 1991-92 | | 166 17.0 | 736 75.3 | 76 7.8 | 978 9.2 |
| Column Total | 404 3.8 | 2578 24.2 | 6547 61.5 | 1118 10.5 | 10647 100.0 |

Number of Missing Observations: 0

TABLE 5: PRIME TIME CHARACTERS: SOCIAL AGE, ROLE AND GENDER

| Social Age | Major Chars. | | Minor Chars. | | Total Chars. | |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Men % | Women % | Men % | Women % | Men % | Women % |
| CANNOT CODE | N: 29 2.3 | 17 2.5 | 109 1.9 | 52 1.8 | 138 1.9 | 69 2.0 |
| CHILD & ADOL. | N: 119 9.5 | 67 9.9 | 504 8.6 | 412 14.4 | 623 8.8 | 479 13.6 |
| YOUNG ADULT | N: 167 13.3 | 122 18.0 | 884 15.2 | 655 22.9 | 1051 14.8 | 777 22.0 |
| SETTLED ADULT | N: 916 73.0 | 455 67.0 | 4226 72.4 | 1664 58.3 | 5142 72.6 | 2119 60.0 |
| ELDERLY | N: 23 1.8 | 18 2.7 | 110 1.9 | 72 2.5 | 133 1.9 | 90 2.5 |
| Total | N: 1254 % 64.9 | 679 35.1 | 5833 67.1 | 2855 32.9 | 7087 66.7 | 3534 33.3 |

Number of Missing Observations: 26

of newsmakers and 12% of authorities cited. Private business makes up 11.5% of newsmakers and 8% of those cited. The next highest news making activity (6.4% of newsmakers) is of those arrayed against law and order: the criminals.

Minorities (except women) have a better chance to make news as government officials than as private business persons. Women in business are relatively more visible in the news than women in government. African-Americans in government are four times as newsworthy as they are in business. This may be because African-American business people rarely make news, or because government is more of an equal-opportunity newsmaker, or both.

The disparities are even greater when we compare news of legitimate and illegal activity. Women make news as government officials and business persons combined 9.9 times as much as in crime. The same ratio for men is 8.2, for Latino/Hispanics 5.0 and for African-Americans 1.7. The ratio of business-related vs. crime-related news shows even more striking contrasts. For one woman in crime news there are 2.6 in business news; for one man in crime news there are 1.7 in business news; but for each Latino/Hispanic in business news there is one in crime news and for each African-American in business news there are 6.6 in crime news.

This begins the discussion of 'fate' on television, the subject we turn to next.

Heroes and villains

'Fate' is the evaluation of characters as 'good' or 'bad' and the outcome (successful or unsuccessful) for which they are destined. We present the dynamics of 'fate' in the multi-season samples of major network prime-time and Saturday morning programmes.

First we discuss the evaluation of characters as 'good' or 'bad' (also dubbed 'heroes' and 'villains'). Secondly, we discuss success and failure ('winners' and 'losers') in terms of the objectives the characters set for themselves, whether those are good or bad. That judgement required fuller character development and was made only for major characters.

Significant proportions of mixed and unclear characterizations are ignored in much of this discussion. We proceed on the assumption that when evaluation and success are not clear, the character's 'fate' is also not as determined as when those characteristics are well-defined. 'Fate', therefore, means the clear-cut and unambiguous evaluation and goal attainment of those characters for whom such judgements could be made.

Seen from the birds-eye-view of this report, television seems to present a pre-ordained world. Its distribution of values is as stable as its casting and thematic structure (Table 6)

Positively valued ('good') characters outnumber evil ('bad') between two and three to one each of the years studied. From half to two-thirds of the cast are of 'mixed' character. Children's programme characters are more sharply differentiated, with fewer mixed evaluations.

For every 'bad' man there are about two 'good' men and for every 'bad' woman about five 'good' women in both prime-time and Saturday morning programmes. When we look at gender evaluation by age, however, we discover that older women in children's programmes bear a disproportionate burden of negative characterizations.

While the ratio of 'good' characters to 'bad' is generally favourable to women, the evaluations are reversed for 'elderly' women. For every elderly male villain there are 13 male heroes of the same age. But for every such heroine there is one elderly female villain. The proportion of 'bad' old females is more than eight times that of 'bad' old males.

Prime-time romance involves more young women than men, but more mature men than women. The disparity is even greater in Saturday morning children's programmes. Nearly half (48.6%) of female romance is in adolescence. Men's romantic parts occur in greater numbers at all other ages. The child viewer may see three mature men involved in romance for every mature woman, and even a romantic old man every once in a great while, but never a romantically involved old woman.

TABLE 6: HEROES AND VILLAINS BY AGE AND GENDER

| | 'Good' characters | | 'Bad' characters | | Ratios | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|--------------|----------------|
| | Men % | Women % | Men % | Women % | Good/bad Men | Good/bad Women |
| Prime time | | | | | | |
| Child, adolesc. | 25.2 | 27.0 | 5.5 | 4.3 | 4.6 | 6.3 |
| Young adult | 19.7 | 21.2 | 20.2 | 5.9 | 1.0 | 3.6 |
| Settled adult | 25.0 | 30.1 | 13.6 | 4.9 | 1.8 | 6.1 |
| Elderly | 24.6 | 24.7 | 7.9 | 5.9 | 3.1 | 4.2 |
| Saturday morning | | | | | | |
| Child, adolesc. | 47.1 | 47.2 | 5.9 | 4.2 | 7.9 | 11.2 |
| Young adult | 28.0 | 45.8 | 18.6 | 5.3 | 1.5 | 8.6 |
| Settled adult | 26.2 | 35.1 | 20.1 | 10.3 | 1.3 | 3.4 |
| Elderly | 43.3 | 32.0 | 3.3 | 28.0 | 13.1 | 1.1 |

TABLE 7: SUCCESS/FAILURE RATIOS, MAJOR CHARACTERS BY GENDER; PRIME TIME

Number of failures per 100 successes

| | Among Men | | | Among Women | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----|---------------------------|-------------|-----|
| | NF | N | | NF | N |
| Foreign chars. of color | NF | 4 | Handicapped | NF | 5 |
| Asian/Pacific American | NF | 4 | Latino/Hispanic American | NF | 3 |
| Elderly | 8 | 23 | Foreign whites | 14 | 16 |
| Age undefined | 18 | 29 | African-American | 23 | 57 |
| Lower Class | 20 | 9 | Marital stat. undefined | 27 | 101 |
| Children | 20 | 119 | Married | 29 | 134 |
| 60 and over | 27 | 74 | 60 and over | 31 | 29 |
| Not Married | 32 | 704 | Settled adult | 33 | 453 |
| Socio-econ.stat undefined | 33 | 37 | Children | 37 | 67 |
| White American | 37 | 978 | White American | 38 | 569 |
| African-American | 40 | 131 | Not Married | 42 | 441 |
| Handicapped | 40 | 23 | Young adult | 43 | 122 |
| Settled adult | 42 | 916 | Elderly | 50 | 18 |
| Married | 45 | 209 | Physically ill | 75 | 36 |
| Native American | 50 | 4 | Socio-econ.stat undefined | 100 | 10 |
| Young adult | 58 | 166 | Lower Class | 100 | 5 |
| Physically ill | 58 | 88 | Age undefined | 120 | 17 |
| Marital stat. undefined | 59 | 340 | Mentally ill | 160 | 25 |
| Latino/Hispanic American | 60 | 11 | Asian/Pacific American | NS | 3 |
| Mentally ill | 147 | 45 | Native American | NS | 1 |
| Foreign whites | 160 | 38 | | | |

NF: No failures.

NS: No successes.

A ranking of 'goodness/badness' ratios has been constructed by dividing the number of positively valued by the number of negatively valued characters in each group. The results give us an order of 'villainy'.

Being 'bad' is not necessarily all bad in the sense that one needs power to be a credible villain. Conversely, a 'good' character may lack effectiveness to succeed, as we shall see later. But the results of this ratio show a relative sense of moral value attributed to different groups of characters.

We have already noted that, on the whole, there are more 'good' than 'bad' characters. We have also examined how many more (or less) in each group. Here we shall line up groups we have identified in this study in order of the number of 'villains' per 100 'heroes'. First we shall look at the total casts of all characters. After that overall view, we shall see if being a major character changes the line-up. Finally we shall look at the most important gender and other differences.

For every 100 heroes in prime time there are, overall, 43 villains. On top of the prime time evaluation order are most minorities, women, and children. (Characteristics coded only for major characters will be discussed below.) Knowing the age, marital and family status of characters means more favourable portrayal than not knowing. Villains are dispropor-

tionately male, lower class, young, Latino/Hispanic and foreign, or at least not identifiable American.

The line-up for major characters shows relatively more Latino/Hispanic heroes, indicating that most Latino/Hispanic villains are minor characters. The most negatively valued characters, with actually more villains than heroes, are the mentally ill.

Differences by gender shed further light on some of these ratios. Evil aliens of colour are all men. For males, it is better not to be married than to be married. Among all male characters, foreign, young, and Latino/Hispanic men have the least favourable 'hero/villain' ratios. Foreign white and mentally ill males provide a disproportionate ratio of major male villains. The largest ratio of female villains in major roles comes from mentally ill and old women characters.

Saturday morning, disabled and older characters fare worse than in prime time. Gender comparisons show that, unlike in prime time, both men and women in leading roles are generally more evil than in other parts. Villains actually outnumber heroes among male aliens of colour. Mother figures in leading roles – married, elderly, settled women – and major African-American female characters, few as they are, are among the most wicked.

Winners and losers

Those who succeed in their aims we call 'winners' and those who fail 'losers'. A reliable determination of success in achieving objectives was made for major characters only. Although 'good' characters usually win and 'bad' lose, it is possible for negatively valued characters to achieve their aims and for positive characters to fail. Therefore, we can consider this measure as one of effectiveness. A character may be good but ineffective while another bad but effective.

As with heroes and villains, a significant proportion of mixed and unclear characterizations is ignored in this discussion in order to make the main points more distinct. Nearly half of all major characters are 'mixed' both in evaluation and success. Of those judged 'good', 63.2% succeed and 6.4% fail. Of the 'bad' characters, 9.6% and 69.9% fail (Table 7).

In prime time, boys and elderly men have a much higher effectiveness ratio than girls and elderly women. A ranking of success/failure ratios shows the order of failures for every 100 successes in selected groups. Latino/Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Americans have higher relative failure rates than most others. Foreign whites, Native Americans, and the mentally ill fail at least as often as they succeed.

Lower class men succeed more often than they fail, but lower class women fail as often as they succeed. To be cast as a major female character in prime time who is old, unmarried, ill, or poor carries a disproportionately high risk of failure. Women cast as Native American Asian/Pacific leading characters, few as they are, are destined for failure; none of them succeeds in achieving her aims.

The world of Saturday morning children's programmes is more starkly, and darkly defined. More than one-fourth (25.5%) of all characters fail, compared to the prime time failure rate of 18.4%. The failure of those depicted as mentally ill is higher (57.1%) than in prime time (42.3%). Boys and older men also have a higher percentage of success and lower percentage of failure than girls and older women.

