

Moments of television:

Neither the text nor the audience

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A group of people in front of the television set, spines curved weakly on the couch, drinks or snacks in hand, eyes glued to the screen is, I suppose, the commonsense model of television and its audience. What is on the screen is the text, the people watching, multiplied a millionfold, are the audience. In the not too distant past there have been theories of both the text and the audience that, unfortunately for them and us, have taken this model for the unsuspected base of their assumptions, for the scene the model paints is both typical and realistic. Its problem lies in its easy categorization of the viewers into "the audience" and the screen into "the text".

I wish to dissolve both categories. First, there is no such thing as "the television audience," defined as an empirically accessible object, for there can be no meaningful categories beyond its boundaries – what on earth is "not the television audience"? The "television audience" is not a social category like class, or race, or gender – everyone slips in or out of it in a way that makes nonsense of any categorical boundaries: similarly when in "it" people constitute themselves quite differently as audience members at different times – I am a different television "audience" when watching my football team from when watching *The A-Team* with my son or *Days of our Lives* with my wife. Categories focus our thinking on similarities: people watching television are best modeled according to a multitude of differences.

Similarly, the television text, or program, is no unified whole delivering the same message in the same way to all its "audience." The old literary idea of the organic, self-contained text has been exploded so comprehensively that there is no need for me here to contribute further to its demolition. But we still need the term, or something like it to refer to television's meaning-making potential, though we might do better to make it less concrete, less comfortable to handle, and to use the word "textuality" whose abstraction signals its potentiality rather than its concrete existence. What the set in the living-room delivers is "television," visual and aural signifiers that are potential provokers of meaning and pleasure. This potential is its textuality which is mobilized differently in the variety of its moments of viewing.)

Textuality is realized in the making of sense and the production of pleasure,

and central to this process is the inescapable intertextuality of our culture, a point I shall return to later. For the moment I wish only to point out that we have now collapsed the distinction between "text" and "audience." The textuality of television, the intertextuality of the process of making sense and pleasure from it, can only occur when people bring their different histories and subjectivities to the viewing process. There is no text, there is no audience, there are only the processes of viewing. – that variety of cultural activities that take place in front of the screen which constitute the object of study that I am proposing.

The viewer

This model, or models, will involve people and television, despite our resolution not to separate them into categories of audience and text. This paper is primarily concerned with textuality: but in order to discuss that I must briefly set out my assumptions of viewers without whom textuality could not be constituted out of television.

Watching television is a process of making meanings and pleasures, and this process is determined by two parallel and interlocking sets of forces. I use the word "determine" in its literal sense of setting the boundaries, not in its more common mis-sense of authoritarian social imperatives – thou shalt be, do, feel, react as society determines. Determination, then, refers to a bounded terrain within which people have the space to exercise some power over their meanings, pleasures, subjectivities. People can and do make their own culture, albeit within conditions that are not of their own choosing. How much power is available within this terrain, and how fixedly its boundaries are determined are matters of considerable debate, in which I align myself with those who propose that ideological and hegemonic theories of popular culture have overestimated the power of the determinations and underestimated that of the viewer.

The two intertwined sets of determination are the social and the textual, the one working upon the subjectivity of the viewer, the other upon the textuality of television, and I wish to argue that the correspondence between subjectivity and textuality is so close that the two leak into each other at every point of contact.

Viewers within this determined terrain are subjects constituted by late-capitalist societies. Such societies are characterized by heterogeneity – a vast shifting range of subcultures and groups which are finally structured by their relationship to the system by which power is unequally distributed in them. Any one person, or television viewer, forms a number of shifting alliances within this heterogeneity, she or he enters the social system via differently constituted and shifting social formations: the metaphor of a nomadic subjectivity is a productive one here.¹ Any one viewer, then, may at different times be a different viewing subject, as constituted by his or her social determinants, as different social alliances may be mobilized for different moments of viewing: to return to our spatial metaphor, the socially constituted viewing subject may occupy different spaces within the determined terrain according to the social alliances appropriate

to this specific moment of making sense of and finding pleasure in the television experience. Hall refers to a similar process as "articulation."³ Here he uses both senses of the word, first as speech, that is a symbolic system used to make sense of both self and experience, and second as flexible linkage. Hodge and Tripp's school students who made sense of *Prisoner* by aligning themselves with the prisoners, the wardens with school teachers, and the prison with the school were articulating, in both senses of the word.⁴ They were using the television program to "speak," or make sense of their experience of institutionalized subordination and thus to make sense of themselves as subordinated subjects, and they did this by articulating (linking) their viewing of a soap opera set in a women's prison with their social experience of school.

But many of the same students also enjoyed *Sale of the Century*—*Prisoner* and *Sale of the Century* were the most popular programs amongst Australian junior high school students in 1983. Here, the program was articulated with school in a way that produced quite different meanings and pleasures.⁵ Making sense of popular television, then, is the process of activating meanings from it, and this process is controlled within more or less determined boundaries by the socially situated viewer. The text will be a source of popular pleasure when these meanings become part of that larger cultural process by which the subject makes sense of his or her material existence. For social experience is like a text: it can only be made meaningful when a social subject brings his or her discursive competencies to bear upon it. The shifting alliance of formations that constitute social experience for the subject allows for a potentially unlimited range of social differences so that each person may be constituted differently. Yet these differences are to be explained not by the individual differences of psychology but by the variety of intersections of social alliances and social relations.

Social experience is like intertextuality. It is a vast interlocking potential of elements that can be mobilized in an unpredictable number of ways. Any social system needs a system of meanings to underpin it, and the meanings that are made of it are determined only to an extent by the system itself. This determination allows adequate space for different people to make different meanings though they may use a shared discursive repertoire in the process. The subject is not fully subjected—the sense we make of our social relations is partly under our control—and making sense of social experience necessarily involves making sense of ourselves within that experience.

This potential of meanings that constitutes our social experience must not be seen as amoeba-like and structureless. Just as post-structuralism and discourse theory must not be allowed to evacuate a notion of material social relations, so too, my argument in favor of difference and a relatively empowered, relatively loosely subjected, subject must not blind us to the determining framework of power relations within which all of this takes place. In a similar vein, the emphasis on the power of the viewer to achieve certain meanings from the potential offered by the text can only be understood in terms of a textual power and a textual struggle that are remarkably similar to social power and social

struggle. Making sense of social experience is an almost identical process to making sense of a text.

