ELLEN SEITER

QUALITATIVE AUDIENCE RESEARCH

LOOKING AT MEDIA in the context of everyday life presents many research problems. How can we study the way viewers interpret television programmes in routinely occurring settings, such as the home or the school? What is the best way to get people to talk about the meanings they derive from television programmes when they may be unaccustomed to interpreting TV material explicitly? How can we study what goes on when people consume media, when so much media consumption takes place in private, and in the domestic sphere, in the context of intimate relationships? How can we study conversation about the media, short of trailing a person throughout the day? How does the researcher herself influence, inhibit, and change the ways people will talk about the media? The media overlap with many dimensions of social life, such as gender roles in the family, political beliefs, social networks of kin and friendship, routines of the clock at home, work, and school, allocation of household resources, and the organization of the workplace. How do we draw the line in our data collection between audience research and the study of society, the family, the community? Should we draw such a line? These are some of the problems facing researchers interested in using qualitative methods to study media audiences.

In this [chapter] I wish to argue for the usefulness of ethnographic methods in studying television viewing and computer use. The dozen studies that I will review in this chapter share a use of semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Most commonly used is a procedure of interviews, often with groups of subjects, where the interviewer follows an outline of interview topics and questions, but allows informants to raise topics not included on the list. Still, considerable variation exists from study to study in terms of contact time, the role of the interviewer, the adherence to questions written out in advance, the settings for the interviews, the use of group interviews, and the means of contacting subjects.

I begin, then, with a consideration of ethnographic method, the anthropological tradition in which its research procedures were developed, and the difficulties in translating this model to the study of media in contemporary social life. I compare the tradition of US mass communication research based on a media effects or uses and gratifications paradigm with audience studies influenced by a cultural studies paradigm. Next, I discuss examples of two kinds of study: one is based on Stuart Hall's encoding–decoding model and focuses on viewer interpretations of specific television programmes; the other is based more broadly on the domestic contexts of media consumption and the way these are structured by family relationships. The next section takes up the influence of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and aesthetic dispositions on the field of television studies and on my own research. Finally, I discuss the importance of theories of language to audience research, and the importance of self-reflexivity about the researcher's role in shaping the interview process and the 'othering' of research subjects.

Ethnographic method

Ethnographic method is a distinctive research process developed within anthropology and soci-
ology involving extended periods of participant observation and emphasizing descriptive writing
of both field notes and the final ethnography. Ethnography's goal is to produce a holistic descrip-
tion of a culture. As anthropologists George Marcus and Michael Fischer describe it. 'Ethnography
is a research process in which the anthropologist closely observes, records, and engages in the
daily life of another culture – an experience labeled as the fieldwork method – and then writes
accounts of this culture, emphasizing descriptive detail' (1986: 18). Very few media audience
studies, even those using ethnographic or qualitative methods, have measured up to the normative
standards of ethnography proper. Most of the time, 'ethnographic' has been used very loosely to
indicate any research that uses qualitative interviewing techniques. Many of the most influential
audience research projects, such as David Morley's study of lower-middle-class London families
(1986), Janice Radway's work on middle-aged readers of paperback romances (1984), Ien Ang's
analysis of letters from Dallas fans (1985), Ann Gray's study of video cassette recorder use (1987,
1992), and Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes's cross-cultural study of focus groups discussing Dallas
(Liebes 1990), were not designated ethnography by the original authors, but were labelled
ethnographic in secondary accounts. While ethnographies are based on long-term and in-depth
fieldwork, most audience research has been based on brief periods of contact, in some cases less
than one hour, with the informants. Also, while ethnographic methods have traditionally been used
to study culture as a whole, media researchers study only one aspect of a culture – such as tele-
vision – when using this method, and attempt to relate it to social identity (Seiter et al. 1989: 227).

Some media research does meet the requirements of ethnography, including Marie Gillespie's
study of Punjabi youth in Southall, England (1995), Camille Bacon-Smith's account of US Star Trek
fans (1992), and Angela McRobbie's study of teenage girls at a Birmingham youth club (1991).
The difference between these studies and other audience research is that they involved extended
contact time over a period of years, and a combination of methods, including quantitative ones. As
Gillespie puts it, ethnographic fieldwork 'is characterised by a multiplicity of data-gathering
strategies, in a variety of contexts, drawing upon the experiences of a wide range of people over a
long period of time' (1995: 60). [   ]

Mass communications vs. cultural studies

Central to the renewed interest in qualitative research on media audiences have been questions of
how specific audiences make meanings in their engagement with media in the context of everyday
life, an emphasis on audience activity rather than passivity, and an interest in why the media are
pleasurable. This move stems in part from the increased agency attributed to the media consumer
in uses and gratifications research, a paradigm that succeeded in altering the way media effects
were discussed before the 1960s in US mass communications research. As communications
scholar Carl Bybee characterized the effects tradition: 'The history of mass communication effects
research in the United States is the history of a relentless, empirical search, first for direct,
powerful short-term attitudinal effects, and later for the intervening variables which could be
regarded as either facilitative or obstructive of those effects' (1987: 195). The uses and gratifica-
tions research represented a shift to a more optimistic and less harmful characterization of the
relationship between media and audiences, emphasizing active engagement and the ways the
media could be employed by individuals to satisfy needs and accomplish personal goals. According
to Bybee, uses and gratifications research does not represent a dramatic break from the traditional
effects perspective, as it kept intact 'its conservative bias regarding the process by which political

power is distributed in society' (1987: 194). The shift from the effects model to uses and gratifications is only an evolution at both the systems and individual levels, as the focus of attention changed from the communicator to the audience. What was left behind was essentially an untenable stimulus-response conception of the media effects process. What was carried along was essentially a limited conception of the media effects process, a lack of explicit social theoretical referents for the interpretation of individual level results, and a consumerist frame of reference (1987: 196).

The other influence on audience research has been British cultural studies. The twin influences of the uses and gratifications model and British cultural studies are not easily distinguished in a single piece of research, and often scholars such as David Morley recognize both paradigms as influential on their work. Cultural studies brought to audience research the emphasis on processes of decoding cultural texts, and theories derived from semiotics (Eco 1976) and reader-response literature (Iser 1978). The British cultural studies tradition grew out of ethnographic research carried out at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s at the University of Birmingham, and captured a more nuanced sense of the complexity of television as a text, as well as a conception of audience activity that was informed by Marxist theories of ideology – which brought explicit questions about social power to the research, distinguishing it markedly from the uses and gratifications perspective. The uses and gratifications model is based on a pluralist conception of society – in which there is something for everyone in the media forms on offer – and a functionalist sociological model – focusing on the explanation of social stability. Uses and gratifications research thus lacks a concern with the power relationships that determine both audiences and forms of media production, while the cultural studies model has tried explicitly to address the question of social power on a number of fronts.

