21. Bourdieu, P. (1990) Structures, habitus, practices, *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 53.

22. It is interesting to ask in what ways Bourdieu's account of cultural taste systems could be used by members of a culture-class, to review and perhaps reconstruct their own relations to the world through gaining a wider understanding of their own position. British cultural studies, at least in the early days, tried hard to examine its own role and potential in this respect. To our knowledge this is not an issue Bourdieu or his followers have ever posed perhaps because it is simply conceptually unimaginable on his account.

23. Bourdieu, P. (1993) Principles for a sociology of literary works. In Johnson, R. (ed.) *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 189–90.

24. For one among many recent useful books on the inevitability of politics in football, see Simon Kuper's (1994) *Football Against The Enemy*, London: Orion.

25. Barker, M. (1993) Seeing how far you can see: on being a 'fan' of 2000AD. In Buckingham, D. (ed.) *Reading Audiences: Young People and the Media*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 159–83.

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19

Domestic relations: the framework of family viewing in Great Britain

David Morley

Investigating family viewing in Britain

The research reported below concerns two different types of research questions regarding, on the one hand, how television is interpreted by its audiences and, on the other, how TV material is used in different families. [...]

The central thesis was that the changing patterns of television viewing could be understood only in the overall context of family leisure activity. Previous work in this area has tended to focus too narrowly on one or another side of a pair of interlinked issues that need, in fact, to be considered together: these are the issues of how viewers make sense of the materials they view, and the social (and primarily familial) relations within which viewing is conducted. [...]

In this research, I took the premise that one should consider the basic unit of consumption of TV to be the family/household rather than the individual viewer. This is done to raise questions about how the television set is handled in the home, how viewing decisions are made – by which family members, at what times, what is watched – and how responses to different kinds of materials are discussed within the family, and so on. In short, this represents an attempt to analyse individual viewing activity within the household/familial relations in which it commonly operates.

Audience research that ignores this context cannot comprehend a number of key determinations relating to both viewing 'choices' and responses – those involving questions of differential power, responsibility, and control within the family at different time of the day and night.

My further premise is that the use of the television set has to be understood in the wider context of other competing and complementary leisure activities (hobbies, interests, pastimes) in which viewers engage. Television clearly is primary leisure activity, but previous research has tended merely to investigate leisure options as separate and unrelated activities to be listed, rather than to be studied in relation in each other.

Investigating how television is used: reviewing some key strands of the relevant research literature

What does it mean to 'watch television'?

'Watching television' cannot be assumed to be a one-dimensional activity of equivalent meaning or significance at all time for all who perform it. I was, therefore, interested in identifying and investigating differences hidden behind the description 'watching television' – both the differences between choices made by various kinds of viewers in relation to different viewing options, and differences of attention and comprehension between and among viewers' responses to the same viewing materials. One important set of differences explored in the project concerns the different levels of attention given to different programs by different viewers – differences that are typically masked by the finding that they all 'watched' a given program.

I wanted to explore both differences between families in different social and cultural contexts. I would argue that it is only in this context – that of the wider fields of social and cultural determinations that frame the practices of viewing – that individual choices and responses can be understood.

In particular, this project was designed to explore in detail within a deliberately limited universe the 'how' and 'why' of questions that lie unexplained behind patterns of viewing behavior revealed by large survey work. I aimed to produce a more developed conceptual model of viewing behavior in the context of family leisure by investigating now such factors as program type, family position, and cultural background interrelate to produce the dynamics of family viewing.

We are, in short, discussing television viewing in the context of domestic life, which, as we all know, is a complex matter. To expect that we could treat the individual viewer making program choices as if he or she were the rational consumer in a free and perfect market is surely the height of absurdity when we are talking about people living in families. For most people, viewing takes place within the context of what Sean Cubitt (1985) calls 'the politics of the living room', where, as he puts it, 'if the camera pulls us in, the family pulls us out', and where the people you live with are likely to disrupt, if not shatter, your communion with the 'box in the corner'.

Let us consider the problem from another angle:

Early in the evening we watch very little TV. Only when my husband is in a real rage. He comes home, hardly says anything and switches on the TV.