What television delivers is not programs but a semiotic experience. This experience is characterized by its openness and polysemy. Television is not quite a do-it-yourself meaning kit but neither is it a box of ready-made meanings for sale. Although it works within cultural determinations, it also offers freedoms and the power to evade, modify, or challenge these limitations and controls. All texts are polysemic, but polysemy is absolutely central to television's textuality.

Television as cultural commodity

Television is a cultural commodity. It works within an economically determined capitalist economy, but when we have said that about it we have said both much and remarkably little. There is a financial economy within which wealth circulates, and a cultural economy within which meanings and pleasures circulate, and the relationship between them is not as deterministic as some theorists have proposed. In the financial economy television is programs and advertisements, not textuality. A program is a commodity produced and then sold to distributors. In distribution its role changes and it becomes not a commodity, but a producer, and what it produces is a new commodity, the audience which is then, in its turn, sold as a commodity to advertisers. The ramifications of this financial economy are fascinating, but they are not the topic of this paper. I wish to concentrate more on the cultural economy.

Here the role shift undergone by the program in the financial economy—that from commodity to producer—is now undergone by the audience, whom I left as a commodity sold to the advertiser. But in the cultural economy the audience rejects its role as commodity and becomes a producer, a producer of meanings and pleasures, and at this moment stops being "an audience" and becomes different materializations of the process that we call "viewing television."

While the metaphor of a cultural economy is a productive one, we must not let it blind us to differences between it and the financial. Meanings and pleasures do not circulate in the cultural economy in the same way that wealth does in the financial. In the first place there is no exchange of money at the point of sale or consumption. Television appears to be free, however it may actually be paid for. Payment has no direct relationship to consumption—people can consume as much as they wish and what they wish with no thought of what they are able to afford. Watching an opera or a concert by Dire Straits costs no more than a quiz show or a rerun sitcom.

This liberation from economic constraints frees the viewer from the subordinate role in the market economy, that of "consumer" who, by definition, gives more than he or she receives. This crucial difference between the television commodity and other more material goods in the market-place foregrounds the considerable freedom won by the viewer in the shift from consumer in the financial economy to producer in the cultural. Meanings and pleasures cannot be

owned or bought and sold in a way that grants proprietorial rights over them to some but denies them to others. Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital needs re-examination: for him cultural capital works for one section of the bourgeoisie (the intelligentsia) similarly to the way that economic capital works for the business section.⁵ It works to maintain power in the hands of the powerful, advantaged minority, whether that power be expressed in economic or cultural terms. We need to add to this notion that of a popular cultural capital that puts bourgeois culture under constant pressure. Hobson, for instance, has shown how the women viewers of *Crossroads* had made the program theirs, had constituted it as their cultural capital that they could draw upon to articulate their social relations and social identities - the meanings and pleasures of the program were theirs, not the male producers'.⁶ Similarly, Hodge and Tripp have shown how Australian Aboriginal children have made American westerns into their cultural capital.⁷ They constructed a cultural category, a tool to think with, that included them, American Indians, and American blacks in a way that enabled them to find in the western some articulation of their subordination to white imperialism and, presumably, to identify with instances of resistance to it. Such a reading position will, we may predict, affect the sense they make of the inevitability of the final narrative defeat of the Indians or non-whites. It was their ability to make a non-white sense from, and find non-white pleasures in, a genre of white imperialism and colonialism that made it popular with them. Without this ability to be the producers of their own culture, the makers of their own meanings and pleasures, it would be difficult to account for Aboriginals' choosing to watch westerns.

This freedom of the viewer to make socially pertinent meanings and pleasures out of television is considerable. Tulloch and Moran found that school students in working-class and middle-class areas made completely different sense out of an episode of the Australian soap *A Country Practice* which dealt with youth unemployment.⁸ The working-class students articulated it with their social experience and found in it the sense that the economic system was at fault in not providing enough jobs for the people. The middle-class students, on the other hand, found meanings that supported the system and placed the blame upon the failures of the (working-class) individuals: for them the unemployed were the undereducated, and the episode's meanings for them were produced by the socially derived discourses of class, education, and economics that they brought to bear upon it. A group of Arab viewers in Katz and Liebes' study of different ethnic group readings of *Dallas* found it incompatible with their own culture that Sue Ellen, escaping with her baby from her husband, should return to her father; so they "rewrote" it in their conversation about the program, making her return to her former lover, not to her father.⁹ Of course, this freedom is inherent in all popular art, not just television: Michaels, for instance, has found that Aboriginal viewers of *Rambo*, who derived great pleasure from the movie, "rewrote" considerable areas of it.¹⁰ They found pleasure in Rambo's conflict with authority (presumably his Hispanic, non-white appearance, his verbal inarticulateness, and

his opposition to the white officer class will have helped here), but could find neither sense nor pleasure in his "patriotic," nationalistic motivation. Instead they constructed for him a tribal or family motivation by inserting him into an elaborate kinship network with those he was rescuing, which enabled them to make sense of the movie in a way that paralleled the way they made sense of their social relations both with each other and with white power. The fact that the film was a favorite with both Ronald Reagan and Australian Aboriginals must not lead us to assume any affinity between the two, nor between the meanings and pleasures that each produced from the same cultural commodity.

The (usually) scatological versions of television commercial jingles produced by school children provide an extreme example of this "rewriting" process which is itself typical.¹¹ Most viewers of course do not need to rewrite television to this extent to find pleasurable meanings in it, but these examples demonstrate that the freedom is there; they are not a distinct form of perverse or aberrant viewing, but an exaggerated and therefore explicit example of the normal process of making meanings and pleasures from television.