Success/failure ratio rankings show that the general rate of failure is higher, and being married is even more of a losing proposition Saturday morning than in prime time. Foreign,

old, and ill characters fail more than they succeed. The mentally ill fail twice as often.

Major male characters on Saturday morning programmes run the highest risks of failure when they are cast as not American, over 60 and mentally ill. Major female characters are most likely to fail as foreign and over 60. While marriage hurts men and helps women in prime time, in children's programmes it hurts both. Elderly women have four times the relative failure rate of elderly men. To be cast as an older woman or a mentally ill character in children's programmes is to run the highest risk of ill fate on television.

Conclusions: defining society's power structure

Minorities are made, not born. Gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, and disability define society's power structure. Their portrayals affect how we see ourselves and each other. The world of television seems to be frozen in a time-warped of obsolete and damaging representations.

Women play one out of three roles in prime-time television, one out of four in children's programmes, and one out of five of those who make news. They fall short of majority even in daytime serials. They age faster than men, and as they age they are more likely to be portrayed as evil and unsuccessful.

Seniors of both genders are greatly underrepresented and seem to be vanishing instead of increasing as in real life. As characters age they lose importance, value, and effectiveness. Visibly old people are almost invisible on television. Mature women seem to be especially hard to cast – and hard to take. They are disproportionately underrepresented, under-valued, and undersexed.

People of colour, the vast majority of humankind, estimated to reach a majority in America by the year 2000, are 13% of the major network prime-time and less than 5% of children's programme casts. African-Americans are less than 11% of prime-time and 3% of children's programme casts. Latino/Hispanics, over 9% of the US population, are about 1% of prime time and half of that of children's programme casts. Americans of Asian/Pacific origin, more than 3% of the US population, and Native Americans ('Indians'), more than 1%, are conspicuous by their virtual absence. Minorities are more likely to play minor than major parts. The world of daytime serials is even more 'white' than prime time. A child viewer sees the fewest minorities.

In the overwhelmingly middle-class world of television, poor people play a negligible role. The low-income 13% of the US (and much larger percentage of minorities and of the world's) population is reduced to 1.3% or less on television. Women of low income, who hold most of the low-income jobs in real life, are even more invisible.

As the 43 million disabled American gain legal rights of equal access and employment in real life, physical disability is visible in only 1.5% of prime-time programmes. Mental illness is portrayed in 3.7 of prime-time programmes. Those shown as disabled fare relatively badly in Saturday morning children's programmes. Mentally ill characters fare badly in all types of programmes.

The Fox network and to a lesser extent cable-originated programmes target young viewers; the age of their character population is skewed accordingly. Fox programmes have the highest percentage of African-Americans. Game show contestants are the most diverse, but the hosts are middle-aged men and their helpers young women, most of whom are only seen but not heard.

If prime time is a time of macho adventures, family

comedies, and societal power-plays, daytime is a time of interior turbulence. Its sexual and marital themes raise female representation but reduce social diversity below that of prime time.

Programmes designed specifically for children's favourite viewing time, Saturday morning, may be expected to present a world that is more tranquil and fair than the troubled worlds of prime-time and daytime drama. However, the world of children's programming is, in fact, the harshest and most exploitive. The inequities of prime-time are magnified on Saturday morning.

A child growing up with children's major network television will see about 123 characters each Saturday morning, but rarely, if ever, a role model of a mature female as leader. The Saturday morning viewer sees an elderly leading character, if at all, about once every three weeks, and it is most likely to be a man. Married and parent images are curiously rare and gloomy in children's programmes. Older women, when seen, are most likely to play the villain. That is where witches come from.

All the mayhem in children's cartoons (32 acts per hour according to our studies) seems painless. Cartoon humour appears to be the sugar coating on the pill of cool, happy violence.

A disproportionate number of ill-fated characters comes from the ranks of poor, Latino and foreign men, and both young and old, African-American, and poor women. At the bottom of fate's 'pecking order' are characters portrayed as old women and as mentally ill, perpetuating stigma of the most damaging kinds.

CASTING AND FATE also affect those who deliver the news, who are referred to and cited in the news, and who are news. In most essential characteristics, news deals with the exercise of power: who has it, who uses it, who seeks it, and, most of all, who threatens it.

Women decline in representation from 35% as newscasters to 20% as authorities cited and 17% as newsmakers. Other minorities are also most visible delivering and least visible making news. When they do, they are most likely to appear as government officials or as criminals. African-Americans make news as criminals at least twice as often as other groups do.

These results present a record of television performance and policy. They show not what the industry says or thinks it does but what it actually presents to the public. Therefore, they provide a basis for judgement and action regarding employment and programming policies vital to a democratic society. ■

The above article is based on a report to the Screen Actors Guild and The American Federation of Radio and Television Artists, June, 1993.

1 The Cultural Indicators project was initiated by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1969 and supported by the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behaviour, the National Institute of Mental Health, the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, the American Medical Association, the US Administration on Ageing, the National Science Foundation, The Hoso Bunka Foundation, the National Cable Television Association and other organizations. The author of this report is the originator of the Cultural Indicators project and co-principal

investigator (with Profs. Larry Gross, University of Pennsylvania; Michael Morgan, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and Nancy Signorielli, University of Delaware) of the television Violence Index and other reports listed in the bibliography. Results and interpretation are the sole responsibility of the project director. For able assistance and co-ordination, credit is due to Mariaelena Bartesaghi, Kristen Conrad, Cynthia Kandra, Amy Nyman and Nejat Ozyegin.

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George Gerbner is internationally known for his work on mass media and culture. He studied at the University of California (BA) and at the University of Southern California (MS, PhD). Having lectured at several North American universities 1951-63, he was appointed in 1964 Professor and Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, where he remains today as Dean Emeritus. He is the author of numerous books and articles, the most recent of which is *The Global Media Debate: Its Rise, Fall and Renewal* (1993) edited by George Gerbner, Hamid Mowlana, and Kaarle Nordenstreng.

The Warsaw Statement on 'Free Media'



The International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) made the following statement to the seminar on 'Free Media' organised by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). It was held in November 1993 in Warsaw, Poland. The statement was preceded by a rationale stressing the need to protect the freedom of the media.

1. We believe that free media are independent media. By independent media we mean media independent from governmental, political or economic control or from control of materials and infrastructures essential to the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and broadcast programmes.

2. We believe that free media are pluralistic media. By pluralistic media we mean that the most diverse segments of the population should have media channels sufficient to allow them to take part in public affairs and to express the widest possible range of opinions, information and ideas. Pluralistic media mean an end of monopolies of any kind and limits to the current trend towards commercialization of information and culture.

3. We support public funding to the media to encourage pluralism as well as independence, both important preconditions of the 'free media.' Toward this end public funding should assist free media channels in ensuring and protecting diverse and minority views. This funding would not be distributed on the basis of content but rather only for structures of production, thereby protecting the public's freedom of choice and guaranteeing that free media not need to rely exclusively on commercial revenues.

4. We demand that governments should refrain from any censorship of media professionals, who must have right and responsibility to gather accurate information and report it to the public. Media professionals should not be prevented or controlled by any government entity. Governmental disinformation also cannot be tolerated.

5. We believe the preservation and development of public media systems should be encouraged. Public media systems should be available to the public and should be outside the control of commercial pressures. Public channels of communication should present commercial-free information and programming reflecting the public they serve.

6. We contend that in cases of national, racial or ethnic conflict, media have a special responsibility not to side with parties in conflict. They should promote understanding and tolerance, should contribute to the eradication of racial discrimination and prejudice, and should refrain from presenting stereotyped, partial, unilateral or tendentious pictures of the parties in conflict.

7. We believe that standards adopted in international law

on the freedom of the media should be incorporated in systems of domestic law. Incorporation of international law regarding freedom of the media into domestic law will ensure that authorities can exact penalties on violators and thus enforce international standards.

8. We demand that all governments sign, ratify and incorporate into domestic law the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which allows the United Nations Human Rights Committee to receive individual complaints of violations of the Covenant.

9. We welcome the appointment of the Special UN Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Opinion and recommend that he should work with other appropriate international bodies in this field, including the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and in particular its High Commissioner on National Minorities and that his work should be assisted by the pertinent non-governmental organizations.

10. We call for increased assistance in the establishment of truly independent, representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists and associations of editors and publishers, in keeping with the desire to protect the independence of the media as a prerequisite for media democratization.

11. We call for effective measures to ensure the safety of journalists on dangerous missions. To be secure in their persons, journalists must be accorded full protection of the law. For journalists working in zones of armed conflict, the appropriate provisions in international humanitarian law should be respected and enforced. In accordance with these provisions journalists must be recognized as civilians enjoying right and immunities accorded to all civilians in order to conduct their professional duties without harm. Journalists must have safe, unrestricted access to sources of information in order to provide the public with a balanced and adequate reflection of all sides of news. If these rights are not guaranteed, journalists must be able to seek justice through an international body protecting human rights.

12. We believe that there can only be restrictions on access to government and privately held information of public interest if such restrictions are necessary for the protection of a democratic society.

13. We support the information and communication rights of the audience and the opinion of the European Court of Human Rights that Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms implies that the public has a right to be properly informed about matters of public interest.

14. We support the adoption of editorial statutes in print and audio-visual media in order to strengthen editorial independence. Local and national media associations should adopt editorial statutes to raise journalistic standards and to improve the quality of information. Such statutes should address the media's accountability to the public and should

free media organizations from external political and economic pressures.

15. We support Resolution 1003 (1993) adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 1 July 1993 and in particular its provisions on ethics and self-regulation in journalism and recommend in line with this Resolution that the media should undertake to submit to firm ethical principles guaranteeing the freedom of expression and the fundamental right of citizens to receive truthful information and honest opinions. In order to implement these principles self-regulatory bodies should be established which include professional journalists, media users' associations and experts from the academic community.

We believe that all Europeans should have equal opportunities to benefit from the development of new information and communication technologies, in particular in the field of audiovisual media. In this context we believe, that joint efforts of the CSCE community would be helpful to promote the development of communication systems in the Central and Eastern European states with the aim to avoid the emergence of new communication disparities in Europe.

We support the development of an all European information infrastructure, including the build up of an electronic superhighway from Vladivostok westward to Vancouver, to enable all citizens of the CSCE member states to participate in the use and in the application of new communication services.

We support the efforts of the ministers of the Council of Europe member states to introduce forms of anti-trust legislation in the field of media to avoid the development of monopolies which would be harmful for diversity and pluralism in the media field and the individual rights to information and communication; We support the development of co-operation among media institutions in the CSCE member states, and in particular the ongoing efforts in the co-production of European films and television programmes, by taking into account the special needs of the Central and Eastern European states.

We support the elaboration of media legislation in the CSCE member states. This legislation should be comprehensive and compatible with international and European standards, in particular with the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (1989). ■

The Honolulu Statement of the MacBride Round Table

The 6th MacBride Round Table on Communication was held in Honolulu, Hawaii. This was an appropriate multicultural and multilingual setting, a home to 'many voices in one world.' Honolulu, through the contributions of the East-West Centre and the University of Hawaii, Manoa, also played a major role in the evolution of the concept of the Right to Communicate, which was to become a central pillar of the MacBride Report.