How much space, and of what types, is available to which family members in the context of television viewing activity? How is that space organized, and how are the television set(s) and other communication technologies inserted into that space? Is the living room organized around the TV set? Do different family members have characteristic viewing posi-

tions within that space? All of these may appear at first to be banal questions. But they do indeed have great significance in understanding how television 'works' within a family. As Lindlof and Traudt (1983) note, for instance, 'in higher density families . . . TV viewing may function as a way of avoiding conflicts or lessening tensions in lieu of spatial privacy'. [. . .]

Research objectives

The particular research project reported here was designed to investigate the changing uses of television among a sample of families of different types drawn from a range of social positions. It was designed to investigate differences between families of different social positions and between families with children of different ages in terms of:

- the increasingly varied use of household television set(s) for receiving broadcast television, video games, teletext, and so on
- patterns of differential commitment and response to particular types of programming
- the dynamics of television use within the family; how viewing choices are expressed and negotiated within the family; the differential power of particular family members in relation to viewing choices at different times of the day; the ways in which television material is discussed within the family
- 'the relations between television watching and other dimensions of family life – television as a source of information on leisure choices and how leisure interests and work obligations (both inside and outside the home) influence viewing choices.

The project was designed to identify and investigate the differences hidden behind the catch-all phrase, 'watching television'. We all watch television, but with how much attention and with what degrees of commitment and response, in relation to which types of shows, at what times?

Moreover, as argued earlier, we are now in situation in which watching broadcast television is only one among various possible uses of the domestic television set. Among the questions I set out to explore were the following ones. Which family members, in which types of families, use their televisions for which purpose at which points in the day? What are the factors that give rise to different patterns and how are they understood by respondents themselves? Further, how are the priorities and preferences of family members negotiated and resolved in relation to conflicting demands on the use of the television in general and of viewing preferences in particular? In short, how do family dynamics interact with viewing behavior?

Methodology

The methodology adopted was a qualitative one, whereby each family was interviewed in depth in order to elucidate their various accounts of how they understand the role of television in their overall leisure

As Bausinger notes, in this case 'pushing the button doesn't signify "I would like to watch this", but "I want to see and hear nothing"'.

(Bausinger, 1984, p. 344)

activities. The aim was to gain insight into the terms within which respondents themselves defined their viewing activities. Centrally, I wanted to generate insights into the criteria and in responding (positively or negatively) used by viewers in making programming and scheduling. I believed that this approach would produce some insights into the criteria lying behind (and generating) particular viewing choices and responses. Thus it was hoped that the project would provide a useful complement to the results of survey work that itself, while usefully detailing the overall pattern of viewing choices that are made, cannot hope to explain why and how these choices and responses take place.

The families were interviewed in their own home during the spring of 1985. Initially the two parents were interviewed, then later in each inter-view their children were invited to take part in the discussion along with their parents. The interviews lasted between one and two hours and were audiotape recorded and later transcribed in full for analysis. [...]

Sample design

The sample consisted of 18 families. All were drawn from one area of South London. All possessed a video recorder. All were white. All consisted of house-holds of two adults living together with two or more dependent children, up to the age of 18.

Because of the nature of the area where respondents were recruited, my sample contains a high proportion of working-class/lower middle-class families – not necessarily in terms of income (my sample includes quite a wide range of income) but in terms of all the other aspects of class (cultural capital, education, etc.) [...]

Television and gender: the framework for analysis

The following major themes were identified in the interviews. They recur frequently enough with the different families that I can point to a reasonable degree of consistency of response. Clearly, one structural principle working across all the families interviewed is that of gender. These interviews raise important questions about the effects of gender in terms of

1. power and control over program choice
2. styles of viewing
3. planned and unplanned viewing
4. television-related talk
5. use of video
6. 'solo' viewing and guilty pleasures
7. program type preferences
8. national versus local news programming

Before describing the findings under these particular headings, I would first like to make some general points about the significance of the empir-ical differences that my research revealed between the viewing habits of

the men and the women in the sample. As will be seen, men and women offer clearly contrasting accounts of their viewing habits in terms of the differential power to choose what they view, how much they view, their viewing styles, and their choice of particular viewing material. However, I am not suggesting that these empirical differences are attributes of their essential biological characteristics as men and women. Rather, I am trying to argue that these differences are the effects of the particular social roles that these men and women occupy within the home. Moreover, I am not suggesting that the particular pattern of gender relations within the home found here (with all the consequences that that pattern has for viewing behavior) would necessarily be replicated either in nuclear families from a different class or ethnic background or in households of different types with the same class and ethnic backgrounds. Rather, it is always a case of how gender relations interact with, and are formed differently within, these different contexts.

