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Abstract

This is a theoretical examination of certain ways in which a child's development may be affected by parent-child interactions in which the content of television programming appears as an explicit referent, i.e., as the topic of a verbal exchange, as the premise for a game, and so forth. The discussion deals with four areas of development, viz.: (1) the child's interpretational skills with regard to the television medium; (2) the child's repertory of cognitive categories regarding the real world; (3) the child's behavioral repertory, including both verbal and nonverbal items; and (4) the child's social relationships. The paper concludes with a discussion of certain methodological issues involved in the empirical examination of these matters.

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ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF TELEVISION-RELATED PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION

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This is a theoretical examination of certain ways in which a child's development may be affected by parent-child interactions in which the content of television programming appears as an explicit referent, i.e., as the topic of a verbal exchange, as the premise for a game, and so forth. The discussion deals with four areas of development, viz.: (1) the child's interpretational skills with regard to the television medium; (2) the child's repertory of cognitive categories regarding the real world; (3) the child's behavioral repertory, including both verbal and nonverbal items; and (4) the child's social relationships. The paper concludes with a discussion of certain methodological issues involved in the empirical examination of these matters.

Studies of mass-media exposure as a potential learning context for children sometimes conceptualize the learning process in question as occurring independently of, or in competition with, the learning processes inherent in intrafamily relationships (e.g., Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970, pp. 657-658; Hollander, 1971). However, as Chaffee (1972, p. 108) has pointed out, this kind of separation between medium and family is not always feasible or permissible for the researcher. A child's behavior with regard to a certain medium may be conditioned by the structure of its family, while the medium may—in a loose sense, reciprocally—provide the pretexts for certain orders of interaction between parents and children. In short, situations with these characteristics present the investigator with the problem of a single learning context, in which the roles of medium and family members must be accounted for at the same time.

An apparently increasing number of investigators have been applying this kind of inclusive perspective, in varying degrees of explicitness, to research on television. The immediate focus of much of this research has been on the ways in which children's viewing patterns and preferences are affected by parents, either through direct control (e.g., Barcus, 1969; Hess & Goldman, 1962; Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958, p. 378; Mohr, 1979) or by virtue of other features of the relationship between parent and child (e.g., Chaffee & McLeod, 1972; Chaffee, McLeod, & Atkin, 1971; Forsey, 1963; Maccoby, 1954; Riley & Riley, 1951). Implicitly, at least, much of this work has also had a broader concern with the consequences of television-related parental influence for behavior outside the immediate television-viewing situation (McLeod & Brown, 1976, p. 203). Among the studies that have focused directly on parental influence on these other consequences, a particularly prominent position is occupied by research on the role of parents in modifying the effects of advertising (Robertson, 1979, for a review). This paper is an attempt to outline certain consequences of one particular class of potential learning contexts in which both family and television play a part, namely, parent-child interactions focused explicitly on television. In other words, the concern of this paper is with parent-child interactions in which the content of television programming appears as explicit subject matter, e.g., as the topic of a verbal exchange, as the premise for a game, and so forth. The discussion of the consequences of this

kind of behavior will be theoretical, although descriptive statements about the interactional sequences involved will be based primarily on empirical findings.

The extent to which television is a subject of interaction in the family has received some documentation in previous studies. To begin with, several investigators have gathered data on the frequency with which children watch television in the company of their parents. Although more recent studies (e.g., Halloran, Brown, & Chaney, 1970, pp. 108-109; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972, p. 166) tend to give lower figures for this kind of behavior than earlier work did (e.g., Friedson, 1953, p. 232; Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958, p. 377; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961, p. 268), even the more recent data suggest that joint viewing by parents and children is a modal pattern of high frequency (Bower, 1973, p. 149). Furthermore, whereas some earlier writers in this area (e.g., Maccoby, 1951; Steiner, 1963, pp. 101-103) tended to argue that such joint-viewing situations were characterized by relatively little interaction among family members, more recent findings (e.g., Barcus, 1969; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972, p. 152) do not support this notion. In general, then, the viewing situation itself appears to be an important context of parent-child interaction involving television. However, subject matter drawn from television can also enter family interaction on a variety of other occasions, such as games between parents and children (cf. Williams, Smart, & Epstein 1979), parental comments on children's play, children's descriptions of programs they have watched alone, as well as after-the-fact discussion of programs viewed together (cf. LoSciuto, 1972, p. 57; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972, pp. 170-171). It need hardly be added that these patterns vary depending on the child's age and any number of other variables.