The borrowing of ethnographic research methods from anthropology was motivated by a critique of experimental and survey audience research in the mass communications tradition. The critique associated with 'critical communications scholars' addressed research procedures, theoretical underpinnings (especially behaviourism), and institutional influences (such as the preference for quantitative findings) Such research failed to address important questions of reception and audience activity The charges were that mass communications audience researchers were wedded to methodologies that restricted them to questions answerable through quantitative methods. In particular, there had been too much emphasis on observable behaviours, rather than structures of meaning. This emphasis on quantifiable phenomena locked mass communications researchers into a cycle of number-crunching. Funding agencies increasingly demanded statistical results. Such administrative research thus followed the norms of market research, where sponsors require clear-cut findings.

Mass communications researchers avoided studying the media in context, preferring instead sanitized, controllable situations (laboratory, telephone interviews), producing data that was irrelevant to everyday life. Often researchers remained ignorant of the media forms they studied and handled media content awkwardly, if at all. Finally, mass communications research lacked a theoretical perspective on language as discourse. This led to a preference for reducing answers to easily codified categories or taking subjects' answers at face value. Similarly, content was reduced to verbal summaries of observable events on screen.

The research that I will describe in this chapter represented a departure from these norms, and bears the influence of ethnographic method. First of all, the new audience studies differ methodologically from quantitative research in that their projects tend to proceed without a clear-cut hypothesis, and investigate multiple research questions interpretively. My research deviates, then, from the scientific model widely adapted by US social scientists (even those working in the uses and gratifications tradition) – with the exception of anthropologists – in the twentieth century. Sample sizes tend to be much smaller than those required for survey research, nearly always

involving fewer than one hundred research subjects, in some cases fewer than thirty. Thus, statistical generalizability is sacrificed; the model for such research is the case study, rather than the survey.

In many of the television audience studies I will describe here, quantification is avoided, or relegated to an appendix. Instead, extensive quotation of informants is presented. There is as much interest in the thoughts and feelings of audience members as in their behaviour. Typically, the research requires the establishment of rapport between the researcher and the subject. This may range from conducting interviews in a friendly, open manner to establishing personal friendships with informants.

Traditional social scientists have faulted this work for lack of generalizability, bias, political axe-grinding, failure to employ multiple methods, and a casual and sloppy approach to data collection. Some of this new research was carried out by scholars trained in the humanities, often by European rather than US academics, or by those trained in disciplines influenced by recent European theory (such as semiotics and psychoanalysis), especially literary criticism, textual analysis, and film theory. The CCCS, under Stuart Hall's guidance, was a crucial influence on the development of this work. Like much of the research conducted at the centre, these researchers' work was rooted in Marxist and feminist theory, and questions of class and gender have therefore been central. By contrast, audience researchers in the mass communications tradition have been trained in social science disciplines, especially social psychology, or in journalism (Delia 1987). In the mass communications tradition, especially in the USA, there has been less emphasis on theoretical developments. James Curran, in criticizing the 'new revisionism' in qualitative audience research, has expressed understandable irritation with the failure of some researchers to recognize when they are revisiting questions that have been debated since the 1950s, without reference to any work done before 1970 (Curran 1996: 264–7). Thus the conflict between so-called 'ethnographic' audience researchers and mass communications researchers involves a generation gap, a disciplinary split, and a continental divide.

Encoding/decoding

A good way to see the differences between a US mass communications perspective on audiences, and a European media studies approach, is in Hall's influential encoding–decoding model and its application in David Morley and Charlotte Brunsdon's work on the news magazine programme *Nationwide*. The centrality of ideology, the variability of interpretation of television, and the complex variables in viewers' interpretations form the core of the theory.

David Morley's first study followed a detailed analysis with Charlotte Brunsdon of *Nationwide*, which was published as *Everyday Television: 'Nationwide'* (Brunsdon and Morley 1978). In the second project, published as *The 'Nationwide' Audience* (Morley 1980), Morley

> explored how that programme material was interpreted by individuals from different social backgrounds, with a view to establishing the role of cultural frameworks in determining individual interpretations of the programmes in question . . . [and] some of the relations between socio-demographic factors (such as age, sex, race, class) and differential interpretation of the same programme material.
>
> (1992: 75)

The *Nationwide* study was an attempt to elucidate the encoding–decoding model, adapted from Frank Parkins's work. Discussions of the project frequently neglect the close textual analysis that preceded the audience study. It is crucial, however, to the project's conception, that the

research was designed first to elaborate the encoding of the programme before exploring the variety of decodings.

The encoding–decoding model was an attempt to get away from a linear sender–message–receiver model of mass communication. It posits three distinctive types of interpretations or decodings The *dominant reading* is performed by viewers who accept the programme and its genre completely. These viewers would agree with the dominant ideology (the preferred reading) of the programme without formulating any objections in their minds. Such a viewer uses ideology to explain her own life and behaviour, and her social experiences. In a *negotiated reading*, the viewer inflects his interpretation on the basis of a particular social experience. The viewer may enjoy a 'pick and choose' relationship to the genre, ignoring more disagreeable sections and concentrating on those more to taste. Another way to think of this is in terms of 'shifting' the text slightly to fit individual interests. Here, the media consumer is mainly in line with dominant ideology, but needs to adjust certain aspects to fit her local situation She might ignore some parts of the show, while focusing on others, providing explanations of events portrayed that suit her own worldview, not all of which may be as strongly 'there' as others. The most radical viewing position is that of an *oppositional reading* – in which the viewer goes against the preferred reading. This type of reading is characterized by annoyance rather than pleasure – as when the reader, recognizing the political motivation of a news programme, says, 'There they go, up to their old tricks again!' (Fiske 1992: 292–8).

The encoding–decoding model insists on the struggle involved in gaining people's agreement with ideology; both because television is complex in how it tells stories, and because how people read television will necessarily be based on their own experiences – what kind of jobs they have, where they live, their educational backgrounds, memberships in unions or political parties, as well as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and class.

For the audience project, Morley gathered focus groups of adult education students who viewed a tape of the programme and then participated in a discussion. While some of the decodings were predictable, given the class position of his subjects, Morley concluded that a more complex model was necessary to determine the ways that social position might predispose TV viewers to make certain types of ideological reading. Contradictory in nature are the responses which individuals may make to different types of programme; audience members may read one programme subversively, another according to a dominant reading; or they may read the same material differently depending on the context. A single individual would not read all of the media the same way; some shows might be laughed off, while others are despised; still other shows might be found to be very absorbing Interpretations or decodings will also vary. [. . .]