Aside from these qualifications, there is one fundamental point that needs to be made concerning the basically different positioning of men and women within the domestic sphere. The dominant model of gender relations within this society (and certainly within that subsection of it represented in my sample) is one in which the home is primarily defined for men as a site of leisure – by distinction from the 'industrial time' of their employment outside the home – while the home is primarily defined for women as a site of work, whether or not they also work outside the home. This simply means that, in investigating television viewing in the home, one is by definition investigating something that men are better placed to do wholeheartedly, and that women seem only to be able to do distractedly and guiltily, because of their continuing sense of domestic responsibility. Moreover, this differential positioning is given a greater significance as the home becomes increasingly defined as the prime sphere of leisure.

When considering the empirical findings that follow, care must be taken to hold in view this structuring of the domestic environment by gender relations as the backdrop against which these particular patterns of viewing behavior have developed. Otherwise, we risk seeing these patterns a somehow the direct result of 'essential' or biological characteristics of men and women *per se*. Ang (1987) extends the argument:

Women's viewing patterns can only be understood in relation to men's patterns: the two are in a sense constitutive of each other. What we call 'viewing habits' are thus not more or less static set of characteristics inhab-ited by an individual or group of individuals; rather they are the temporary result of a ...dynamic...process...male/female relationships are always informed by power, contradiction, and struggle.

(pp. 18-19)

So, as Ang argues, male and female modes of watching TV are not two separate, discrete types of experience, clearly defined and static 'objects' of study or expressions of essential natures. Rather than taking differences between male and female relations to TV as an empirical given, one must

look to how the structure of domestic power relations works to constitute these differences.

Power and control over program choice

Masculine power is evident in a number of the families as the ultimate determinant on occasions of conflict over viewing choices ('We discuss what we all want to watch and the biggest wins. That's me, I'm the biggest.'). It is even more apparent in the case of those families that have a remote control device. None of the women in any of the families use the remote control device regularly. A number of them complain that their husbands use the device obsessively, channel-flicking across programs when their wives are trying to watch something else. Characteristically, the remote control device is the symbolic possession of the father (or of the son, in the father's absence) that sits 'on the arm of Daddy's chair' and is used almost exclusively by him. It is a highly visible method of condensed power relations:

*Daughter: Dad keeps both of the automatic controls – one on each side of his chair.

*Woman: Well, I don't get much chance, because he sits there with the automatic control beside him and that's it. I get annoyed because I can be watching a program and he's flicking channels to see if a program on the other side is finished so he can record something. So the television's flickering all the time, while he's flicking the timer. I just say 'For goodness' sake, leave it alone.' I don't get the chance to use the control. I don't get near it.

*Woman: No, not really, I don't get the chance to use the automatic control. I leave that down to him. It is aggravating, because I can be watching something and all of a sudden he turns it over to get the football result.

*Daughter: The control's always next to Dad's chair. It doesn't come away when Dad's here. It stays right there.

Interestingly, the main exceptions to this overall pattern are those families in which the man is unemployed while his wife is working. In these cases it is slightly more common for the man to be expected to let other family members watch what they want to when it is broadcast while he video-tapes what he would like to see in order to watch that later at night or the following day. His timetable of commitments is more flexible than those of the working members of the family. Here we begin to see the way in which the position of power held by most of the men in the sample (and which their wives concede) is based not simply on the biological fact of being men but rather on a social definition of a masculinity of which employment (that is, the 'breadwinner' role) is a necessary and constituent part. When that condition is not met, the pattern of power relations within the home can change noticeably. [...]

Styles of viewing

One major finding is the consistency of the distinction made between the characteristic ways in which men and women describe their viewing activity. Essentially, men state a clear preference for viewing attentively,

in silence, without interruption 'in order not to miss anything'. Moreover, they display puzzlement at the way their wives and daughters watch television. The women describe viewing as a fundamentally social activity, involving ongoing conversation, and usually the performance of at least one other domestic activity (ironing, etc.) at the same time. Indeed, many women feel that to just watch television without doing anything else at the same time would be an indefensible waste of time, given their sense of their domestic obligations. To watch in this way is something they rarely do, except occasionally, when alone or with other women friends and when they have managed to construct a situation in which to watch their favorite program or video. The women note that their husbands are always 'on at them' to shut up, and the men can't really understand how their wives can follow the programs if they are doing something else at the same time. [...]

