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Radical Education Dossier 15

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Education and the Media

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER

15

Contents

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Radical Education Dossier is produced by a group of teachers, students and university staff working to bring about democratic and socially progressive change in Australian schooling, as part of a broad political movement toward a socialist revolution in Australia. The magazine aims to present a socialist analysis of a wide range of theoretical and practical issues in education and is not affiliated with any political party.

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Confronting the Media

The mass media, and television in particular, is one of the most powerful social forces in Australia. Television networks determine the structure and content of news and information, and the values and ideologies in television entertainment. In general, the mass media serves as an instrument of social control, promoting commodities and consumerist values, social conformity, law and order, authority figures and the family. Media ownership is an extremely profitable form of business institution, and part of a rapidly growing economic conglomerate which controls many other businesses.

Yet, despite its obvious power, and the great national and international growth of the media industry, we have yet to develop a serious socialist critique of the mass media in Australia. Furthermore, we have hardly begun to develop media studies in schools that look critically at the media industry and its productions. Although we are surrounded by the visual image, we keep our eyes in school narrowly focused on the written text.

We have based this issue of *RED* on media and education in order to counteract this neglect. In New South Wales, the Education Department has given the lead by issuing in March of this year a policy statement on Mass Media Education. Helen Wyatt discusses the policy statement in this issue, and argues that the Department has given progressive teachers the opportunity to press ahead with curriculum change in this vital area. The emphasis in such programs should be on production when teachers and students together can work with the technology and in so doing develop a language and an analysis of media in general.

Whatever the techniques used in media education programs, a basic recognition of the contradictory images and social effects of the media should be a central component of the analysis. The simplistic view on the left is to define television as a monolithic tool of a unified ruling class, used to maintain order and stability. Conservatives, in contrast, have projected their own simplistic view, where television is seen as a destabilising force, eroding respect for authority by exposing political scandals, and business corruption, while fostering cynicism, distrust and disrespect for the system. Both views fail to see the contradictions within television messages and its contradictory social effects.

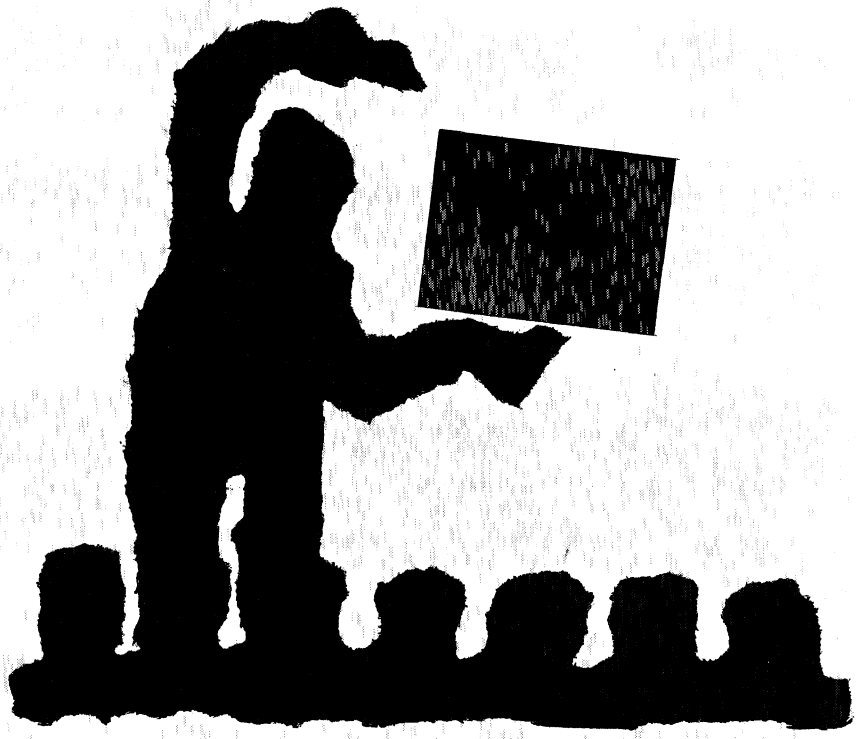
This important theme is explored in our lead article by Christine Curry and Christine O'Sullivan. They describe the various approaches to teaching television in schools, stressing their major weaknesses, before developing an approach to television teaching that avoids some of the pitfalls and takes account of the contradictory images and social effects.

It is the policy of *RED* to produce, whenever possible, practical resources for teachers and in this issue we have a four page centre lift-out on the theme of sexism and the media. Janet Kossy has prepared the detailed lesson plans which have been tried out in various classrooms. They contain excellent ideas and we hope teachers will remove this section from the magazine and make good use of it in their classrooms.

Our final article in this issue continues the theme of worker education that we featured in *RED 14*. In that issue we highlighted the current controversy in the Workers Educational Association in New South Wales. In this issue, we can see the historical roots of the current conflict. Tim Rowse describes the doctrine of impartiality and detachment that was central for the liberal intelligentsia who controlled the WEA in its early years, and the conflicts that began in the late 1930s when the maverick liberal, Lloyd Ross, challenged this comfortable notion.

Curry and O'Sullivan analyse the assumptions underlying most teaching about television, assess their shortcomings and suggest a classroom procedure teachers can use which involves effective engagement of kids' experience of TV.

Teaching Television in Secondary School



Christine Curry Christine O'Sullivan

In this article we want to raise some problems that we think surround the teaching of television in the junior secondary school. While some of these problems are specific to television studies, others are relevant to the teaching of mass media and popular culture generally. We realise that some teachers reading this may consider such an outlining of problems, with a reduced emphasis on practical suggestions, unnecessarily critical and confusing. Nevertheless there are two major reasons why we think this type of approach is necessary. Firstly, because in our view a large proportion of the television teaching that does take place in secondary schools is quite ineffective in what is often its implicit aim: to raise the standards of the television audience so that they will demand better from the television networks than they already get. Hence we have devoted a part of our article to an outline of the philosophy behind this teaching and will attempt to reformulate some political aims. Our second reason is that practical suggestions alone do not count for a great deal unless they are embodied in a knowledge of recent advances in media studies and are themselves grounded in a pedagogical practice which acknowledges the school and its educational practices as themselves subject to criticism, analysis and change.

Television and the English Curriculum

Television has been used and taught in Australian secondary schools for some time now. In many subjects it is used as an aid, a neutral means of conveying subject matter, in a way that is thought to be more interesting than conventional teacher talking or student reading. Indeed, (and quite unselfconsciously) some teachers feel that the screen outweighs their authority. Quite separate from this use of television, however, is the teaching about it. The latter varies from state to state and from school to school. Given the often wide gulf between official dictates, such as syllabi, and actual school practice, and the paucity of documentation on the latter, it is at the moment impossible to establish accurately what teaching does go on, let alone to generalise about it. In New South Wales, at least, the most prevalent official practice seems to be the school formulation of a mass media course, of which television forms a part. This mass media course is usually slotted into English in the junior school. Some mass media is taught as part of social studies or social science. However, most teaching seems to go on in English. In addition to television, mass media studies in secondary schools cover newspapers, advertising, magazines, radio and cinema. Some schools in other states have courses in mass media that are separate, at least in theory, from English.

Given that television is, as Umberto Eco says, "the school book of modern adults, as much as it is the only authoritative school book for our children"[1] one would imagine that teaching **about** television, as opposed to its mere use, would be far more prevalent and organised than it actually is. Yet in state schools in New South Wales and, as far as we know, in other states, it is lumped in with the other mass media and is, in turn, in junior secondary schools in New South Wales a part of English, while the preamble to the media section of the New South Wales Education Department's English Syllabus admits that a complete study of the media "would be beyond the scope of English". It goes on to say that it is "highly

relevant to English and has therefore a firm place in the English syllabus". In practice the teaching of the media and television is very much subsidiary to the traditional literary concerns of English teachers. Indeed, the English syllabus is symptomatic of this when it says that literature and expression should not be curtailed for media studies, but that such work should replace "language studies of the formal kind"[2]. Moreover, few teachers have formal technical or theoretical training in media studies. Most secondary school English teachers, for instance, are products of heavily literature-centred academic courses.

. . . much television teaching is carried out by English teachers who, . . . see their task or burden as opposing a literary-inspired culture (often of a rather petit bourgeois variety) to the banalities of any form of 'mass culture'.

Education Against Television

Partly as a consequence of this, as well as other ideologies of schooling and school knowledge, much television teaching is carried out by English teachers who, with varying degrees of intensity, see their task or burden as opposing a literary-inspired culture (often of a rather petit bourgeois variety) to the banalities of any form of 'mass culture'. The most widespread reason given for the inclusion of mass media/television studies in school courses is to teach discrimination. Thus the NSW English syllabus suggests that students be taught "in, for and against the media". The Australian Society of Educational Film and Television submission to the 1977 Broadcasting Tribunal Inquiry requests "much deeper education in television . . . with the purpose of raising aesthetic standards (leading to more discriminatory viewing) and counteracting the so-called bad effects of TV"[3]. The latter formulation is interesting because it reveals the ultimate political aim of the liberal and well-intentioned advocates of television education: a working class, whose school-acquired cultural refinement will somehow force the commercial television stations to elevate their programming, which will prefer perhaps *Edward and Mrs Simpson* to *Charlie's Angels*.

Apart from the extremely simplistic and questionable characterisation of the cultural and ideological dynamic of schooling assumed by this position, it also represents a very naive analysis of the relationship between television networks, their audiences and what appears on the screen. Just as, for example, the school 'audience' is differentiated and differentiates itself according to various cultural and economic determinants, not the least being the types of jobs that the students are oriented towards, so, to speak of a 'mass' television audience is quite inaccurate. Thus, given that television stations are profit-producing agencies whose aim is to 'sell' audiences to advertisers, programs are somehow constructed to attract and to define **particular** audiences. The programs that are such a lamentable reflection of public taste are frequently quite complex negotiations and representations of the various contradictory and shifting ideologies that accompany relations of production in capitalist society and within which the audience itself is constructed. Moreover, the limitations and foreclosures of commercial television do not escape what is often the ideal of Australian television educators, the ABC, whose 'quality' programs are no less subject than commercial television to the push for ideological consensus and whose subjection to professional ethics, such as neutrality and community standards, can sometimes mean even greater limitations.

Yet, despite its inappropriateness, the discrimination rationale remains the most widely practised basis of television teaching in schools. On a level that is even cruder than the political program we have described, it shades into what Ed Buscombe terms "the innoculation approach"[4]. This involves condemnation of popular television programs from a conventional literary humanist perspective, with the aim of countering the presumed poor effects of television. Research has shown that this attitude to television teaching is widespread in England[5], and there is no reason to believe it would not be equally pervasive amongst Australian teachers. Certainly in our experience it is practically universal. Thus characters and themes are 'shallow' in American and Australian serials and comedies (less so in British drama) and the 'values' of television are to be guarded against, particularly 'violence', 'commercialism' and 'unreality'. Sophisticated versions of the innoculation approach structure questions about television which are already implicitly answered. Thus a widely circulated article suggests that students first identify the story line and decide if it is original or written to a "well worn formula"[6]. Other suggested questions the teacher might ask are "Can you identify explicit values in the program?", "Is the show believable?" and finally and rather enigmatically "Does it show an awareness that the basis of all drama lies in conflict and that the roots of human conflict must be sought well below the surface of relationships?".

'Progressive' Approaches

The true repositories of values, depth, experience and enlightenment are poetry and literature, despised as these are in the world outside the school. Progressive, well-intentioned teachers are thus frequently demoralised and upset when children, rather than conveying their innocent and imaginative selves, use the opportunity afforded them for literary expression in 'creative writing' to reproduce an amalgam of television plots.

Recent influential theorisations of English teaching involve certain overtly ideological assumptions about the practices, purposes and participants of this seemingly incongruous feature of the contemporary curriculum and in part explain why a study of television is either ineffectively incorporated or kept at the margins. For instance, Strata and Wilkinson see the typical English classroom as one where pupils are engaged in exploring aspects of the human condition, especially those concerned with human relationships. "In the course of these explorations, the teacher hopes, among other things to deepen the pupil's understanding of himself, others and of the human condition"[7].

Such insidious conceptions of the classroom as a laboratory of self-understanding under the tolerant guidance of the messiah teacher tail in well with Leavisite conceptions of intellectuals, literature and values. Moreover, as a generalised guide to the functions of cultural education, they represent the increasing tendency of the school to trespass into areas of personal and emotional life once reserved almost wholly for the family, since the latter is no longer entirely adequate to some of the more subtle aspects of the task of labour power reproduction. Within this framework, television is seen as a negative and rival

cultural influence because it is insincere and formulaic. Nevertheless, the multiple, and until recently, fecund variants of progressive/personal approaches to the teaching of 'English' require that television be incorporated because it is 'relevant', that is, part of the children's experience. This seems to be largely motivated by the contradictory pressures exerted on schools by working class children's resistance to conventional curriculum content, as well as the tendency noted earlier to personalise classroom relationships. It is normally very superficial in so far as such things as television and rock music are included in the curriculum as a diversion to occupy otherwise undisciplined 'lower ability' children. Concomitantly, we have the increasingly wide scale use of television 'school programs' whose popularity with teachers is partly based on their capacity to keep a class quiet.

Effects Research: Why It Is Done

The innoculation approach has its systematic and articulated expression in the various studies done on the effects of television on school children. Much of this has its origin in research done in England and America on the effects of television since the latter's inception. The assumption of this research is that television and the school are mutually hostile influences on the child, except in so far as television can be 'educational'. The school in this research is an unquestioned normative institution. Teachers' views about television are influenced by this research, although one searches the conventional literature in vain for evidence on teachers' television viewing. A typical and representative piece of Australian effects research is *Television's Children*, the first publication of the audio visual research centre at Sydney Teachers' College. This opens with the rather manichean observation that "few people at the turn of the century would have predicted that within a lifetime the behaviour of hundreds of millions of the earth's population would be manipulated by an electronic pupeteer". The study concludes that "there is an urgent need for extensive research into the effects of television on children . . . In no other area is a clear understanding of its role more important than its relationship with our children"[8].

. . . the real concern is whether television dislocates the smooth efficient reproduction of the labour force; clearly there is some contradiction between the latter function of the school system and television's promotion of consumptive leisure.