The Round Table meeting lasted for three full days (20-23 January 1994) and much of that time was devoted to the study of communication equity, both within nations and internationally, focusing especially on the perspective of marginalized groups and societies. In this it followed a tradition established in the 1970s when research played a crucial role in a process leading up to the formulation of the MacBride Commission's report *Many Voices, One World*. Based on the reflections of more than forty research papers, several discussion groups and many other significant interventions, the participants wish to address a number of issues.

Empowerment of women and grassroots' organizations

Previous Round Tables have referred to the concerns of these groups of people, and emphasized the need for their cultural and socio-political emancipation. The mass media could play an important role in assisting and publicly legitimizing this process. But women, as well as other 'minorities' (which in some places are, in fact, majorities), and grassroots and citizens' organizations of all kinds, must seize their own communication power and develop alternative media. Comparatively inexpensive technology, like video, on-line computer links and desk top publishing, can facilitate this development.

One of the main functions of the study of international communication problems, as summarized in the MacBride report, is the necessity for an ongoing process of democratization in society as a whole and the mass media in particular. This however, presupposes the active participation of women and grassroots organizations whose views, contributions, and aspirations are usually ignored by the mass media, and who are largely excluded from the socio-political decision making processes at national and international levels. No genuine civil society and no functioning public sphere are possible without the active participation of all marginalized groups.

Rights of indigenous peoples and their cultures

The Round Table noted the United Nations Declaration of the International Year (1993) and the Decade (1994-2003) of the World's Indigenous People.

The Round Table recognized:

- that the lives, languages and cultures of indigenous

peoples are at great risk of extinction amidst today's revolution in communication technologies;

- that the indigenous peoples of the world are marginalized from communicative links in the world and within countries and that therefore they remain at great risk under pressures from the state, capital and other groups.

The Round Table accepted favourably the report of the working group on indigenous peoples, which appeals for dedication of communication resources' funds, and calls upon media industries, educational institutions and the MacBride Round Table itself for greater commitment, and it applauded efforts to empower indigenous peoples.

'Information superhighway': Efficiency versus equity in information flows

Meeting immediately after the 16th conference of the Pacific Telecommunications Council, the technological scenario of an 'information superhighway', as proposed by the Clinton Administration, provided the backdrop for some of the Round Table's discussions. While the US National Information Infrastructure (NII) plans remain substantially unclear, they aim at creating a more efficient flow of information through integrated system digital networks (ISDN). Similar to the construction of interstate highways under the Eisenhower Administration, the metaphor of 'electronic superhighways' promises higher volume of communication flows, but not necessarily greater equity.

Similar 'information superhighways' are likely to be constructed by the European Union, Japan, and other major economies. The 'information superhighways' will inevitably bypass poorer regions. No 'information superhighway' is planned for the developing world, nor are exits or entries likely to be available to marginalized communities. Many questions remain. Who sets and collects the tolls on the 'superhighway'? Who establishes the highway code, and polices traffic? Will there be public transportation and equal access for all?

It is likely that the new information highways will widen the gap between the information rich and information poor, both within individual countries and between rich and poor regions of the world, to such an extent as to render it unbridgeable in the foreseeable future.

The Round Table considers the establishment of reliable and affordable telephone systems, to which ordinary people can have ready access, as a high priority for developing countries. The telephone is also the linchpin for access to most of the new information technologies such as fax and electronic mail. The efforts of the ITU and organizations like PTC to 'close the gap' are greatly appreciated.

Dialogue with Unesco, ITU and GATT

The research papers presented at the Honolulu Round Table amply demonstrate that the issues addressed by the MacBride Commission are still there, and that the problems identified in the Commission's recommendations have barely been addressed, let alone resolved. On the contrary, many international problems have compounded themselves and are ever more intractable.

Media practitioners and academics are continually reminded of the unresolved nature of most of these issues. It is no coincidence that attendance at the annual MacBride Round Table has grown steadily, with over eighty people from eighteen countries attending the Honolulu meeting.

All of this prompted us to reflect on the leadership which

Unesco once held in the study of global communication problems. Given, however, the convergence of telecommunication and mass media, and the future 'information superhighways', the ITU and GATT play an increasingly pivotal role. We plead for co-ordination and consistency in the efforts of these three intergovernmental organizations, and for close and timely consultations with non-governmental organizations.

We believe it is time that Unesco should reactivate its resources, and renew its commitment, towards democratization of global communication structures. But, this is only possible if the US, UK and Singapore governments rejoin Unesco. We urge these governments to take practical steps as soon as possible towards full membership in Unesco. ■

The next MacBride Round Table will be held in early March 1995 in Tunis, Tunisia. The Tunisian Association of Communication (ATUCOM) will serve as host. The meeting will examine the means of access and distribution of an 'electronic superhighway' system and the safety of journalists on life-threatening assignments. In addition, the three Working Groups on Gender, Indigenous People, and Grassroots Organizations, established by the Round Table in Honolulu, will continue their work at the Tunis meeting.

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Ethnic minority media in the UK – access and control



The development of an ethnic minority media sector in Britain is best examined within a recent historical context, where its fortunes have been dependent on changing technology and broadcasting policy. The proliferation of new media services and structural changes to the established ones have, if anything, enforced the need for minority control of specific media processes and for greater access to all levels of the media industry.

From the first television broadcasts to newspaper reports in the 1980s, the historical relationship between ethnic minorities and the media in Britain has been fairly well documented.¹ It reveals a history of misunderstanding and under-representation that is uniformly spread across the media, and deep-rooted in chauvinistic practice. Although this phenomenon has varied in intensity and subtlety over time (in the case of Commonwealth immigrants, depending on the changing political agenda), its sustained presence signifies an unwelcome continuity in the media's relationship with certain sections of the public.

One of the high points in black people's² relationship with the audio-visual media occurred in the mid-1980s, with the rise of the black workshop movement. Until then, Britain's three television broadcasters, BBC1, BBC2 and ITV, had rarely commissioned (independent) work from outside their own structures. This was to change with the 'Workshops' Declaration in 1982. The Declaration led to the foundation of a number of franchised black film and video workshops: such as the Black Audio/Film Collective, 1983; Macro Films, 1983; and Sankofa in 1984.

With its 'distinctively different' programming remit, the newly emerged Channel Four contributed as a financial sponsor and a national showcase, thereby playing its part in the creation of a viable production culture at the grass roots level. Reflecting on the wider implications for black aesthetic production in this period, Ali Hussein has written that: 'black film-making in Britain had established an indelible presence within the cultural and artistic life of the country... a body of work of sufficient breadth and depth now existed to make it possible to speak of a distinct black British cinema.'³

A combination of factors,⁴ most notably the abolition of the Metropolitan Authorities as a chief source of funds, contributed to the slow but steady demise of the sector in general, and the black workshops in particular. The application of Thatcherite free-market principles to broadcasting meant the remaining funding bodies were less able to resist the logic of mass, commercial production. The same workshops that had previously been courted for their distinctive cultural innovation and creativity, now found themselves toeing a line of least resistance to cultural uniformity; to deliver 'made for television' products. The collapse of the black workshop move-

ment had a knock-on effect on the black independent sector. The workshop sector and the regionally-based training and production centres, had acknowledged differences in the ways they approached agendas exploring issues of identity and culture. It was hoped, however, that the sector would form an independent alliance to broaden the production infrastructure. In the light of this aborted attempt, the activities and agenda of one of these local organisations assumes an especial relevance, and is of interest here.

About Hall Place Studios

Hall Place Studios is a training organisation claiming to have a history of providing accessible, innovative and relevant training for any person wishing to work with film, video and sound. To promote this, the centre is mandated to offer access to media equipment and facilities, and an up-to-date programme of training courses and events. The centre places a premium on learning through shared experiences, and so it aims to provide opportunities for students to interact with other (like minded) participants, and a forum within which to discuss work and information in all production areas. The official policy document is a statement of aims, and is quite specific in relation to the priorities and commitments of the organisation. In the section titled 'overall policy', the document states that:

We aim to encourage a broad range of views and voices on race, gender and social identity, and the expression of these views through the provision of training and production opportunities designed to encourage experimentation in presentation and form. We are interested in the expression of individual and collective experiences which deal with all aspects of our cultural lives. Through this practice we aim to explore what unites communities while respecting their differences.⁵

An engendered sense of 'community' is fundamental to the work that Hall Place does, and has an ideological (rather than a geographical) basis. The studios are not situated within any particular 'community' as such, but near an industrial estate on the edge of the city. It is more accurate to think in terms of the organisation promoting the activities of 'community(s) of interest': collectivities of individuals with varied concerns around issues of class, ethnicity, sexuality, and combinations of these. Hall Place sees itself as actively engaged in addressing the social exclusion and oppression of certain interest groups, with their productions as vehicles for expressing the greater range of perspectives and stories that exist by implication.

As part of a broad cultural agenda to promote plurality in media sources, the centre advocates the communicative rights (the right to speak freely, for instance) of misunderstood and under-represented groups in this society. This emphasis has meant orienting a section of the centre's courses specifically to black people and women, who are acknowledged to have very real, historical restrictions on their media access. In



Members of the Black Film Project based in the city of Leeds, UK. (© Hall Place Studios).

practical terms, Hall Place has chosen to co-ordinate and run major workshops and events targeted at these groups in the Leeds (West Yorkshire) Metropolitan area. A commonly used approach is for the screening of important contemporary films to be augmented by detailed discussion sessions and workshops around the key issues. And as well as practical, instructional courses in film and video techniques, there are opportunities to engage with media practitioners whose work is considered of relevance to the priorities of the students and the organisation. For instance, a twelve-week course run by the centre and titled 'Young, Gifted and Black', concerned itself with the new wave of black writers, producers and directors. Discussions focused on how their films contributed to the representations of black people found in the popular media, and some of these practitioners were invited to address the group.

The Black Film Project

This was a significant event targeted at black people in the city. The Black Film Project's (BFP) aim was to encourage the production of film and video about black people. My role was in monitoring the course, the staff, and the progress of the trainees themselves.

The BFP had a mix of features which the trainees saw as very desirable and in this way, Hall Place appears to be tapping into the desires of sections of Leeds' black community(s). Firstly, the course was specifically oriented to black people. The students spoke of how important this was for them, from the perspective of having 'something to call their own'. Within this context the value of Hall Place as an emotional resource, as well as a training, skills-based centre, was also emphasised. It meant that the trainees felt able to 'drop in', and talk

freely about issues around film making, and other matters. The enthusiasm with which they seemed to embrace this experience of privileged distinctiveness, perhaps signified their awareness of racism as an exclusionary, unwelcoming force when they've tried to integrate in predominantly white settings. The net was extended within the limits of the selection criteria to appeal to people with little or no media experience, and this was seen as a definite fillip to attracting novice enthusiasts. In contrast, all of the students expressed the view that screening, in the form of 'pre-course' interviews, could have taken place to assess people's level of commitment to projects, and level of maturity regarding working in group situations. Crucially, the students felt that the course should have had some kind of qualification on completion: to facilitate entry to intermediate or higher-level courses.