The aim of this paper is to develop a theoretical framework for the examination of certain consequences for a child's subsequent behavior, of the kinds of interactions adumbrated above. The consequences to be examined here may be grouped into four general categories. The first category comprises changes in the way in which a child interprets televised material. Within this general category, two more specific kinds of changes will be discussed: those involving the child's development of interpretational competence regarding the narrative conventions of commercial television and those contributing to the child's acquisition of a set of beliefs regarding the validity and generalizability of various types of televised material. The second general category of consequences discussed below includes changes in a child's repertory of cognitive categories regarding the real world. The specific focus of the discussion of this category will be on the child's acquisition of a system of verbal labels for "translating" the visual content of television programming into a socially validated system for the representation of reality. The third category of consequences covered here includes changes in a child's patterns of overt behavior, that is, a child's overt action upon, or interaction with, features of his/her environment other than television itself. Included in this discussion will be an examination of the formation of opinion, considered here purely as overt verbal behavior. Finally, under a fourth general category of consequences, this paper will focus on changes in one specific aspect of a child's overt behavior, namely, his/her social relationships. It should be emphasized that the list of specific processes and consequences to be discussed under the four headings outlined above is not intended to be exhaustive. Notably absent from this list is any discussion of parental influence on children's television-viewing patterns; and several other issues, such as parental definitions of incidental vocabulary items encountered by a child in a television program, will be mentioned only in passing. It should also be pointed out that, although the four categories of consequences will be discussed separately from one another, they are not unrelated, since various second-order effects may be conceived of as linking one area with another. Thus, changes in a

child's system for the cognitive classification of environmental objects and events (the second category of consequences discussed here) presumably have certain implications for his/her patterns of overt behavior toward them (the third and fourth categories) (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pp. 27-28), whereas the first category (changes in a child's way of interpreting televised material) may be thought of as involving a "reflexive" change, that is, a change in part of the learning context itself, with repercussions for all the other categories of consequences (cf. Bateson, 1972).

The discussion that follows makes frequent use of illustrations taken from the findings of a project in which the authors are currently engaged. The goal of this project is to compile an inventory and to map the features of television-related parent-child interactions in several social contexts. Although the project is aimed at eventual direct observation of selected situations of family interaction, in its present phase it is based on interviews with parents, and it is from some of these interviews that excerpts will be drawn here. Further details on this project are contained in the concluding section of this paper. The findings themselves will be presented in full elsewhere.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPRETATIONAL SKILLS

Parent-child interactions centered on television may affect in at least two important ways a child's skills in interpreting television programming: first, by developing the child's proficiency regarding the representational conventions of commercial television and, second, by contributing to the child's perception of the validity and the generalizability of specific types of programming (cf. Leifer, Gordon, & Graves, 1974, pp. 239-241).

Television is frequently regarded as a medium whose representational substance, that is, the flow of televised images and sounds, is so isomorphic with the objects it represents, that is, the appearances and sounds of the material world, that little or no learning is required in order to be able to match the two. In the case of individual images, there is considerable evidence that this is indeed the case. For example, in a somewhat extreme study of this issue, a child raised with no exposure whatsoever to pictures was able to identify immediately the subject (an animal) of the first television image he encountered (Hochberg & Brooks, 1962). When it comes to the relationship between images, however, the situation appears to be different. In particular, the isomorphy between reality and its televised presentation cannot be said to hold in the case of many of the narrative devices, such as flashbacks, parallel editing, and the like, by which the sections of the typical fictional program are joined together. Devices of this sort can therefore properly be considered to be arbitrary conventions, in the sense that one should expect them to vary cross-culturally (cf. Bellman & Jules-Rosette, 1977) and, more important, to require learning on the part of the audience members in a particular culture. Several studies provide evidence of this kind of learning, although the medium of reference in each case is film, rather than television. For example, in an experiment based on three filmed versions of a single story, age-related differences in comprehension were found to increase with increasing presence of certain editing devices in the films (Mialaret & Melies, 1954). In a study by Zazzo (1952), similar results were found for variations in editing style within a single film. Indirect evidence on this point is also provided by Carey (1974), in a study of devices indicating space-time transitions.