Effects research has proceeded apace since the introduction of television in England and the United States in the late 40s and early 50s. It is relevant that the rise in the popular novel in the eighteenth century provoked not dissimilar anxiety about its negative effects. Similarly, the mass cinemas in the 20s and 30s provoked much concern in this respect. Some of the concern about violence and delinquency manifested in American and Australian effects research, and evident in some of the popular debates about television, interacts with concerns about disciplinary problems in schools, but basically the problem is seen as one of television's effect on children's learning capacity: do children who watch a lot of television progress poorly at school?

Ultimately, arguments about teaching television (generally of the innoculation variety, derived from the assumptions of effects research) ignore the fact that both television and the school are effects of "a whole active social order which is not analysed but simply taken as a background or as an empirical control"[9]. It is possibly not too crude to suggest that the real concern is whether television dislocates the smooth efficient reproduction of the labour force; clearly there is some contradiction between the latter function of the school system and television's promotion of consumptive leisure. Moreover, the unstable shifting contradictoriness of television's social/cultural representations conflicts with the apparently more systematic, coherent, reliable, natural significations within which children and adolescents are reproduced by the primitive and ideological apparatus of the school. Moreover, in assuming that violence, poor school achievement, etc, could be related to television, teachers who take notice of effects research do not perceive that such phenomena are always embodied in wider patterns of social and cultural relations.

The point we would want to emphasise in this survey of television teaching is the absolute lack of system in theory that accompanies it. In advocating teaching about television we are not simply wanting to modernise the curriculum but attempting to "contest the dominant conception of what is knowledge by presenting a knowledge that is oppositional and dangerous to the curriculum"[10].

Switch Off! It's The Wicked Capitalists Again

Before we outline our own suggestions for teaching television there remains one teaching approach which, because it is overtly political in content, cannot be properly included under the discrimination or innoculation traditions of teaching television. This approach is especially tempting for left or politically committed teachers. It involves a wholesale condemnation of the capitalist and state television networks on the basis that they are essentially biased and manipulative. Thus, for Humphrey McQueen, "The values that are pushed by advertising and programs are usually one and the same. Companies tell us to compete, while crime shows are grounded on the view that people are inevitably violent and greedy"[11].

Along with this goes a detailed political economy of the media as profit-making enterprises integrated with monopoly capitalism and engaged in marketing commodities to audiences which they are also producing and exchanging as commodities. While we don't want to enter into debate about McQueen's basic argument, it is indisputable that any radical proposal for teaching television must take account of, if not centre itself on, the fact that the media are, in McQueen's words, big business. Most teachers will find that students, if they do not have a Marxist analysis of the economics of the media will, particularly since the takeover dramas of 1979-80, have a knowledge of the ownership patterns of the mass media. Many will know and be angry that the news is biased. However, the presentation of a political economy of the media with a concomitant condemnation of its brainwashing deviousness is not necessarily radicalising in a school context. First of all, it does not necessarily accord with the experience that school children feel that they have of television. Indeed, to make a direct and simplistic connection between the capitalist mode of production and the content and forms of television programs runs the risk of being as ineffective and remote as the proponents of the innoculation approach. Analogous would be the hypothetical literary critic who would want to dismiss *Tom Jones* because it is a commodity, product of "that fatal revolution whereby writing is converted to a mechanic trade"[12]. Hence McQueen's work is not very useful to school teachers who are faced with the problem that children and adolescents actually enjoy and will militantly defend their television.

. . . [children] have absolutely no vocabulary to discuss the visual image. Children discussing television on their own automatically use the concepts of realism: character, plot, theme . . .

An Approach to Television Teaching (With Attendant Problems)

In order to provide some tentative guidance for teachers who wish to teach television, and hopefully avoid some of the pitfalls we have described, we have used some concepts derived from the still extremely underdeveloped science of semiology. There are several reasons why we believe that some of the techniques of analysis provided by this theory are appropriate to a school course in television. Firstly, in our discussions with children we have found that they have absolutely no vocabulary to discuss the visual image. Children discussing television on their own automatically use the concepts of realism: character, plot, theme, as the following extracts from taped discussions indicate.

A Character (*Skyways*)

Gina: What do you think of Peter Finelli?
Robert: Aw, he's good, he's funny eh?
Glen: Aw, he's a slob.
Katrina: He's pretty big for his size.
Robert: He's always eating isn't he? And you know his wife – she's a prostitute she is.
Paul: She was.
Nina: Does he know about it?
Glen: Yeah, he knows.
Nina: She works at the airport, doesn't she?
Gina: How'd he take it?
Robert: Well, they got married, didn't they?
Glen: He's a slob – he is.
Gina: He's good 'cause he helps people with their problems doesn't he?
all: Yeah!
Gina: Like the boss and the guy in Bangkok.

B Plot (*Prisoner*)

Catherine: and in the dining room when they went to have their meal, Monica was due for parole that day, or she might have been getting it, and Martha went up to her and spilt soup over her all on purpose. Monica punched her in the stomach and then Martha gave signals to Toni McNally and Vera got Monica and she took her down to Davidson and Davidson wasn't going to let her go out on parole – it had to be reviewed by the board again and then Mrs Jackson walked in and said that it was signals, that it was a set up, and then Monica went off her brain and said, "Thanks Mrs Davidson for everything", for letting her out and so Monica went and packed and then she was going out of the prison.
Sandra: And that was it.
Catherine: Yeah and that was the end.

C Theme (*Skyways*)

Paul: Aw, when I first watched this show I thought it was all going to be sex and violence and watching it I found out that's just what it is – sex and violence.
Laughter.
Robert: Yeah, see the lady's tit pop out!
Glen: I reckon it's a filthy show.
Sandy: My parents were laughing their heads off.
Paul: Aw, it's quite an interesting story, really.
Nina: Mum don't think anything of it. She doesn't say anything.
Gina: My mum doesn't mind. My dad always changes the station.
Nina: Dad don't.
Katrina: Mine don't care about it.
Paul: I'm the only one that watches it.

Semiology provides a way of breaking down the authoritativeness of the picture in combination with the narrative, an authoritativeness of which children are rarely aware[13]. It also can help explain why it is that we adhere strongly to particular images and ultimately why certain elements of television provide recognisable material for use against the metaphorical television show of the school day. Moreover, the conceptual tools also are in principle sufficiently rigorous to be hypothetically transferable from the school to home or from the television lesson to the lesson which was television.

A semiotic analysis identifies a number of codes, or systems of conventions, which give meaning to a cultural product such as a television program. There are preferred or dominant codes through which the mass media largely work, but consuming groups may read a text through somewhat different codes due to differences of class, sex, age or race from the producers of the text. For example, the popular series *Prisoner*, about a women's prison, was not intended to question dominant assumptions about the need for prisons. The following it has acquired among various young and feminist audiences indicates an awareness of common situations of oppression rather than an acceptance of dominant codes of authority.

There are two types of competence with respect to television which the teacher would want to develop: technical competence and textural competence[14]. The first refers to a familiarity with the codes of editing and filming and aesthetic codes to do with sets, music and costuming; the second refers to an understanding of a range of narrative, imagistic and linguistic codes. In our experience of teaching television we found that students were in possession of a much greater textual competence than of a technical competence, that is, they were able to discuss programs at the narrative level and made constant reference to narrative codes but were less able to respond to questions related to technical detail. However, much of this textual competence is unconscious and achieved through a constant exposure to texts of a similar kind and hence needs to be made conscious. The television audience often know the codes but they do not know that they know them. They have the competence to comprehend but not an analytical or applied competence. This second level of competence can be defined as the ability to consciously decode the messages of the sender through a process of deconstruction and decontextualisation so that a recognition of the relationship to, and differences between, the manifest and the latent content of a given message can be produced. The crucial question now is what practical means are available to the teacher to promote both types of competence and both levels of competence.

The grammar of communication we have sketched applies not only to televisual communication but also to the communication which occurs in the classroom. The sender-teacher communicates with the addressee-pupils through a series of codes. The pupils receive these codes and fill them up with meaning (not always the meaning intended by the teacher). This is a problem for the teacher, particularly with respect to television teaching where, as Ed Buscombe suggests, it would be inappropriate to adhere to conventional teaching methods[15]. This is not to suggest that only when teaching television is it inappropriate to adhere to such methods. It is a problem because pupils are required to learn a new set of classroom codes as well as a new body of knowledge. Some of these codes they are already familiar with; small group work, for example, has become an established practice in many classrooms, but other codes with respect to practical video work will not be known. This problem is further complicated by kids' ideas about the negative relationship between television and school (in other words, their view that television experience is in opposition to school experience). The teacher is in the difficult position of using teaching methods different from the usual, to teach a subject that is also generally considered inappropriate for school.

There is clearly a contradiction between the kids' conception of what constitutes oppositional knowledge and the teachers' conception of it. Between these two conceptions there is ample room for classroom anarchy; the video lesson as a form of pedagogical hell. Given that oppositional classroom practices are not very well established in schools, and given that the reasons for the kids' suspicions of school and teachers are social – and hence beyond the control of individual teachers – there is no quick way out of this contradiction. We can only suggest that the teacher endure the anarchy and persist in the use of unconventional methods until the kids become familiar with the methods, while at the same time teachers have to recognise the limitations of the institutions in which they have to work. However, at least it is helpful if the teacher understands the reasons for what is occurring in the classroom. Such an understanding can be conveyed to the kids so that they in turn can know the reasons for what is occurring around them.

There are basically two approaches to the issue of competence; the analytical approach and the practical approach. Neither is very useful on its own because the pupils need to understand both what appears on the screen and the process whereby it does appear.

We want to emphasise the importance of practical work. Nobody would think now of teaching children to read without teaching them to write, although as Raymond Williams points out this was the case with respect to working class education in the nineteenth century[16]. Then it was recognised that workers needed to be able to read directions, instructions and morally uplifting texts in order for industry and society to function efficiently while it was not thought desirable that they achieve the power to write. Media literacy in the fullest sense means having the power to produce as well as to comprehend.

The analytical approach attempts to enable the students to deconstruct the messages they receive. Practical work should assist in this process of deconstruction because it will provide a first hand knowledge of many of the technical codes of television, but it should also enable the pupils to reconstruct new forms of television. It should indicate the possibility of giving alternative kinds of television messages from those ordinarily received and hopefully, where oppositional teaching methods are applied, to teach about relations of production which are different from those operating in 'real' television.

Analysing Popular Programs

The first step in teaching television is to discover what the kids in a given class actually watch and to choose program material which the majority of them are familiar with. The mistake made by a number of textbook authors and teacher educators is that they suggest or reproduce material which they might watch or think that the kids should watch, ie programs which are on the whole broadcast by the ABC. Few of the children taught by either of us ever watch the ABC and on the whole regard it with suspicion and/or contempt. To use 'acceptable' material from the teacher's viewpoint will immediately create a barrier which is perhaps insurmountable and, in the first instance at least, it is pointless to educate children in junior high school about a type of television which they don't want to watch and may never watch. This means choosing currently popular programs from a variety of popular genres; that is, soap operas, crime dramas, quiz shows, variety shows, commercial news broadcasts, advertisements and sporting broadcasts. The latter are particularly important in outer suburban areas and, one might assume, in country areas where TV is the only access that people have to big sport and perhaps the only viable activity on hot summer holidays. We found that kids of both sexes in the outer suburban area where one of us teaches have an encyclopaedic knowledge of big sport as a television phenomenon and that discussion and debate about it occupied a large part of classroom and playground conversation. Apart from the fact that sporting broadcasts provoke a high level of interest amongst the kids, they do use a limited and clear range of technical codes (for example, slow motion replays, stills, interviews, statements by experts – the talking head – panning, zooms and a variety of advertising ploys). As a result they could provide a very useful way into an examination of a number of conventional television techniques. The debate (current in 1979) over broadcasting rights with respect to big sport was one that the kids were familiar with, and thus provides the additional advantage of opening up questions about the ownership and economics of television.

There is another criterion for choosing programs. Some programs will hail a particular group of students more than others; that is, their content seems to speak to the class interests of the pupils. This is both one way of explaining the appeal of a particular program and of provoking fruitful discussions as to its meaning or effects. *Prisoner* and *The Restless Years* seem to convey an ambiguous attitude to authority or to sexual permissiveness, while a program like *Charlie's Angels* appears to challenge ideas about the role of women; thus, any of the three of these programs could in certain classrooms reflect the class, gender or generational interests of the group or of a good part of a group of students. Programs such as these express a higher level of social contradiction than do programs with a more consistent or hegemonic ideology, such as *Cop Shop*, where audience faith in the repressive state apparatus is rarely challenged.

We will make a number of suggestions as to how the program material once chosen can be deconstructed. By 'deconstruction' we mean to "show the internal devices of that clockwork orange that young viewers consume without worrying about its chemical composition"[17]. How these suggestions with regard to both practical and analytical work are employed will depend upon the particular circumstances of a teacher's work. Circumstances include the age of the students, the amount of time available in a program, the nature of equipment and the level of interest shown by colleagues. In some schools, for example, it would be possible to work out a whole program of television studies covering four years of junior high school, while in others it might be a matter of grabbing whatever time is available to teach a six or eight week unit of work with a class who may never get anything more than this.

There is a great deal that can be done with just one or two recordings of a particular program. The students can be asked to break the program down into scenes while they watch it. After watching it, questions can be asked to small discussion groups about the reasons for scene changes in general, the alterations in frequency of scene shifts and the reasons for particular scene shifts. The responses to these discussion questions can be recorded in writing on an individual level, written up as a group report or recorded on a cassette. The value of this fairly simple exercise is that it enables the kids to see the program as a production because they have been engaged in dividing it into its narrative parts.

Other lines of questioning with respect to individual characters can reveal certain visual codes and meanings. Questions about the clothing and appearance of characters again reveal the program as produced, as well as leading to discussions about appeal and empathy and how this is achieved. Questions about recurrent visual images and about settings can produce some awareness of the latent content of the program as well as a sense of it as fabrication. Much of this can occur without even stopping the video, a fatal error at the beginning of a course of television studies. We found that where consideration of visual codes required a static image it was better to use stills (slides taken at low speed in a darkened room of the television image) rather than interrupt the flow of the program.