This model differs essentially from that underlying political economy in stressing the relative autonomy of the cultural economy from the financial to which political economy traditionally grants considerable, if not total, determinate power. The political economy model is thus unable to progress beyond seeing the audience as a commodity, or in defining it other than in market terms, those of demographic headcounting. Equally it cannot conceive of the text except as the free lunch that catches the audience for the advertisers. Of course the audience is a commodity, of course the text is a free lunch: but neither definition comes within a mile of adequacy. Political economy cannot conceive of television audiences as being socially diverse and therefore capable of producing different socially pertinent meanings from the same commodity, nor of conceiving of this productive activity as pleasurable. It thus cannot conceive of the cultural commodity as a text that requires reading, and thus as capable of serving the contradictory interests of both the producers in the financial economy and of the viewers in the cultural: it cannot conceive of the text as a site of struggle for the power to make meanings; or of the notion that what finally determines the meanings and pleasures provoked by a text is the social situation of the viewer-reader, not the interests of the producers and their ideological investment in consumer capitalism. This leads to another crucial factor in the cultural economy which political economy is unable to take into account, and that is popular discrimination. The people choose to make some texts popular, and some not, and this process of choice is essentially a popular one: however hard the industry may try through market research, promotion, advertising, and scheduling to influence popular choice, its failure rate is enormous. It has thus been forced into producing what Giamham calls a "repertoire" of products from which the public is invited to choose.¹² And it does not know which of its products will be chosen: if it did, it could concentrate on producing a narrower and thus more profitable repertoire. As it is, twelve out of thirteen records fail to

make a profit, as do the vast majority of films on their cinema release. Television shows are regularly axed in mid-run. Political economy cannot conceive of any audience activity that opposes the interests of the producers, whether this activity be one of semiosis or of discrimination.

My position differs from that of political economy in locating at least equal, if not greater, power in the cultural economy. The interests of the financial economy would be best served by producing and reproducing the smallest number of hit products: the cultural needs of the constantly shifting alliances of its audiences force the industry into its constant search for products that have enough originality to meet these shifts, but yet retain enough familiarity to meet both the audience expectations and developed competencies, and the routinized production practices of the producers. The major drive for innovation and change comes from the audience activity in the cultural economy, and from the relationship of this activity to larger movements in the political and social system. Television's rehabilitation of Vietnam in shows like *Magnum PI*, *Simon and Simon*, or *The A-Team* has participated in the 1980s shift of American values to the Reaganite masculine right, but did not originate it. Similarly, shows like *Designing Women*, *Golden Girls*, and *Cagney and Lacey* are part of the (re)definition of gender meanings, but the spur to redefine them came from the changing material conditions of women. In both cases, it was the cultural economy's dialectic relationship with the socio-political system at the level of the meanings of social experience that fed into the financial economy and caused the economic success and therefore the reproduction of these genres. Theorizing the audience as commodity blinds us to the subtleties and complexities of these social forces.

Of course the audiences' freedom and ability to make their socially pertinent meanings out of television's text, even though these meanings may be beyond both the prediction and the control of the producers, is, at one level, exactly what the producers want: they neither know nor care what meanings and pleasures their audiences produce, their concern is solely with the headcount and the demographics. But only a tiny proportion of audience members are converted into purchasers or even potential purchasers. We must be chary of singular definitions of such multifarious (and ultimately untenable) categories as text and audience. Just as television's textuality can simultaneously serve the economic needs of its producers and the cultural pleasures of its audiences, however oppositional these functions may be to each other, so the audience can, at one and the same time, fill the contradictory roles of commodity and cultural producer. Russian Jews, newly arrived in Israel, read *Dalila* as capitalism criticizing itself: such a process can hardly be described as one of commodification.¹³ Of course the industry will attempt, often successfully, to produce programs that invite and encourage the audiences' powers as meaning-producers, but their commercial intention can only describe a part and, I would argue, a small part, of the audiences' activities within the cultural economy.

The democracy of the television text

I wish to adapt Barthes' theory of the writerly text by describing television as a "producerly text."¹⁴ A producerly text does not prescribe either a set of meanings or a set of reading relations for the viewer; instead it delegates the production of meaning to the viewer-producer. It differs, however, from the writerly text in that it is not avant-garde and does not shock the reader-writer into learning new discursive competencies in order to read-write it: rather it offers provocative spaces within which the viewer can use her or his already developed competencies.¹⁵

Television can only offer its viewers the flexibility of its producerliness because of its textual and intertextual characteristics: all of which constitute it as a particularly polysemic medium. I wish to deal with these under four main headings: 1) segmentation and syntagmatic gaps; 2) intertextuality; 3) time and seriality; 4) heteroglossia (many-languagedness). For the purposes of my argument, I will take as read the means by which the dominant ideology is structured into the text as an agent of closure working to oppose polysemy. My attention, then, will be focused on the counterforces of openness and flexibility.

Segmentation and syntagmatic gaps

Williams' famous characterization of television viewing as an experience of "flow" is useful in so far as it stresses television's lack of textual boundaries, but within it he seems to suggest that the consequent contradictions and lack of formal organization are regrettable rather than a positive textual characteristic.¹⁶ Ellis' use of the term "segmentation" is more productive:¹⁷ television's continuous flow is actually fragmented into an often jarring experience of segments in which discontinuity, sequence and contradiction take precedence over continuity, consequence, and unity. Channel switching and zapping merely exaggerate and exploit this characteristic. Segmented texts are marked by abrupt transitions from segment to segment that require active, experienced, televisually literate viewers to negotiate. Abrupt changes from plot to plot in soap operas are, to television illiterates, as confusing as the change from movie to promo. To adhere to Williams on his first experience of US television, (Television illiterates, of course, are those whose textual experience is of books, movies, or theater where the textual characteristics are quite different from those of television.) The segmentation of television allows for connections between its segments to be made according to the laws of association rather than those of consequence, logic, or cause and effect. They are therefore much looser, much less textually determined, and so offer the viewer more scope to make his or her own connections. They resist textual hierarchization. The differential mode of attention given to television means that the viewer views some segments more intently than others: this is paralleled semiotically by the viewer's ability to give greater significance to some segments than others. Thus Lewis found that

viewers of a news story exploited the contradictions between a live insert and the studio narrative framework in a way that accorded semiotic precedence to the insert, even though the textual structure was attempting to subordinate it to the narrative framework and thus to close off many of the meanings that viewers reportedly found in it.¹⁸ The prioritization of some segments over others is performed by the viewers rather than the text.