Aside from the possibility that a child may have to learn the meaning of particular narrative devices, however, it may also be true that the very act of treating the separate sections of a narrative as parts of a whole, rather than as successive unrelated events, requires specific learning, i.e., is not a tendency transferable automatically to television from one's experience with raw reality. This point has been argued in theory by Worth & Gross (1974); and the argument is supported by a series of studies, summarized in Messaris & Gross (1977), in which young children's misinterpretations of a visual narrative appear to have been occasioned by a failure to take into account the implications of one scene for the meaning of another. Studies by Collins and his associates (cf. Collins, 1975, 1979) also support the notion that the ability to deal with a visual narrative as a set of interrelated parts, subordinate to a whole, is an acquired skill; and an impressive example of differences in degrees of acquisition of this skill is provided by Noble (1975, p. 91).

In general, then, the development of the ability to interpret a television program as a coherent narrative is one potential area on which a child's interactions with parents-or, in fact, any more experienced viewer-can have an effect. It is our assumption that the actual process involved here takes place primarily during, or immediately following, joint-viewing situations and consists not only of explicit teaching but also-and, perhaps, more frequently-of indirect learning, contingent upon a parent's indication of the correct interpretation of a particular point, although not necessarily of the principle on which the interpretation is based. More specifically, in our interviews with parents, it was reported repeatedly that joint-viewing situations were punctuated continuously by two kinds of questions from their children: why had a particular event occurred (or not occurred) and what was going to happen next. Since the answers to these kinds of questions frequently involve the establishment of appropriate connections between segments of a program, these answers can, if accumulated over a sufficient number of cases, supply a child with the material necessary to infer, consciously or not, the principle behind the connection. It should, however, be emphasized that the principle itself need not be cited explicitly by the parent, who may, in any case, not be able to give an explicit rule for a particular interpretation. One example of this kind of situation in our data involved an episode of "The Incredible Hulk" in which a young woman whom the Hulk saves from drowning remembers, in flashback, the death by drowning of her sister. The interviewee's child, apparently failing to understand the correct sequence of events, wanted to know why the Hulk had allowed the second sister to drown after having saved the first one. While this child's mother did not, by her own account, give her daughter a general rule for recognizing and interpreting flashbacks, it seems reasonable to argue that, by supplying the correct interpretation of this particular flashback, she was making possible the eventual inductive recognition of the rule on the child's part. An intriguing extension of this argument is developed by Appell (1963, p. 312), who suggests that, even before a child can talk, it can begin to learn appropriate patterns of response to television by adjusting its own behavior to the nonverbal responses of older viewers.

A second way in which parent-child interactions may affect the development of a child's interpretational skills has to do with the child's perception of the validity and generalizability of the situations depicted on television programs. A common belief regarding this issue is that younger children either cannot distinguish television's portrayal of the world from the real thing or that, at any rate, they are uncritical in their acceptance as "the truth" of whatever they see on

television. For example, the father of two preschoolers told our interviewer that "they'll accept anything they see as gospel, unless you tell them it's not for real." It should be added that the prevalent belief that this kind of situation is typical of most children is usually supported by the claim that the situation arises from the extreme naturalism with which commercial television is thought to portray everyday life. On the other hand, however, there were also several accounts in our data of children who reportedly do question the veridicality of televised representations. According to one mother, her children (aged 4, 8, and 11) are continually asking her, "Is this a true story?" or, "Did this really happen?" This mother also described her children as "very critical" of television in general and then explained: "But they just do what their father does. They're doing that by example." The existence of cases of this sort suggests, then, that the origin of children's perceptions of the truth value of television programming is best considered problematical and that parent-child interactions may well contribute, in certain cases, to the formation of these perceptions. Indeed, the argument concerning television's naturalism is by no means impregnable, since, for one thing, the flagrant antinaturalism of "superhero" stunts is frequently cited by parents as a stimulus for their children's developing understanding of television's fictitiousness.