Stopping and starting the video at the initial stage will invariably produce groans, protests and an instant switch-off from the kids because it is not something that usually happens to them when they watch TV at home. It is too radical an intrusion into their jealously-guarded private patterns. They are engaged at the level of narrative or action continuity and to interrupt this continuity to discuss lighting or camera angles is a disturbing and, we found, not very productive experience for them. We found it more productive in the early stages to use stills to demonstrate and discuss the use of visual codes. Using stills places distance between the normal experience of viewing and the techniques used to create what is being seen. It takes the students outside of their usual television context while at the same time enabling perception of the constitution of images to take place. Decontextualisation, an adjunct to deconstruction, takes place in two senses of the word in that the context of perception is changed and that the images being examined are taken out of their narrative or action context.

Examination of publicity material from the press and TV press can also provide information about the production of the program and make explicit some of the knowledge about and

fascination that the kids have for the difference between the 'real' and fictional lives of their favourite television characters. Research projects can be initiated on the production of the program where the students are asked to note the name of the production company, to list other programs made by that company, to discuss similarities and differences between these programs and to write to the company asking for information about how the show was conceived and made. We found that one company was quite co-operative when approached by letter. The kids whose letter was sent got a great deal of pleasure out of the reply they received and at the same time the whole class discovered how the writers of the show were organised, that the plots were evolved from crime reporting in the press and the nature of the relationship between the production company and television station.

Recordings of one or two episodes of a program and a set of stills can generate at least six weeks of analytical television study for a class. Where more time is available it is possible to go beyond the single program and explore other genres using similar strategies. Eco argues that "underlying textual competence can be made conscious only by violently contrasting different texts or different interpretations of the same text"[18]. One way of doing this is to examine a given program and then to follow this with the examination of a program which burlesques it. The *Paul Hogan Show*, for example, frequently contains segments which send up advertisements and common television genres. The *Kenny Everett Video Show* does this in an even more specific fashion while seeming to run a critical commentary on his bosses and backers, Thames Television. *Soap* is a serialised burlesque of the soap opera. *Monty Python*, after its move to commercial television, could be useful as a counter text because it contains satiric material on various television genres and practices. These kinds of television satire can be used to emphasise aspects of particular texts and codes while at the same time generating a knowledge of another kind of text, namely of the kind that these programs are themselves.

Even with little or no equipment it is possible for kids to do some practical work as part of their television studies. There is no better way of destroying the mystique of television than by having the kids do some form of television production themselves. Activities such as script writing require nothing more than ordinary school equipment.

It is probably best to begin modestly by asking the students to write from television programs which have been or are being treated analytically. They can be asked to write a story line for the next episode of a serial and later write dialogue for it. Writing alternative ends and beginnings of serial programs is one way of learning the mechanics of serialisation and again developing textual competence. Students can be presented with the prospect of imagining other ways for the narrative to develop within the context of a program they have seen and to write a script for that. This sort of exercise serves the purpose of decontextualisation. Materials from outside television such as newspaper stories, comic strips and short stories can be used as a basis for a television script. Some commonly used resource text books contain reproductions of scripts[19]. Students could actually imitate the layout of real scripts, and where video filming equipment is available for use and the students have some familiarity with filming techniques, they may incorporate technical instructions into their scripts. Another activity which requires relatively little equipment is the making of story boards for advertisements and again, examples of story boards are provided in some English resource texts[20].

Most schools have at least one camera and many have developing facilities, so stills and slides can be used as a basis for practical work. Students could use photographs to design advertising posters, collages or a publicity article for the TV press on programs they have watched and discussed. Slide shows can be constructed using photographs of and commentary on school or community news events and issues.

Where the school possesses a portapak in working order the range of possibilities is much greater. School news reports can be made from filming real or fabricated events. Sporting events can be filmed where an attempt is made to have the finished product look and sound like the real thing. This will involve a commentary, interviews with the players and perhaps even stills of highlights of the game. Students can be taken outside the school to make news or documentary reports on local events and phenomena. This sort of work, however, needs to be accompanied by some analysis of these forms of television as they appear on 'real' TV, so that the kids are aware of the sorts of practices which are available to them and of course the implications for meaning of using such techniques.

Local versions of favourite fictional programs can be written and filmed where the themes, codes and techniques of these programs are imitated. A four-part serial based on *Prisoner* which was called *Classroom* was tried in one of our schools. The similarities between gaol and school had not escaped the notice of the students and these generated a number of possibilities for simulations of both a narrative and a visual kind.

Footnotes

1 Umberto Eco, 'Can Television Teach?', *Screen Education* 31, Summer 1979, p 22.
2 NSW Department of Education, 'Notes on the Media', 1972.
3 ASEFT Submission to Broadcasting Tribunal Inquiry, February 1977, *Mass Media Review*, Summer 1977/8.
4 Ed Buscombe, 'Teaching Television in Schools and Colleges', *Screen Education* 12, Autumn 1974, p 33.
5 Graham Murdock and Guy Phelps, *Mass Media and the Secondary School*, Macmillan, 1973, p 7.
6 Barry Dwyer, 'Mass Media Activities', in *English in Secondary Schools Today and Tomorrow*, English Teachers Association, Ashfield, 1977, pp 423-8.
7 Leslie Strata and Andrew Wilkinson, 'Listening and the Teaching of English', in English Teachers Association, op cit, pp 209-39.
8 K Tindall and D Reid, *Television's Children*, Audio Visual Centre, Sydney Teachers College, 1975, p 65.
9 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, OUP, 1977, p 137.
10 Alvarado, op cit, p 27.
11 Humphrey McQueen, *Australia's Media Monopolies*, Widescope, 1977, p 151.
12 Oliver Goldsmith, quoted in R Williams, *The Long Revolution*, Penguin, 1965, p 183.
13 John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television*, Methuen, 1978, is one of the few examples of an attempt to apply semiotic concepts to the study of television. It is reviewed by Ed Buscombe in *Screen Education* 29.
14 Eco, op cit.
15 Ed Buscombe, 'Teaching Television in Schools and Colleges', *Screen Education* 12, p 5.
16 Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Fontana, 1974, p 131.
17 Eco, op cit, p 21.
18 Ibid, p 20.
19 For example, D Mallick et al, *Some Say a Word is Dead*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973, p 78; B Dwyer et al, *Mastering the Media*, Reed Education, 1971, pp 93-4.
20 Mallick et al, op cit, p 85.

Getting in Tune with the Policy:

a comment on the NSW Education Dep'ts statement on media education

Helen Wyatt.

The NSW Department of Education policy statement on Mass Media Education, issued in March this year, acknowledges the degree of penetration of kids' lives by television and other media and states that education "must face the issue of how best to serve the interests of the child of this media age."

The NSW Minister for Education, Paul Landa, said that the statement should be seen as an "umbrella" document under which would be developed curriculum guidelines, support statements, and teaching resources, while those initiatives which had been going on would be encouraged to continue.

The policy preamble argues that children "should be taught to be discriminating users" of the mass media. To do this, the policy continues, mass media should flow from K to 12, with "media literacy" taking its place alongside skills such as movement, reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy: "it is essential that every teacher takes the opportunity to be a teacher of mass media".

The "Approaches" section is the core of the document. It says that at primary level, mass media education should be a study in its own right as well as an integrated part of the primary curriculum, while at secondary level it may be developed within existing programmes, provide an integrating theme between two or more subjects, or form a separate course. The statement adds that these courses should "develop understanding of the nature of mass media, the techniques employed in them and the effects of those techniques", and calls for practical activities to support this learning: "They may include investigation and research, the making of media products and the use of the media as a means of creative expression." At this point, someone in the Department seems to have got cold feet about the cost of all these initiatives because the next sentence reads: "These activities should not depend on expensive or sophisticated equipment."

Political Context

In the context of cutbacks in education spending, attacks on "standards" and suggestions of a swing towards private schools, the policy might be seen as an attempt by the Department to redress the balance in favour of public schooling and strengthen its claims to "relevance". Although the "discrimination" approach to teaching television has its shortcomings (see the analysis by O'Sullivan and Curry elsewhere in this issue), by underlining the importance of mass media, the Department has given progressive teachers the opportunity to press ahead in a worthwhile area.

It is very important that the policy exists. Without it, perceptive teachers who see the radical necessity of education to be involved in media processes, operate singly and are in a weak position to initiate programmes which could turn out to be expensive. Obviously, a Departmental policy on mass media education demands video/radio/film equipment – some of which is already found in schools – be used not as playback equipment for already recorded programmes, but as part of the process of analysis and for production. This can only be a healthy shift.

"Mass Media Education" implies an awareness that curriculum development must be broadly based in social issues. The Committee responsible for the development of the policy insists that these courses be much more than a straightforward imparting of skills and critique of movies. At present, the treatment of these issues is up for grabs. In this sense, the superficial and even contradictory nature of the policy is an asset to teachers.

The policy also provides a shift away from and a re-orientation of what the "basics" in education are . . . teachers and bureaucrats alike can be heard to mutter the words "media literacy" (implying "aural" and "visual" literacy as well). In the process, the policy develops a further legitimacy for the creative subjects in the school and an obvious rationale for the kids in the school to spend time on these subjects.

The notion of discrimination mentioned earlier emphasises the gap between the high culture with which most teachers are familiar and the mass culture experienced by kids, especially those who do least well at school. If this notion is linked with the idea that "media literacy" can be taught towards a discerning end (that somehow this end is tangible, concrete and

understandable), then teachers may find themselves up the blind alley O'Sullivan and Curry so clearly describe.

Fortunately, the policy does not make dogmatic prescriptions about the kids' experiences which lead to the end it desires. This gives teachers the possibility of acting to counter the statement's implied view that exposure to the facts and information about the media will give a dynamic understanding of how they work. The radical possibilities inherent in mass media education come from the participation of students and teachers in a "freireian" dialogue using technology and where the outcomes are not necessarily known.

Doing It

In other words, the bias should be to **production** where action allows for these open-ended experiences and where the theory and relevant questions emerge from the relationships set up between the teacher and the student, the teacher's and student's relationship with the technology itself and from the relationships developed among the participants in the teams developing their own productions.

Working class kids are not going to passively accept our analysis of the media and translate this into their own experiences. Production is the only meaningful way to begin to develop their analysis and the success of this will depend on other contingencies as well, including teachers' relationships and credibility with the kids, the attitude of other teachers, and the ability of the school to accept the demands for flexibility which media production will make on space inside and outside the school (not to mention the noise levels and time constraints).

Funding

The suggestion that mass media education can take place without expensive and sophisticated equipment is contradictory and sidesteps the importance of using the media to understand the media. Timely as the statement is, the fact that it coincides with cutbacks in spending has serious implications not only for capital costs but for in-service education and for implementation strategies.

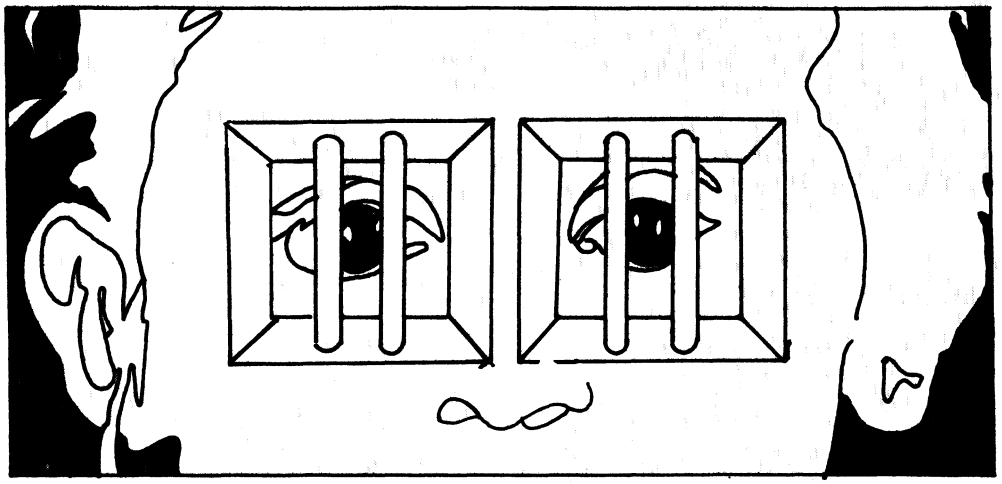
Most in-service courses are short-term affairs where skills and ideas are imparted, often with very little follow-up. With mass media training, the skills and issues are not going to be explored unless the courses are extended. Ideally, the "training" would mean exposure to aspects of mass media education, strategy development for the classroom, experiments in the teachers' own classrooms and then a report back and feedback to the course at a later time. Experiences would be shared and theory and practice united.

The demands of in-service training will change according to the subject area and the grade. The technology is going to change and will require continued upgrading; the issues are going to shift according to the specific regions and the specific group of kids.

The implications of this are that mass media education is going to develop on the level of regional networks and not as a statewide departmental syllabus. Teachers are justifiably critical of such new syllabuses sent out to burden them even more. In-service training as part of regional policy development should aim to provide them with practical and concrete ideas and directions which will not add to but rather develop their teaching roles.

The policy is an essential bureaucratic and ministerial coup for education in NSW. Its translation at the school level must be based on the regional development of programmes that relate to the specific needs of the kids and teachers themselves, all of whom should be involved in the designing process.

The State government has initiated something which could develop into a most important and radical direction for education. It is also the most complex and expensive of any proposal we have seen recently. Will the cutbacks mean that it will dissolve into tokenism?



How can teachers assist students to gain a critical approach to the media? Janet Kossy has prepared and tried out a number of lesson plans that form part of a forthcoming collection of counter-sexist resources to be published soon by Second Back Row Press. We have printed the lesson plans as a centre lift-out, and we hope that teachers will find it of practical use.

Sexploitation and the Media

A SERIES OF LESSON PLANS ON ADVERTISING AND THE POPULAR MEDIA FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS.

Janet Kossy

Introduction

Media images of flowing haired beauties, inane housewives, Marlboro men, and products, products, products, pervade our lives and those of our students even after we have switched off the TV or put down the newspaper. The purpose of advertising is to make us behave in a certain way, i.e. to buy. In order to make us buy, advertising and the media which support it often take advantage of our longings, fears and insecurities by implying that products will bring us love, happiness and other things that cannot be bought. They seek to instill a need for even the most superfluous products and so we find our real needs distorted, replaced by desires and images we would not otherwise have.

Undeniably, the media have played a major role in creating the consumption-oriented world view which has become the dominant world view of Australian society. The world of our students is, in reality in their fantasies, one of popular media images and values. It follows that if we want our students to understand the forces that shape their lives, and to be able to actively and responsibly take power in their lives and society, then one of the most helpful things we can do is to make them conscious and critical of advertising and the popular media. All the more so because the potency of these agents is so largely based on their unconscious and uncritical acceptance.