Decoding fiction

Another study influenced by the encoding–decoding model was Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis's audience research on *The Cosby Show*. The study was funded in part by Bill and Camille Cosby and was widely publicized in the USA. The design called for focused interviews in which a single episode of the show would be shown and discussed by people who were already familiar with the show. The sample consisted of fifty-three small friendship or family groups, roughly divided between white and African-American residents, and between middle-class and working-class groups. All were residents of a small New England city.

The study, published in 1992 as the book *Enlightened Racism*, incudes a content analysis of the episode, of *The Cosby Show* as a series, and of the history of representations of black and of working-class characters on US television. The ambitions of the study go far beyond the encoding–decoding model – which makes the study a useful polemic, but also limits its interest in terms of audience study. The preface sets out the scope of the book:

This book deals with issues of immense political importance. It addresses two critical aspects of our contemporary culture: how our most ubiquitous cultural form, television, influences the way we think; and how American society thinks about race in the post-Civil Rights era. We chose to study audience reactions to *The Cosby Show* because of its position in relation to these two issues.

(Jhally and Lewis 1992: xv)

In guiding the discussions, trained interviewers showed the programme and then solicited feelings about the characters and descriptions of the plot's episode, in which conflict ensues after Claire discovers her son Theo reading a 'girlie' magazine. Interviewers investigated viewers' decodings only superficially, as in determining whether most respondents liked and admired the characters, and whether they found the situations true to life. Instead, questions about the television programme served as a pretext for getting at larger social attitudes. Even when responses did not suggest attitudes towards class and race, these were pursued by the interviewer:

These innocuous questions often succeeded in opening up the discussion by giving respondents the opportunity to remark on attitudes toward class, race, or gender, attitudes the interviewer could then explore. If respondents were less forthcoming, the interviewer could ask them to comment on these topics — for example, 'How would you feel if the Huxtable family were white?' and 'Would the show be as good if the Huxtables were a blue-collar family?' Because the initial responses to these questions were sometimes ambiguous, guarded, or even misleading, the answers were carefully explored in the ensuing discussion.

(Jhally and Lewis 1992: 11)

Jhally and Lewis claim that their initial findings suggested optimism about the ability of whites to accept black characters — even to love and admire them on television.

The interviewees might have suspected the interviewers of false pretences, as questions about *The Cosby Show* turned increasingly to discussions of race relations in the USA. As the interviewers probed attitudes towards race, they received rather depressing answers: the majority of white respondents enjoyed *The Cosby Show* because the characters were neither too black nor too working class, and — even worse — that the show served as a sort of argument against affirmative action. Thus, *Cosby* is implicated in the defence of Reaganomics, the dismantling of affirmative action, and the widening class divide. In the end, they conclude that *Cosby* has an insidious effect on white Americans:

For many white respondents in our study, the Huxtables' achievement of the American dream leads them to a world where race no longer matters. This attitude enables white viewers to combine an impeccably liberal attitude toward race with a deep-rooted suspicion of black people.

They are, on the one hand, able to welcome a black family into their homes; they can feel an empathy with them and identify with their problems and experiences. They will, at the same time, distinguish between the Huxtables and most other black people, and their welcome is clearly only extended as far as the Huxtables.

(1992: 110)

For black viewers, *Cosby* is pernicious, not because it encourages racist attitudes, as it does with the white viewers, but because it forces African Americans to accept the television industry's

position that normalcy means upper-middle-class status, and that a positive portrayal of Blacks necessitates their belonging to a socio-economic stratum that the majority of black viewers cannot hope to attain.

Jhally and Lewis's study, then, successfully publicized an argument about the class background of television characters that has been made most notably by George Lipsitz (1990) – that US television has abandoned dramas about working-class characters and, instead, populates its programmes with upper-middle class professionals, presenting a demographic picture drastically skewed from that of the real population of the USA. *Enlightened Racism* also introduces an important and too often overlooked discussion of the intersection of class and race identities. But the study's empirical findings are troubling on a number of points. Gender is almost completely erased from its major findings. This seems highly problematic in a study dealing with a genre – the domestic comedy – that turns so centrally around gender conflicts, and an episode theme – magazine pornography – that seems to insist on such a reading. While differences between men and women are rarely highlighted in the interviews, stark oppositions between whites and blacks emerge in terms of attitudes. For the white respondents, the interview situation itself seemed a sort of set-up, to say good things about *Cosby* – perhaps even in the spirit of seeming enlightened, liberal – led one down the road to apologism for an entire decade's political failings – including the retrenchment of the welfare state (H. Gray 1993). This may be a cause of one of the problems that was encountered in conducting the *Cosby* interviews. Lewis notes that analysis of the interviews was difficult because of the 'cautious and evasive' responses on the topic of race. The *Cosby* study calls attention to the ways that informants may be cognizant of the interviewers' wish to categorize them in ideological terms, and may wish to resist these efforts. There is also the question of whether domestic viewing of entertainment programmes can be reducible to ideological position. In another book discussing this research, *The Ideological Octopus* (1991), Justin Lewis described the viewers they interviewed to be lacking in critical discourses about television, but this may speak more to the flaws in the adequacy of the decoding model, and to the superficiality of what respondents feel permitted to say in a focus group, as it does to the degree of racism in the United States.

In some ways, the *Cosby* study tells us little about television itself, since the researchers were eager to move beyond the subtleties of audience interpretation to get to the more important, overarching theme of racism. The danger in such a design is that television is used as a mere pretext for conversation and insufficient attention is given to the complexities of television form. Thus the television programme may be reduced to a series of 'messages' (as in the traditional effects paradigms) and themes – aspects of programming that are clearly only a small part of the experience of television viewing and could easily be ignored or rejected by viewers.

On the other hand, as a study of racism, *Enlightened Racism* offers no information about the connection between words and actions, about the different background of the respondents' lives in terms of their interactions with people of different races. Instead, a highly reified picture of whites emerges that bears little feel for the necessarily lived contradictions of race and class relations in the contemporary USA. Indeed, the picture that emerges is one of a dominant ideological discourse holding total sway over television viewers – something quite other than the adoption of Gramsci's theory of hegemony originally proposed by Hall in the encoding–decoding model.

[. . .]

The encoding–decoding model seems to work better for news and nonfiction programmes than it does for entertainment programmes, where it is much more difficult to identify a single message, or even a set of propositions with which audience members could agree or disagree. Drawing conclusions from his *Nationwide* study – and these would apply to fiction programming as well – Morley has astutely recommended 'dropping the assumption that we are principally dealing with the overtly political dimension of communications' and, instead, 'dealing more with the

relevance/irrelevance and comprehension/incomprehension dimensions of decoding rather than being directly concerned with the acceptance or rejection of substantive ideological themes or propositions' (Morley 1992: 127). To some extent this agenda is implicit in the move towards studying the contexts of television reception, especially in domestic space. In the following section I turn to three influential studies of media consumption that are based on the study of the domestic sphere rather than specific texts.