The most obvious way in which a parent may affect a child's tendency to accept certain kinds of televised portrayals as true or false and representative or unrepresentative would seem to be that of direct statement, as in the following account of a mother's comments to her 7-year-old son on the series "Roots": "I didn't see all of that, but parts I did see, I remember saying, I don't believe any of this, I'm sure that this is all played up." (Interviewer: "What kind of thing?") "Well, like the way they were treated, the attitude and the personality of the slaves at the time." In this case, of course, it is a particular series which is being indicted, whereas the husband in the previous example seems to be more generally critical. In any event, what matters in the long run, presumably, is the cumulative pattern of parental comments on particular types of programming or on television in general. Patterns of this sort may account for the results of a study by Gross & Morgan (in press), who found a negative association between, on the one hand, the degree of parental intervention, through rule imposition, advice, and the like, in their children's television viewing and, on the other hand, the children's adherence to "versions" of reality presented on television. It must not be assumed, however, that explicit commentary or intervention are the only ways in which parent-child interaction can impinge on a child's assessment of the credibility of televised material. For example, the work of McLeod and his associates indicates that there is a relationship between adolescents' beliefs in the verisimilitude of television violence and certain aspects of intrafamily communication patterns in general: these beliefs were highest for adolescents from families with a joint-and seemingly self-contradictory emphasis both on subordination to established authority and on the adolescent's development of his/her own position on an issue (McLeod, Atkin, & Chaffee, 1972b, p. 296). This datum becomes particularly important in the light of other findings by McLeod and his associates of relationships between family positions on these two dimensions-" socio-orientation" and "concept-orientation"-and various other aspects of adolescents' responses to the mass media (McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972; McLeod & Brown, 1976), since these findings, taken together, make it possible to incorporate the issue of children's perceptions of television's truth value within a more general theory of the relationship between family communication patterns and children's responses to television. A study conducted by Lull (in press-b) within the terms of this theory has yielded several findings of potential importance to the issue at hand: most notably, a positive relationship

between socio-orientation and the use of television for the illustration of experience and for "intellectual validation" and a positive relationship between concept-orientation and the use of television for the selective regulation, by parents, of children's experiences. It seems reasonable to make the tentative assumption that a family's use of television in any one of these ways also has implications for a child's developing sense of the validity and generalizability of programs, although Lull's analysis is not concerned explicitly with this aspect of the matter.

It should also be mentioned that validity and generalizability can, of course, be matters of degree and not merely of kind. For example, as is often assumed, the credibility of a medium may be a relative matter and it may therefore be pertinent to ask how children learn to discriminate among television, the press, and so forth as possible sources of information. A potential instance of direct parental influence on this process may be present in the following case of a mother who uses the newspaper to validate a TV-news report of suicide that her child had questioned: "This guy committed suicide. So, you know: Did this guy really jump off? And the next day in the paper, somebody jumped off the Tacony Bridge, and I said, see, here it is, this kind of thing really happens." As suggested earlier, of course, parental influence in these matters may also occur less directly.

THE ARTICULATION OF COGNITIVE CATEGORIES

There are several ways in which television viewing may lead, through parental intervention, to an augmentation or refinement of a child's stock of information about reality. Parents are frequently called upon to provide contextual information (e.g., historical or technical/scientific facts) necessary to the understanding of a television program, to explain the meaning of words a child has not encountered, before, or, most importantly, to integrate disturbing material into an acceptable philosophy of existence, as can happen when a parent must deal with a child's reaction to an irrefutable portrayal of suffering. In this discussion, we shall concentrate on two aspects of this cognitive development, both having to do with the elaboration and refinement of the child's system of cognitive categories: first, what may be termed the "translation" of the concrete information provided by television into the abstract categories of social intercourse; and, second, the imposition on reality of "new" categories derived from television through a process to be explained below.

It is an inherent property of "photographic" media such as television that their representations of reality are concrete, in the sense that these representations correspond always to a particular object or event (cf. Gombrich, 1972). By contrast, the linguistic representation of reality is largely a matter of abstract categories (e.g., the words *object*, *event*) and only secondarily, as with proper nouns, involves concrete reference. As de Saussure (1959) and Wharf (1956) have pointed out, this means that the use of language involves, of necessity, the imposition, on the real world, of a system of categories given in the language itself and, ultimately, ascribable to the needs of the societies in which this language is in use (cf. Berlin & Kay, 1969; Gould, 1979). Furthermore, it is a commonplace observation that, to the extent that the category system of language furnishes the terms in which the members of a society interact with each other and, indirectly, act upon the material environment, this system can be said to constitute the reality of a given society (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Practical illustrations of some of the senses in which this argument may be valid are provided by a variety of studies demonstrating the

consequences of verbal labels for several types of behavior (e.g., Kanouse, 1972; Kraut, 1973; Gurwitz & Topal, 1978). It follows from this argument that the requirements of social intercourse necessitate the continuous "translation," by the viewer, of some of the information provided by a medium such as television into the terms of an abstract system. To a great extent, this translation process is an "automatic" by-product of any use of language in reference to televised material, and in such cases the issue may be said to be trivial. However, in situations in which the existence of variant categories is a matter of current social consequence, rather than an obsolete survival, the issue obviously becomes important. An example of such a situation will also illustrate how the interaction between parent and child may enter into this process of "translation."