This unit looks at the portrayal of women and men in advertising, television and popular magazines in the context of the place these institutions have in contemporary Australian society and in the individual lives of the students. The unit could easily be extended to include other media – eg radio, popular music, and film – by using some of the project suggestions as the basis for class work. Also, the addition of theoretical reading material would make the Sexploitation unit suitable for senior classes. The books listed for teacher reference at the end of this unit are very readable and could be excerpted for use in the classroom. For the sake of convenience, the unit is divided into a succession of lesson plans for periods of 40-50 minutes, but of course the material should be adapted to suit your particular situation.

The lessons are designed to give students practice in written, oral and graphic communication, and to increase their powers of observation and analysis as applied to various communications media.

General Objectives for Students.

Overall, the aim of the unit is to assist students to gain a critical approach to the mass media and advertising and a wider view of women's and men's roles and capabilities. The more detailed objectives for students are:

- To discover the ways women and men are portrayed in advertising and the popular media.
- To compare and contrast the media images with the students' own experience and aspirations.
- To examine and extend students' images of men and women.
- To gain information about the popular media in Australia.
- To analyse some of the reasons for the distorted portrayal of men and women in the popular media.
- To assess the effects of media distortions on students' own lives and on the wider society.
- To explore possible alternatives to media distortions and stereotypes.
- To explore possible alternatives for media control and operation.

LESSON ONE: TELEVISION CHARACTERS.

Objectives:
1 To start students thinking about the portrayal of men and women on television series and serials, and about their own responses to them.
2 To introduce the concept of "stereotypes".

Preparation: Duplicate TV Characters Chart (see below).

Activity: Firstly, each class member writes down the TV series or serial character s/he most admires (ie would like to be like) and the one s/he least admires, plus a paragraph explaining why. (If a student does not admire any character, ask her or him to write a paragraph explaining why this is so.) (15 minutes)

Next, several students share their remarks with the class, with other students adding reasons if they have chosen the same favourites or "leasts". (10 minutes)

Discussion: Are there other characters similar to the ones chosen, can they be said to fit a stereotype? (Introduce definition: A stereotype is an exaggerated, oversimplified, or unrealistic view of members of a particular group, which assumes that everyone in that group is alike.)

What are some of the TV stereotypes and what are their familiar characteristics? List the stereotypes suggested by the class on the board under headings "male stereotypes" and "female stereotypes". (Eg. Daring Hero, Interfering Mother-in-law, Beautiful Victim, etc.)

If the characters most admired by the class do not fit stereotypes, discuss the superiority of realistic or "rounded" characters to stereotypes. (20 minutes)

At Home: Students watch 1-2 hours of TV series or serial programs, and fill out the chart listing the characters by sex, noting whether they fit any of the stereotypes listed on the board, a stereotype omitted from the day's discussion or none at all. Include minor characters.

TV Characters Chart: (duplicate onto a full page.)

Date:	Time:	Program:
Male Characters	Stereotype	Brief Character Description
Female Characters	Stereotype	Brief Character Description
Male Stereotypes:		Female Stereotypes:

Comments: In this introductory lesson it is more important for the students to articulate their own observations and preferences than to analyze the characters for sex-role stereotyping. This will come later. However, if students discover from the discussion that there seem to be more admirably male characters than female characters, or that the female stereotypes are sillier, so much the better!

LESSON TWO: TELEVISION CHARACTERS AND THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR.

Objectives:
1 To make students aware of the differences between stereotyped views of women and men and the reality of women's and men's lives.
2 To make students aware that TV series and serials are fiction – they have been created by fallible human beings subject to prejudices, commercial motives, etc.

Activity: Students write up on the board the names or descriptions of the characters from the charts they made at home, listing them under the appropriate male and female stereotypes. Add any new stereotypes that were noted. (10 minutes)

Students make note of any conclusions or hypotheses they can draw from this "master chart" on the board.

Discussion: Start with anything the students themselves have noticed.

Ask the class to compare/contrast the characters listed under the stereotypes to the men and women they know. Some areas to look at are:

- Appearance and dress
- Wealth
- Ethnic background
- Family makeup
- Jobs and activities
- Speech
- Opportunities
- Behaviour

Try to press the comparison/contrast so that the emphasis is on the complexity of real individuals and of community make-up which may not be reflected in the stereotypes. Are there whole categories of people who are omitted or are treated only as minor characters? Which characters, if any, are portrayed in a realistic way? Are there more male or female characters? Are there more males or females who are portrayed as positive, active, admirable characters?

Discuss the fictional 'manmade' (sic?) nature of the programs – the fact that actors are chosen for parts, dialogue is written, etc. What conjectures can the class make about the people who wrote and produced the programs? Are any sex, class or ethnic biases evident?

Does the country in which a program was made affect its content? You might pull down a world map and have the students indicate which countries have produced or been depicted in the programs they have seen. (The point here is only to become aware of the limitations of the view of life presented by TV series and serials.) (25 minutes)

Summary: Do the stereotypes on TV present a fair view of women and men? Are they fairer to some groups than to others? (5 minutes)

Comments: If the night's viewing seems to have been atypical, you might do well to broaden the discussion early to include the class's previous experience of TV series and serials.

Also, you might decide to give more or less emphasis to ethnic, class, or other bias evident in the portrayal of characters and situations. The chart on the board is only a starting point.

Lesson Three:
Television Characters: A Closer Look

Objectives:
1 To reinforce awareness of sex stereotypes gained in the previous two lessons.
2 To make students aware of the 'hidden' messages about women and men.

Preparation: Pre-record a current series episode which is clearly sexist in its depiction of characters and situations. An alternative is to use the episode of a daytime serial which is broadcast at the time that your class meets. (This second is less desirable since you will not have been able to preview the episode.)

Activity: The class views the episode together, perhaps taking notes on the way men and women are portrayed. You may wish to stop the video occasionally to ask a question or point something out.

Discussion: How are the women and men portrayed, including the minor characters? How many characters of each sex appear? Are there characters whose appearance and behaviour are non-stereotypical? Who is the butt of the jokes?

Is the humour based on either
a people deviating from stereotyped sex role behaviour, or
b from the silliness of the sex role itself?
If so, what is the implied message about how men and women should behave?

What impressions of women and men would a young child get from watching this program?

Comments: The teacher should add or substitute discussion questions which reveal clearly the sexism in the episode.

Students will not necessarily see sex role stereotyping as undesirable, even if they can recognise its existence. They are likely to see it as 'natural' or 'different but equal'. Rather than argue the point yourself, it is probably best to wait for other members of the class to notice the unfairness of the way women are portrayed, and let them carry the argument.

Lesson Four:
The Selling of the Female Image

Objective: To enable students to respond critically to the objectification and distortion of women for the purposes of advertising.

Preparation: Hire *The Selling of the Female Image* from the Sydney Filmmakers' Cooperative (9 minutes, colour, rental $9, PO Box 217 Kings Cross 2011 NSW, [02] 330 721) or borrow it from an educational resources centre. If you cannot obtain this film, pre-record a collection of TV advertisements which stereotype women as sex objects and as happy household drudges – the most blatantly offensive ads you can find. Make copies of 'Mantrap' (see below).

Activity: Show the film or ads, discuss briefly, then read 'Mantrap' aloud. Discuss 'Mantrap'. If there is time, show the film or ads a second time.

Discussion Questions – film or ads: Do the ads make girls feel good about themselves, or inadequate in some way?

Why do you think ads try to make you feel there is something missing in your life, or that you could be happier, or prettier, or sexier than you are?

Everyone laughs at the man in the film behaving exactly the same way that women often behave in commercials. If the film has put this actor in a ridiculous position, what kind of a position are actresses put in when they act in similar commercials? If people don't usually laugh at women behaving so foolishly, is it because we are used to seeing women directed to do idiotic things in ads and TV programs?

Discussion Questions – 'Mantrap': Do you agree with Angela Rose? Give some examples of what she is writing about.

How does advertising affect us even when, as she says, "We don't believe the promises . . . use perfume"?

Comments: Especially with younger boys, it is easy, unfortunately, to reinforce a view of women we are trying to criticise when we show a film like this one, or a collection of sexist ads. It might be necessary to spend a great deal of time discussing this film, and showing it a number of times, if the message is to get across to immature boys. They may feel that seeing women as sex objects is one way of showing that they are men; if this is the case, they will be resistant to any criticism of this view of women.

Man Trap

Ads take human needs and play on them to get people to buy.

All our desires are downgraded in this way:

Love becomes catching a man, becomes a man's reaction to our blonde hair.

Liberation is reduced to the freedom to smoke cigarettes openly, or use Tampax.

Individuality and creativity are expressed in the clothes or other things we buy, not in anything we **do**.

Products, in fact, become substitutes for life (for love, action, freedom).

Ads also take our needs and use them against us to frighten us into buying.

We need to love and be loved and ads imply that if we don't buy a perfume or dye our hair we won't be loved.

The ads tell us no-one will love us with pimples so we have to buy something to get rid of them. They try to sell us love.

Our natural smells are turned into a source of worry for us so we will buy vaginal sprays and deodorants (some of which are actually harmful).

All this goes to make us dissatisfied and embarrassed with our real selves.

In the process of using our own humanity against us, ads define for us what a woman ought to be: What is 'feminine'.

They put men and women in two different and stereotyped worlds – a woman's world is the kitchen.

A woman's absolutely primary task is to catch a man.

A woman is what she wears and what she looks like and not what she does.

A woman is gentle, not too smart, not too strong, but very easy on the eyes.

Ads are oppressive. They serve a number of important functions:

1 They make us buy.
2 Under the guise of caring for women and treating us as extra special and beautiful they reflect and strengthen women's subordinate position.
3 Because ads use our human needs to get us to buy, they trivialise them and twist them to fit in with the system that exists. Our own needs are turned against us to keep us down. We need freedom and love and to be creative and active. Ads tell us that all these goals can be reached by consuming. Sometimes they go so far as to suggest that their products **are** love, freedom etc. Eventually we almost come to think of ourselves as products – as things rather than people.
4 Advertising works to turn our sense of the world upside down. It presents us as passive and non-existent except through the products we buy. The impression is created that it is products and machines that make us. In fact, we **make** the products and machines but it is useful for sales if we forget this.

We don't believe the promises that happiness will come automatically once we bleach our hair or use perfume. We know that housework is not creative and fulfilling. In fact, we know that advertisements give a totally unreal picture of life – full of 'beautiful people', cute babies, rich people, endlessly happy people. But we so much would like it to be true that we allow ourselves to float along with them. In this way ads obscure the real nature of our lives. Instead of freely living our own experience, we judge and downgrade it against the illusions of advertising. (And what is worse, change it to fit in with the illusions.)

Advertisements compiled and analysed by Angela Rose

Lesson Five:
TV for Erehwemos

Objective: For students to explore through a simulation game some of the problems of power and control involved in commercial TV.

Preparation: Make cards giving character information for the named participants in the meeting. Duplicate the Invitation.

Activity: Most of the period will be devoted to an enactment of a public meeting. Carefully select students to take the main parts, and give them the appropriate information cards. Hand out copies of the invitation to everyone, and ask the students without specified parts to attend the meeting as other residents of Erehwemos, including children. The teacher should either participate in the meeting or act as a facilitator.

Ms/r Chair calls the meeting to order, and briefly introduces the topic for discussion. Half the meeting time should be spent on open discussion, with half reserved for consideration of specific proposals. The meeting should be followed by ten minutes of class discussion.

Characters: (Information on cards to go to the actors)

Ms/r Chair: You have called this meeting following your visit to Australia. You want TV for Erehwemos, but not necessarily run in the same way that it is in Australia. You chair the meeting, allowing half of the time for general discussion and half of the time to consider proposals from the floor. You ask that each speaker identify her/himself before speaking.

Ms/r Secretary: You sit at the front with Ms/r Chair and take notes on the discussion. You may also participate in the meeting.

Ms/r Cute: You are the spokesperson for a new company, Cutesie Cosmetics for Little Girls. You and your company are eager to have a commercial TV station so that you can put ads on TV to convince children to buy your products. You also want to sponsor a children's talent program, "The Cutesie Hour', which will give lots of added publicity to Cutesie cosmetics.

Ms/r Talenti: You have been chosen to produce 'The Cutesie Hour', a children's talent program sponsored by Cutesie Cosmetics for Little Girls. You hope that this program will go ahead when TV is introduced to Erehwemos.

Ms/r Bigg: You are a very rich person. You own most of the shares in a new company, Cutesie Cosmetics for Little Girls. You also own, or own a controlling interest in, many other companies. You want to finance and run the Erehwemos TV station so that you can get advertising and program time for your companies' products, and therefore sell more products and make more money. You also want everyone to say what a generous person you are for giving Erehwemos a TV station. You are the only one person in Erehwemos with enough money to set up a TV station.

Ms/r Natural: You are making a film called The Cutesie Con that warns parents and children about the dangers of a new line of products called 'Cutesie Cosmetics for Little Girls'. These products are bad for children's skin, they cost a lot of money, and they make little girls think that they need to wear lipstick, other makeup, perfumes, etc, for other children to want to play with them. You are opposed to Mr Bigg, who owns Cutesie, having anything to do with the TV station, because you know that he'll organise everything to make more money for himself, and not to help the people of Erehwemos. You want to be able to show 'The Cutesie Con' on TV.

Ms/r One: You don't want ads on the new TV station that will be set up. You visited Australia once, and saw how horrible the ads were, and how they made people want things they didn't need, and that wouldn't really make them happy. You suggest that big companies with high profits, like the ones owned by Ms/r Bigg, should be taxed to pay for the TV station.

Ms/r Two: You agree with Ms/r One that TV should be paid for by taxing the high-profit companies of Erehwemos. You suggest that a committee representing different community interests should run the TV station.

Discussion: What questions were raised by the meeting? Were any of the problems concerning TV in Erehwemos similar to those concerning TV in Australia?

At Home: Students should bring in ideas and materials to make ads or commercials during the next period for Cutesie Cosmetics for Little Girls.

Comments: This activity would be most suitable for a double period. Otherwise, you might want to extend it over two periods, or even three – perhaps setting up a further meeting which deals with problems that have come up since decisions made at the first meeting have been implemented.