Feminist studies of domestic contexts

As feminist scholars have frequently argued, nuclear families are places where gender roles are produced, played out, and challenged. Three of the foundational works in audience studies that take up this argument are Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1984), David Morley's *Family Television* (1986), and Ann Gray's *Video Playtime* (1992). These projects established the significance for media studies of the feminist tenet that the home is perceived as a place of leisure for men and a place of work for women, and media consumption is inextricably linked to gender roles.

In *Reading the Romance*, Radway relied on a key informant, who worked at a bookstore, recommended paperback books to many customers, and published a newsletter discussing the best romances on the market. This key informant put Radway in touch with other women, to whom she gave a survey questionnaire (thus, employing some quantitative analysis in the book) and invited to focus-group interviews.

In some ways, Radway's study borrowed from the 'uses and gratifications' tradition of media research by asking what place these books have in the lives of her informants. Unlike uses and gratifications research, however, the question of textual interpretation – both Radway's own and that of her informants – is at the centre of the study. Radway's book captures many contradictions inherent in the act of women's reading, by sorting out the differing tendencies in the readers' motivations, in the ideology of the texts themselves, and in the use of reading as a strategy to secure leisure time. The prestige of reading as an activity was used by these women to justify the leisure time required to read books and their own release from housekeeping and childcare chores. Radway mounts a subtle argument that women use these deeply conservative books, in which heterosexual romance provides the ultimate meaning to women's lives, to liberate themselves from the conditions of patriarchal marriage. Radway also frames her study of romance novels with an analysis of the publishing industry, and the place of the genre and its women readers in the economics of bookstores and marketing. In this respect, the study exemplifies a strategy that has been only rarely followed (see Shattuc 1997) of combining political economic research with audience research.

In *Family Television*, Morley found that the behaviours of television usage were inextricably linked to family hierarchies and gender roles. Morley had set out to 'produce a more developed conceptual model of viewing behavior in the context of family leisure' (1986: 17). He interviewed eighteen white families in South London: each family consisted of two parents, two or more children, and had a television and VCR in the home. (Informants were located by a market research firm.) Morley argued that television audiences need to be studied in the natural settings in which most media are consumed, and so he elected to study television at home, among family members.

Morley found distinctively different viewing styles reported by men and women, and a great deal of conflict between them concerning the TV. Husbands charged that their wives and daughters talk too much while the TV is on; wives complained that their husbands talk too little. The men Morley interviewed tended to adopt a style of intense, cinema-style viewing; the women were more distracted, tending to do chores at the same time as watching TV – unless they were

alone in the house. Morley organized the gender-related themes in the interview material into the following categories: power and control over programme choice; viewing style; planned and unplanned viewing; amounts of viewing; television-related talk; use of video; solo viewing and guilty pleasures; programme type preference (Morley 1986: 146).

Morley found that men watched more television, planned their viewing more, and tended to control what others in the household watched. Women viewed less, often deferred to other family members in the selection of programmes, and enjoyed watching soap operas and melodramas, especially when they were alone. Morley found that his subjects seemed already to like those 'gender genres' designed for them. Women voiced a taste for soaps and movies; men preferred crime shows and sports. Morley's interviews were conducted *en famille*. Using Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, he suggests that men were under-reporting their fictional viewing and over-reporting their viewing of news and documentary, based in part on their perception of the differential evaluations of these kinds of television in the system of social distinctions. Women seemed to feel freer to admit that they watched and liked TV.

In *Video Playtime*, Ann Gray reports on interviews with thirty women from predominantly working-class backgrounds who were contacted through a video rental library. Gray focused on a series of interrelated topics: the incorporation of the VCR into the domestic sphere, the gendered division of labour and leisure in terms of use of and attitudes towards the VCR, and preferences for particular genres of video. All the women in Gray's sample had children at home and had husbands who were the household's primary wage-earner.

Gray found that many women reported that the home was a difficult place for them to relax. The women she interviewed rarely took breaks from domestic chores, which lessened their enjoyment of the VCR. Gray explains that the husbands' greater involvement with the VCR was the result of 'a combination of masculine address of VCR advertising, the relative freedom of male leisure time in the home, and male economic power' (1992: 243) For husbands and children, then, the greater freedom from domestic chores made them more likely to watch videos, rent them, plan ahead for recording and time-shifting, and become adept at operating the machine.

Some of the women expressed resentment towards television and video as a deterrent to engaging in more appealing forms of leisure activities, such as going out, and as a barrier to family communication and intimacy. In an interesting research design borrowed from Cynthia Cockburn, Gray asked her subjects to identify various parts of the VCR controls as 'pink' or 'blue', based on whether they would be more likely to be used by male or female members of the family. The timer switch was always blue, with women depending on their husbands and children to operate it, and the remote control device tended to fall into the hands of the male partner or male child. Only the play, rewind, and record functions were 'lilac', being used equally by male and female family members. Gray insisted that the issue of competence in operating a VCR is inextricably linked to domestic labour.

Gray found more differences among women in her sample in the area of preferences for videos to rent and television material. She divided her sample into two groups: 'Early School Leavers' and 'Later School Leavers and Graduates'. She found starker gender differences in the second group, who tended to evaluate negatively a taste for romance, melodrama, and trash TV. Following Morley, Gray found that her subjects correlated feminine tastes with adjectives such as 'soft, soppy, fantasy, silly, fictional'. They correlated masculine tastes with such words as 'hard, tough, real, serious, and factual'. The more highly educated women in her group tended to share preferences with their partners: 'These women claimed to have similar preferences in programmes and films to their partners and the majority of them were keen to distance themselves from soap opera, particularly American products . . . and to align themselves with "quality" products' (1992: 160). Gray suggests that Bourdieu's work – which I review in the next section – can be used to explain the tendency for these educated women to have achieved 'an aesthetic

disposition', which included a distanced objectivity with regard to television products, and, in particular, a distaste for soap operas, and a concern for their ill effects.

Ien Ang and Joke Hermes have criticized these studies for offering essentialist renderings of gender. They have argued that 'an individual's gendered subjectivity is constantly in the process of reproduction and transformation. Gender does not simply predetermine media consumption and use' (Ang 1996: 116). The portraits of domestic life constructed by Morley, Radway, and Gray seem very much at odds with the kind of formulation Ang postulates when she writes: 'Gender identity, in short, is both multiple and partial, ambiguous and incoherent, permanently in process of being articulated, disarticulated and rearticulated' (1996: 125). From this perspective, the families in *Family Television* represent a feminist nightmare: father holds the remote control and imposes his programmes on everyone else; mother desperately, guiltily, sneaks time to watch a weepie. There is a conflict, then, within media studies between theoretical frameworks, modes of doing research, and methods. Radway, Morley, and Gray's works construct their notions of subjectivity through empirical studies of media use by adults with children living in nuclear families – a group that is perhaps more fully engaged in the social reproduction of gender on a daily basis than are single adults. Their research is based on reports of behaviours, interviews, and discussions of everyday practices (a kind of data that is likely to reflect many commonsense notions of gender difference) – a subject defined through a materialist approach to audience research. Ang and Hermes construct media subjectivity through postmodern *theories* of ethnography, through theoretical discussions informed by Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Judith Butler, and others based at times in textual analysis, but rarely in empirical field research – and argue that gender is constructed as contradictory and shifting.