The segmentation opens up the syntagmatic gaps in television's narrative so that the viewer has to "write" in the connection.¹⁹ The largest, and most obvious of these gaps are those produced by television's seriality. Many authors have shown how, for instance, women viewers of soap opera write their own "scripts" in their heads as they predict the future of the serial, and check these scripts against the ones actually broadcast.²⁰ This activity and the gossip that it involves generate considerable pleasure, for they involve the viewers in a producerly relationship with the text: the viewers draw upon the same sort of cultural competencies as do the actual scriptwriters — they know the conventions of soap opera, they know the need to appeal to an audience, they know the difference between the soap opera world and the real world, yet know that the connections between the two must be readily available. They adopt a position of equality with the scriptwriters, a position that gives them the right not only to predict future developments, but to attempt to influence them directly by writing to the producers/scriptwriters.²¹

Segmentation not only opens up syntagmatic gaps, it also allows for a wide variety of syntagmatic relations to be made. Williams failed to see that television's apparent unawareness of the contradiction between the syntagmatically related segments of a news story about Indian Civil Rights protests at Wounded Knee and the promos for a cowboys and Indians movie later in the evening were capable of producing a number of possible meanings about Indianness in American society. Similarly, *Dattar* in Malaysia is viewed as pornography by many males; its syntagmatic relations with the rest of Malaysian television and its intertextual relations with a largely Muslim culture allow its sexuality to provoke a different set of meanings and pleasures from those for many of its American viewers.

Television's syntagmatic gaps and their range of potential syntagmatic relations resist the organizing and controlling forces of its narrative and ideological closure.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is not a property unique to television but it does work in televisionally specific ways. Barthes' notion that culture is a web of intertextuality, that all texts refer only to other texts and never anchor their referral in a final reality, sets up a useful framework from which to start.²² He alerts us to the idea that represented events and characters can be understood only in terms of their intertextual relations, so that a "killing" on a detective show can only be made

sense of in terms of its relations with a murder story on the news or in the newspapers, or other representations in novels, films, theater, fairy stories, and so on. Culture as a web of intertextual meanings recognizes no boundaries of genre or medium. Similarly, the "wronged mother" is an intertextual figure. Intertextuality of this sort is not the fleshing out of the meanings of one text by references to others, but rather a meaning potential that exists in the spaces between texts, a cultural resource bank that texts and readers can draw from and contribute to equally but differently. Barthes' theory is important because it denies both the uniqueness of the text and its authority to impose its meanings. But this general theory needs to be made more specific if we are to operationalize it in the study of television. I suggest there are four dimensions of intertextuality that require study.

Primary relations

These are the ones elaborated in Barthes' theory. All representational texts and their readers have equal access to this intertextual resource bank and the texts relate not to each other directly, as in the old literary sense of allusion, but indirectly via this intertextual potential. At one level this can deny genre and medium boundaries, at another the concepts of genre and medium act to organize, direct, and thus limit intertextual relations.

Secondary relations

The excessiveness and openness of primary texts in our culture have produced a huge industry of secondary texts that advertise, promote, criticize, and respond to the primary texts of television, film, literature, and so on. Relations between these and the primary texts are direct and specific: secondary texts relate to specified primary ones and these intertextual relations are their sole *raison d'être*. They work to activate certain meanings rather than others, to legitimate certain pleasures rather than others.²³ They can be arranged on a scale that stretches from producer interests at one end to viewer interests at the other. At the first are studio publicity and promotions which can indicate some of the meanings and pleasures which the producers believe their viewers will find and which they hope will help to produce the audiences as commodity.

At the other end are viewers' letters to fan magazines sharing their responses amongst other fans. Somewhere in the middle lie the professional critics who purport to speak for viewers but generally fail because the discourse of formal criticism originates at a social point occupied by only a minority of viewers. More useful and more widely used are the articles which give background or insider information about players, conditions of production, studio business, and so on. All these secondary texts work to activate and often extend the meanings of the primary texts. They are intertextual enablers.

Biographical gossip about soap opera players can indicate some of these intertextual operations. It invites fans to explore the intertextual relations between the representation and the real, or rather between texts of higher and

lower modality. The biographies are texts of higher modality than the soap operas themselves, and the "real life" details of the biography of the player can be used to validate or interrogate the verisimilitude of the represented character. They can also provide insight into the mode of production: they give details of the player's acting skill, of his/her hard work, and the conditions under which that work is performed. They provide insider information about players' earnings and contracts, and thus extend the fan's pleasures by extending the primary texts.

Fans will predict the future of a character not only according to their knowledge of the soap opera conventions, but also according to knowledge that only secondary texts can provide - whether the player is pregnant in "real life" or whether she or he is asking for too much money for the next contract. There is also a sense in which those secondary texts provide a "ghost text," like the ghost image on a television set with poor reception, so that viewers of *Cagney and Lacey*, for example, can understand and enjoy both the relationship between the two characters and that between the two players in a complex play of intertextual and intermodal relations between primary and secondary texts that involves a simultaneous surrender to, and distancing from, the illusion of realism. These secondary texts increase the viewer's sense of power over the meanings and pleasures offered by the primary texts because they grant them access to, and thus allow them to participate in, the mode of representation. The pleasure of making meanings is greater by far than that of finding them ready-made.

Oral culture

People talk about television: television is a great promoter of gossip. Katz and Liebes, for instance, argue that part of the popularity of *Dallas* derives from the ease with which its soap opera form enables it to intersect with a variety of oral cultures.²⁴ People's talk about television is not just a response to it, but is read back into it: our friend's gossip about a program influences our reading of it.

Oral culture is a product of its immediate social formation, so the way that television is talked about provides us with two sorts of clues - clues about how television is being assimilated into the social formation and how that social formation is read back into the text, and clues about which meanings offered by the text are being mobilized in this process. This form of intertextual relations is a bridge between the textual and the social, and is a crucial, if methodologically difficult, area of study.

Methodologically more accessible is a secondary form of this talk, and that is its written form, either in the newsletters and publications of fan clubs or in the letter columns of the press and fanzines. Also methodologically accessible are the verbal responses of viewers to researchers. All of these verbal responses are, of course, not cold data, the verbal equivalent of galvanic skin responses, but texts that require the same sort of theoretical investigation as do the primary texts, and that can only be understood in terms of their intertextual relations with them.

The subject and the social formation

Material social experience is made sense of by textualizing it, by bringing a culture's discursive resources to bear upon it. As argued earlier, reading a social experience parallels reading a text. This does not mean that the reading relations of the two are identical; clearly they are not, because they operate in different modalities. Essential to textual pleasure is an awareness, to whatever extent, of its textuality. The pleasure in playing with the boundary between the representation and the real involves a recognition of their difference as well as of their similarities. Textual experience and social experience are different, but not totally unconnected. The discursive repertoires and competencies that are involved in making sense of each overlap, and inform one another. These discursive resources are also the ones that determine the production of subjectivity, so that the subject is an interdiscursive potential; subjectivity is like textuality, capable of actualization in different forms at different moments. The relations between textual experience, social experience, and subjectivity are perhaps the most methodologically inaccessible; but theoretically and politically, they are amongst the most important of all.