Planned and unplanned viewing

It is men, on the whole, who speak of checking through the paper (or the teletext) to plan their evening's viewing. Very few women seem to do this at all, except in terms of already knowing which evenings and times their favorite series are on and thus not needing to check the schedule. This is also an indication of a different attitude to viewing as a whole. Many of the women have a much more take-it-or-leave-it attitude, not caring much if they miss things (except for their favorite serials):

*Man: Normally I look through the paper because you (his wife) tend to just put on ITV, but sometimes there is something good on the other channels, so I make a note – things like films and sport.

*Woman: I don't read newspapers. If I know what's going to be on, I'll watch it. He tends to look in the paper. I don't actually look in the paper to see what's on. [...]

Television-related talk

Women show much less reluctance to 'admit' that they talk about television with their friends and workmates. Very few men [...] say they do this. It is as if they feel that to admit that they watch too much television (especially with the degree of involvement that would be implied by finding it important enough to talk about) would be to put their very masculinity in question (see the section on program type preference below). The only standard exception is where the men say that they talk about sports on television. Some part of this has simply to do with the fact that femininity is a more expressive cultural mode than is masculinity. Thus even if women watch less, with less intent viewing styles, they are nonetheless inclined to talk about television more than men, despite the fact that men watch it more attentively. [...]

Use of video

The women didn't operate the video recorder themselves to any great extent, but relied on their husbands or children to work it for them.

Videos, like remote control devices, are largely the possessions of fathers and sons:

*Woman: There's been things I've wanted to watch and I didn't understand the video enough. She (the daughter) used to understand it more than us.

*Woman: I'm happy with what I see, so I don't use the video much. I mean lots of the films he records I don't even watch. He watches them after we've gone to bed.

*Man: I use it most – me and the boys more than anything – mostly to tape racing and pool, programs we can't watch when they (the women) are watching.

*Woman: I can't use the video. I tried to tape 'Widows' for him and I done it wrong. He went barmy. I don't know what went wrong. . . I always ask him to do it for me because I can't. I always do it wrong. I've never bothered with it. [...]

'Solo' viewing and guilty pleasures

A number of the women in the sample explain that their greatest pleasure is to be able to watch 'a nice weepie' or their favorite serial when the rest of the family isn't there. Only then do they feel free enough of their domestic responsibilities to 'indulge' themselves in the kind of attentive viewing in which their husbands routinely engage. Here we enter the territory identified by Brodie and Stoneman (1983), who found that mothers tended to maintain their role as 'domestic manager' across program types, as opposed to their husbands' tendency to abandon their manager/parent role when viewing materials of particular interest to them. The point is expressed most clearly by the woman who explains that she particularly enjoys watching early morning television on the weekends because these are the only occasions when her husband and sons 'sleep in', providing a chance to watch television attentively without keeping half an eye on the needs of others. [...]

What is at issue here is the guilt that most of these women feel about their own pleasures. They are, on the whole, prepared to concede that the dramas and soap operas they like are 'silly' or 'badly acted' or inconsequential. They accept the terms of a masculine hegemony that defines their preferences as having low status. Having accepted those terms, they then find it hard to argue for their preferences in a conflict because, by definition, what their husbands want to watch is more prestigious. They then deal with this by watching their programs, when possible, on their own, or only with their women friends, and will fit such arrangements into the crevices of their domestic timetables:

*Woman: What I really like is typical American trash, I suppose, but I love it . . . all the American rubbish, really. And I love those Australian films. I think they're really good, those.

*Woman: When the children go to bed he has the ultimate choice. I feel guilty if I push for what I want to see because he and the boys want to see the same thing, rather than what a mere woman would want to watch. . . . If there was a love film on, I'd be happy to see it and they wouldn't. It's like

when you go to pick up a video, instead of getting a nice sloppy love story, I think I can't get that because of the others. I'd feel guilty watching it because I think I'm getting my pleasure while the others aren't getting any pleasure, because they're not interested.