The problem of gender essentialism in these studies is as much methodological as it is theoretical: more intensive ethnographic methods might have uncovered more contradictory and shifting positions among Morley, Gray, and Radway's informants; Radway and Morley have advocated such methodologies in subsequent work. To some extent, the question of whether the discussion of gender in these studies was mechanical and essentialist is an empirical one. More research needs to be carried out in the field to note the degree to which traditional gendered roles in the family are flexible, shifting, and multiple. [   ]

Bourdieu on television

Pierre Bourdieu's work, with its emphasis on the differential distribution of cultural tastes and on the embeddedness of tastes in the habitus, the material – and domestic – structures of everyday life, has exerted a major influence on television studies since the publication of *Distinction* in English in 1984. Bourdieu's empirical research and his theories of the role of aesthetic distinctions in the construction of social hierarchies have resonated with questions about television audiences, the importance of the domestic sphere as a site for the inculcation of tastes and a place of aesthetic consumption, and the accentuated awareness of the variability of interpretations of aesthetic texts. *Distinction* has helped scholars conceptualize television in relation to other cultural forms, and to force them to think about the relationship between tastes for particular kinds of television genre and class position. Bourdieu's best-known argument is that 'art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences' (1984: 7).

In *Distinction* and other work, Bourdieu has had little of a theoretical nature to say about television (more recently he has published a diatribe about the impoverished nature of television programming as compared to academic discourse, and its detrimental impact on democracy: see Eakin 1997). Yet Bourdieu has proved useful to television scholars because he pays particular

attention to forms of culture stigmatized by intellectuals and the bourgeoisie: forms considered vulgar rather than refined, emotional rather than mental/intellectual, expressive rather than aesthetically distanced. Of course, such concerns match rather well with most popular television genres, especially sensationalistic forms: talk shows, soap operas, sports, wrestling, ground ideas about the ambiguous social status of television as a cultural form that is at once widely accessible and widely deprecated.

Bourdieu focused attention on the role of education and the influence of 'cultural capital' on taste, the selection and valorization of certain cultural forms. In his introduction, he formulates this in the widely quoted statement 'Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' (1984- 7). These distinctions are used to legitimate the privileges of those with more education and more money, who envision themselves as superior to those whose tastes differ from their own. Bourdieu emphasizes that these distinctions are just as present in the selection of novels to read or pictures to hang on the wall of one's home as they are in choices of food or hairstyle. His account focuses on the relationship among types of goods, and argues that the meaning of any given commodity (such as a television programme) derives from its similarities to and differences from other commodities in society (live performances of opera or ballet; football games). Increasingly, society requires consumers to understand and manipulate complex meanings and connotations attached to consumer goods and commodified cultural forms, so that they may choose to make the right impressions – and so that they may avoid mistakes. This can involve complex negotiations in the linking of cultural forms to social status. Emulation involves a double movement: imitation of those richer, and differentiation from those poorer or less 'refined'.

To a large extent, the attention to strategies of decoding texts in audience studies has been an excavation of forms of cultural capital unrecognized by prior forms of communications research – thus contributing to the sense of television as a complex and even fascinating media form with its own codex. In one of the earliest examples, Charlotte Brunsdon pointed out that:

> Just as a Godard film requires the possession of certain forms of cultural capital on the part of its audience for it to 'make sense' – an extra textual familiarity with certain artistic linguistic, political and cinematic discourses – so too does . . . soap opera . . . the narrative strategies and concerns . . . call on the traditionally feminine competencies associated with the responsibility for 'managing' the sphere of personal life.
>
> (Brunsdon 1983: 80)

This kind of argument led to observations by Robert Allen, Dorothy Hobson, Tania Modleski, Andrea Press, and Seiter et al. that members of the audience who despised soap opera, often were simply lacking in the cultural capital required to read the text adequately – and that the low status of soap opera audiences could best be explained as a result of a social structure which routinely placed working-class and feminine forms at the bottom.

The concept of cultural capital has been widely appropriated throughout television studies. Bourdieu has described his project 'to grasp capital . . . in all of its different forms, and to uncover the laws that regulate their conversion from one into another' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 118). Four different forms of capital were identified by Bourdieu: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital includes financial resources of various kinds, and encompasses the bases for most traditional definitions of class, such as by income level. Cultural capital adds to this an embodied state of tastes, preferences, and knowledge, ranging from educational credentials, to preferences in music, to embodiments of femininity. Social capital consists of networks, connections, group memberships, familial relationships: 'Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of

more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). Finally, symbolic capital is the form achieved when the economic, cultural, and social capital are recognized as legitimate and institutionalized.

Individuals could accumulate large stores of cultural capital in relation to television – for example, knowledge of twenty-five years of a soap opera's history, the names of actors, gossip about the stars, or by watching the evening news every night for decades. This cultural capital could be used in the currency of friendship or polite conversation with neighbours or family members, but unless it can be converted to symbolic capital (to get a job as a TV studies professor, or to land a job at a television network), it has not been translated or exchanged for symbolic capital.

It would be fair to summarize the influence of Bourdieu on television studies by saying that there has been considerable attention to cultural capital, and some attention to social capital in ethnographic audience studies tracing TV as a part of social relationships, but very little attention to, or indeed cognizance of, symbolic capital in relation to these. As Beverley Skeggs explains:

> Symbolic capital is powerful capital: it brings power with it. If one's cultural capital is delegitimated then it cannot be traded as an asset; it cannot be capitalized upon (although it may retain significance and meaning to the individual) and its power is limited . . . Most representations of working-class people contribute to devaluing and delegitimating their already meagre capitals, putting further blocks on tradability, denying any conversion into symbolic capital.
>
> (1997: 11)

The celebration of forms of cultural capital involved in the appreciation of television programmes, a tendency perhaps best exemplified by the work of John Fiske and Henry Jenkins is a position that Bourdieu himself explicitly opposed. Bourdieu is adamant about the necessity of a means of translating cultural capital into social capital for any material rewards to accrue to an individual. Clearly, only a small group of professionals (academics and media producers, usually backed by forms of middle-class education and credentials) can 'convert' the cultural capital of knowledge about television into social capital. Even when researchers identify themselves as fans (Hobson, Jenkins, Bacon-Smith), there is a considerable difference in cultural capital between interviewers and informants. Brunsdon has pointed out that such work has avoided confronting questions about the quality of the media itself:

> Only the inheritors of legitimate culture, researching other people's pleasures, pleasures they may well share, can afford to keep quiet about the good and bad of television. They – we – through years of training have access to a very wide range of cultural production. Watching television and reading books about postmodernism is different from watching television and reading tabloid newspapers, even if everybody concerned watched the same television.
>
> (Brunsdon 1990: 69)

Brunsdon argues that too often, by validating the pleasures of television viewing, scholars fail to make any demands for different, even better forms the audience might want.