In several instances in our data, parents reported having been asked by a child why a particular television character had committed an evil act. A frequent response to this kind of question appears to be the classification of the characters in the program into several categories and the explanation of the evil act by assignment of the perpetrator to the category of "bad guy." For example, one mother says that she told a daughter who was upset over an incident in "Lassie," "there are some people who are good in this world, and some people who are bad"; and a father reportedly explained to his daughter, in reference to a western, that "the good guy is the one with the white hat and the bad guy is the one with the black hat, so you can always tell the difference." On the other hand, the following account was given by the mother of three grade-school children: " Sometimes you would have to explain why the bad guy was really good, something like that. 'Cause they wouldn't understand why the bad guy was doing all these terrible things, but they didn't understand the *background* behind why he had ended up being such a rotten character, and why he always somehow got it in the end but you felt sorry for him, and maybe the children didn't really understand, why you did feel sorry for him. So, there are a lot of times when I'll say, well, I felt sorry for him because he had so many rough breaks, or whatever, and it really wasn't his fault that he ended up the way he did." In this case, the mother's category system for the distribution of good and evil in society is more complex than the simple dichotomies of the previous examples and may, perhaps, be identified with a "liberal" position on these matters. Which of these alternative systems a child ends up operating with would seem to be a matter of some consequence, and the same can therefore be said of the potential role of the parent as "category-provider" in this kind of situation.

A second type of process, involving television, through which the interaction of parent and child may shape a child's system of cognitive categories, is best introduced by example. Many parents in our interviews report having compared a television character to a real-life person in the presence of their children. The television character cited most frequently in this respect is Archie Bunker. For example: "My son was watching Archie Bunker the other day and he said, mommy, do you know that Archie Bunker looks a lot like grandpa, and I said, yeah, and I guess he *thinks* a lot like grandpa too." "I call her daddy Archie Bunker when he's being particularly redneck in my opinion, and she will kid him to that effect, ay, you're Archie Bunker! Well, he plays—and it's obviously a play: don't you call me Archie Bunker! Oh yes, you are, you are! No, I'm not, no, I'm not!—kind of thing."

The most obvious intended effect of such comparisons, on the part of the parent, is probably that of giving an inoffensive frame to criticism. (For a description of the use of comic strip characters

in this way, see Bogart, 1955.) However, it may also be the case that an important additional effect—probably unintended—of this kind of situation is the creation of a new classificatory category for the child. It seems reasonable to suggest that such a category is already within the awareness of the parent in this kind of situation. In the second example cited above, for instance, the mother gives direct evidence of having such a category ("particularly redneck"); but, independently of such evidence, it might be expected that the conceptual type of the "house reactionary as buffoon" would exist, prior to its televised fictionalization, in the awareness of the kind of adult who would be likely to use such a conceptual type in a critical vein. On the other hand, it also seems quite likely that the child in this kind of situation has not yet developed such a conceptual type or cognitive category. In such a case, the situation itself, i.e., the comparison between a fictional character and a real-life person, may be the stimulus for the creation of such a category.

What may happen, in other words, is that the indication, by a parent, of the existence of a set of traits common to the two or more people compared may direct the child to abstract this set of traits into a "new" type. In such cases, then, the parent's contribution to this category formation is indirect, and the category, or set of categories, is not actually given in abstract terms. On the other hand, the applicability of this category, or set of categories, to reality is given in the very process of formation. In both of these respects, therefore, this kind of process differs from the process of "translation" described earlier. Both types of process, however, may be assumed to have the following important consequence: Once a child has acquired a particular category system, future encounters with the relevant concrete content of television programming (e.g., a particular episode of "All in the Family") may now presumably lead directly, that is, without parental intervention, to the elaboration of the content of the corresponding abstract categories.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON OVERT BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO TELEVISION