Depending on the experience and abilities of your students, you may require more or less adherence to standard meeting procedures. Before you begin the simulation try to think through ways of tailoring it to your particular classroom situation.

INVITATION
You are invited to
A PUBLIC MEETING
to discuss a television station for Erehwemos

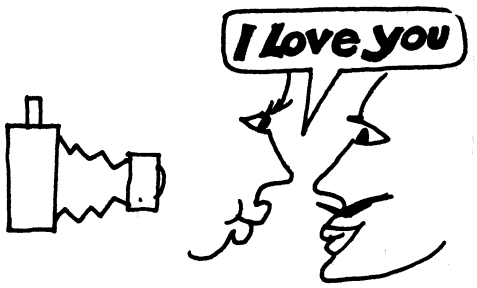
I have recently returned from a visit to Australia, where television is a large part of the national way of life. My visit made me think about the absence of TV here in our own country. Although Erehwemos is small, and we have survived well enough until now without TV, I believe it is time for us to discuss the possibility of starting a TV station here. I am calling a meeting for this purpose.

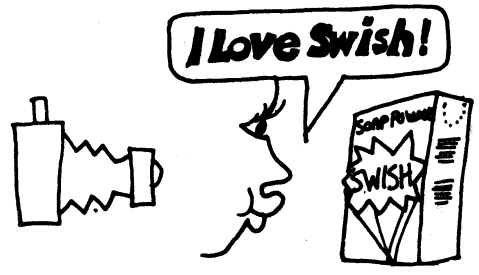
There will be an opportunity for open discussion, and also for the presentation of proposals.

Please come along and share your views.

Yours sincerely
A Chair

EREHWEMOS PUBLIC HALL
September 1 – 7.00 pm
EVERYONE INVITED





Lesson Six
Cutesie Cosmetics For Little Girls

Objective: To increase students' awareness of how advertising creates new markets (eg children as users of cosmetics) and induces consumers to buy what they don't need.

Preparation: Old magazines, paper, paste, and scissors should be available for making ads. A cassette recorder would be useful for radio ads, and if possible, video recording equipment for TV commercials.

Activity: Have the students write TV commercials, or make magazine ads, for any of the Cutesie Cosmetics for Little Girls (makeup, perfume, lotions, whatever). Emphasise that these are not toy cosmetics but real ones which the producers hope to induce children to use every day, and to feel dependent on. The ad or commercial should be effective: the point is to make money for Cutesie.

The students can use their own ideas, or borrow ideas and pictures from magazines. (20 minutes)

Discussion: Discuss the ads which have been produced. The discussion should include: creating a need for something that is unnecessary; methods of appealing to consumers; the possible effect on girls' self-images of seeing these ads, etc. (10 minutes)

Summary: At the end of the lesson each student or group should answer briefly in writing for their own or other students' ads:
1 Is this ad misleading? In what way?
2 Does this ad use female stereotypes? How?
The critiques should be attached to the ads, or recorded onto the end of the tapes. (10 minutes)

At home: Students may wish to finish their ads at home if there was only time for a rough version in class.

Comments: If you use video recording equipment, this lesson will probably take two periods.

Although students should always be encouraged to take pride in their work, it is important in this lesson not to lose sight of the objective, which is a critical view of advertising. Some students may need convincing that a critique of their own ad which finds it sexist and misleading does not mean that they did a bad job; a product like Cutesie demanded such an approach.

If possible, display the ads around the room with the critiques attached.

Lesson Seven
Collages

Objectives:
1 To allow for consideration and informal discussion of magazine and newspaper presentation of women and men.
2 To encourage students to differentiate their views of women and men from the media views.

Preparation: Bring in lots of magazines and some newspapers – as varied a collection as possible. Also scissors, paste, cardboard.

Activity: Period One – in small groups, students produce a collage presenting 'The Media Image of Women' or 'The Media Image of Men'. Period Two – in the same groups, students produce a collage presenting 'Our View of Women' or 'Our View of Men', using added snapshots, their own drawings, and their own words as well as magazine and newspaper clippings.

Discussion Questions: How are the images of men and women in the media alike, and different?

Compare/contrast these to your own images of men and women. What kinds of facial expressions and poses do the media women and men have? What do you think of these?

Is the media image closer to your own for men than for women?

Comments: Depending on the age and maturity of your students, you may or may not want to ask single sex groups to make up collages of their own sex only. (Young boys are not likely to be able to distinguish their own image of women from the media image!)

In a girls' school you might do well to make collages of images of women only.

Lesson Eight
Collage-based Creative Writing

Objective: To allow the students to 'demystify' the women and men who are portrayed in the media.

Preparation: Use the collages from the previous lesson.

Activity: Ask the class to write about what they imagine to be the real life of one of the people in the collages. They can write a short story about a day in her/his life, or a diary entry, or some other form of imaginative writing.

At the end of the period have some students read their writing aloud, indicating to the class the picture on which the writing was based.

Comment: This assignment can focus on either the model who is 'playing a part' for an ad, or on the character in the picture as though she/he were a real person. Allow the students to choose whichever pictures and interpretations interest them.

(Idea from Gates, Klaw, and Steinberg, *Changing Learning, Changing Lives*, Feminist Press, Old Westbury, New York, 1979, p 39-40.)

Lesson Nine
Content Analysis of Popular Magazines

Objectives:
1 To enable students to analyse the popular magazines' portrayals of women and men.
2 To encourage a critical attitude toward the media images.

Preparation: Several copies each of a variety of magazines aimed at the following groups:
teenage girls (eg *Honey, Dolly*)
teenage boys (eg *Tracks, Juke, Wave*)
young women who work outside the home (eg *Cleo, Cosmopolitan*)
young men (eg *Playboy, Penthouse*)
housewives (eg *Women's Weekly, Good Housekeeping, Women's Day*)
and their husbands (eg *Bulletin, Modern Fishing, Playboy*)
Also, copies of the Magazine Content Analysis form.

Activity: This lesson will take about three periods. Students will work in small groups, perhaps the same groups in which they made collages.

First they should be shown how to fill out the content analysis form for any given magazine. Then, each group is given a magazine for teenage girls or one for teenage boys during the first period, one for young men or young women during the second period, and one for men or women with families during the third period. Each group completes one content analysis form each period.

The teacher should circulate among the groups, helping them with the questions and pointing out aspects of the magazines they might not have noticed.

The completed forms should be displayed or circulated so that groups can see the results of each other's work.

Comments: If you don't want to spend three periods on this activity you can assign magazines covering the range of age groups during one period.

If students ponder too long on each item of the content analysis sheet they are not likely to finish. They should work fairly rapidly and superficially, aiming for an overall analysis of the magazine. It might be useful here and there, however, to point out some of the deeper meanings of an ad or article, eg an ad apparently about wine might also be about appearance, love, sex and relationships if we consider the photo and copy as well as the product.

Male equivalents of the female magazines don't really exist: men's magazines don't have anywhere near the mass readership that the women's magazines have, and this fact should be pointed out. It might be discussed in terms of the greater influence magazines and the ads in them are likely to have on women and women's images of themselves. It might also be discussed in relation to women's greater role as consumers. (This role may be changing.)

It is important that the analysis of these magazines not be perceived as a denigration of their readers, who probably include ourselves, our students, and our students' families. The point for readers is to be able to differentiate our purposes in reading a magazine from the producers' purposes in selling it to us.

Magazine Content Analysis Form

Title of the Magazine

After you have carefully completed this form on one or two issues of a magazine, you should know:
a what most of the magazine is about;
b what kinds of people the magazine tries to appeal to;
c what messages about being a male or female the reader would get from the magazine.

Remember that what a magazine excludes might tell you as much about the magazine as what it includes.

Part I

A Put a mark next to the category which best describes what each story, ad, photo, article, poem, quiz, etc is most concerned with. If it is concerned with two things, put a mark next to each of the two. (Eg an article about how a movie star stays slim would be about media stars and about personal appearance.)

Alcohol and cigarettes:
Cars and motorcycles:
Childcare and children:
Education:
Entertainment (including film, music, theatre, books etc):
Hobbies (eg photography, pottery):
Homemaking (including cooking, sewing, entertaining, family life):
House (decorating, construction, repairs, garden, etc):
Jobs and careers:
Marriage, relationships, sex, love:
Media and sports stars:
Medical problems and health:
News events:
Other famous people (eg politicians, community activists, writers):
Personal appearance (includes hair, figure, clothing, makeup, etc):
Personal problems (other than marriage, relationships, sex, love):
Social issues (eg pollution, discrimination against women, etc):
Sport:
Travel:
Other (specify):

B 1 Which three categories appear most frequently in this magazine?
2 Are there any categories which are not represented at all?

Part II

1 What percentage of the total pages in the magazine are taken up with ads?
2 What kinds of products are most frequently advertised?
3 Describe the typical facial expressions and poses of the female models. Do the same for the male models.
4 What stereotypes appear most often in this magazine?
5 What is the ideal man or woman like, according to the images presented by this magazine?
6 Write and draw a profile of the ideal reader (not necessarily the same as the ideal male or female!)
   a age:
   b sex:
   c marital status:
   d job:
   e hobbies:
   f cares and thinks most about:
   g spends extra money on:
   h ambition:
   i thinks of her/himself as:
7 How important would buying products seem to be in the life of the ideal reader?
8 How important would pleasing a man seem to be in the life of the ideal female reader? How important would pleasing a woman seem to be in the life of the ideal male reader?
9 How do you think this magazine would influence the life and views of a regular reader?

Lesson Ten
Individual and Group Projects

Objectives:

1 To give students the opportunity to explore areas ofspecial interest which are related to this unit.
2 To allow for class discussion of aspects of the media and 'sex-ploitation' that have not already been dealt with.

Preparation: Copies of the projects list should be made and distributed early in the unit, and projects should be collected a few days prior to the period(s) devoted to their presentation. The teacher might ask that particular students prepare to display and/or present their projects to the class. (Discussion questions could be added if desired.) The teacher might also decide which areas from the previous lessons need further emphasis or explanation; this further discussion can fit in well with presentation of the projects.

Activity: At home – each student should prepare Project I individually, plus one project of their choice from Project List II, either individually or with another student.
In class – devote one or more periods to the presentation of projects interspersed with class discussion.

Comments: You may decide to allocate several periods of in-class time for work on the projects, depending on the motivation of your class. You will also probably add to the list of project suggestions.

Projects

Due Date:

Part I

Prepare a detailed explanation and analysis of one ad from a magazine or from TV which features a woman (or women).

Describe the ad and the woman, tell how the ad seeks to sell its product, whom it is designed to appeal to, whether any stereotypes are involved, what kind of view of women is presented, etc.

The ad should be affixed to the analysis of it, if it is from a magazine, so that the two may be displayed together.

Part II

Choose **one** from the project suggestions below.

1 Make a tape of excerpts from pop songs, then record your own analysis of the views of women, men, and relationships implied or stated in the songs.
2 Do a project on current pop groups that discusses their style and 'image' in relation to sex stereotypes. How many females are in the bands, and which instruments do they play? What explanations can you give?
3 Find out all you can about a female musician or band which has succeeded in breaking through the sex stereotypes.
4 Interview a woman who is involved in the media in some way.
5 Do a project on women's sport coverage in the media. How much space is given to reportage of women's sport, compared to men's sport? How many female sport writers and commentators are there? What do you think are the reasons for, and effects of, the inferior place given to women's sport?
6 Investigate reporting on women in the news pages of the daily newspapers. Discuss any sexist language, trivialisation of women, or other ways in which women in the news are treated differently than men.
7 Write letters to advertisers, television stations and/or magazines complaining about sexism in ads. In your letters include details about the specific ads which are offensive, explaining how they insult women. Keep a copy of each letter after you have mailed it.
8 Do a project on images of schoolgirls in the media. It might be something like the project by three English students which is reproduced in *Spare Rib* No 72 (include two-page spread?).
9 List 'beauty products' which are available for women. How many of these are really necessary? How are they sold if they are not necessary? What images of women are presented in the ads and features that deal with these products?
10 Look at a women's magazine which has been going for fifteen years or more, and trace any changes you can find in the content of the magazine over the years.
11 Make a collection of cartoons about women. What kinds of views and stereotypes do you find?
12 Do a project on images of women in comic books. Choose one particular comic book series to examine.
13 Collect sexist ads about children. Include a critique of the ads.
14 Reverse the sexes in two or more sexist ads. Discuss the effect.
15 Write a satire (you may put it on video or audio tape) about an average day in the life of a woman who is ideal from the advertisers' point of view.
16 Write an essay which discusses the following question: Does making women appear as sex symbols in ads and on TV help men and women in their relations with each other?
17 Create three versions of an ad for the same product:
   i appealing to the traditional housewife stereotype;
   ii appealing to the liberated woman stereotype;
   iii appealing to the male stereotype.
18 Collect examples of ads which use women to sell products to men, and ads which use men to sell products to women. Discuss each ad and any differences between those appealing to men and to women regarding how the opposite sex is viewed.
19 Collect ads which make use of images or ideas from the Women's Liberation Movement. How do these ads distort the aims and methods of the Women's Liberation Movement?
20 Find at least one ad to illustrate each of the following 'mindwarped' statements:
   man's world and woman's world are separate;
   woman's place is in the kitchen;
   freedom is nothing but a special cigarette (or pair of hose, or . . .);
   creativity through drudgery;
   glorification of servitude;
   woman's main task is to catch a man;
   fear makes sales;
   buy Saturday night fun in a bottle;
   what we are naturally is bad;
   I am what I wear (and nothing more);
   women: objects among objects;
   women workers as sex objects.

(Headings from Angela Rose, *Mind Warp*)

Lesson Eleven
Alternatives

Objectives:
1 To raise students' awareness of possible alternatives to popular mass media sexism and commercialism.
2 To explore opportunities for a participatory role in the media.

Preparation: Depends on which of the activities you choose to include. What follows are a list of possibilities.

Activities:
1 Collect and display magazines such as *Spare Rib, Ms, Womanspeak, Rouge,* and *Noi Donne.*
2 Make a list or collection of TV programs, ads, films, songs, etc, which show women in an active, positive, non-stereotyped way. If possible, arrange a class excursion or viewing which involves one of these.
3 Play a tape of the ABC's *Coming Out Show,* or any other program which deals seriously with issues concerning women's liberation.
4 Invite a feminist involved in some aspect of alternative or mass media to speak to the class.
5 Play songs which show insight into the limitations of traditional sex stereotypes.