Here, Brunsdon is in keeping with the spirit of Bourdieu's work, which finds any celebration of the popular bankrupt and warns that: 'To act as if one had only to reject in discourse the dichotomy of high culture and popular culture that exists in reality to make it vanish is to believe in magic . . . What must be changed are the conditions that make this hierarchy exist, both in reality and in minds' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 84). Like Brunsdon, Bourdieu has insisted that the intellectual's peculiar place in the system of social distinctions – a set of predispositions that make

him a poor (or, rather, an inevitably interested) party in discourses about television. Thus, Bourdieu has perhaps inspired one of the recurring critiques of some audience research of the 1970s and 1980s. For example, Jostein Gripsrud comments that, too often, audience researchers have adopted a 'pro-television' position and failed to recognize their position as 'double access' audiences: 'Intellectuals now have access to both high and low culture, they are "double access" audiences; the majority of "ordinary people" have only access to "low" or popular culture. Our double access is a class privilege, a benefit of education, from which we cannot escape' (1995: 125). Audiences who have been denied access to more elite forms of culture tend to rely heavily on television as a media form, but are vulnerable to recognizing a judgement from above of television as trash, as a waste of time. Forms of apology or guilt about television viewing by heavy viewers can be viewed as a symptom of 'symbolic violence', which Bourdieu defines as 'the *violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity*' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 167; emphasis in original). Bourdieu uses the failure to recognize symbolic violence as a chronic failing of sociological researchers, a blindspot in the goal of reflexive sociology: 'Intellectuals are often among those in the least favorable position to discover or to become aware of symbolic violence, especially that wielded by the school system, given that they have been subjected to it more intensively than the average person and that they continue to contribute to its exercise' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 170). Critics of Bourdieu have suggested that his model is functionalist, overly pessimistic and deterministic, and puts forward the dominant ideology as an all-powerful and universally accepted standard. John Hall explains one aspect of this critique when he points out that Bourdieu assumes that everyone recognizes the legitimacy of distinctions handed down 'from above': 'To describe any one social group's calculus as the effective one is to confer legitimacy to a calculus that, as Bourdieu recognizes, remains in play with others . . .' (Hall 1992: 279).

Another important limitation of Bourdieu's work involves the ways in which it universalizes the quite specific social hierarchy of French society. Clearly, much adaptation is needed of Bourdieu's model to British and probably still more to US culture. Sociologists Michèle Lamont and Annette Lareau have predicted that American legitimate culture is 'less related to knowledge of the Western humanist culture, is more technically oriented (with an emphasis on scientific or computer information) and more materialistic' (1988: 66). They suggest that purchasable – rather than culturally acquired – signals of legitimate culture may be more acceptable and may be granted more weight – in Bourdieu's terms, more easily converted to symbolic capital – in the United States than in France.

Bourdieu's greatest value to television audience research may be his enthusiasm about the practice of empirical sociology, his urgent calls that such field research must complement theoretical work on the sociology of culture. Thus, the move outwards to the audience is in line with his notions of reflexive sociology, a form of research which practises, at best, 'the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an integral component and necessary condition of a critical theory of society . . .' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 173).

Speaking subjects

Bourdieu's research has often been based on large-scale survey research. It has been open to the same criticism as that lodged at traditional media effects research, in that its use of research procedures do not do justice to the increasing theoretical sophistication about language that informs so much Marxist, postmodernist, and poststructuralist theory. Speech is the primary form through which researchers gain access to information about media audiences. This fact links audience studies with theories about language and subjectivity that have brought about dramatic reappraisals in the humanities and social sciences.

Much of the ethnographic research on audiences is grounded in theories of subjectivity, based in part on the work of Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan. In this theoretical tradition, subjectivity is a term for consciousness, and 'subject' replaces terms such as individual, person, citizen. The term subject connotes a certain degree of passivity, implying one who is subjected to something (namely ideology and unconscious processes) rather than a free individual acting upon the world (a conception more in line with uses and gratifications research). Some audience researchers have stressed the multiplicity of subjectivities. This position implies a political understanding of differently defined and created identities, such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation; and of the unconscious as well as the conscious mind. The stress here is on the international and unintentional nature of the subject's speech and way of making sense of the world. Language cannot be treated as a perfect match with the intentions of the speaker, nor as a realist system of representation, a transparent, immediately comprehensible vehicle for communication.

In the poststructuralist view, language is theorized as a kind of prison. Language is not a free, open form that expresses us perfectly; rather, it pre-exists us as individuals, and all our utterances are trapped within structured, conventional, ideological systems of language – or discourse. In its current usage, the term discourse carries the implication for speech governed by social, material, and historical forces, which disallow certain other things. Many being said or even thought, while forcing us to say certain other things. Many scholars use it in Foucault's sense to refer to a set of complex, multilayered texts that determine and limit what can be said or known about certain subjects and therefore serve particular interests in the power structure of society [Foucault 1980]. Discourse is not 'free speech'. It is not a perfect expression of the speaker's intentions. Indeed, we cannot think of communicative intentions as predating the constraints of language at all.

The methodological implications of this theoretical work are that what people say when talking about the media cannot be taken at face value. We cannot assume that what subjects say in an interview reflects individual, idiosyncratic views, or that what is spoken is all there is to be said on the subject. First, our subjects may not have access to all that might be going on with their media consumption, because of the role of the unconscious. Second, media tastes do not simply reflect identity, but are actually constitutive of it. Therefore, one of the things we would expect to hear from subjects is the reiteration of certain prior existing discourses on the self, society, politics, and gender.