It may be assumed that the cognitive developments discussed above are of ultimate consequence for a child's overt behavior as well. In this section, however, the focus will be on some of the processes by which television-related parental interaction with children may affect their behavior directly. A number of the parents we have interviewed described instances in which the content of a television program gave them the opportunity to inject a moral precept into discussions with their children (cf. Barcus, 1969), as in the following instances: "One of the episodes (of "The Brady Bunch") there was a broken vase, one of the mother's favorite vases, and they had glued it together, and I said, well, I'm sorry, I would be very disappointed if you didn't come and tell me that you broke this favorite vase, 'cause if find out you were trying to cover up you're in a lot more trouble than if you'd come and told me the truth." "I'll say certain things like, oh, wasn't that girl nice, how she just shared things so willingly. I'll make comments like that sometimes in a program to point out that sharing's a very important part of life." There is a variety of evidence on the effectiveness of this kind of advice. A series of studies of children's imitation of filmed aggression found that degree of imitation was controllable by the use of appropriate rewards, (Bandura, 1965), that verbal approval or disapproval of the filmed behavior by an adult was an effective positive or negative reinforcer (Hicks, 1968), and that the physical presence of the adult during the period of potential imitation was necessary for this effect among younger children (5-year-olds) but not among older ones (10-year-olds) (Grusec, 1973). (In fact, it has been argued that imitation cannot occur at all without prior or concomitant environmental reinforcement—

whether by parents or otherwise—of the class of behavior involved, e.g., Skinner, 1953, pp. 119-122; Gewirtz, 1969, pp. 159-160.) In an experiment in which mothers, rather than adult experimenters, administered the reinforcement, successful countering of the message of a commercial was found under certain conditions, namely, with a relatively less attractive commercial and, more importantly, when the mothers reasoned with their children, rather than giving authority-based advice (Prasad, Rao, & Sheikh, 1978).

In all the instances cited above, the parent's or experimenter's advice or other comments preceded the behavior that they were intended to affect. This kind of situation may be contrasted with cases in which, once a child has actually performed a certain type of behavior that may be linked to television, the parent administers positive or negative reinforcement after the fact. For example, one of our interviewees reportedly uses the young son from the television series "Eight Is Enough" as a point of comparison when she is trying to stop her 7-year-old son's crying ("see what happened to Nicholas, and *he* didn't cry, so why are you crying?"), while another points to a television character as a warning in attempting to control her daughter's eating habits ("see, if you keep eating, you're going to be fat like that when you're older"). Also of potential relevance here are findings reported by Linne, which can be interpreted as indicating that children's long-term aggressive responses to a violent television series were tempered in those cases in which the children's immediate reactions to the programs could be monitored by their parents and other family members (Brown & Linne, 1976). In the examples from our data, of course, the link with television was introduced into the situation by the parents themselves, whereas in the situation studied by Linne the link preceded parental intervention. The common element that distinguishes both types of situation from those cited earlier, however, is that the coincidence between reinforcement and behavior is here more direct. From this it may tentatively be inferred that the potency of reinforcement is here greater.

Aside from the findings mentioned above, there are several instances of research that has suggested a connection between children's behavioral responses to television and various features of the family environment, although in these cases it is less clear that parent-child interaction focused directly on television is involved. Thus, it has been shown that the relationship between children's or adolescents' aggression levels or aggressive tendencies and amounts of viewing television violence may vary with degree of parental emphasis on nonaggression (McLeod, Atkin, & Chaffee, 1972a, p. 238; 1972b, p. 312), with the extent to which family attitudes towards aggression are clear to the child (Dominick & Greenberg, 1972, p. 323), or with the degree to which parental disciplinary practices are oriented toward internalization vs. external control of behavior (Korzenny, Greenberg, & Atkin, 1979). Also of relevance here may be the findings of several studies that have indicated that children's responses (variously measured) to advertising may be related to the frequency of family discussions about the consumption of goods and services (Ward & Wackman, 1971), to the degree of parental approval of a product (Atkin, 1978, p. 79), or to differences in family environment associated with parental education (Rossiter & Robertson, 1974; Robertson & Rossiter, 1977). It must be repeated, however, that in most of these instances the extent to which parental influence is exercised through interactions specifically focused on the subject of television is unclear.