Comments: Students may be able to help with examples of alternatives. Use whatever community resources are available.

The unit should end on a somewhat positive note: sexism and other offensive aspects of the mass media are still rampant, but there are people working to change this, and also to create alternatives. The students themselves can participate by involving themselves in community access radio, working on a school or community newspaper or magazine, writing their own songs, investigating the uses of graffiti and posters, etc.

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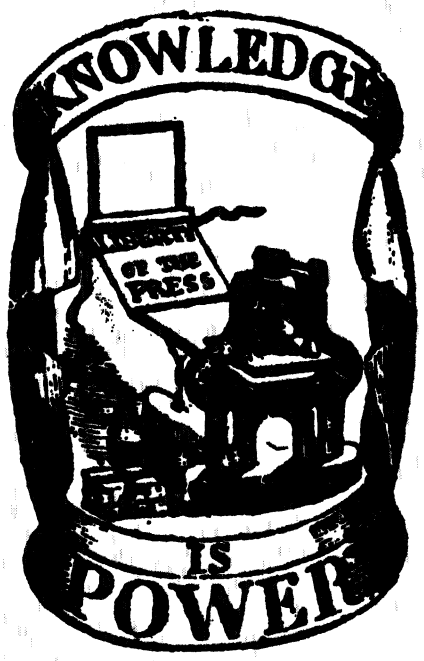
PEDAGOGY OF THE DETACHED?

Lloyd Ross's Challenge to the W.E.A.



Tim Rowse.

Since the rise of the working class organisations and political power in the Industrial Revolution, there have been several initiatives to educate the working masses, to civilize their outlook and temper their militancy, to make them worthy of the responsibilities of citizenship and obedient to the discharge of their duties. In their recent book *Class Structure in Australian History*, Bob Connell and Terry Irving have traced the late nineteenth century extension of a dominant middle-class culture into the lives of the urban working class, by a mixture of voluntary and state efforts. Adult education was one of these endeavours.

The Doctrine of Impartiality

Intellectuals of the Victorian era believed in the moralizing effects of secular knowledge; they were committed to the discovery of facts about the physical and social worlds, and the dissemination of those facts to a waiting public. This was often an heroic, liberal and demystifying endeavour. It generated enough useful knowledge and scientific breakthroughs to sustain the confidence of a small "l" liberal intelligentsia, which, in the Australian university environment, faced authorities which were smugly philistine about any knowledge that did not equip one to be a professional, a member of the clergy, or a gentleman. The first Australian chair of History was not created until 1891, and then with rearguard opposition from members of the Sydney University Senate.[1] The social sciences did not win acceptance in the universities until the years just before and after World War One. It was this group of liberal social science intellectuals who started the WEA in Australia, in 1913.

Entering the academic scene under some suspicion, this first generation of social science intellectuals relied on the 'relevance' and 'scientificity' of their work to sustain their reputability. The WEA was both a significant experiment and a relatively secure launching-pad for their ambitions. They offered society a handsome repayment if their efforts were accepted and rewarded – industrial and political consensus. In the uncertain political environment created by the Labor parties' entry into politics, the education of workers appeared a pressing matter to intellectuals, like William Morris Hughes, who knew that the churches were too remote, and the old university extension classes (dating from the late 1880s and early 1890s) too effetely 'cultural', to attract and channel the turbulent aspirations of the workers:

> In this country the people can do any thing they please; have whom they like as their leaders, make what laws they please, have what industrial conditions they desire, and get all these things by methods safe, peaceful, and sanctioned by our own experience and the teachings of history. What remains then but to educate the people to desire wisely?[2]

Hughes himself symbolizes the political centre to which the WEA was meant to give roots by instructing the worker to be a citizen. An advocate of Arbitration, a moderate ALP leader who betrayed workers during World War One by supporting conscription and postponing indefinitely a referendum on price control, Hughes moved easily into the leadership of the new anti-Labor coalition, the National Party, at exactly the same time (1915-19) as the WEA was first showing its true colours. Neither Hughes nor the WEA would countenance a real shift in political power towards workers. Both adopted a paternal stance from which workers would be instructed to know that they were citizens before they were workers, and that society functioned by certain laws which determined the proper and responsible course for the organised working class. There was a convergence between the liberal ideal of the statesman – the

leader who stood at the centre and cancelled all political tensions by defining and enacting a consensus – and the notion of 'objective' social knowledge – the discoverable and teachable 'laws' by which society worked. This point of convergence could be described as the doctrine of impartiality.

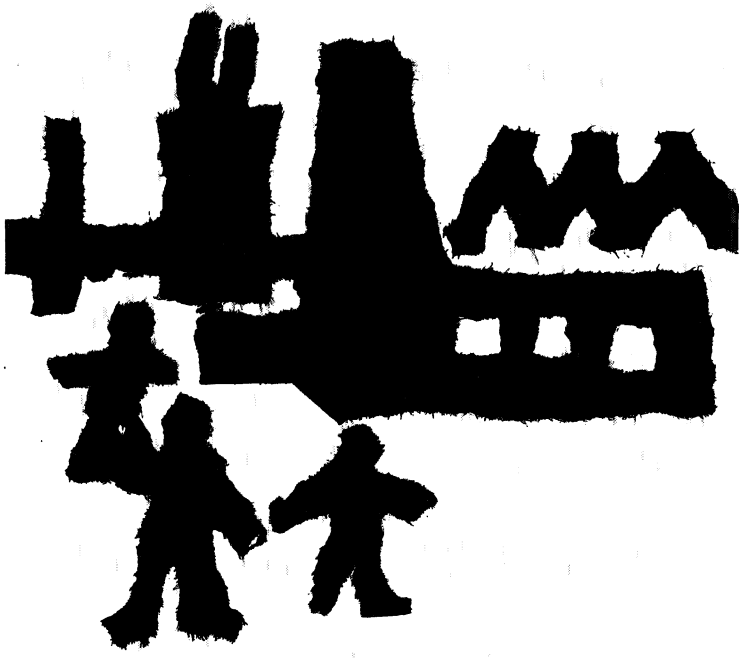
Three glimpses of the WEA at this time will suffice to illustrate how 'impartiality' operated. Firstly there was the stated rationale of the WEA tutorial class. It was conceived as an enclave which people entered on the condition that they separated themselves from the social identity that defined them in their daily lives. Affiliation to a party, group, class or doctrine was to be temporarily suspended to allow the student to make an examination of their own and others' economic and political theories. The curriculum, at least in its ideal form, should not try to avoid controversial matters; 'relevance' was esteemed. The point was to disengage the students from blinding and irrational group loyalties. The WEA was not meant to teach any particular social doctrine, but rather to insist on the personal ideal of a dispassionate relation to doctrines.[3]

Secondly, any matter which became a political issue was in principle available to be rescued from politics by reasoned debate and empirical inquiry. The social system had its principles and laws of efficient functioning. Economics was thought to be particularly effective in setting out these laws, so its study was urged on workers by WEA intellectuals. At one two-day conference, in 1915 (held on one day at Sydney University and on the other at the Trades and Labour Council) workers were told that they often had an unrealistic expectation of what their parliamentary representatives could deliver. They were naively unappreciative of the economic constraints built into the social system; economic science was the counsel they should turn to:

> Labour leaders themselves have learned, by a short experience of the responsibilities of government, how entirely necessary is such a study. [4]

Cultivators of detachment, instructors in social science, WEA teachers were also citizens with their own freedom of opinion outside their jobs. This at least was the view taken by the WEA in 1916-17 when Australia was polarized by the conscription issue. Trade unions who were among the most virulent opponents of conscription, were appalled when some of their colleagues on the joint (university/trade union) committees of the WEA stumped the country campaigning for a "yes" vote in the conscription referenda. The WEA decided that as an educational body it had no opinion on the matter and refused to silence Meredith Atkinson, then director of tutorial classes at Sydney University. This ruined the reputation of the WEA in trade union circles more quickly than anything else it ever did. By 1918 the WEA was past the zenith of its support among the organised labour movement. It had failed to reach out to the militant class conscious worker.

This crisis must also be seen as evidence of the tenacity of the ideal of scientific impartiality in the WEA. The professional reputations and the political credibility of the new generation of university social scientists were sustained in this rhetoric. Between the wars this new intelligentsia, fortified by public-spirited professionals (mainly lawyers) created a number of bodies that set out to enact impartiality, an approach to political issues that they judged to be no longer possible in the political arena: the campus Public Questions Societies, the Australian Institute of Political Science (and its journal *Australian Quarterly*) and the WEA. But the Depression, even more sharply than the conscription crisis, raised again the nagging question of the possibility or effectiveness of the pedagogy of the detached.



"Education or Propaganda?"

It took a maverick liberal, Lloyd Ross, to challenge the doctrine of non-partisanship. Ross moved from Newcastle, where had been university district tutor for two years, to Sydney, to become assistant director of tutorial classes for the University of Sydney, in 1934. F A Bland, who was on the point of taking up the new chair of Public Administration at Sydney University, wrote as outgoing editor of *Australian Highway* that it was time to take stock of WEA activities. He was specifically concerned with the declining circulation of *AH*, but Ross and others took up other points of concern. The WEA's problem, he said, was that it had become detached (in its curriculum, its personnel and its students) from its original aims of being an educational facility for the working class. Ross assumed editorship of *AH* and throughout 1935 turned its pages over to a lively debate on the objectives and methods of the WEA.

Ross had earlier stated his admiration for education that oriented itself to the militant politics of worker activists. Education that took as its point of departure certain basic and unquestionable political objectives could still be education, it was not necessarily propaganda. Brookwood College illustrated this. Run by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action (CPLA) in New York, its students were militants who combined theoretical work with rank and file activism. Discussions witnessed by Ross had been 'as free as any I have experienced in the WEA".[5] It was still possible that this 'educational' effort could drift into 'propaganda' however, if the boundaries of controversy became narrowed to conform to the doctrines of one particular sect. Apparently this was the downfall of Brookwood, as Ross reported a year later.[6] Brookwood had become the instrument of the CPLA against the American Socialist Party and the American Federation of Labor.

These two reports illustrate two important themes of Ross's case. Firstly, that education framed by the political objectives of the working class was not necessarily propaganda. Secondly,

his genuine exasperation with sectarianism – an enormous problem within the Australian labour movement at that time.

Ross endeavoured in the mid 1930s to question whether 'impartiality' should be a defining principle of adult education. 'Depressions make propagandists of us all", he said in 1933. He had experienced recent classes in economics as a tug of war between a tutor trying to teach a lesson and students – hungry for guidance through the maze of economic and political doctrines that proliferated during the depression – who tried to 'squeeze from the tutor his own opinion.'[7] Between an impartiality that denied these needs of tutorial students, and a dogmatism that made them instruments of a sect, lay a proper form of working class education, Ross believed. That proper path was determined by a number of things: the subjects the WEA offered, the quality and educational views of the tutors, the 'catchment area' from which students were drawn, and the willingness of trade unions to encourage the education of their membership. Ross aimed his fire at all four problems, though they were not always easy to distinguish.

"Miss Psychology"

'The self-mutilation that is known as psychology'[8] seemed a particularly important obstacle to partisan education. Psychology flourished institutionally between the wars, enjoying some currency as the key to the human sciences, the one that understood the 'whole man'. In the pages of *Australian Highway*, psychology was often extolled as the study which taught a person to think clearly, to distance their emotions, to be more rational. In a letter responding to some critical remarks about psychology made by Ross, Jane Clunies Ross said that after studying psychology:

> The student finds himself with a mind disciplined by self-knowledge, with increased powers of weighing evidence, of avoiding errors of hasty or emotional judgment, and he has also learnt tolerance of the point of view of types of personality different from his own. In short he is in a position to tackle economics, politics or any social study with great competence. [9]

This implied an educational practice which isolated students from their 'emotional' social allegiances. Different opinions were a function of personality differences. The ideal student was one whose loyalty to reason and impartiality was soverign over any political or social loyalties because it was conceived as a triumph of rationality over the emotions. ('Too much psychology has made Hamlets of us all', thundered Ross in response.)[10]

As well as promoting this pedagogical ideal of detachment, psychology seems to have promoted substantive theories about society. F J Seamons, a student from a Sydney University tutorial class on psychology, contributed an essay on 'Psycho-industrial conflict' in which he argued:

> We may as well recognise the fact that in the industrial army the great majority will always carry their general's batons in private's knapsacks . . . And so, because the number of bosses is limited, the number of projectionists, introjectionists, regressionists, identificationists, negativists and destructionists and poor old hard-luckists is practically unlimited

and

> economic differences are not solely responsible for the class warfare that is such a lamentable feature in the industrial world. The economic factors are only contributory to the real conflict which is psychological. [11]

No wonder that Ross wrote that the decline of the WEA stemmed from the time when,

> the association married money in the person of Miss Psychology, who insisted that the Economic Man should show what a good husband he could be by staying at home and saving his individual soul. [12]

While the metaphor justifiably fascinated Jane Clunies Ross, the rejection of psychology, for its substantive arguments and for its theory of learning and reasoning, was accurate.

The psychologists fought back. C R MacRae said that most psychology in classes was really social psychology. For instance when 'pugnacity' was the topic of a lesson, discussion would develop around 'the causes and cures of war and crime.'[13] Nor was psychology necessarily apolitical wrote J Infante: 'How can one deal efficiently with a crowd without having a good understanding of the motives of their behaviour?'[14] But their strongest case lay with two observations: that there was a demand for psychology by fascinated lay people; and that the aim of the WEA was to cultivate that intellectual independence of individuals without which democracy could not thrive. Psychology would help anybody shield themselves against those emotive entanglements of thought – advertising and political propaganda.