Program type preferences

My respondents displayed a notable consistency in this area, whereby masculinity was primarily identified with a strong preference for 'factual' programs (news, current affairs, documentaries) and femininity identified with a preference for fictional programs. The observation may be banal, but the strength of the consistency displayed here was remarkable whenever respondents were asked about program preferences, and especially when asked which programs they would make a point of watching and doing so attentively:

*Man: I like all documentaries. . . . I like watching stuff like that. . . . I can watch fiction but I am not great lover of it.
*Woman: He don't like a lot of serials.
*Man: It's not my type of stuff. I do like the news, current affairs, all that type of stuff.
*Woman: Me and the girls love our serials.
*Man: I watch the news all the time, I like the news, current affairs and all that.
*Woman: I don't like to so much.
*Man: I watch the news every time, 5.40 p.m., 6.00 p.m., 9.00 p.m., 10.00 p.m., I try to watch.
*Woman: I just watch the main news so I know what's going on. Once is enough. Then I'm not interested in it.

These responses seem to fit fairly readily into a kind of syllogism of masculine/feminine relationships to television:

MASCULINE	FEMININE
Activity	Watching television
Factual programs	Fictional programs
Realist fiction	Romance

It could be claimed that my findings in this respect exaggerate the 'real' differences between men's and women's viewing and underestimate the extent of 'overlap' viewing between men and women. Certainly my respondents offer a more sharply differentiated picture of men's and women's viewing than is ordinarily reported in survey work, which shows substantial numbers of men watching fictional programs and equally substantial numbers of women watching factual programs. However, this apparent contradiction largely rests on the conflation of 'viewing' with 'viewing attentively and with enjoyment'. Moreover, even if it could be demonstrated that my respondents had systematically misrepresented their behavior to me (offering classical masculine and feminine stereotypes that belie the complexity of their actual behavior), it would remain as a social fact of considerable interest that these were the particular forms of misrepresentation that respondents felt constrained to

offer of themselves. Further, these tendencies – for the men to be unable to admit to watching fiction – themselves have real effects in their social lives.

National versus local news programming

As has been noted, it is men and not women who tend to claim in interest in news programming. Interestingly, this pattern varies when we consider local news programming, which a number of women claim to like. In several cases they give very cogent reasons for this. For instance, they say that they don't understand what international economic news is about and, as it has no experiential bearing on their lives, they're not interested in it. However, if there has been crime in their local area, they feel they need to know about it, both for their own sake and their children's sakes. This connects directly to their expressed interest in programs like 'Police Five', or programs warning of domestic dangers. In both these kinds of cases the program material has a practical value to them in terms of their domestic responsibilities, and thus they will make a point of watching it. Conversely, they frequently see themselves as having no practical relation to the area of national and international politics presented in the main news and therefore don't watch it. [...]

Roads (and potholes) ahead – the prospect of empirical research

Some years ago, in the conclusion to my study of the *Nationwide* Audience (Morley, 1980), I argued that the relation of audiences to television's ideological operations had always, in principle, to be formulated as an empirical question and that the challenge was to try to develop appropriate methods for empirical investigation of these relations. Whatever difficulties might be raised about the status of the knowledge produced as a result of this complex process, it seems to me to be a fundamentally more appropriate way to attempt to understand what audiences do when they watch TV than if I were simply to stay home and try to imagine the possible implications of how people might conceivably watch TV.

I would accept that in the absence of any significant element of participant observation of actual behavior beyond the interview situation, I am left only with the stories that respondents choose to tell me. These stories are themselves obviously limited by the cultural and linguistic frames of reference that respondents have available to them through which to articulate their responses.

However, a number of other points need to be made. The first concerns the supposedly lesser validity of respondents' accounts of behaviour as opposed to observations of actual behavior. The problem here is that observing always leaves open the question of interpretation. I may be observed to be sitting staring at the TV screen, but this behaviour could be equally compatible with a sense of total fascination or total boredom on my part – and the distinction may not be readily accessible from observed behavioral clues. Moreover, should you wish to understand what I am doing it would probably be as well to ask me. I may well, of course, lie to

you or otherwise misrepresent my thoughts and feelings, for any number of purposes, but at least you will then begin to get some access to the language, criteria of distinction, and types of categorizations through which I construct my (conscious) world. Without these clues my TV viewing (or other behavior) will necessarily remain more opaque.