The trainees showed a full-time devotion to producing their film, often working at nights and weekends. Their commitment can be as seen as a response to the scarcity of meaningful, representative images of black people in the media. Without exception, the students claimed that conveying accurate images of black people through the vehicles of dialogue and visual action was paramount to helping to redress this situation. And, perhaps not surprisingly, the students claimed to derive a great deal of 'artistic satisfaction' from seeing their collective efforts shown on screen.

I spent a total of eight months monitoring the Black Film Project. From the outset, the BFP was seen as another manifestation of the centre's vital proactive role in initiating culturally-specific projects. The responses from the interviewees indicated that the Studios occupy a prominent position as a formative training site for them. Equally, the course itself was high on the list of rare and valuable training oppor-

tunities. As the course progressed, the trainees seemed to have acquired an emergent sense of the importance attached to working as an organic, symbiotic unit. However, the organisation's 'community activism' is not without its critics. Some sections of the dominant ethnic group are alarmed by what they interpret as the centre's 'discriminatory' policy in the targeting of courses. From a purely quantitative perspective however, the plain facts contradict this view. The vast majority of the centre's users are white and male, and this fact only serves to illustrate the amount of work needing to be done, at the micro level, to redress the imbalance that exists in the industry as a whole.

At one level, Hall Place can be seen to be providing a career option for people who want to get involved in the media, and who feel they are given few opportunities to do so. This was certainly the view of a number of now experienced trainees I spoke to, who have since gone on to pursue careers in the industry, or other media related courses. Virtually all of these students claimed that, without the availability of accessible, challenging, locally-based courses, they probably would not have embarked on their present career paths. At another level, a general consensus among the various long-term interests who presently use the centre (such as women's script writing groups, and local workers' co-operatives) is that it has come to fulfil a vital 'community function'; forming a training and skills resource base.

The organisation hopes that some of these trainees will reinvest their acquired expertise in the community at large in the form of teaching, film productions or some other audio-visual combination. Significantly, the centre's users all acknowledge a provisional commitment to this principle. Hence, the process of skill accumulation and reinvestment is one that should proceed under its own momentum.

Appropriating old and new

The introduction of the new moving-image delivery systems (cable, satellite) has facilitated debate about how broadcasting can best cater to all sections of the populace.⁵ Among a multiplicity of national and global programme services, cable is unique in its ability to deliver and tailor programming to specific interest groups, and areas or (as they are becoming increasingly known) 'markets'. Together with the latest digitised compression techniques⁶ for increasing the number of available channels, governments in Europe are solidly endorsing the rhetoric of greater consumer choice in broadcasting. A free-market approach to organising the media in the UK has already revealed central flaws that compromise the democratising process in this area. As Curran has succinctly stated, commercial principles applied to broadcasting 'exclude broad social interests from participating in the control of the main media . . . [lead to] a concentration of media ownership . . . [and promote] cultural uniformity, particularly in TV output.'⁷ So what of the prospects for ethnic minorities' access to the media in the UK's current broadcasting climate? Support for cable television's public access channel has assumed some of the momentum of its North American neighbours.⁸ Public access channels generally offer a free, non-discriminatory platform for a plurality of arbitrary views, opinions and stories and in this way, realise an important democratising principle. It is also significant that access arrangements are beginning to be secured under local control of the channel. This means that although the channel remains the legal responsibility of the cable owner, the local individual or community group broadcasts material which is not subject

to external (i.e. cable company) editorial control.

The new media technologies are being appropriated by minority groups in Britain as alternatives and/or complements to the more traditional outlets. Even these have undergone a transition. Newspaper titles aimed at first generation immigrants like *The Gleaner*, *The Caribbean Times* and *The Asian Times*, have been joined by younger titles targeting sections of the UK-born black population by socio-economic group. 1993 saw the launch of the *Weekly Journal*, a broad sheet newspaper aimed at social class ABC 1 black people. Broadcast has taken off too, as black radio stations have won incremental radio licences. *Sunrise Radio*, which broadcasts in West London and Bradford (Yorkshire) has gone on to satellite to make it available to dish owners around Europe. And *Spectrum*, a radio station which purports to broadcast to around 18 black communities in London, claims a reach of over 20% among its target audience of 1.2 million.⁹ Cable stations serving Britain's Asian population, most notably *AsiaVision*, have been available since 1986. And in July 1993, Britain's first African-Caribbean entertainment channel, *Identity TV*, was launched on satellite.

The aggregate effect of these developments is to foster a more pluriform culture of participation, and in so doing present a partial corrective to the exclusionary and stereotypical practices of the media. The way forward is increasingly being seen through equal access to, and participation in, available communication technology. ■

- 1 See for example Barry, A. (1988). Black mythologies: representation of black people on British Television. In: Twitchin, J. ed., *The Black and White Media Book*. Staffs, Trentham Books
- 2 The term 'black' used throughout refers in its narrowest sense to people of African-Caribbean descent. This does not mean that parallel issues of representation do not affect other non-white peoples
- 3 Hussein, A. (forthcoming). Market forces and the marginalisation of black film and video production. In: Husband, C. ed., *A Richer Vision*. p 228.
- 4 See Hussein, A. op cit.
- 5 Hall Place Studios Policy Document, p 3.
- 6 See for example Rushton, D. ed., *Citizen Television*. London, John Libbey.
- 7 See for example Osborne, D. Coming soon on Channel 499: *Starvation*. *The Independent*. 5 January 1993.
- 8 Curran, J. (1991). Rethinking the media as a public sphere. In: Dahlgren, P. and Sparks, C. eds., *Communication and Citizenship*. London, Routledge.
- 9 See for example Rushton, D. op cit.
- 10 Syedain, H. Major Minority Interest, *Marketing*, 1 April 1993, pp 37-40.



British media policies, he also tutors sociology at the university.

Patrick Ismond is currently studying for a PhD in the Department of Social Sciences at Bradford University, England. He studied Politics and Management Science (BSc) at the same university, followed by a theoretical study of aspects of racism in British society (MSc). While completing a thesis on ethnic minority media productions in relation to

ON THE SCREEN...

Cinemafrica

Films from the African continent are enjoying growing popularity with Western European audiences. Ten years ago, only a few African film directors found their way outside their continent. Now there are young talents winning prizes at the main European festivals like Venice, Berlin, Cannes, and Zürich. Many smaller Swiss towns also have their 'Cinemafrica'. And the brand-new, beautifully designed international magazine *Ecrans de l'Afrique* has its editorial staff in Milan. In 1993 the fourth Dutch festival 'Africa in the picture' showed more than 50 films produced in nearly 20 countries south of the Sahara. Several were shown on Dutch television.

I cannot recall that Europeans have ever shown such interest in new films from Eastern Europe, Asia or Latin America. What might be the explanation for this welcome and hopeful phenomenon? I am quite sure that African film-makers do not have large budgets for public relations. Reading their statements and interviews, I sought a clue to the reasons for their success.

One recent film, *Au nom du Christ* (In the name of Christ), received more attention than others. Roger Gnoan M'bala from the Ivory Coast directed this feature film which alludes to the countless independent churches, sects, religious groups in non-Islamic Africa. Set in a small village, the main character is a pig-breeder turned prophet who has seen the light and who sets himself up as the local charismatic leader.

'I don't want to give my views on religion', said the director in an interview.

'I keep my neutrality and my feelings for observation. I do not judge; I show things with pictures. I am not a moralist or a politician; I do not criticise my people for their beliefs and I don't put forward a belief. But we must ask ourselves seriously: Aren't these prophets swindlers?'

To me this seems a very balanced and a rather kind-hearted statement when one brings to mind the history of colonialism and religion in Africa. M'bala is very careful and seems well aware of the sensitive taboos in the North. Are African film-makers more respectful towards their former oppressors in order to be more readily accepted?

Reading other interviews and statements from African film-makers, I found another clue in response to my astonishment about the strong interest in African cinema in the western world. For a European audience, there is a lot to identify with in African films. Cinematographic developments on the African continent are not only strongly connected financially with Europe but the visual expression of their struggles, social criticism and the shock at the loss of their traditional cultures offer many more chances to identify with than Asian films ever could.

A recent issue of the Swiss film magazine *Zoom* published a dossier on African cinema with major contributions by African experts. It opened with an intriguing observation on the role of the big city in African films, where Africans live 'like Europeans', where they lose their traditional values but never find emancipation. Blacks are in leading positions but the repressive structures

remain the same. The failure of modern institutions like hospitals, and chambers of commerce, are often thematic. African films offer European viewers the opportunity to compare, to seek affinities with both the fascinating and shocking aspects of the mix of cultures, languages and religions that have been imported into Africa. But that doesn't mean they all like what they see.

Female African film-maker Wanjiru Kinyanjui lives in Berlin. She writes in *Zoom* that France offered considerable financial resources to establish a Pan African movie library in Ouagadougou (capital of Burkina Faso and home of FESPACO - Festival Panafricain du Cinéma et de la Télévision). One condition was that the films held in the archives should not show aspects of racism. Of course she asks: 'Can we only make films about nice colonists?' And she mocks those of her colleagues who obey financiers who only want to sponsor African 'village films'. She refutes Europeans who criticise the long shots, slow rhythms and simple, linear stories of African directors as being 'typically African'. She explains that lack of money and technical equipment are the main reasons for this so-called 'African style'.

My impression is that a young generation of female film-makers is fighting back. Anne-Laure Folly from Togo is convinced that the only possible protest against complaints about Europeans' racist or wrong images of Africa is in films that reflect African realities. She says, 'A society needs a mirror to be able to reflect about itself. Film is the most appropriate medium for this role when one considers the influence of

television in the urban centres of present-day Africa.' CinemAfrica holds great promise!

Wim Koole, editor of The Co-Production Connection, Switzerland, 21, CH-4003 Basel,

Portraits

The Faculty for Comparative Study of Religions in Antwerp (a member of Interfilm Europe) organises in depth study at international and university levels of world religions, so-called 'local' religions and so-called 'primitive' religions. Courses are given by teachers who are adherents of the religions concerned. This is the best guarantee of objectivity, equality and accuracy.

The 'Department of Religious Communication' was founded in 1987 in close co-operation with Interfilm. Led by Prof. Dr. Jan Hes, the department had several courses which involved media and religion. After the sudden death of Prof. Dr. Hes in July 1991 there was a period of transition. Prof. Eckart Bruchner (Munich) was appointed successor to Prof. Hes and became Head of the Department in April 1992.

Study seminars (minimum 4 days) on film are organised now with international experts from many different media fields, especially specialists in film (directors, authors, critics) and in co-operation with other academics, university teachers in the spheres of culture and religion. An important aim of these seminars is to bring together students of different countries and cultures/religions for actual discussions.

The 4-day seminar in April 1993 involved Islam, Indian and Jewish films around the theme 'Cultural alienation and cultural alienation in a multicultural society' (i.e. Europe).

Further seminars are planned for April 1994 (Beyond Consciousness: films about drugs), November 1994 (Gypsies and Europe: film and video.)