Intertextual relations are almost infinitely complex and diverse. They are activated at the moment of viewing, and the process of viewing can only be described in relation to them. They are inherent neither in the text nor in the viewer, but in their interaction in the cultural process. They are an agent of openness in the text and invite or require considerable semiotic activity from the viewer. Activating them in some ways rather than others is one of the ways in which a viewer exercises "cultural authority" over his or her text by exploiting its productively potential.

Time, seriality, and semiotic democracy

Television's lack of "authority" over its viewers, its democratic delegation of so many of the meaning-making functions, points us to another set of textual characteristics. One of these is television's "liveness" or "nowness."²⁵ Television's world appears to be occurring in the same time as the world of the viewer. Novels and movies are records of the past - we know that the end of the narrative has already been written as we watch or read the opening scenes, but in television serials, at least, the future appears to be as unwritten as our own. This sets up the empowering reading relations that I have already noted in which viewers feel they have both the right and the ability to influence the future narrative. Television has no author in the sense of authority.

Television's nowness and its lack of textual authority are closely allied. Its attempt to present itself as "live" is a recognition that "liveness" is a normative and defining characteristic which sets up specific reading relations. Suspense in sport or in game shows is quite different if they are seen as "live" rather than recorded, and the hermeneutic engagement of the viewers is changed. They are

not in producing meanings, but in policing and controlling the excess of meaning it cannot help producing.²⁶ Fiske argues that the excess allows television first to offer the meanings preferred by the dominant forces, but that the overspill of such meaning allows for resisting or at least evasive meaning to escape this control; and Fiske argues it allows for the viewer to produce a counter-text.²⁷ By exceeding the norms, television draws attention to them and to their ideological function, and by doing so opens up the possibility for contradictory meanings and pleasures to be made. One of Ang's subjects was a Marxist who found in the excessiveness of *Dallas* a critique of capitalism; another was a feminist who used its excess of sexist display to produce oppositional, and vocally expressed, pleasures.²⁸ Elsewhere I have argued that devices such as irony, metaphor, and jokes depend upon a collision of discourses that generates more meaning potential than any authorial function can control: they depend upon contradictions within segments rather than between them, a micro-level heteroglossia.²⁹ Television's recent tendency to self-reflexivity, the explicit acknowledgment of its textuality, is a good example of this collision of discourses and the way it delegates semiotic power to the viewers. When characters in shows like *Moonlighting* refer to the writers or walk off the set, when *Miami Vice* breaks the 180-degree rule and draws attention to its stylistic devices, or when *Magnum PI* is shot partially in black and white in an explicit reference to *film noir*, television is setting up contradictions with its own realistic mode: it is simultaneously inviting and shattering the illusion of realism. It is significant that this tendency is clearest in those television genres that are most "authored," closest to a novel or film, for in these realistic fictional genres television has had to devise different methods from those of sport or news by which to draw attention to its authorial authority, to demystify it, and, thus, to allow the viewer access to it in a productively way. The "willingness" of realism's "willing suspension of disbelief" is central to the pleasures of viewing, those productively pleasures of access to the process of representation, and the reading position that this access promotes. This playful toying with the boundary between our sense of the representation and of the real exploits the final contradiction in popular art forms which depend, at least in part, upon realism's request to willingly suspend disbelief, and it is a necessary contradiction for television to exploit. For realism is essentially a unifying, closing strategy of representation, it is necessarily authoritarian. But the pleasures of television are democratic, to be found in its diversity, so the fracture of realism, the inclusion of the viewer into the process of representation is necessary if television is to be popular in a heterogeneous society.

Of course, television viewers realized this long before its producers. Women viewers of soap opera have long been adept at playing with this boundary between the representation and the real.³⁰ Their oft-chronicled and oft-decried belief in the represented characters as "real" people is not only a knowing self-delusion entered into to increase their pleasure, but is also one they are able to extricate themselves from at will, particularly at the first sign of displeasure.³¹

It is typically accompanied by a critical awareness of the conventions of soap opera, and of its conditions of production. There is a pleasure in playing with television's textuality, in exploiting one's ability to submit oneself to, and to distance oneself from, its illusion of reality that is finally a democratic one, for it allows the viewer both control of reading relations and access to the process of representation.

Pleasure, semiosis, and difference

The relationship between pleasure and meaning needs to be rethought. Universalistic notions of pleasure derived from psychoanalytic theory do not get us very far in understanding something as diverse as television. Similarly, notions of *jouissance* and affective pleasure require an intensity of viewing and a loss of subjectivity that do not accord with television's typical modes of reception. Television is not an orgasmic medium. Any theory of televisual pleasure must be able to account for both the diversity of the televisual experience and the activity of the viewers within it: it must derive from the social heterogeneity of viewers and of moments of viewing, and from a notion of television textuality as delegated semiosis, what we may call its semiotic democracy.

The pleasures of television lie not just in the meanings it provokes, but also in the access it offers viewers to the process of representation itself. This invites them to adopt a productively reading relation to its textuality that is necessary if they are to produce from it meanings and pleasures that are subculturally pertinent to them. This productively relation to the text is a non-subjected one that is a precondition for pleasure. It has its parallel, too, in the world of the social, for it is discursively similar to the subject's process of making sense of social experience and of the social system that provides the conditions for that experience; this process, of course, involves also making sense of our own subjectivity. For this process to be pleasurable there must be some sense of control over at least part of it, some sense of participation in it, and certainly no sense of being excluded from it. There is no pleasure in being totally subjected by the social system or in being made a "cultural dope" by a text.³² Semiotic democracy entails the subject's power to participate in and inflect meanings of text, social experience, and subjectivity.

The power inherent in this process is both pleasurable and political. But of course it is not undetermined or limitless. Power can only exist in the experience of resistance: democracy is only necessary (or pleasurable) in the face of autocratic forces. The power and the pleasure of making one's own subculturally pertinent meanings out of television can only exist in recognition that opposing semiotic forces are at work in the text. The process of making meanings out of television involves the recognition of authorial, centralizing lines of semiotic force against which the viewer-produced, decentered, democratic meanings are opposed. The centripetal-centrifugal metaphor is a useful one here: the pleasures of television are diverse, around the circumference, and can exist only in

not engaged in solving enigmas and predicting narrative outcomes that a powerful author-role has already experienced and resolved, but are rather invited to experience the suspense and its anxious uncertainty as less mediated, more direct, and thus more open to their own inflections of it. Similarly, the hermeneutic engagement of the viewer of soap opera, with its sense of an unwritten future, is different from that of the cinema spectator or novel reader. The "liveness" of quiz shows like *The Dating Game* or *Perfect Match* invites viewers to bring their own social expertise of pairing people off, or of reading into people from inadequate clues, and to measure this expertise against that of the contestants in a much freer way than if the shows had been presented as a record of who chose whom and for which reasons. The apparent coincidence of the time frames of the show and of the viewers resists the closure inherent in an already written text.