A somewhat different perspective on the problems of language in qualitative research is offered by ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, who focus on the ways in which speech events construct and affirm reality for speakers. Their work suggests the importance of looking at the conventions of speech and the commonplace understandings of what is happening that are operative in interview situations. Ethnomethodology would call attention to how researcher and subject 'do interviews' and at the tacit procedures that rule the situation. Ethnomethodology focuses on such speech situations and practices as 'contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life' (Garfinkel 1976: 11). According to Lindlof, conversation analysis is a branch of ethnomethodology that focuses on 'such features of ordinary talk as the way conversations open, the order in which speaking turns occur, the sequencing of utterances, the repairing of problems, reflexive expressions about the talk, and in general, the manner in which spontaneous conversation displays the appearance of a polished performance' (1995: 39). This phenomenological work has so far been less influential on the development of media audience research than have theories of discourse and subjectivity, but it deserves serious consideration by audience researchers.

David Buckingham has usefully summarized the issues as they relate to talk about television concerns:

Clearly, individual users of language have no option but to select from among the available linguistic resources, which are already structured in particular ways. Language therefore cannot be seen as merely a neutral vehicle for 'attitudes' or 'beliefs', or a product of mental entities or processes. At the same time, subjects use language to construct versions of social reality; to a large extent, what people talk about is constructed in the process of talk itself. These versions of reality are consequential, in the sense that they perform specific social functions or purposes. In these respects, then, language is both constructed and constructive.

(1991: 229–30)

At its worst, audience research simply ignored these theoretical developments and fell back on a realist treatment of language, analysing transcription of speech as a pure and direct expression of the mind of the subject. At its best, this research accepts that 'the audience' is ultimately unknowable in some totalizing way, yet strives for a research design that maximizes an awareness of the researchers' own role in moulding what is said and how it gets said. There is considerable difference of opinion as to how much contact is necessary before a group of informants feels comfortable enough to act and speak naturally in the presence of a researcher. Lull (1988), who takes a realist view of language and whose work fits into the US uses and gratifications paradigm, reports that families quickly felt at ease and behaved normally, despite the observer's presence. Others — and I would place myself in this camp — consider the impact of the researcher's presence to be a continuing and strongly influential factor in shaping the interaction, and limiting what is said. [. . .]

Most work on audiences has relied exclusively on verbal transcripts, usually quoted without description of the context in which a statement was made. Dependence on a printed transcript results in a tremendous loss of information in terms of the non-verbal communications that accompany speech, such as eye movements, facial expressions, hand gestures, and head and body movements, as well as tone of voice, rate of speech, loudness or softness, etc. One of the best exceptions to this is the book *Children and Television* by Bob Hodge and David Tripp (1986). The authors collected data by videotaping and audiotaping children while they discussed particular cartoons. Careful attention was paid to non-verbal communication. This is an especially rich method of study for children's language, where vocabulary may be limited but communications are very rich in terms of non-verbal and phatic elements. It is also especially important to look at the power differential between the adult interviewer, who has authority over the children, and the children.

Hodge and Tripp's transcript of the group interview tells one story; the videotape tells another. Hodge and Tripp's discussion benefits from a very finely tuned sense of how the social situation produces what can be said about the cartoon being studied. Similarly, in David Buckingham's interviews with children, he found that:

they perceive the [interview] context as one in which a relatively 'critical' response is at least appropriate, and possibly even required. The 'critical' discourse serves a dual purpose: it enables the children to present themselves as 'adult', for the benefit of each other and myself; and it provides a means of refuting what they might suspect adults (including me) to believe about the influence of television upon them.

(1993: 231)

Hodge and Tripp pay careful attention to how the children's inflections, their use of rising and falling tones, and 'babyish' voices to communicate non-seriousness, significantly shape the meaning of their speech. Throughout the group interviews, boys and girls interact with each other, and individual children become leaders within the groups. In analysing videotapes and transcripts of

these discussions, it became apparent that in many instances boys silenced girls, adults silenced children, and interviewers silenced subjects – through non-verbal censure of some remarks (glances, laughs, grimaces), by wording questions and responses in certain ways, or by failures to comprehend each other's terms.

Hodge and Tripp's analysis represents a type of methodology that is very rich in complexity, but – unfortunately – very time-consuming, requiring as it does a careful study of the videotape and notation of all of the children's actions. All kinds of prohibitions exist on the ways that children will discuss television with adults because of status differences, and children's knowledge about adult disapproval of popular culture. Hodge and Tripp accept that researchers simply will not discover everything that children think about TV, but careful attention to non-verbal as well as verbal clues gives many clues to the ways that the contexts of research produce certain forms of speech from children. Children present a particularly obvious case of the importance of non-verbal communications, but researchers dealing with adults need to be similarly aware of the powerful communicative role of the non-verbal in interview and conversational situations.

Ethnography's other

The origin of ethnography is rooted in colonialism. Historically, ethnographies have been written by Europeans and Americans documenting their experiences among people living in Africa, Asia, or Native American cultures. James Clifford and others have mounted a critical challenge to traditional ethnography's implicit insistence on scholarly experience as an unproblematic source and ultimate guarantee of knowledge about a specific culture or cultural process. Clifford has rejected 'colonial representations' as 'discourses that portray the cultural reality of other peoples without placing their own reality into jeopardy' (1983: 128).

Do audience studies also construct a sort of colonial representation? Is there an 'Other' who is the subject of audience ethnography? Most audience research exists in an ambiguous relationship of alterity to the culture: when researchers investigate media use are they venturing into 'foreign' lands or not? Valerie Walkerdine has stressed the ways that fantasies of the 'Other' play a major, if usually unwritten role in social science research, and that, for mass media research, class has been one of the most important structuring differences between researcher and researched. Walkerdine's case studies of families analyse the interplay between video watching and casual conversation. She includes, to a much greater degree than other researchers, or than would be acceptable according to the conventions of most social scientific writing, autobiographical material as well as an analysis of the way her own family background compels her to 'read' the family interactions in certain ways. Walkerdine seeks to avoid 'exoticizing' the Other through this approach. She is harshly critical of the representation of the audience in most social science:

> The audience for popular entertainment, for example, is often presented as sick (voyeuristic, scopophilic) or as trapped within a given subjectivity (whether defined by the social categories of class, race and gender or by a universalized oedipal scenario). What is disavowed in such approaches is the complex relation of 'intellectuals' to 'the masses'. 'our' project of analyzing 'them' is itself one of the regulative practices which produce *our* subjectivity as well as theirs. We are each Other's – but not on equal terms. Our fantasy investment often seems to consist in believing that we can 'make them see' or that we can see or speak *for* them. If we do assume that, then we continue to dismiss fantasy and the Imaginary as snares and delusions. We fail to acknowledge how the insistent demand to see through ideology colludes in the process of intellectualizing bodily and other pleasures.
> (Walkerdine 1990: 199–200)

Many studies have focused on women from working-class or middle-class backgrounds (Radway 1984; Morley 1986; A. Gray 1987, Seiter *et al.* 1989; Press 1991). In this work the projection onto the audience as an Other primarily involves class issues, although there is often a strong component of identification and even solidarity between the feminist researcher and her informants.