Further information from: Geert Vermeire, Department of Media and Religion, Faculty for Comparative Studies of Religions, Bist 164, B-2610 Antwerp, Belgium.

Die gemeinsame Filmkommission der Kooperation Evangelischer Kirchen und Missionen der deutsch, italienisch und romanisch sprechenden Schweiz (KEM),

des Hilfswerks der Evangelischen Kirchen der Schweiz (HEKS) und von Brot für alle (BFA) besteht seit 1977. Seit 1986 arbeitet sie eng zusammen mit dem Katholischen Arbeitskreis Medien-Dritte Welt, in welchem die grossen katholischen Hilfswerke ihre Medienarbeit koordinieren. Eine oekumenische Visionierungsgruppe Nord/Süd der beiden Organisationen ist dafür zuständig, für die Informations- und Bildungsarbeit der Hilfswerke Filme (16mm und/oder Video VHS) zu beschaffen und dem Verleih SELECTA/ZOOM zu zuführen, welche im weitesten Sinne dafür geeignet sind, Themen und Problemfelder der evangelischen und katholischen Hilfs- und Missionswerke darzustellen und zu diskutieren. Dafür steht ein gemeinsames Budget zur Verfügung.

Die Filmkommission KEM/HEKS/BFA selber sieht ihre Aufgabe in der Koordination der Medienarbeit der evangelischen Hilfswerke. Insbesondere engagiert sie sich in der Förderung von Filmproduktionen, welche die Lebenswirklichkeit der Menschen in den südlichen Ländern in einer ganzheitlichen Weise darstellen und die Verflechtungen zwischen Nord und Süd sowie hoffnungsvolle Veränderungen des Lebens darstellen. Im Rahmen der finanziell begrenzten Möglichkeiten werden vor allem Filmschaffende in der Zweidrittel-Welt unterstützt. Die Finanzierung von Eigenproduktionen, welche ursprünglich im Vordergrund der Bestrebungen stand, hat in den letzten Jahren an Bedeutung verloren. Im Mittelpunkt der Arbeit steht jetzt der Ankauf von Filmen durch die oekumenische Visionierungsgruppe Nord/Süd, ihre Dokumentierung und Lancierung, die Durchführung von Medientagen in verschiedenen Regionen der Schweiz, so 1992 zu Lateinamerika. Der Kampf um finanzielle Unterstützung für die Filmarbeit wird härter. Eine Verstärkung der bestehenden internationalen Vernetzung ist dringend.

Annemarie Friedli, c/o Brot für Alle, Missionstrasse 21, CH-4003, Basel, Switzerland.

Unesco plans

Unesco is planning to celebrate the first hundred years of cinema by organising an international event including the following activities:

- An international competition among film and television schools for the preservation of films.
- A photographic exhibition at Unesco headquarters about films that broke new ground in different periods and cinema schools.
- In co-operation with the China National Commission at Unesco, a colloquium on film co-production for the year 2000.
- A festival of films restored by Member States for the occasion of the centenary.
- An international symposium with film buffs, critics and historians on the theme 'How to redeem cinema that has artistic value and that of countries where the film industry does not exist or no longer exists?'. This meeting will draw up an international charter for the defence of quality cinema.
- A plan to restore films and audiovisual documents in Member States and a special help fund for developing countries who are members.

Film/video catalogues

Videos on religious themes is the title of a new publication from OCIC. Six years ago the organisation published an edition containing programmes in three languages. Such was the response that three separate catalogues in English, French and Spanish have now appeared.

The English edition contains 640 titles, with a brief description of contents, an indication of the target audience, the names and addresses of producers and distributors.

Videos on religious themes is available from OCIC, rue de l'Orme 8, B-1040 Bruxelles, Belgium.

A second catalogue, at present much smaller in scope, is *African Films & Videos*, published by Development through Self-Reliance Inc. These social message works cover a variety of issues including AIDS, teenage pregnancy, family planning, training, health and hygiene, environment and women's issues. They are available in local currency through affiliated distributors in Zimbabwe, Senegal, Kenya, Namibia, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Australia. Many of the films and videos can be purchased in local languages.

For a free copy of the catalogue, write to: Development through Self-Reliance Inc., 9111 Guilford Road, Suite 100, Columbia MD 21046, USA.

Berlin Film Festival

'Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home, your house is on fire, your children are gone.' This old children's rhyme provides the title for British film-maker Ken Loach's latest film, premiered in competition at the 44th Berlin International Film Festival, 10-22 February 1994, and awarded the Ecumenical Jury prize of DM 5,000.

The film is a fictionalised account of a true story of a working-class woman from a violent family background. It confirms that 'violence begets violence' and reminds those old enough, of Loach's late 1960s television production *Cathy Come Home*, which had such an impact on British society at that time.

Ladybird, Ladybird is a dramatic and compelling film. In addition to the Ecumenical Jury prize, it was also awarded top honours by the International Film Critics' Association. Moreover, the film's star, Crissy Rock, a 'stand-up comic' in her first big film role, won the International Jury's Silver Bear for best actress, for her outstanding performance as Maggie, the mother whose children are removed into the care of the social services.

At the start of the film Maggie has four children (all by different fathers). Leaving them alone one night in her apartment she is called home to find her family being removed to hospital after a fire. The subsequent drama provided the citation from the Ecumenical Jury: 'For the film's convincing portrayal of the causes and consequences of violence in family and society, and its powerful bid for a way out of an unbearable situation via love and trust.'

The Ecumenical Jury's second main prize, which carried a similar financial award, was given to a film in the International Forum of Young Film Makers, *La Estrategia del Caracol* (The Snail's Strategy) by Sergio Cabrera from Columbia.

The Jury citation for this film reads: a 'clever and witty parable on the importance of solidarity and the need to act collectively. The film depicts the final triumph of the community over greed and aggressive individualism in an exploitative and unjust situation.' It is a drama about tenants in a run-down apartment block. It becomes a comedy of ingenious tactics used against the newly rich owner of the building.

This year's festival contained a rich



The Ecumenical Jury at Berlin: (seated left to right) Latvora Dularidse (Russia), Hans Hodel (Switzerland), Anita Uzulniece (Latvia), (standing left to right) Felix Premawardhana (Sri Lanka), Guido Convents (Belgium), Robin Gurney (United Kingdom), Bernhard Natschlager (Austria), Martin Ammon (Germany), Michael Kuhn (Belgium) and Reinhold Zwick (Germany).

panoply of films in all the sections: Competition, Forum, Panorama, Children's Festival, as well as special retrospective and regional films, for example the first sound film made in the Mongolian language in 1936, *Son of Mongolia* and a number of films from Africa.

A special Golden Bear was also presented with much acclaim to Sophia Loren, to mark a life-time's achievement.

Other films to receive Special Mention by the Ecumenical Jury were the Cuban/Mexican/Spanish production in the Competition, *Fresa y Chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate), which was described as 'impressive on account of its pleas for tolerance, its respect for personal freedom, individuality and dignity'. This film also won the Silver Bear Special Jury Prize. In the Forum section Special Mentions were given to *Satan Tango* a seven-and-a-half hour epic from Hungary, which is an alarming depiction of the disintegration of social and moral order, and an American film *The Last Klezmer*, a portrait of the Jewish musician Leopold Koslowski.

The Ecumenical Jury was comprised of five representatives from the international film organisations Interfilm and OCIC, belonging to the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic churches.

Prizes are awarded on the basis of guidelines which accentuate films where directors have shown genuine artistic talent and succeeded in expressing actions or human experiences that

comply with the Gospels, or in sensitising viewers to spiritual, human or social values.

Among other films which made an important impact at the festival must be mentioned those that received the International Jury Award, *In the Name of the Father*; Philadelphia where Tom Hanks won a 10-minute standing ovation for his superb portrayal of a lawyer suffering from AIDS, and was awarded a Silver Bear as the best actor; and *God Sobaki* (The Year of the Dog) which also won a Silver Bear for its outstanding portrayal of personal fates in contemporary Russia.

In the Name of the Father is, to quote Derek Malcolm, the distinguished film critic of the London Guardian, 'a parable based on the truth.' It deals with the most appalling miscarriage of justice in Britain, and the conviction of the 'Guildford four' who were wrongly imprisoned for blowing up a public house in Guildford. The acting of Daniel Day-Lewis in his role as Gerry Conlon, must have been a close race with Tom Hanks for the winner of the best actor award.

Other films which will eventually find their way into the local market place and which merit an evening out include: *The Law of Courage* from Italy, dealing with the yet unsolved murder of a young judge by the mafia. This film won 'The Blue Angel', the Grand Prize of the European Academy of Film and Television, sponsored by the Eastman Kodak



Maggie (played by Crissy Rock) with portraits of the four children she has lost, from *Ladybird, Ladybird*, directed by Ken Loach and winner of the Ecumenical Jury Prize at the 1994 Berlin Film Festival. (Parallax Pictures for Film Four International.)



Winner of the Ecumenical Jury's second main prize was *La estrategia del caracol* (*The Snail's Strategy*), directed by Sergio Cabrera from Colombia. Presented in the International Forum of Young Film Makers, it tells the story of the resourcefulness of tenants in run-down apartments who outwit the unscrupulous rich owner of the block.

Company. If, after all the drama you need a good laugh, try to see another Italian production *Cari Fottutissimi Amici* (Dear Goddamn Friends).

Outside of the viewing, the traditional Ecumenical Reception was held in the Evangelische Kirche der Union at the invitation of Bishop Dr Martin Kruse and Auxiliary Bishop Friedrich Ostermann. The address this year was given by Hans Norbert Janowski, entitled: 'The detour to myself - returning by way of others'. A large crowd of church employees, film makers and others was introduced to the Ecumenical Jury before listening to the address and participating in the reception.

A reception was also given by the Director of the Berlin Film Festival, Moritz de Hadeln, for the Ecumenical Jury, a mark of the appreciation and esteem in which the festival holds the presence, input and participation of the churches at this most prestigious of European film events.

By Robin Gurney, Secretary for Information and Communication of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Geneva, Switzerland.

Protecting film makers

In the middle of 1993, a thirty-three year old German documentary maker, Winfried Bonengel, presented his new 90-minute film *Beruf Neo-Nazi*. The TV magazine *Tagesspiegel* described the film as 'the most important film of our time', and there were other positive comments.

At the beginning of the film, we meet the young, good-looking neo-Nazi Ernst Althans in the busy office of Ernst Zündel, who lives in Canada and is shown to be the godfather of the young German activists. The 'Z' of his name on posters and banners looks like the Swastika on the red Nazi flag. Later we travel with Althans through Germany and see him spreading his ideas and booklets in shabby meeting-rooms.

The film doesn't comment. The most tantalising moment is Althans' visit to Auschwitz, where he denies or belittles what happened there. In a spontaneous confrontation, a young American tourist tells him where to get off. Althans is demagogic but not very original as a speaker. It is difficult to imagine him attracting large groups of supporters and his ideas are unoriginal and offer no answers to the problems of today's



Al otro lado del tunnel (At the Other End of the Tunnel) directed by Jaime de Armiñán and set in Aragon, Spain, starred the late Fernando Rey as a film scriptwriter.

young people. The film shows that his audiences are small and the prototype of dissatisfied right-wing radicals.