There is evidence from a variety of sources, then, that parents may affect their children's overt behavioral responses to television—through advice before the fact, through approval/disapproval

or other reward/punishment once a type of behavior has been initiated, or through the control of aspects of a child's environment less specifically oriented toward a particular type of behavior. It must not be assumed, however, that action (e.g., aggression, consumer behavior) is the only kind of overt behavior that may be influenced by parental advice or approving/disapproving comments occasioned by, or linked to, television. Rather, it may well be the case that an important additional consequence of such advice, and so forth, is the conditioning of a child's verbal behavior. An interesting example of this possibility is the case of a mother from a wealthy suburban community who reportedly warned her 7-year-old son at length to avoid the kinds of criminal entanglements that were shown, on television, to have landed a 10-year-old heroin addict in jail. Although a child's involvement with drugs cannot be precluded, regardless of social background, it is probably true that, for this particular child, the circumstances that might lead to general criminal entanglements are not likely to materialize. In this sense, then, his mother's advice on that aspect of the matter may never have any direct bearing on his actions. This does not mean, however, that the consequences of advice of this sort are unimportant.

While the child in this example is only remotely likely to face a jail term for the kind of "non-white-collar" criminal activity his mother was warning him about, his future as an adult will almost certainly occur in a society in which such activity is a public issue, requiring the expression of opinion. There is in fact a whole range of experiences that any particular child can never expect to encounter directly but on which he/she will be expected, as a member of society, to make a verbal contribution towards the attainment of community consensus. It is, then, to the shaping of verbal behavior of this sort that much of the parental commentary discussed above may be said to contribute. Indeed, several parents reported that they used joint-viewing situations to elicit and to regulate the opinions of their children on salient moral issues—or that their children themselves used such situations to have their opinions monitored. For example: "Sometimes I might ask *him* to explain it to me to see whether he understands something, you know, the difference between a good character and a bad character, something like that, and, why is one good and one bad." "The kids will come with it, they'll say, that's the kind of thing you shouldn't do, right? Or, that's not very nice. They'll say, he's not very nice is he, he shouldn't do that. And I'll say, yes, you're right, he's not very nice, he's hurting someone." It can be argued, incidentally, that such occasions, on which children actively voice an opinion, which is then either accepted or modified, are the most likely to result in the stabilization of these opinions (cf. Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1968, pp. 215-240). The use of cases from television as pertinent referents for the clarification of values has also been reported by Lull (1980), while Anderson et al. (1979) give an example of a parent who avoids watching certain programs with his children because of the likelihood of questions on difficult moral issues.

The notion that situations that call forth comments on matters of public concern are institutionalized means for the regulation of public opinion is an old one (cf. Durkheim, 1900; Malinowski, 1926). The role of the mass media in such situations has been described by Lazarsfeld & Merton (1964), in their discussion of what Wright (1959) has labeled the "ethicizing function" of mass communication. Their argument was that public exposure of wrongdoing through the mass media generates discussions in the course of which private moral standards are adjusted against societal norms. An implicit part of this argument, too, was the notion that the end result of these discussions is an actual adjustment of individual action as a consequence of internalization of public standards of morality. The position advanced here

differs somewhat from that of Lazarsfeld and Merton on this latter point. Since any connection between verbal opinions and action is problematic (cf. Mischel, 1968; Wicker, 1969) and since the process that Lazarsfeld and Merton describe is, in the first instance, primarily one of equilibration between verbal pronouncements, it may be wise to see the primary function of this process as the regulation of public opinion considered purely as overt verbal behavior. With this view, conformity to public opinion in one's actions need be seen only as a matter of response to the social pressure generated by concerted public declaration on a certain issue, and the assumption of internalization need not be made.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The final area to be considered here is the development of the child as a participant in social relationships. In this area, the discussion will focus on three ways in which the interaction between parents and children, in combination with various uses of television content, may contribute to the developmental process. The first two of these involve parental intervention in the processes attendant upon a child's identification with a particular television character. The third entails the assumption by parents and children of complementary roles in situations modeled after television portrayals.

The term "identification" can be used in several ways. Here it will be used relatively loosely to refer to a child's perception of, or assumption of, a commonality of personality traits between himself/ herself and a particular television character. In the first of these two situations, in which the commonality is perceived to exist, rather than assumed in the absence of its existence, identification may lead a child to use his/her televised counterpart as a guide for future social behavior. More important, from the present perspective, a parent may intervene in such a situation, by placing selective emphasis on particular aspects of the commonality and their implications. In two separate cases in our data, for example, parents reported that one of their children identified with the TV-cartoon character, Charlie Brown, with respect to his constant victimization by other characters. ("A lot of kids can relate to Charlie Brown, because I think these are things that have always happened to them, just like poor little Charlie.") Both of these parents said that they responded to this situation by pointing out the importance of perseverance in the case of the "real" Charlie Brown ("in the end they all become his friends The school year isn't over yet, the *day* isn't over yet"). Assuming that statements of this kind do, in certain circumstances, affect the nature of a child's continuing relations with his/her peers or any other persons, this sort of parent-child interaction would appear to be a relatively simple instance of the type of process under examination here.