Most US and UK audience research has involved white researchers and white informants, although the researcher frequently apologizes for the lack of diversity in the sample. As Jacqueline Bobo and I have argued elsewhere, the homogeneity of the samples does not occur accidentally: white researchers have not been alert to the self-selection at work here (Bobo and Seiter 1991; 290–2). People of colour may not have sufficient trust in or comfort with white researchers to participate in audience research. The tendency for qualitative interviews to be carried out in people's homes may also dissuade some from participation. The strain of caring for children and working long hours, sometimes at multiple jobs, will mean that many more impoverished informants will simply not have the time to be interviewed.

Bobo's study of the reception of the film version of *The Color Purple* among African American women is an important exception to the all-white sample. In Bobo's focus groups, African-American women reported how much they valued being interviewed by an African-American researcher. In a follow-up interview, Bobo mentions to the group that her research has been criticized as representing an atypical sample because her subjects were so articulate:

> Once again, the women displayed a shrewdness about their status in society and about the way black women are viewed by others. One of the women wondered if the critics knew that a person could be intelligent but not necessarily well educated . . . Still another commented that many people react with surprise when they hear black people speak sensibly because, too often, that is not what is allowed to be presented in a public forum. She then asked a rhetorical question toward which the other women responded with spirited agreement: 'Don't you think we would have come off sounding stupid if someone other than another black person was doing research on us?'.
>
> (1995: 132)

Bobo's discussion is an important example of the way that media audiences may be critical of the ways they are characterized by researchers. Bobo's research design, returning to the focus group to discuss her 'findings' and their reception by an academic audience, allowed her to include such criticisms in her discussion. One of the continuing struggles within audience research is to expand the diversity of the researchers and the informants and to heighten self-reflexivity about the impact of racism on our knowledge production; the perception of various methods by groups; and the politics of exploitation of research subjects by researchers. As it stands, we know much more about white, middle-class audiences in the UK and the USA than about any other groups. Media audience researchers are academics with specific social, class, and cultural backgrounds, who frequently leave their normal places of work and residence to seek out 'the field' and learn about groups with social and cultural backgrounds different from their own. These differences are of a lesser magnitude than those between first world/third world ethnographers, but they are present none the less. [. . .]

References

Allen, R.C. (1985) *Speaking of Soap Opera*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
—— (1989) 'Bursting Bubbles: "Soap Opera", Audiences and the Limits of Genre', in E. Seiter *et al.*, *Remote Control*, 16–43.
Ang, I. (1985) *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*, London: Routledge.
—— (1996) *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World*, London: Routledge.

Bacon Smith, C. (1992) *Enterprising Women: TV Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Bobo, J. (1995) *Black Women as Cultural Readers*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Bobo, J. and Seiter, E. (1991) 'Black Feminism and Media Criticism: *The Women of Brewster Place*', *Screen* 32/3: 286–302.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J.D. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Brown, K.M. (1994) 'Fundamentalism and the Control of Women', in J.S. Hawley (ed.), *Fundamentalism and Gender*, New York: Oxford University Press, 175–201.

Brunsdon, C. (1981) 'Crossroads: Notes on a Soap Opera', in E.A. Kaplan (ed.), *Regarding Television*, 76–83.

—— (1989) 'Text and Audience', in E. Seiter *et al.*, *Remote Control*, 96–115.

—— (1990) 'Problems with Quality', *Screen* 31/1: 67–90.

Brunsdon, C. and Morley, D. (1978) *Everyday Television: 'Nationwide'*, London: British Film Institute.

Buckingham, D. (1991) 'What Are Words Worth? Interpreting Children's Talk about Television', *Cultural Studies* 5/2: 228–45.

—— (1996) *Moving Images: Children's Emotional Responses to Television*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bybee, C.R. (1987) 'Uses and Gratifications Research and the Study of Social Change', in D.L. Paletz (ed.), *Political Communication Research: Approaches, Studies, Assessment*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Clifford, J. (1983) 'On Ethnographic Authority', *Representations* 1/2: 118–46.

Curran, J. (1996) 'The New Revisionism in Mass Communication Research: a Reappraisal', in J. Curran, D. Morley and V. Walkerdine (eds), *Cultural Studies and Communications*, London: Edward Arnold, 256–78.

Delia, J. (1987) 'Communication Research: A History', in C.R. Berger and S.H. Chaffee (eds), *Handbook of Communication Science*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 20–98.

Eakin, E. (1997) 'Bourdieu Unplugged', *Lingua Franca*, August: 22–23.

Eco, U. (1976) *Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Garfinkel, H. (1976) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gillespie, M. (1995) *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*, London and New York: Routledge.

Gray, A. (1987) 'Behind Closed Doors: Video Recorders in the Home', in H. Baehr and G. Dyer (eds), *Boxed In: Women and Television*, New York: Pandora, 38–54.

—— (1992) *Video Playtime: The Gendering of a Leisure Technology*, London and New York: Routledge.

Gray, H. (1993) 'The Endless Slide of Difference', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 10: 190–7.

Gripsrud, J. (1995) *The Dynasty Years: Hollywood Television and Critical Media Studies*, London: Routledge.

Hall, J.R. (1992) 'The Capital(s) of Cultures: A Nonholistic Approach to Status Situations, Class, Gender, and Ethnicity', in M. Lamont and M. Fournier (eds), *Cultivating Differences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 257–88.

Hodge, B. and Tripp, D. (1986) *Children and Television: A Semiotic Approach*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Iser, W. (1978) *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.

Jhally, S. and Lewis, J. (1992) *Enlightened Racism: 'The Cosby Show', Audiences, and the Myth of the American Dream*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lamont, M. and Lareau, A. (1988) 'Cultural Capital: Allusions and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments', *Sociological Theory* 6: 163.

Lewis, L. (ed.) (1992) *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, London and New York: Routledge.

Lindlof, T.R. (1995) *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lipsitz, G. (1990) *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lull, J. (ed.) (1988) *World Families Watch Television*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Marcus, G.E. and Fischer, M.J. (1986) *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McRobbie, A. (1991) *Feminism and Youth Culture: From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Morley, D. (1980) *The 'Nationwide' Audience*, London: British Film Institute.

—— (1986) *Family Television*, London: Comedia/Routledge.

—— (1992) *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge.

Press, A. (1991) *Women Watching Television*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.

Seiter, E., Borchers, H., Kreutzner, G. and Warth, E. (eds) (1989) *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power*, London: Routledge.

Shattuc, J. (1997) *The Talking Cure: TV Talk Shows and Women*, New York: Routledge.

Skeggs, B. (1997) *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*, London: Sage.

Walkerdine, V. (1990) *School Girl Fictions*, London and New York: Verso.