A few weeks before *Beruf Neo-Nazi* was due to be shown at the Frankfurt Film Festival in December 1993, the German weekly *Der Spiegel* accused the film of 'making propaganda for young right-wingers and their comrades'. It said that the film offers no commentary and, therefore, leaves open what is good or bad. Before it could be shown in Frankfurt, government officials seized the film, justifying their action by saying it was insulting, slanderous of the dead, and incited people to become members of an unconstitutional organisation.

Since then, I saw the film at the Rotterdam Film Festival and afterwards listened to a discussion between the film maker and a young audience. In fact the film is done in reporter-style, revealing the irritable, mean and unsympathetic side of Althans who acts like an unscrupulous politician struggling for power. He is a lone wolf in an audience of sympathisers.

In my view, those who initiated the actions to prevent the film being shown both in Germany and the Netherlands had not seen it. During the Rotterdam meeting, Winfried Bonengel implied that *Der Spiegel*, which had offered him a large sum of money for the international TV rights, had started the row in order to make the film commercially more attractive. But the main point of discussion was fear that the film might stimulate anti-racism and anti-Semitism. One group representing Jewish interests said that it was shocking for a denial of the Holocaust to be freely shown.

In the discussion, the film-maker said: 'It is my purpose to show reality. In

Munich, the reality is that a neo-Nazi can run an office and organise propaganda without any problem. No one prevents a neo-Nazi from telling visitors to Auschwitz that no Jews were murdered there. Not one German has protested against those facts. That's why I made the documentary.'

He rejects the criticism that he is offering a platform to neo-Nazis and that he should have 'commented' in the film. 'I admit that the format is provocative but the film should work as a cuff round the ears. It is about the enemy. But it is easier to take action against my film than against the neo-Nazis.'

Bonengel is shocked by what is happening in Germany. The leading figure in his film is able to earn a lot of money from being a professional neo-Nazi, while rich anonymous Germans offer him financial support.

During the Rotterdam Festival the Chinese government also tried to prevent the showing of several new Chinese feature films. Their attempted censorship provoked support for the Chinese film makers present at the Festival.

All these conflicts prove the need for the recently formed FilmFree Foundation, which aims to protect and defend film makers' rights. FilmFree has a hotline for film makers in need of support and is setting up a global network of concerned individuals and organisations to promote awareness of censorship. Reporting abuses and violations is essential to the work of the Foundation, which also depends on international support.

By Wim Koole. Contact: FilmFree, Kleine Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017 RR Amsterdam, Netherlands. Tel: (31) 20 623 3673. Fax: (31) 20 638 4489.

ON THE PAGE...

Technopoly, the Surrender of Culture to Technology, by Neil Postman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. 222 pp.

'Technopoly' is Neil Postman's term for 'totalitarian technocracy' (p.48), something which involves the 'submission of all forms of cultural life to the sovereignty of technique and technology' (p.52). Both a state of mind and a state of culture, technopoly is an affliction of individuals and societies in which technology is elevated to such pre-eminence that it is effectively deified, becoming the source of authority, definer of life-goals and chief provider of satisfaction. Technopoly, says Postman, is what happens when our 'defences against information glut' break down (p.72). Assailed by trivia mixed in with what is important in a media diet of insistent indiscriminateness, grounding values such as good and evil, disappear (p.90). Technopoly is 'a form of cultural AIDS' (p.63), only here the acronym stands for 'anti-information deficiency syndrome'. Postman diagnoses the widespread malaise of life in modern America and concludes that much of what has gone wrong stems from a surrender, at both an individual and cultural level, to the values of technopoly. He gives the ailment a name, identifies and describes some of its most serious symptoms and makes some suggestions about a cure.

The book is written with the same pace, clarity and persuasiveness that made *Amusing Ourselves to Death* so deservedly popular. And for what is, in effect, a jeremiad, it is liberally spiced with humorous asides. For instance,

playing on David Riesman's idea that the printing press acted as 'the gunpowder of the mind', Postman dubs the computer 'the talcum powder of the mind', stressing 'its capacity to smooth over unsatisfactory institutions and ideas' (p.116). Despite the author's many pessimistic observations, the book as a whole is more likely to encourage critical reflection than despair. It is not without its flaws, however, and has the capacity to irritate as well as enlighten. Some readers may feel that, in the end, Postman has not taken sufficient account of the advice he acknowledges to be sound in the early pages of the book, namely, that 'a wise man must begin his critique of technology by acknowledging its successes' (p.7). Such acknowledgement tends to be somewhat overwhelmed by the two hundred pages of criticism which follow it. Others may object that some of the book's generalisation do not stand up to close scrutiny (some of the comments made on the chapter on medical technology (pp.92-106) seem particularly questionable).

Carefully avoiding the fallacy of considering them merely as independent inventions whose significance can be judged purely in terms of their intrinsic novelty or sophistication, Postman effectively emphasises the huge extent of the impact which new technologies have. They 'alter the structure of our interests. They alter the character of our symbols. And they alter the nature of community' (p.20). Perhaps the most concerning item on the agenda of worries which Postman puts before his readers, and the one which gives considerable credence to the idea that the new technologies influence what we think

about, how we think and 'the arena in which thoughts develop' (p.20), is the way in which they affect language.

Defining ideology as 'a set of assumptions of which we are barely conscious but which nonetheless directs our efforts to give shape and coherence to the world' (p.123), Postman notes that language is 'our most powerful ideological instrument', indeed it is 'pure ideology' (p.123). For all its importance, though, we live 'deep within the boundaries of our linguistic assumptions' (p.124) and are often unaware of the cargoes of meaning and value which our words carry. Much of the malign ideology of technopoly is rooted in the way in which machines have become key metaphors, whose increasing presence in our language subtly engineers important differences in meaning and outlook. Beside the impersonal and endlessly repeatable operations of a machine, 'subjectivity becomes profoundly unacceptable' (p.158). The 'diversity, complexity and ambiguity of human judgement' (p.158) comes to be seen as flawed in comparison with the predictably perfect operations of our technological creations.

Computers and TV, two of the most potent weapons in the armoury of technopoly, have had a particularly profound effect on our vocabulary. Television, for instance, 'changes what we once meant by the terms 'political debate', 'news', and 'public opinion'. Likewise, the computer 'changes "information"'. Like every medium, their impact on us goes far deeper than the purposes for which they were designed. Just as writing and then printing both 'changed what we once meant by

"truth" and "law" (p.8), so the new technologies are now changing them again. Technology, says Postman, 'commandeers our most important terminology. It redefines "freedom", "truth", "intelligence", "fact", "wisdom", "memory", "history" - all the words we live by' (pp.8-9). That it also provides the scaffolding on which to construct and disseminate precisely such a criticism and open the matter up for widespread debate is, perhaps, worth noting. *Technopoly* was not written with a quill. That cultural criticism of the sort Postman engages in is itself very largely facilitated by, and dependent on, the technology it does so much to damn, must surely give one pause for thought.

Those concerned with the relationship between religion and the new technologies, will find what Postman has to say in Chapter 10 about the 'Great Symbol Drain' of particular interest. Here trivialization, rather than blasphemy, is identified as the commonest means of devaluing traditional symbols, and in *technopoly*, 'the trivialisation of significant cultural symbols is largely conducted by commercial enterprise' (p.165). Indeed, as it is currently manifested in America, advertising has become 'a symptom of a world-view that sees tradition as an obstacle to its claims' (p.171). Postman warns that we are witnessing a form of cultural rape which is 'sanctioned by an ideology that gives boundless supremacy to technological progress' (p.170).

In the final chapter Postman goes some way towards suggesting solutions to the problems he has spent the rest of the book highlighting. As with *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, education is cast in the central salvific role, a part one wonders whether it has the strength to play given the extent to which it too (at least according to Postman) has become subservient to *technopoly's* agenda. A new curriculum is proposed with the

idea of the 'ascent of humanity' as its key organising principal (p.188). We are told that 'every teacher must be a history teacher' (p.189); that every school should offer courses in philosophy of science and semantics (p.193); that 'there is no subject better suited to freeing us from the tyranny of the present than the historical study of art' (p.196); that the curriculum must contain both the history of technology and a course in comparative religion (p.198).

These proposals, like his ten-point characterisation of the essential attributes of the individual who resists the culture of *technopoly* (pp.183-184), offer some interesting (if sometimes obvious) suggestions. They also underline Postman's admission that he is, 'like most critics, armed less with solutions than with problems' (p.182). *Technopoly* is an engaging and challenging book which, even if it does not offer conclusive remedies, helps us to pinpoint the location, scale and nature of some particularly serious modern problems and some of the likely directions in which solutions to them may lie.

Chris Arthur

Apprendre avec l'actualité. Théorie et pédagogie de l'événement, by Christian Hermelin. Paris: Retz, 1993. 143pp. FF85.00.

This volume is the fourth in a series published by the Paris-based *Centre de liaison de l'enseignement et des moyens d'information* (Clemi). Founded in 1982 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Clemi's task is 'to introduce current events into the teaching of all subjects and at all levels, with a view to training in citizenship' (p.5).

The notion of 'citizenship' as a rationale for education has gained significance in a century that has given increasing recognition to the rights of individuals rather than collectivities. The countless political, socio-economic and cultural changes after 1945, culminating in the 'collapse of communism', have led to a reappraisal of the relationship between State and civil society. If it is true that democracy cannot exist without participation, it is equally true that citizenship cannot exist without education. In reconstructing societies post-1989, a key question is: what kind of education should be given and for what

purpose?

In a media age, part of the answer lies in an education policy that includes understanding communication systems as carriers of particular social, cultural and ideological information. In this respect, young people (i.e. those still learning how to be responsible citizens) need adequate training in order to understand how communication systems work, and to avoid being manipulated for political or consumerist ends.

Apprendre avec l'actualité ('Learning with current events'), in keeping with the philosophy of the other books in the series, 'offers a global approach to events which aims to provide reader-citizens with reflections, analyses and facts. In addition to the text, in the form of teaching aids, reader-teachers will find ideas for exercises on which they may draw according to their needs and audiences' (p.10).

The book is divided into three parts. The first, 'From news to event', explores what constitutes a newsworthy item, and defines the parameters of what is 'new' and, therefore, of possible note. The paradox is that the new 'tends to self-destruct and requires constant regeneration through novelty' (p.14). The journalistic value of a piece of news is relative to its speed of transmission, to its market value and to the system established for gathering news.

How does a happening that is a potential news item turn into an event worth the media's attention? The answer lies on page 32: 'Certain ordinary events become media events after they have been transformed into news which can be used by the media (*nouvelles médiatisables*). A happening in society (*événement social*) becomes a media-friendly piece of news (*nouvelle médiatisable*) and consequently a media event (*événement médiatique*). By analysing the way the various components of the media system work, it is possible to suggest the degree to which happenings are 'eventual' (*événementiel*) and therefore their 'eventuality' (*événementialité*).