At a micro level, this authorial absence works much less obviously. The speed with which television has to be produced makes it less well "crafted" than, for instance, film. But this lack of craftsmanship is also a lack of authorial intervention: for instance, the absence of post-production in soap operas may, in the financial economy, be simply explained in terms of costs and returns, but in the cultural economy its meanings are quite different. The result is that actions on the screen take place in the same time scale as "reality": they cannot, in the editing process, be speeded up by having "dead" bits removed. This helps the impression that the events on the screen are happening "now" and are not an authored account of events in the past.

The "nowness" of news, like that of sport, takes a different form, but has similar effects. The author-figure of news is explicit, there on the screen, telling us what has happened. Because his or her authorial status is explicit, it is therefore challengeable and, often, challenged. The live "inserts," however controlled they may be by the conventional narrative structure of the news story and the bulletins of which it is a part, rarely fit perfectly into the ideological slot prepared for them. There are always rough edges, unresolved contradictions that intransigently resist the explicit authorship of the bulletin. Television news is the result of a constant struggle between authorial control and a sense of an unwritten, unruly set of events that resist this control. The haste with which news has to be produced means that its authorial control is both visible and inefficient. The contradictions between the "voice of authority" and "the imperative of the real" keep news and sport well within television's productively mode.

In sport this is explicit. Sports commentary is the authored text that exists simultaneously with the "events" it is writing about: the opportunity for viewers to "produce" their own scripts is openly offered and, frequently, eagerly accepted. The constant flow of background and statistical information, of slow motion replays, of replays from different angles and distances, gives the viewers the insider information and therefore the power to make meanings that is normally the cultural property of the author to be released in controlled doses to the reader. The authorial function of the commentators invites, and frequently receives, oppositional challenges from the viewers and television, along with a

host of secondary texts, provides the material upon which such challenges depend. This insider information is similar to that given by fan magazines. It works similarly in that it increases the viewer's awareness of the constructedness of the text and, thus, encourages a productively relation to it. Access to the mode of representation is an important source of pleasure for the literate readers whom productively texts demand: and today's television viewers are, of course, exceptionally televisually literate. Again the reading relations of television tend toward a democracy rather than an autocracy.

Television's seriality works to underpin these closely allied appearances of oneness and unwrittenness, for, like them, it works with a sense of a future which denies closure. However completely the plot of one episode is closed off, the situation never is. All television series have some characteristics of serials — the relationships between the characters and the possibilities of the basic situation are never completed or resolved, but remain open, reverberating, and ready for re-activation next week. In action and detective series, the sense of an author, of the writtenness of the text, may be much stronger than in many other television genres, and the "nowness" of the action much less in evidence, but television's tension between the forces of closure and of openness, between authorial and viewer authority, still remains central to the textual experience they offer. It is also pushing them to develop contradictory ways of foregrounding their own constructedness, a point I shall return to in the next section.

Heteroglossia

Television's segmentation and its democratic delegation of semiosis make it necessarily heteroglossic, and its heteroglossia is a precondition for its semiotic democracy and its segmentation. Unity, continuity, and consequence are textual signs of an author function whose authority is exerted in the creation of a comparatively stable, comparatively uncontradictory, locus from which to make sense of the text and of the world that we are invited to experience through it. This author function, of course, must not be reduced to an individual author; it is often performed by institutional conventions and practices, and finally is a discursive practice in an Althusserian model of ideology. But however this authorial function is characterized, it is essentially a force toward homogeneity.

The diversity of television's modes of reception, the diversity of social formations within which it may be viewed, and the diversity of cultural systems and subsystems with which its meanings will be connected require us to understand television in terms of diversity and difference rather than of unity and homogeneity. It is a diversity of voices which resist any authorial hierarchization, but which can be listened to differentially by different viewers and hierarchized differently at different moments of viewing. Different segments can and do speak with different voices, often contradictory ones.

One basic textual characteristic that enables television to speak contradictorily is its semiotic excess. Television's main semiotic energy is, according to Hartley,

unstable, shifting moments of balance with the opposing centripetal forces that seek to center, unify, and provide ready-made meanings. But the model works in both ways. Television expects to be disagreed with: its centripetal forces depend upon centrifugal ones.

This viewer-disagreement, this viewer-challenge, goes beyond the challenge to the meanings that television offers and becomes pleasurable when it becomes a challenge to the power to make meanings. This is when it also becomes political. For the power to make meanings, albeit within conditions not of our own making, is the power to be different. This power to be different can only be understood as power if it is seen in relations of resistance to homogenizing forces. In a liberal pluralistic model of society there is neither power nor threat in social difference; consequently social differences are seen as contributing to social harmony and stability rather than as motors for social change. The social model I prefer is one that characterizes the agencies of social power as working hegemonically to minimize the awareness of social differences, to construct a common sense of social relations that emphasizes harmony and commonality. The power to be different, then, is a resistive power and one that keeps alive the possibility of social change.

Any social system requires a system of meanings to underpin it, to stabilize it, or destabilize it. Popular television can never have a direct radical or subversive effect and it is fruitless to propose that it ought to. However many feminist readings and pleasures women may find in soap opera, the viewing experience of *itself* will never bring them out on the streets in anti-patriarchal revolution. The domains of entertainment and of politics are simply not interconnected along such direct, cause-and-effect channels. But neither is each domain completely autonomous from the other.