The interview method then is to be defended, in my view, not simply for the access it gives the researcher to the respondents' conscious opinions and statements, but also for the access that it gives to the linguistic terms and categories – the 'logical scaffolding' in Wittgenstein's terms – through which respondents construct their worlds and their own understanding of their activities.

I would like to argue here that we need to broaden the framework of our analyses to focus on the contexts in which processes of communication occur, including especially those instances in which class and gender considerations are articulated. Among other things, I wish to argue that the broader frame required also involves analysis of the physical as well as the social contexts in which television is consumed. This argument can perhaps usefully be made in the first instance, by reference to the development of film theory.

Predominantly, within film theory, the subject addressed has been the subject of the text – the film. At its simplest, I want to argue that it is necessary to consider the *context of viewing* as much as the *object of viewing*.

Simply put, films traditionally had to be seen in certain places, and the understanding of such places has to be central to any analysis of what 'going to the pictures' has meant. I want to suggest that the whole notion of the 'picture palace' is as significant as the question of 'film'. This is to introduce the question of the phenomenology of 'going to the pictures', which involves the 'social-architecture' – in terms of decor and ambience – of the context in which films have predominantly been seen. Quite simply, there is more to cinema-going than seeing films. There is going out at night and the sense of relaxation combined with the sense of fun and excitement. The very name 'picture palace', by which cinemas were known for a long time, captures an important part of that experience. Rather than selling individual films, cinema is best understood as having sold a habit, or a certain type of socialized experience. This experience involves a whole flavour of romance and glamour, warmth and color. This is to point to the phenomenology of the whole 'moment' of going to the pictures – the queue (line), the entrance stalls, the foyer, cash desk, stairs, corridor entering the cinema, the gangway, the seats, the music, the lights fading, darkness, the screen, which begins to glow as the silk curtains are opening (Corrigan, 1983). Any analysis of the film subject that does not take on board these issues of the context in which the film is consumed is, to my mind, insufficient. Unfortunately, an awful lot of film theory has operated without reference to these issues, given the effect of the literary tradition in prioritizing the status of the text itself, abstracted from the viewing context.

My further point is that this argument applies with equal force to the study of television. Just as we need to understand the phenomenology of 'going to the pictures', so we need equally to understand the phenome-

nology of domestic television viewing – that is, the significance of various modes of physical and social organization of the domestic environment as the context in which TV viewing is conducted. There is more to watching TV than what's on the screen – and that 'more' is, centrally, the domestic context in which viewing is conducted.

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20

Television and everyday life: towards an anthropology of the television audience[1]

Roger Silverstone

No consideration of public communication can reasonably ignore the audience: the readers, viewers, consumers of the content of the mass media. Indeed, the history of mass communication research has been continuously sustained and informed by concerns with its effects on audiences – on their moral, political and economic lives. That history has been an uneven one. It has been dominated by a concern with effects, effectiveness and power, but judgements on each of these, and of the relative weight to be attached to the overall capacity of the media to influence its audiences in significant ways, has, as countless observers have noted, produced little convincing evidence of the media's potency one way or the other. The problems are substantial. The media operate in an already complex world. Audiences live in a complex world. Both are rapidly changing. The belief that the media can affect an audience in some direct or measurable ways has passed, despite commonsensical view to the contrary. [...]

In this chapter I would like to offer an approach to some of the questions posed for the study of the television audience, not so much in the hope of providing conclusive answers as marking out a territory for future exploration. I will argue for a broadly anthropological conceptual-ization of the audience and for a methodological approach, or a set of approaches, which sets the audience for television in a context of the world of everyday life: the daily experiences of home, technologies and neighbourhood, and of the public and private mythologies and rituals which define the basic patterns of our cultural experience. [...]

Towards a framework for the analysis of the television audience

[...] I intend to explore a number of possible avenues for the pursuit of the television audience, and to argue for a naturalistic methodology – a critical ethnography – as the appropriate way to proceed. There are three elements to the argument. The first is the status of television as technology. The second concerns the nature of mass and mass-mediated consumption. The third focuses on the principles of rhetoric as a way of approaching the rela-tionship between medium and content (technology and text) and its