This play on words (for which English has no equivalent) leads to a valuable insight on which the remainder of the book is based. To give importance to items of news, the media organise them hierarchically according to how extraordinary they are and how near they are to the reader/viewer. In doing so, 'the media express what is normal and abnormal in society; they convey, even set out, territorial, social, ideological or simply media relationships' (p.41).

Reviewers in this issue

- Chris Arthur is Senior Lecturer at Saint David's University College, Wales.
- Myrna G. Grant is Dean of Graduate Communications at Wheaton College, Illinois, USA.
- Leonard L. Chu is Professor at the University of Queensland, Australia.
- Alan O'Connor is Professor at Trent University, Ontario, Canada.
- Carlos A. Valle is General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication, London, whose staff includes Philip Lee and Anne Davies.

Part II is called 'The theatre of events', reverting to the notion of the unexpected: a dramatic turn of events on the world stage. It discusses the different kinds of actors in this theatre, the transition from happening to media event, and their *médiation* (the spiral into which events are drawn in the process of becoming media-friendly). 'There is no news without spectacle. News, written or audiovisual, is made up of events and situations revealed to the sight. By informing ourselves about something, we are gazers at the world and if we participate, it is less as actors than as spectators' (p.46).

The third part further explores the notion of 'eventuality' by studying the way news is constructed from bits of information. Understanding how certain facts become events means examining the way they are narrated and used by the media. This process of transformation is different for newspapers, radio, television and even photographs. Yet the outcome is the same. Facts are assimilated by the media as an entity, their paths crossing and recrossing until a clear trail is all but lost. 'The essential feature of news today is that it can be used by all media (*polymédiation*), which does not mean just adding different media but combining them' (p.86).

Part III includes a 'lexicon and grammar of the event' which sheds light on the verbal and visual languages employed to express how important, in media terms, an event is seen to be. It concludes (p.108) that 'language, at the end of the chain of "eventuality", is the essential aspect in expressing the "eventuality" of a piece of news. The latter is ultimately an event because the media say so.'

A review is not the place to delve into all the corners covered by this short but remarkable book. It is concise and well written, offering many easily understood examples in support of its claims. Often there are insightful asides that serve to clarify the point being made. These examples are mainly based, as one might expect, on the French media's perceptions of what is news. But the main thrust of all the arguments is universal and the many teaching aids can readily be adapted to local situations.

The notion of responsible citizenship and the need to understand the way media function lie at the heart of chapter 5, 'The media event spiral'. Here the author takes the Romanian revolution of 1989 to illustrate the sometimes dubious effects that media have on the course of

history. By taking sides in the politicisation of events, the media raise serious questions about their impartiality. In part, good citizenship relies on fair and unbiased media coverage, on access to information that retains its integrity after being 'mediatised'.

This book clearly shows how the media can knowingly or unknowingly bias and distort information, and that learning how the media function is intrinsic to social freedom. As the author remarks (p.139): 'If information power exists, it is right for there also to be counter-power. The education sphere is the only place where that seems possible without risk of attacking the freedom of the press so beloved of democracies.'

Philip Lee

Los directores del cine argentino.

1. *Adolfo Aristarain*, by Fernando Brenner; 2. *Eliseo Subiela*, by Paraná Sendrós; 3. *Fernando Solanas*, by Luciano Monteagudo; 4. *Leopoldo Torre Nilsson*, by Fernando Peña. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993.

Centro Editor, supported by the National Cinematographic Institute of Argentina, has begun publishing a series of 24 monographs about the most outstanding Argentinean film directors. The first four volumes, in Spanish, have already appeared. It is quite likely that the whole collection will have been published by the time this review appears.

One of the good things about this series is that it highlights the close relation that in almost all cases exists between the work and the lives of the film-makers. Nearly all of them have done, and are currently doing, extremely good work. Resources of all kinds, except human beings, are rudimentary and scarce. Despite this lack, however, they have managed to carry their films through from the initial development of the argument to the final product. The direction that these gifted directors are moving in, as with the great majority in the Third World, can only be understood within their own economic and social contexts.

This is a long way from the huge industrial production of Hollywood. The economic resources for production and distribution are extremely limited. It hardly needs to be said that a film, in order to be able to cover its modest costs, has to have total box-office suc-

cess at the national level, which very rarely happens. Its distribution in other countries encounters enormous obstacles in a market dominated by the US. But this is not a problem exclusive to the developing countries. It is well known that throughout Europe, more than 70 per cent of those shown are American films.

Perhaps one of the advantages chiefly enjoyed by the directors on whom this series focuses is that they are not constrained by the limitations imposed by industrial production, where the film ends up, most often, belonging to whoever does the wheeling and dealing and where there is considerably less space for new ideas. Cinema is understood as a business with fixed rules which cannot be bent because to do so would hinder its economic success. Every film has to follow an established model and generally has to have a happy ending.

These four directors, especially the first three, have worked under difficult social and political conditions and have tried to express themselves despite those limitations in a search for identity and dignity. What marks them out is art, as the expression of the essence of the human being in community, from the point of view of transcendence and in their aspiration towards freedom and creativity.

This is a valuable collection of short but immediate texts that will be of enormous help to anyone wishing to get to know and to understand something about Latin American cinema from a new perspective.

Carlos A. Valle

Las mentiras de una guerra: Desinformación y censura en el conflicto del Golfo. Barcelona: Deriva, 1991. 181 pp.

These essays contain a critique on media coverage of the Gulf War as it occurred in the Spanish and Catalan press, although some mention is given to CNN as the rising star in journalism's firmament. The tone of the essays is critical. The theme of the essayists seems to be that communications have themselves become a battlefield, and the dominant powers have won the day without a shot being fired.

Economics, not politics, have brought about this defeat. The inability of the media to be informative is nothing if not

a market phenomenon. Never, perhaps, has news coverage been so vacuous, so much noise signifying nothing. The consumerist slant of reportage emphasises contemporary events to the neglect of history, even though in this war, as in so many, historical matters were very germane to the whole affair. The influence of the consumer society also suggests itself in the resemblance of television coverage to contemporary toys and games, particularly video games. More sinister still are the financial connections of many of the media conglomerates to military industries.

Was this really a global war, as Giordano suggests in his essay on CNN coverage? The media coverage and the reasons for military action were filtered through the prism of Western interest. But while CNN did not necessarily provide better information than other news sources, it nevertheless became the dominant voice world-wide in reporting the Gulf War. It was not a global war, but it was a war with just one voice. As a result of their apparent monopoly of Baghdad coverage, CNN consolidated its position as a major player in the media arena. However, Giordano glosses over the point that many in the West, and not least the military and government, were hostile towards CNN for apparently purveying Iraqi propaganda.

As Aguilar and Zeller argue in their own piece, the liberal press theory so beloved of the West can actually be used to limit and control debate. The routine confinement of both debate and of power in normal conditions becomes a direct assertion of control by dominant power groups in times of crisis (or what constitutes a crisis in their terms). It is false to say that, unlike Iraq, leaders in the West had to heed public opinion; for in Spain, at least, the government acted in contrast to public opinion, as a government minister himself admitted. Western media were swift to marginalise movements and opinions that ran contrary to Western hegemony.

A critique of the coverage featured in *El País* highlights the rise of the expert in the formation of public opinion in this case military and arms experts. The use of experts to present issues in the media implies that such issues are too complex for ordinary people to understand. Such issues become in a sense preordained, allowing little room for debate. It is hard to argue with the expert, after all.

The book has to be read bearing in mind the context of the year in which it

was written (1990), the authors, and its origins. The writers are clearly at odds with a media industry that sees them as too radical. They are against manipulation and for freedom of expression, a theme taken up by the Social Communications Union of the Workers' Commissions in February 1991. The previous month, many concerned journalists had published an alternative daily newspaper carrying articles against the Gulf War and against media manipulation. The first edition of 30,000 copies was sold out and had to be reprinted. This may go some way towards explaining why most of the writers contributing to the second part of the book chose to use pseudonyms.

Inevitably this is a book about how the mass media ought to be able to foresee and help prevent conflicts. As Vicenç Fisas Armengol points out (p.103): 'The task of establishing a more just, less violent world, that is to say one with more peace, is something that has to be carried out daily, across many generations and in all corners of society. But the more media that collaborate in the task, the shorter the road.'

Ann Davies

Words Like Colored Glass: The Role of the Press in Taiwan's Democratization Process, by Daniel K. Berman. Boulder, San Francisco & Oxford: Westview Press, 1992. 237 pp.

A book with great ambitions, *Words Like Colored Glass* attempts to view the role of the press in Taiwan's democratization process in historical and in theoretical frames. As such, it reads like an 'informational montage', superimposing the historic on the contemporary, Mainland China on Taiwan, the West on the East, and, last but not the least, theory on reality. It is a tough and unenviable job that is not always carried out with success. Neither is it appreciated by the erudite or the uninformed readers. The book thus both illuminates and obscures. Chapter 2 (pp.16-34), discussion of the nature of science or behaviorism (pp.48-56), and summary of the relationship between communication research and the study of politics (Chapter 4, pp.59-93) seem to have done more to obscure than illuminate the theme of the book.

Nonetheless, the book's montage is

not totally unavoidable. Those who are interested in the role of press in Taiwan's democratization *per se* may consider skipping the first three chapters on modernization, institutionalization and media-politics research to move right into Chapters 6 and 7. On the other hand, although the book introduces more concepts than its volume can tackle in depth, those looking for a quick, though not comprehensive, guide through the labyrinth of modernization and communication theorization may consider reading the first three chapters. Likewise, those wanting a brief, though not necessarily gratifying, tour of American communication research (pp.65-74) or the author's alternatives (pp.74-92) may sample Chapter 4.

Laying down a theoretical foundation for the book's theme is of course justified; but the prudence of allocating 99 pages, nearly 45% of the book, to this task is questionable. It is too much because it obscures the theme. Although relevance of the Taiwan case to the various concepts is discussed, this is usually done briefly towards the end of each theoretical mentioning. It is also too little because discussion of so many theorems distracts the readers. Yes, indeed the press has an important role in modernization and in democratization and the study stands out amidst the overwhelming micro media research as a rare attempt to approach media at the system level. What all this warrants is no more than a concise presentation of the author's own systemic analytical scheme in the context of his own modernization theorization.

The historical roots and controls of the Chinese press in modern times are set in Chapter 5, 'The Chinese Press during the Late Ch'ing and the Republican Era', although it is largely based on Lee-hsia Hsu Ting's *Government Controls of the Press in Modern China 1900-1949* (1974), complemented by Lin Yutang's *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (1968) and Andrew Nathan's *Chinese Democracy* (1985). However, it should be noted that the contrast of press controls imposed by Kuomintang (KMT) on the mainland with those on Taiwan appears to have neglected to account the political, social and economic differences before and after 1949, the year when the KMT government retreated from the mainland to Taiwan. For smoother presentation, this chapter should have concentrated on pre-1949 press controls on the mainland. The historical comparisons can be

made in the conclusion chapter.