The domain of entertainment deals in the interior pleasures of the meanings of texts, of self, and of social relations; any resistance within it is semiotic, not social. Semiotic resistance may not pass beyond the world of the interior, but this does not invalidate it. Angela McRobbie argues that fantasy is a private, intimate experience which can be part of a strategy of resistance or opposition for it constitutes an area that cannot be finally colonized and is, paradoxically, as real an experience as "baby sitting or staying in to do the washing."²³

The power to think differently from the way preferred by the structures of dominance has a political dimension, even if the meanings produced by such thought remain interior and are not circulated subculturally. The political effectiveness of the minority whose resistance takes the form of organized social action depends upon the support of a grass-roots body of the people who are thinking similarly resistant thoughts. Though this semiotic resistance need not translate into direct political resistance, it can, even if the politics is that of the family rather than the state. Seiter *et al.* found a soap opera fan whose pleasure in a woman character's extramarital affair translated into a direct, if playful, challenge to her husband.²⁴ Radway found similarly that some women readers of romance novels found that their reading gave them the increased self-confidence

to stand up to and oppose the patriarchal power in their marriages.²⁵ The difference between semiotic resistance and socio-political resistance is not at all clearly defined: the interior is, to coin a phrase, the political.

The origins of social change do not lie in cultural representations, but in material social conditions. Cultural representations obviously have an important role to play in the meanings they can provoke people to make of these social conditions, and television can and does participate to an extent in offering progressive, if not radical, meanings. But I would argue that television's political effectivity and its progressive potential lie rather in its ability to devolve the power to make meanings rather than in any alternative meanings it may offer. Its delegated semiosis encourages the production of semiotic differences which in turn enable social differences to be maintained.

Not all social differences are subjected to the forces of homogenization in the same way. Racial differences, for instance may, as in *The Cosby Show*, be "whitened" or homogenized (I suspect, in the absence of direct evidence, that it offers more pleasurable meanings of race to whites than it does to blacks), or they may be largely ignored, or written out of the system. This may result in such groups not watching television (Morley found that unemployed black girls did not watch *Nationwide* because it offered them nothing²⁶) or, if they choose to watch they become ingenious almost to the point of deviousness in finding black pleasures and meanings in white texts - witness the Aboriginal readers of *Rambo* and westerns quoted above. Gans discovered different oppositional reading relations amongst Boston's Italian community in the 1960s.²⁷ Young males would enjoy jeering at white Anglo-Saxon television heroes in a way that gave them pleasure and empowerment in their sense of ethnic difference: these were not the pleasures of accommodation to the dominant, but of the subordinate asserting their pride in their difference. Oppressed and silenced groups will only enjoy television which offers them the opportunity to participate in this semiotic democracy with its ability to empower the subordinate by providing the opportunity of making resisting meanings of text, society, and subjectivity, and thus to provide a sense of self-confidence in the subordinate that enables their maintenance of social difference, their resistance to the hegemonizing, incorporating process of homogenization.

Television's heteroglossia reproduces social heterogeneity. The contradiction between television's status as an authored text and its apparent unwrittenness that allows the viewer access to the authorial role of making meanings reproduces the struggles for power and (semi-)autonomy in a capitalist democracy. Social change can only be motivated by a sense of social difference, and television, far from being the agent of homogenization that pessimists in the past have feared, is more productively understood as an enabler, if not an active agent, of diversity and difference.

Critical intervention

Television's textuality is not bounded by the titles and credits of a program, subjectivity cannot be confined within the skin or history of an individual, and similarly viewing television cannot be confined to the periods when the set is switched on. Television is not only part of the process of viewing, or reading or talking about it, but it is also part of our cultural lives when its presence is less direct, less obvious. We need to investigate ways in which a television fan watches movies in a cinema or attends a live ballgame; we need to probe how a middle-aged fan of *Miami Vice* makes sense of his own shabby dress. Television is part of family relations and family politics, it is part of gender relations and politics, part of consumer relations and politics. Again, a comprehensive map of all the cultural processes, of which television viewing is only one, is both impossible and unnecessary. What is needed is the investigation of instances that are no more and no less typical than other instances. And the emphasis should be not on what people do, not on what their social experience is, but on how they make sense of it. Their recorded words and behaviors are not data giving us their reactions and meanings, but instances of the sense-making process that we call culture, clues of how this process works and can be actualized.

The ability of the critic to intervene in the politics of popular culture, to counter the forces of domination and support those of resistance or evasion, depends upon a far more sympathetic and detailed understanding of the cultural economy than we have so far achieved. The traditional critical emphasis from the left has focused upon the power of the industry and upon the power of ideology and hegemony. This has led us to locate the appropriate sites of intervention in the processes of production and representation. A more effective, if methodologically much more difficult, focus for intervention might be the diversity of sites of reception, but instrumental simplicity should not be the only factor in our choice of appropriate political action.

The main problem facing the critic today is to understand popular pleasures and popular discrimination, and on the basis of this understanding to decide how and if to intervene in both the production and reception of texts. It may be that open heteroglossic texts such as *Dallas* (which Altman characterizes as a "menu" from which viewers choose²⁸) are actually socially and politically more progressive than more closed, monoglossic texts, even ones that prefer more apparently progressive meanings. The progressiveness of popular television may lie in heteroglossic programs that not only promote the dominant ideology but that also offer opportunities to resist, oppose, and evade it. As yet, we just do not know.

We can only find out by paying more attention to the moments of reception for only here can we determine which texts and which characteristics of those texts offer their polysemy for semiotic mobilization by the subordinate, and how these semiotic differences are produced and circulated subculturally. We also need to discover why some members of subordinated groups are more productive or

more resistant viewers than others. The critic can only intervene effectively on the basis of adequate understanding, and on the basis of a deep respect for the pleasure that the subordinate make from their popular culture. It may seem unfortunate that it is commercially motivated mainstream television that is best able to offer these pleasures, but possibly the commercial imperative has brought its producers to a closer relationship with popular social experience than the more distantly theorized political-moral-aesthetic position of those with both a social conscience and a social power has been able to achieve.

The question facing progressive critics may now need reversing: rather than asking how it is that the culture industry makes people into commodities that serve its interests, we should now be asking how it is that the people can turn the products of the industry into their popular culture and can make them serve their interests.

Social differences are produced by the social system but the meanings of these differences are produced by culture: the sense of them has to be constantly produced and reproduced as part of the subject's experience of these differences. Viewer-driven meanings made from texts and subculturally driven meanings made of social experience involve the pleasures of producing meanings rather than the subjection of being produced by them, and make it possible to maintain a consciousness of those abrasive, uncomfortable social differences that hegemonic common sense works so hard to smooth over.