The image of the inependent individual returned again and again to these arguments, almost irresistibly. David Stewart, the long-serving Scottish ex-carpenter secretary of the NSW WEA, made an early effort to distance himself from the liberal educational ideal of cultivating the individual.[15] A year before Ross began his critical provocations, Stewart had criticised 'the development of the individual personality' as an outmoded educational objective, part of the social philosophy of laissez-faire liberalism which had now plunged the world into Depression. Education should properly address and cultivate groups within the community. The church schools cultivated the religious affiliation of their congregations, and the WEA should cultivate loyalty to and love of the working class, as long as it did not turn into a doctrine of class warfare and class hatred, Stewart said. The WEA should foster, and protect the independence of working class culture.[16] But Stewart seemed to conceive that culture as one that should contain no sense of opposition to any other social force. At least one correspondent, 'J.O.A.B.' argued that this was absurd and that there was nothing distinctively working class in the WEA curriculum.[17] Ross never publicly contested the woolliness of his colleague's argument, choosing instead to make explicit again and again that working class culture had to be conceived in a political sense. Ross also rhetorically differentiated himself from Stewart's cloyingly ambiguous workerism, by interlacing his work with quotes from Lenin, and writing such heretical epigrams as 'A class must be an educational soviet'. Stewart subsequently lapsed back into the view that the WEA sought to improve democracy by cultivating intellectual independence of individuals.[19]

Ross question

Ross questioned the assumption that the educational practice of the WEA should always consist of a graduate tutor giving lessons to emotional and confused lay people. 'In a class on economics the experience of the worker is as important as the theory of the leader' he said.[20] Nor was essay writing necessarily the best activity to which students should be directed. Ross was excited about the possibilities afforded by radio. In the UK the WEA was developing a system whereby the BBC would broadcast radio talks and also train interested people to lead discussions among listener groups that gathered round the

radio in people's homes. Not only was the word spread further and more cheaply by radio but the listener groups gave people a change to organise their own participation in adult education. It would break the exclusive and dependent university-style of teaching. Discussion leaders need not be graduates, participants need not write essays, and the groups themselves were built into existing networks of friendship and political association – quite contrary to the orthodox ideal of the tutorial class.[21]

One of the impressive features of Ross's attack was its breadth. It touched on the many dimensions by which a self-satisfied liberal intelligentsia implicitly defined itself and its relation to the culture of the working class. For instance, Ross saw the literary culture of the WEA as Anglo-centric and distainful of modernism. In 'We demand from literature' he argued that literary study should be animated by a sense of the socially-critical potential of literature and criticism.[22] One tutor, P C Greenland, accused Ross of advocating a totalitarian socialist realism.[23] Another appealed to the heritage of the classics (mostly English) who were conceived as tribal elders perturbed by what they could see from their heavenly home.[24] But Ross was not merely advocating modernism, but also a different teaching practice.

While in Newcastle, Ross had co-operated with the ARU in running an amateur drama club, with an emphasis on realist plays of social protest. He became secretary of the WEA Drama Group in Sydney, and one intriguing entry in 'Movement Notes' in *Australian Highway*, July 1935, advertises a special workshop of the Drama Club and Socialisation Class which would collectively write a play on Lenin. No report of this function exists, but in the next month's issue a correspondent called 'H C F' blamed low attendance at Drama Club functions on its preference for 'propaganda'. Ross responded that this was probably true, and hit back:

> If you had added that they prefer A A Milne to Ernest Toller, Sir James Barrie to Eugene O'Neill, Noel Coward to Elmer Rice, you would have completed the picture of their intellectual bankruptcy and aesthetic cowardice.[25]

A condemnation of the characteristic audience of the WEA, as well as of the liberal intelligentsia that had shaped their expectations, had begun to creep into Ross's articles. His vision of working class education had been shaped by the atypical propinquity of WEA, trade union leaders and rank and file in Newcastle. Sydney was proving to be more immovable: the intellectual establishment was large and sure of itself, the trade union leaderships were resistant to the approaches of Ross's newly-formed WEA Trade Union Committee, and the students stayed away from the innovatory functions Ross fostered. He acknowledged the failure of his "year of controversy" in the last issue he edited, saying: "The limits of the WEA are that by its very constitution and its very source of finance [the university], it is impossible to link intellectual discussion with political action".[26] Notwithstanding some letters to *Australian Highway* supporting Ross, this conclusion was accurate. The WEA, in so many ways, was saturated with the university-based liberal intellectual culture of the 1930s. Ross's challenge was provocative, instructive and courageous, but there was an unbridgeable gulf between him and the WEA. Ross withdrew, but resisted what would have been understandable – the bitter condemnation of a defeated man. Announcing that he was joining the Australian Railway Union as its secretary he paid this tribute:

> I leave the WEA convinced that the WEA technique of discussion and the WEA atmosphere of tolerance are essential for the labour movement that I am entering. My future will depend on whether an increasing number of workers will respond to a call to intellectual effort, industrial struggle and political principles.[27]

Lloyd Ross's challenge to the WEA, to identify itself with the aims of the labour movement and to add its voice to the growing coalition of popular forces against Fascism, was the strongest challenge the doctrine of impartiality has ever faced. The resistance the other WEA intellectuals showed is a fascinating illustration of the limitations of Australian intellectual culture between the wars. Contemporary attempts to reform the WEA could perhaps learn from this episode, what Ross himself seemed to know (though he did not highlight it above other factors), that the intellectual ideal of detachment from politics must be uprooted, not only as an explicitly stated ideal, but also as a preapposition contained in the way classes are constituted – the way people are brought together.

References

1 See R M Crawford, *A Bit of a Rebel*, Sydney University Press, 1975, p. 127.
2 W M Hughes, *The Case for Labor* (1910), Sydney, Sydney University Press edition 1970, p. 105-6.
3 For further discussion of this theory, and of the WEA intellectuals' assumptions, see Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, Malmesbury, Kibble Books, 1978. chap. 2.
4 *Ibid.* p. 59.
5 Lloyd Ross 'Brookwood – an American Labor College' *Australian Highway*, May 11, 1932, p 281.
6 Lloyd Ross 'An old moral with a new story', *Australian Highway*, September 11, 1933.

7 *Ibid.* p. 123.
8 Lloyd Ross, 'Participation' *Australian Highway*, May 10, 1934, p. 66.
9 'Letters' *Australian Highway*, May 15, 1935, p. 94. Another contributor had also spelled out a similar notion of the separability of rationality and emotion. 'When we are under the control of emotions which are at all strong we cannot think clearly or efficiently. Under strong emotions our behaviour becomes mechanical, and is controlled by the autonomic nervous system, which is a much more primitive part of our nervous system than the cerebral cortex, which appears to be active when we think' W J Weeden, 'Thinking and Emotion', *Australian Highway* September 12, 1932, p 346. Weeden was a psychology tutor in Orange, NSW
10 Lloyd Ross, 'Out on the Roads', *Australian Highway*, July 11, 1935, p.113.
11 F J Seamons, 'Psycho-industrial Conflict', *Australian Highway*, October 10, 1934, p. 5-6.
12 Lloyd Ross, 'Plan or no plan in adult education', *Australian Highway*, April 15, 1935, p. 73.
13 C R McRae, 'An open letter to the editor of the *Highway*', *Australian Highway*, June 11, 1935, p. 106-7. McRae had recently published a book called *Concerning You and Me – A Psychology of Everyday Life* which answered such questions as: "Why do people touch wood to avoid danger? Why do we tell lies? Why don't children want their food? Why do girls object to domestic service? Why do people choose commonplace political leaders?" See F A Bland's warm reception of this book in *Australian Highway*, October 10, 1934.
14 'Letters' *Australian Highway*, August 8, 1935.
15 For a far too sympathetic biography of Stewart see E M Higgins, *David Stewart and the WEA* Sydney, WEA of New South Wales, 1957.
16 D Stewart, 'Social purpose in education', *Australian Highway*, March 10, 1934, and April 10, 1934.
17 'Letters' *Australian Highway*, June 11, 1935.
18 'Participation' *op. cit.* p. 67.
19 Letters, *Australian Highway*, August 12, 1935.
20 'Participation' *op. cit.*, p. 67.
21 Unhappily the ABC was shy of undertaking controversial broadcasts and made only a few token moves to support the WEA. See Higgins, *op. cit.*, p. 68-9. In Britain however there were 850 listening groups in 1933 and 632 in 1934. ('Movement notes' *Australian Highway*, July 11, 1935)
22 Lloyd Ross, 'We demand from literature', *Australian Highway*, March 11, 1935.
23 P C Greenland, 'Mr Ross at the tutor's conference' *Australian Highway*, March 11, 1935. Greenland was upbraided in the May issue by a tutor in German at Adelaide University for ignoring the necessity of the anti-fascist theme in modern writing, and for downgrading the quality of Soviet literature. Hirsch Munz, 'Demands from literature', *Australian Highway*, May 15, 1935.
24 H L McLoskey, 'The writer's protest', *Australian Highway* May 15, 1935.
25 'What plays shall we do?' *Australian Highway*, August 12, 1935, p. 13.
26 Lloyd Ross, 'A year of controversy', *Australian Highway*, October 15, 1935.
27 *Ibid.* p. 14.

BRING OUT YOUR OPPOSITION

Considerable criticism has been directed at *RED 14* which dealt with worker education. This criticism has focussed on two main points:

1 That *RED 14* concentrated on institutionally provided education – education through unions and tertiary institutions – and it could thus be inferred that the editorial collective viewed educational programmes provided for workers as the most promising form of worker education.
2 That *RED 14* did not acknowledge the significance of spontaneous forms of worker education organised and directed by workers themselves and that only such 'oppositional' education can be viewed as useful to the working class.

We agree, in part, with some of these criticisms. However, the concentration on institutional initiatives in worker education rather than on 'oppositional' educational programmes was prompted by two realities.

a We have been unable to identify and analyse learning programmes wholly initiated and implemented by workers themselves. This reflects either our own ignorance or the absence of such practices in any coherent form. This is not to deny their existence or their centrality in any examination of worker education.
b There has been an important expansion in adult education, generally, and worker education specifically in the last decade, an expansion largely expressed through institutional channels. The search for explanations for this growth in a time of contraction of the education industry as a whole is an important one if we are to understand the consequences in practice.

Therefore, the next edition of *RED* will continue the debate on worker education. We hope to move from description to analysis; to identify efforts by workers themselves to develop educational programmes and to make connections between developments in worker education and other parts of the education industry.

If you are critical of *RED 14*, contribute to *RED 16*. If you are not critical of *RED 14*, contribute ot the on-going discussion.

RED REVIEWS

A Discourse on Discourse

Discourse, The Australian Journal of Educational Studies Volume 1 Nos 1 and 2, 1981. Available from The Editor, **Discourse**, Department of Education, University of Queensland, St Lucia, Qld. 4067. Subscription $6 (individuals), $12 (institutions) per year.

This review covers the first two issues of a new educational journal published from the Department of Education at the University of Queensland. The editor is Salvatore d'Urso, with an extensive predominantly male list of associate and consulting editors. The journal is to appear twice yearly.

An editorial policy statement describes *Discourse* as "a journal in the field of socio-cultural foundations of education . . . mainly interested in articles with an Australian focus . . . *Discourse* is not bound to any ideological position. It prefers interdisciplinary writing (eg among the sociology, anthropology, history, economics of education) but it will also consider articles without restriction of orientation, method or scope". The nine articles in the first volume show no strong party line, though positivistic social science finds few defenders. Only two papers (the first two) are specifically Australian in focus, though almost all are concerned with questions familiar enough in Australian university education departments. The predominant tone is academic and theoretical. On the evidence of Volume One, this is a journal for educational theorists not for teachers.

The first issue contains four papers. Ashenden, Connell, Dowsett and Kessler provide an interesting report on their School, Home and Work Project, which makes skilful use of case-study material to illustrate the limitations of naive reproduction theory. It closes with a plea for an understanding of the complex interrelationships in specific situations between processes within the school and the dynamics of the wider society. *RED* readers could hardly disagree. The theoretical problems involved in reaching such an understanding are not to be underestimated, but there is no doubt that the future work of the School, Home and Work Project will be well worth following.

Malcolm Skilbeck, of the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra, provides an elegantly-argued defence of the CDC's recent paper on Core Curriculum. Core curriculum, we are told, will defend the safe liberal centre against both the 'back to basics', backlash from the Right, and the impractical idealists of the Left. Skilbeck is particularly concerned to defend 'Core' against any would-be critics but, in the process, comes close to losing his argument in a fog of jargon. But this is undoubtedly a cleverly written and persuasive paper whose arguments need to be confronted in some detail by radical educationists. As he notes "this whole process of clarifying enlarging and developing the idea of core curriculum . . ., promises to be with us for a long time" (p 34).

Ivan Snook, from New Zealand, provides a brief critique of the work of Thomas Szasz. Snook's main interest in Szasz appears to be in Szasz's usefulness as a back-up to a moderate attack on the growth of a 'mental health' approach to education (in the form of school counselling centres and such). According to Snook, Szasz exaggerates wildly and his politics are somewhat nasty, but nevertheless Szasz has got some good points. Snook doesn't want to abolish mental illness, but wants rather to restrict it to the obviously crazy, and keep it (and the treatment of it) out of schools. At least this is what I think he wants. The article is not conspicuous for its clarity.

Brian Hill's closing paper is a brief reflection on *Discourse*'s alleged commitment, to the 'socio-cultural foundations of education'. Hill argues against the idea of 'foundations' and claims that unless education is taught in a genuinely interdisciplinary manner, as he claims is done at Murdoch University, it will be at risk of disintegrating into a collection of assorted disciplines. In that case, university education departments will lose their respectability and credibility and become prime targets for financial cutbacks (p 55). Education has to establish itself as an autonomous profession.

Robert Stake (University of Illinois) opens the second issue with a plea for 'subjectivity' in educational research. Positivistic, structuralist social science excludes subjective experience and subjective knowing from our representations of the educative process. Michael Pusey (University of New South Wales) continues the assault on positivism, "the newest enemy of good educational practice . . . **not** neutral and value free . . . instead an instrument for political and pseudopolitical control" (p 13). Its real aim is to increase the 'steering capacity' of the capitalist state in the field of education, by denying the validity of the experience of teachers, pupils and parents. Pusey recommends Habermas as a source of relevant insights.

A long paper on curriculum theory by Patrick Brady (Canberra CAE) begins with a critique of three main approaches in this area. 'The Objective Model' of Tyler and Taba begins with high-minded attempts at general theory and ends with (again) positivism and behaviourism, while the 'Cultural Model' of Sockett and Lawton combines Popperian piecemeal social engineering and situational analysis with old-style cultural elitism. The 'Problematic Model' (Bernstein, Young and the 'new' sociology of education) gets the most sympathetic treatment but Brady is worried at its implicit relativism, and proceeds through an analysis of the concept of 'imagination' to argue that education has to combine structure and creativity. We should think of curriculum as "a network of exchanges where connections are attempted, between students and teachers, between teachers and the community, between tradition and innovation, between theory and practice" (p 37). As the reference to the 'new' sociology of education indicates, Brady is aware of the power relations within and beyond the educational process. His conclusions however sound a little remote from the all too real world of Ashenden, Skilbeck or Pusey.