The beef of the book is in Chapters 6 and 7. The 'rationales' for control, the mechanisms of control, and the official agencies responsible for control are documented in Chapter 6, 'Politics and the Press on Taiwan, 1945-1990'. These are supplemented by brief descriptions of the prosecution of renown dissident Lei Chen and writer Po Yang plus the murder of unmanageable biographer Chiang Nan. Brief discussion of the role of the press in the context of Schramm's media and development and references to status conferral, international demonstration effect and institutionalization conclude the chapter.

While Chapter 6 deals with general press controls and the establishment dailies, Chapter 7 has its focus on the more radical political opinion magazines that strung the past four decades. However, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, the conclusion, make very little attempt at discussion of the theorems summarized in earlier chapters. The conclusion's reference to television and McLuhan is relevant, albeit limited. In terms of substance though, the chapters do offer an informed understanding of the evolution of press control and freedom in Taiwan.

Although the author has mentioned the opposition party's *Capital* newspaper (p.87; it should be *Capital Morning Post*) founded by Kang Ning-hsiang after press restrictions were lifted in 1988, there was no discussion of its role in spreading the positions of the Democratic Progress Party (DPP). This omission seems hard to understand as the closure of this 14-month-old (6/1989 to 8/1990) DPP mouthpiece, together with the declining influence of the *Central Daily News*, KMT's party organ, testifies strongly to the impact of market forces over political controls in suppressing the flow of radical views. On the other hand, it also demonstrates that liberalization in Taiwan has gone so far as to allow DPP's views to be objectively reported in the mainstream dailies, if not yet in KMT-controlled electronic media.

A number of factual errors or translation inconsistencies can be found. For examples, while referring to the Government Information Office as the 'Press Bureau' (p.173) may still be acceptable, though inconsistent, rendering the Executive Yuan as the 'Administrative Yuan' (p. 177) and the Control Yuan as the 'Examination Yuan' (p.192) are definitely incorrect. Note that the

Control Yuan is a government branch responsible for monitoring corruption and inefficiency, not 'the judicial branch of the government' (p.178) as understood by the author. On the other hand, the 'Examination Yuan' is another of the five branches of the government responsible for policies on and administration of the civil services. One also wonders whether writer Po Yang would like to see his book translated as 'The Ugly Chinaman' (p.163, Note 13) instead of 'The Ugly Chinese'.

Of lesser importance is that *wa-chiao cheng-ts'e* is not 'policy of digging for dollars' (p.158), nor 'digging for dimes' (p.168, Note 99). It simply means 'digging for talents'. Here the *chiao* refers to *chiao-se* (character or role) rather than 'dime' as the author comes to read it. In another instance, Chiang Hsiao-wu is the second, not the eldest, son of Chiang Ching-kuo (p.163, Note 17). All this could have been easily avoided by careful editing of the manuscript. Then, Peng Huan-en should be more appropriately referred to as a political scientist or current affairs commentator rather than 'communication scholar' (p.161), although he does chair a college journalism department.

The dearth of research on Taiwan's media makes the book, especially its latter one third, a welcome addition to the understanding of its economic, political and social development. The author, trained in political science, benefited from his access to opposition politicians and scholars as well as the many graduate theses in Taiwan. Media research in the West has suffered from provinciality. The more acclaimed area studies on media or journalism are, more often than not, written by scholars outside the communication discipline. Compared to history, political science, sociology or anthropology, communication is in compelling need of area experts who have empathic understanding of the countries they work on.

Although the book should be read mainly for its contribution in documenting the role of media in Taiwan's democratization process, the author has made some interesting theoretical observations. For example, he advocates a closer look at the international demonstration effect (IDE) of media, especially TV, as well as the influence of the press over television in given areas of political change. He is right that these are among the areas that have largely been overlooked.

Leonard L. Chu

A Passion for Radio by Bruce Girard. Montreal and New York: Black Rose Books, 1992.

This book is a project of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) which has its head office in Montreal, Quebec. The association had its origin almost a decade ago when an international conference on community radio was held in the same city. One of Canada's most famous citizens, Marshall McLuhan, left his country a legacy of absurd theory. He wrote that the technology of radio, because it floods a single sense (hearing) with high-quality information, keeps listeners at a distance and discourages participation. Quebec has a strong tradition of community radio because its political leaders have encouraged initiatives to maintain its cultural difference from Canada.

By comparison with film, television, literature and the arts, there is very little theoretical writing on radio. There are technological assumptions underlying a book such as *A Passion for Radio*. Yet in practice, grassroots activists are just as likely to be attracted to other low-cost technologies such as video, posters and printed material (comics, illustrated writing, photo-narratives). The stories of this book are frequently about a passion for fundamental social change. It does not seem to matter much that a book on radio comes without a sound cassette.

Most books about radio are about hegemonic institutions and broadcasting: textbooks which never challenge the dominant notions of news and entertainment. Fewer books on radio are about fundamental social change: 'radio' as a metaphor for the on-going struggles, day after day, to build movements for change. Fanon's brilliant essay on radio in the Algerian struggle for independence says this clearly: tuning into radio is a symbolic action for participation in something else. We are even willing to imagine what the radio sounds like.

Listening to radio is an experience in which we are being spoken to (as if the speaker and the musicians are in the same space) but in which at some level we also know there are others. The broadcast allows (or if it fails, doesn't allow) us as listeners to imagine a relationship to those other listeners. The term 'community radio' is overused and empty of passion - for something between the everyday and the unreal.

It is difficult to evaluate together the various chapters in *A Passion for Radio*, which range from broadcasting that builds communities, participates in struggles, attempts to foster 'development', and strengthens cultures. The book covers a great diversity of situations from First Nations in the Canadian North, to punks in Amsterdam, progressives in California, guerrillas in El Salvador, genuine revolutionaries in the ex-Communist countries, women and persons of colour in many parts of the world. It is an interesting book that turns rumours (we heard) of community radio in Argentina into a story of small, brave FM stations. The broadcast humour of feminists in Peru is an inspiration.

Beyond this diversity, the stories have some similarities. There are struggles with the technology and with the state's claim to control the airwaves. The financial crisis never ends. Commercial radio offers real competition. There is a vague but powerful idea that somehow the radio speaks for us.

Something like an actual movement for social change emerges in occasional, honest gaps in these stories. The chapter on Radio Soleil in Haiti tells in a postscript that in 1989 conservative Catholic bishops gained control of the station and most of the programming staff were fired. Most discussions of 'community' radio owned by a church or religious organization are not so honest. What limits and pressures existed even before the bishops took over? In California, a community radio station moves to a new building. What are the structural antagonisms (social class, race, gender) at the station which are apparently fighting for the new definition of KPFA? A moving human interest story about a Cree community and its radio station actually tells little about the internal and external politics of the Cree nation in Canada.

Stories about 'community' and its struggle for radio are no substitute for adequate political description and analysis. In our own movements we ask the difficult questions, with respect and sometimes with anger. Why are there so few socialist voices in 'community' radio? Why is the passion in this book apparently heterosexual? Is it because both of these 'voices' would demand serious thought about social movements? Neither is in any simple sense a community demanding its voice, but both are transgressive movements which demand serious analysis of all these words we are using.

The stories in this book are moving and inspiring. But the book weaves between an untheorized technological definition of its subject (radio) and a diversity of stories of resistance to state and capital (the police, commercial radio). The passion of radio is that it promises, is a metaphor for, social movements for fundamental social change. In our ordinary lives as activists we make judgements about social movements. We quit the party and join the show. We agree with what has been said, or decide that it is wrong. This is the open secret of 'community radio'. Radio as a metaphor for revolutionary movements everywhere should tell the secret.

Alan O'Connor

Getting the Message: News, Truth and Power, edited by John Eldridge. London/New York: Routledge, 1993. 350pp.

This most recent book from the distinguished Glasgow University Media Group is a must for mass media academics, researchers, media planners, journalists, and media analysts. The Group continues to examine the relationship of TV news production and content to society as a whole, the present anthology examining the media and public opinion, current news formats and styles, and the relation between theory and method in media research. Current events subjected to content analysis within the case study approach are the media's role in reporting on AIDS, Vietnam, Northern Ireland, the Ethiopian famine, and the Gulf War. Half of the ten contributors are from the Sociology Department of the University of Glasgow; the others are academics from Universities of Kent, Stirling and Wales. One researcher is an independent film producer.

Chapter 2 of the book, 'Media Research: Whose agenda?', provides an excellent analytical overview on the development of media studies since 1976, the date of the first publication of the Glasgow Media Group, *Bad News*. A discussion of John B. Thompson's thesis that mass communications are central to modern culture and thus belong at the core of sociology rather than relegated to 'a narrow group of media specialists' leads to Thompson's concept of the 'mediatisation' of modern culture. The chapter's discussion on the

relationships between media and power provide a context for the book's overall exploration of the connections between theory and method in contemporary media studies.

Of particular interest are the predictions that future topics on the research agenda are likely to be set by the imperatives of new technology, deregulation and the restructuring of audiences and that media education is moving into courses with a 'skills component' in co-operation with media organisations and practices.

The most important part of the book, as far as the reviewer is concerned, is a final essay by the book's editor, John Eldridge, that provides a sobering discussion of the ideological issues illustrated by the case studies, varied as they are. He argues that beliefs do exercise power over the actions of individuals, whether or not the belief itself is true or false. The implications of this thesis for Christian communicators are important: distinctions between illusion and reality continue to be as troubling today as they were when Malcolm Muggeridge gleefully irritated media professionals during the 1976 Lectures in Contemporary Christianity by declaring that mass media induce audiences to live in fantasy. Now, insisted Muggeridge, is 'the Unholy Grail', the ultimate fantasy on which the whole structure of media is founded.

Eldridge quotes Durkheim on the distinctions between illusion and reality and follows Robert Merton's writings and many other theorists to provide a rich examination of how to situate human experience and action within the analysis of social structures.

Given the meticulous news case studies on media strategies, tactics, content, formats and audience research of the earlier sections of the book, the question of truth and power is one that compels our attention. If people act on what they perceive to be real (and if the media contribute to audience misperceptions) then to understand the circumstances which produce 'fantasy' (to use Muggeridge's word) can help to improve knowledge and dispel ignorance. This surely is a task worthy of the commitment of Christian media scholars and practitioners.

Eldridge's essay alone is worth the price of this book which rightly commends the case study approach as 'a bridge that could facilitate our understanding of the communication process.'

Myrna Grant

Media Development

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/ One of the most critical areas of communication needing women's empowerment is in self-knowledge, the need for women to know and understand the day-to-day national and global economic policies and the impact on their lives. Self-knowledge is the challenge for the 21st century. /

Brigalia Bam

/ It is not simply what the media say, or how they say it, that creates stereotypical perceptions of women. Equally important is what they do not say. /

Noeleen Heyzer

/ It is essential to promote forms of communication that not only challenge the patriarchal nature of media but strive to decentralise and democratise them. /

The Bangkok Declaration

/ Global sisterhood also has its dangers because it is only the literate, the well connected and endowed who can make it to events like this. People like me become self-appointed spokespersons for others . . . We middle-class, literate feminists need to be constantly vigilant to ensure that we do not impose our communication on other women. /

Kamla Bhasin