And television plays a crucial role in this; though it is produced by the culture industry and bears within it the lines of hegemonic force, it is met by the tactics of the everyday. De Certeau argues that social power and the power to make meanings that serve the interests of the dominant work strategically, that is, they work in the manner of an occupying army, in a massively organized structure of power.²⁹ But they are met by the tactics of guerrilla warfare, by tactical, fleeting raids upon their weak points which are not organized into any master plan, but which exploit the particularities and possibilities of each tactical moment. According to de Certeau, "people make do with what they have," and in the heavily bureaucratized and industrialized society of late capitalism, what people have is what is provided for them by the institutions and industries of capitalism. It is through these that the social strategy is put into practice, but its effectivity must not be read simply from its intent or from the strength of the forces at its disposal. It is not only the US army in Vietnam and the Soviet army in Afghanistan that have been unable to devise a strategy to beat guerrilla tactics. What we need to investigate, after de Certeau's provocative theorizing, is the everyday tactical, and therefore pleasurable, uses of these cultural resources (albeit industrially produced), the everyday deployment of the tactics of evasion, expropriation, and resistance.

The links between semiotic power/resistance/pleasure and the maintenance of resistive social differences, the role of television in this, and the part that all this can play in social change are theoretically arguable. What I would like to see is the methodologically daunting project of tracing actual instances of these links

F being made, of these processes being actualized, of the delineation of the multitude of cultural processes at work in the different moments of viewing television.

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P Notes

d 1 Lawrence Grossberg, "The In-Difference of Television," *Screens* 28, no. 2 (spring 1987): 28-46.

b 2 Lawrence Grossberg (ed.) "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (summer 1986): 45-60.

h 3 Robert Hodge and David Tripp, *Children and Television* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986). *Prisoner*, (screened in the US under the title *Prisoner - Cell Block H*) is an Australian soap opera set in a women's prison. Hodge and Tripp (p. 49) found that school students identified many similarities between school students and prisoners:

- 1 pupils are shut in;
- 2 pupils are separated from their friends;
- 3 pupils would not be there if they were not made to be;
- 4 pupils only work because they are punished if they do not and it is less boring than doing nothing at all;
- 5 pupils have no rights; they can do nothing about an unfair teacher;
- 6 some teachers victimize their pupils;
- 7 there are gangs and leaders amongst the pupils;
- 8 there are silly rules which everyone tries to break.

These similarities enable *Prisoner* to provide the students with an imaginative "language" with which to think through their experience of powerlessness in the school. The meanings of subordination were those of the subordinate, not of the dominant, and there is evidence that students found these meanings both pleasurable and empowering.

f 4 *Sale of the Century* and *Prisoner* were both "articulations" of school in that both could be linked with school and could be used differently to "speak" or make sense of the school experience. See John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987).

f 5 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Aristocracy of Culture," *Media, Culture, and Society* 2, no. 3 (July 1980): 225-54.

f 6 Donohy Hobson, "Crossroads": *The Drama of a Soap Opera* (London: Methuen, 1982).

f 7 Hodge and Tripp, *Children and Television*.

f 8 John Tulloch and Albert Moran, "A Country Practice": 'Quality Soap' (Sydney: Currency Press, 1986).

f 9 Elliott Katz and Tamar Liebes, "Mutual Aid in the Decoding of *Dallas*:"

Preliminary Notes from a Cross-Cultural Case Study," in Phillip Drummond and Richard Paterson (eds) *Television in Transition*, (London: British Film Institute, 1985), pp. 187-98.

f 10 Eric Michaels, "Aboriginal Content: Who's Got It - Who Needs It" (paper presented at the Australian Screen Studies Association Conference, Sydney, December 1986).

- 11 Fiske, *Television Culture*; e.g. Sydney children in 1982 and 1983 were singing their version of a Tooheys beer commercial: "How do you feel when you're having a flick, under a truck, and the truck rolls off? I feel like a Tooheys, I feel like a Tooheys"; I feel like a Tooheys' or two" (Children's Folklore Archives, Australian Studies Centre, Curtin University).
- 12 Nicholas Garnham, "Concepts of Culture: Public Policy and the Cultural Industries," *Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 1987): 23-37.
- 13 See Tamar Liebes and Elliott Katz' chapter in this volume, pp. 204-22.
- 14 Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977).
- 15 Fiske, *Television Culture*.
- 16 Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974).
- 17 John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema Television Video* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).
- 18 Justin Wren-Lewis, "Decoding Television News," in Drummond and Paterson, *Television in Transition*, pp. 205-34.
- 19 Robert C. Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).
- 20 See, e.g., Charlotte Brunsdon, "Writing about Soap Opera," in Len Masterman (ed.) *Television Mythologies: Stars, Shows and Signs*, (London: Comedia, 1986), pp. 82-7; Tulloch and Moran, *Country Practice*; and Fiske, *Television Culture*.
- 21 Tulloch and Moran, *Country Practice*.
- 22 Roland Barthes, *5/2* (London: Cape, 1975).
- 23 Tony Bennett, "The Bond Phenomenon: Theorizing a Popular Hero," *Southern Review* 16, no. 2 (1983): 195-225.
- 24 Katz and Liebes, "Mutual Aid."
- 25 Stephen Heath and Gillian Skirrow, "Television: A World in Action," *Screens* 18, no. 2 (summer 1977): 7-59; Jane Feuer, "The Concept of Live Television: Ontology versus Ideology," in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.) *Regarding Television*, (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1983), pp. 12-22.
- 26 John Hartley, "Encouraging Signs: TV and the Power of Dirt, Speech and Scandalous Categories," in W. Rowland and B. Watkins (eds) *Interpreting Television: Current Research Perspectives* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1984), pp. 119-41.
- 27 Fiske, *Television Culture*; Jane Feuer, "Melodrama, Serial Form and Television Today," *Screens* 25, no. 1 (January-February 1984): 4-16.
- 28 Ian Ang, *Watching "Dallas": Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985).
- 29 John Fiske, "Television: Polysemy and Popularity," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 3, no. 4 (December 1986): 200-16.
- 30 Hobson, *Crossroads*, and Ang, *Watching "Dallas"*.
- 31 John Davies, "The Television Audience Revisited" (paper presented at the Australian Screen Studies Association Conference, Brisbane, 1984); and Fiske, *Television Culture*.
- 32 Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Poplar,'" in Robert Samuel (ed.) *People's History and Social Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 227-40.
- 33 Angela McRobbie, "Dance and Social Fantasy," in Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava (eds) *Gender and Generation* (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 130-61.
- 34 See the chapter by Seiter et al. in this volume, pp. 223-47.
- 35 Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

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