Richard Bates (Deakin) in a paper from the 1979 SAANZ Conference asks "What can the New Sociology of Education do for teachers?". The combination of critical structural analysis and phenomenological relativism in

the early formulations of Young, Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis and others perhaps merely convinced teachers that their situation was hopeless. But the New Sociology of Education has the potential to reassert "the dignity of teachers, their importance in the achievement of human betterment" (p 46) and helps teachers reject "the encroachment of bureaucratic controls and the mechanisation of pedagogy directed towards extending the control of social, cultural and economic elites over the process of education" (p 47).

The concluding paper, by C A Bowers (University of Oregon) is perhaps the most theoretical of all, but also one of the most interesting to this reviewer. Bowers analyses some of the ways in which Marxist educational theorists have remained bound by "traditional patterns of thought basic to the deep structure of the Western Episteme" (p 54): structuralism, rationalism, and teleology. (The School, Home and Work project is cited as a rare exception to the dominance of depersonalized structural analysis, giving a pleasing circularity to the structure of the first two issues!) Bowers brings some substantial arguments to bear on the side of the critical and 'humanist' Marxists against the Marxist structuralists, particularly in his/her demonstration of the inadequacy of Marxist structuralism to cope with basic contemporary social and educational issues, though as I commented above with reference to Ashenden *et al* the job of providing a convincing alternative to both orthodox sociology of education and Marxist structuralism is only beginning.

As the above summaries indicate, readers of *RED*, especially if theoretically inclined, are likely to find some worthwhile reading in the pages of *Discourse*, and in any case the appearance of a new educational journal is something to be welcomed, especially in these hard times. We wish *Discourse* well, and hope that it will thrive, and expand into some of the other areas outlined in its editorial policy statement.

Linley Samuel

Role Call

Producer: Sandra Alexandra

Director: Gilliam Leahy

Role Call is a new documentary on initiatives in non-sexist education. It reports from two Australian high schools with different approaches in their programs. One offers students a choice across traditional subject areas: boys take sewing, girls take metalwork. In the other, the concept of sex-role stereotyping is explored in personal development and history classes.

The film attempts to raise questions on aims and methods in non-sexist education. Despite the predictability of its technique (interviews, a teacher's inservice session and classroom footage) it is a thought provoking piece. An interview with a sports mistress shows the chicken and egg dilemma in developing non-sexist curricula. Mixed competitive sports see the girls coming off second best while mixed gymnastics results in boys' bruised egos – this whole situation coming about, precisely because both sexes have not so far had a history of mixed competition. Teachers are left with the short term, no-win options of either continuing segregation or loss of self-esteem, by one or other sex. This film thus confronts the audience with the difficult choices rather than posit any simple easy answers to the sexism problem.

Role Call was funded by the Schools Commission and The Women's Film Fund, and is intended for use by teachers, trainers and community educators working to implement affirmative action on anti-discrimination programs. Presumably this target audience would know the answer to the question "What is sexism" which begins the film. Yet it goes on to provide a definition and show how boys and girls of high school age are affected. The precise aim of the film is therefore in some doubt. And a short cartoon sequence used in the initial section adds to the confusion with its ambiguous tone.

The twenty-three minutes of film covers a wide range of relevant issues appealing at different times across the spectrum from the unconverted to the committed feminists (though some of the latter may have some objections to the sequence on women's place in history). This attempt to appeal broadly in combination with an expected heterogeneous audience should ensure the success of *Role Call* as a stimulus film.

However, it does not of itself provide sufficient information to change negative or even neutral attitudes. Those interested in introducing the idea of non-sexist schooling to a group would need to use it in combination with other resources.

Role Call is available through Sydney Filmmakers Co-op, PO Box 214, Kings Cross 2011, phone: 330 721.

Sue Hilder
Christine Baxter

INTERVENTION No 17

SPECIAL ISSUE:
BEYOND MARXISM?

In recent years, it has become common to speak of a "crisis in Marxism". While the precise focus of this term is unclear, it is apparent that there is a widespread disenchantment amongst radicals with some of the central tenets of Marxist orthodoxy. For example: there is increasing scepticism concerning the alleged primacy of material production in social life; there is suspicion of the claim that any coherent and liberating political practice must be based on the leadership of the working class. A number of issues which have come into prominence since the early 1970s have posed problems for Marxism. These include: power and the state; feminism, politics of sexuality, family, marginal social movements; language, ideology, the politics of signs; the nature of socialist politics, the revolution/ reform dichotomy. To many, the attempt to deal adequately with these issues has seemed to involve recourse to categories and theories not recognisably Marxist.

Intervention No 17 (to be published in January 1982) will be devoted to these issues. We invite contributions. The deadline will be 1 November, 1981; however, it is important that we be informed of any work that is being planned as soon as possible – certainly not later than mid-July. If there is enough interest, we may organise a weekend seminar-discussion of potential contributions in August.

Enquiries, suggestions, contributions etc to:

Judith Allen, Paul Patton,
Ross Poole,
School of History,
Philosophy & Politics,
Macquarie University,
North Ryde NSW 2113

Tiger Tales: Living In Richmond, a selection of work from the children in years 7 and 8 at Richmond High School, Sue Howard (ed) $1.50, 64 pages.

"One day", armed with her money, cards and cheques, "a lady jumped out of her window because her husband had another woman". The shock of witnessing the suicide is described with stark simplicity by Lisa. David recommends that the Richmond City Council fix the roads so they are safe, repair lighting, develop more parks and childcare facilities. "Don't ignore us", he pleads. And Nicholas describes how when the Council did plant trees in his street, they were ripped out by skin-heads. James writes about a kid he knows: "His Turkish name is Ozen, but we call him Brantly. Sometimes we call him Tom." Nick is puzzled by his Indian neighbours who pray in their front yard. He concludes: "I don't know why they do that. I always keep thinking about why they pray, but it really isn't none of my business."

What it's like to live in an inner suburb of Melbourne is told here through the eyes of these children. They are a few of the young writers whose everyday experiences and perceptions about living in Richmond are produced in a collection of children's stories, *Tiger Tales, Living in Richmond.* The authors are 'Richmond kids' – year 7 and 8 students from Richmond High School – and the book has been edited by Sue Howard, an English teacher at the school.

Tiger Tales grew out of an exploration of city life, which occurred as part of the General Studies Programme at Richmond High School. Based on the children's own experiences, it began as a writing and talking activity to develop their literacy skills, and developed into a book with the financial assistance of the International Year of the Child Committee. The project aimed to provide a wider audience for the children's writing than normally available within a school. It also aimed to foster appreciation and understanding of the particular characteristics of Richmond, and to encourage in the children an awareness that they are part of and belong to a community.

For the children who wrote these stories, living in Richmond is an intense affair: there's always something happening, some drama to relate, a scandal, a fight – or the inevitable accident. Reflected in their writing is the sense of shared experience, group solidarity, loyalty and betrayal, the loneliness of the eccentric and the 'down and out', isolation, and the resolution of conflict. The children describe and analyse their environment, and the adventures and people they find within it. The stories illustrate their attempts to make sense of this world. The writing highlights their developing value systems and their growing awareness of the different, and often conflicting, values of the wider world. The collection acknowledges as valuable the language of these children and their attempts to use language competently.

Tiger Tales can be used in a variety of ways in educational programmes, at both primary and secondary levels. The collection has attracted the interest of tertiary educators involved in children's literature and writing. It is a refreshing and insightful text for English and Social Studies teachers and students.

Tiger Tales is available either singly or in class sets and can be bought at Readings Bookshops in Melbourne, the Richmond Community Centre, 123 Church Street, Richmond (428-1411), or from Sue Howard, 32 Murchison Street, Carlton 3053.

Reviewing Some Reviews

Dear Collective,

RED 12 contains two reviews of books whose content deserves much more detailed and critical discussion than space allowed your two reviewers. Sally Sayer described Harold Entwistle's important *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics,* and Peter Stevens the book by Castles & Wustenberg, *The Education of the Future: an Introduction to the Theory & Practice of Socialist Education.*

Sally Sayer, concentrating on Entwistle's use of Gramsci to criticise progressive and radical education, avoids "assess(ing) how accurate as a reading of Gramsci" the book is (*RED* p 28). Yet this must be done by those wishing to understand their place in the European socialist tradition, and, as here, to answer those wishing to use Gramsci's authority to support their own case. But the task is not easy. Much of Gramsci's writing remains untranslated, and much of that which is translated was written in fear of censorship (*Notebooks,* p xiii) and is therefore more than usually capable of different interpretations. My own reading would place Gramsci on schooling as less conservative than Entwistle's reading and more conservative than that of Henry Giroux (*Telos,* 45, 1980, pp 215-25).

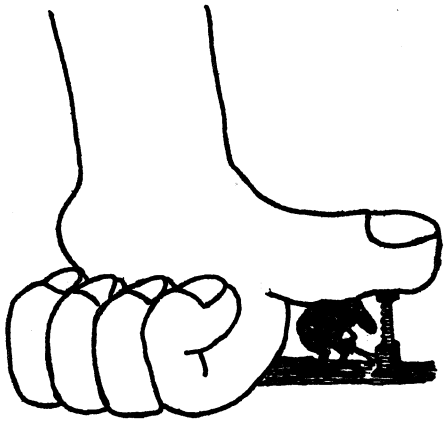
Of particular interest today is the question of the school curriculum. Here Entwistle argues Gramsci's support for traditional subjects and "a certain 'baggage' or 'equipment' . . . of concrete facts" (*Notebooks,* p 36). Giroux counters with quotations which suggest that Gramsci clearly distinguished between storing facts like a dictionary and education in which traditional culture has been reflected on and digested (*Telos,* p 218). But this does not contradict the essentially conservative (with a small c) nature of Gramsci's preference for "scientific ideas" embodied in the culture of the school and its teachers as against "folklore", the "type of culture represented by his pupils" (*Notebooks,* pp 33-4 & 35-6).

The second question where I judge Gramsci, if not conservative, at least a man of his time rather than ours, is his concern with working class "access" to schooling (Entwistle, pp 102-3 and *Notebooks,* p 24). But without our experience of mass schooling and its large-scale rejection it is not surprising that he, like so many writers today, failed to fully comprehend the problems of **learning.** The more committed the writer, the more faith there seems to be that learning will automatically follow "correct" teaching, and it is teaching to which most attention is devoted. Peter Stevens would seem to share this error, for he comments: "working class kids . . . increasingly recognise the relative worthlessness of the knowledge which the school provides" (*RED* p 26). Were this true socialist educators would have an easier prospect. Unfortunately the truth is very different, as is shown, eg by the work of Paul Willis and others at the Birmingham Cultural Studies Centre (described in *Knowledge, Ideology & the Politics of Schooling,* by Rachel Sharp, pp 135-38). Only when socialist educators can elucidate the dialectic of teaching-learning, and that beyond the school also, can the aim of Gramsci of giving all members of society access to the best of all our cultures become a possibility.

The main theme of Castles' and Wustenberg's book, "polytechnical education", is also dealt with at some length by Entwistle (pp 149-75 and more narrowly, pp 151-59). Both discussions are largely vitiated by a failure of definition which bedevils almost all treatments of the subject, and which stems in part from Marx's own sketchy treatment of the subject, and in part from Soviet apologetics following the decade of the twenties. Castles and Wustenberg compensate for a lack of theoretical clarity by their wide and remarkably accurate descriptions (eg in their treatment of China they speak of combining education with labour and do not make the mistake, as they do in their introductory summary (p 8), of calling it 'polytechnical education'). Entwistle has the merit of directly challenging what he sees as Marx's defence of child labour in *Capital* (pp 153-5).

I already argued in 1977 (in *Marx & Education in Russia & China*) that embodied in the brief comments on education in Marx's writings are two different concepts. That of polytechnical education is spelt out in the instructions to delegates to the Geneva meeting of the First International (Price, 1977, p 71). There Marx speaks of "the general principles of all processes of production", and "the practical use and handling of the elementary instruments of all trades". The other concept is moral-political and comes from the social experience of work, and its locus is the much-quoted passage on Robert Owen and the nearly adjacent one on the value of "the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages" (Price, 1977, p 72). In addition to this distinction it is also necessary to make a number of others, as I explain in the chapter on Labour & Education in the same book (pp 184-87). Only when this is done is it possible to go on and evaluate the experience of the USSR, China and other countries where in one form or another labour has been "combined" with education. Whether, having done that, (and may I repeat that this is just what none of the writers considered here has done), one can conclude with Castles and Wustenberg that socialist educators should "fight for the introduction of genuine polytechnic education" and thus make "education a 'revolutionary ferment' " I doubt. But having done the analysis we will be a lot clearer as to just what we should be doing.

R F Price



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Articles should not exceed 5000 words and those with a practical emphasis are especially sought. We also seek commentaries and information items up to 1000 words, as well as book reviews, letters, notices, contacts, news, photographs and cartoons. Please submit articles typed and double spaced.

RED 16 will continue the debate about worker education. We would welcome articles on this theme, or any other articles of general interest.

Send contributions to: Editorial Collective,
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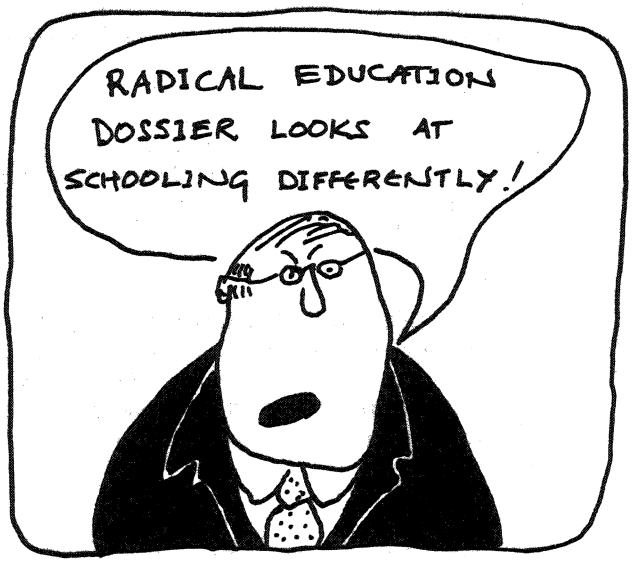

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