More complicated is the case of a child's identification with a television character who is in fact perceived to be different from the child, in the sense that this character's personality and social situation are clearly other than those of the child in question—for example, the obedient child of wealthy parents identifying with the TV version of a penniless juvenile delinquent. It is generally argued (e.g., Kennedy, 1978) that the value, from the point of view of the child's development, of cases such as these is that they increase the child's understanding of the types he/she is identifying with. However, a more precise formulation of this issue was given by G.H. Mead (1925, p. 276), in a discussion of the role of fiction in the development of the self. To his well-known position that the social self (or person) is a relational entity encompassing appropriate

patterns of response to specific other members of society as well as to a "generalized other," Mead added in this instance the observation that identification with fictional characters is one way in which these patterns of response may be formed. The specific processes implicit in Mead's formulation are internal to the organism. However, in the situations we are concerned with here, these processes can take partly external form in the interaction between parent and child.

An example of what we have in mind occurs in the following description of a mother's response to her 7-year-old daughter's imitation of "the Fonz." "I guess that particular character annoyed me, the Fonz. I'm not terribly pro-TV anyway, as you may have noticed at this point, but I think they showed what is essentially a hood and a creep and gave him many positive characteristics that the type he represented wouldn't have, and I didn't like that, so I would tend to put him down when she was imitating him, or when he happened to be on TV. 'Oh, he's so neat!' 'Oh, Jenny, he's such a creep!'" Identification in this case takes the overt form of imitation. By putting herself in this position, the child elicits from her mother the kind of (negative) response that is the appropriate form of her relationship to the type of person she is imitating. This much of the process is therefore external, and it is only the necessary final step, that is, internalization by the child of a "relational tendency" modeled after that of her mother, which is not. It must be assumed further, of course, that identifiable real-life counterparts of "the Fonz" are a salient component of the child's social environment. Incidentally, in reference to the process described here and to the previous case, it might be mentioned that H.S. Sullivan (1953, pp. 223-225) considered imitation in the presence of parents to be an indispensable component of adequate socialization.

The third and final type of process to be discussed in this section may also be said to involve identification, although of a very different order. In this type of process, two or more members of a family will adopt a set of television-derived roles during the course of a game or other type of play. This sort of thing occurs quite typically among children, of course (cf. Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958, p. 381; Desmond, 1978, pp. 205-206), and some of its functions in such circumstances appear to be relatively clear. In the course of systematic observation of children's play in a day-care center, for instance, we have noted such patterns as: male "superheroes" saving female "damsels in distress" from assorted perils; male "vampires" attacking female "victims" in aggressive/erotic fashion; aggressive older "monsters" (e.g., the "Incredible Hulk") terrorizing more retiring, younger, "helpless masses," and so forth. It is easy to see such play as "rehearsal" with obvious stimuli and also, perhaps, fairly obvious consequences. Play involving parents with their children, however, is another matter.

There are two particularly vivid examples of play of this latter variety in our data. One case is that of a father who takes the role of the "joker" and other villains in games with his two sons, "Batman" and "Robin." The other is that of a mother who on at least one occasion allowed her son to tie her up and come to her rescue as a "superhero." The complexity of the relationships that such situations temporarily give rise to should be evident. The children of the first example, for instance, must be able to balance the game's intensification of certain dimensions of the father-son relationship against its reversal of certain others of these dimensions. Furthermore, they may also have to contend with the possibility that the reversals actually correspond to latent elements. In the second case, the difference in sex between parent and child makes the situation

even more complex. It would be rash to hazard an interpretation of the consequences of these specific interactions without much more study of the particulars in each case. As a general principle, however, it may be suggested that perhaps one of the most important consequences of such interactions as a class is the training they provide in the skills of performance in delicate social positions (cf. Bateson, 1956).

SUMMARY

The contents of the preceding four sections have yielded several assumptions about potential consequences of television-related parent-child interaction, which the following summary will attempt to present in compact form.

(1) Assumptions concerning the learning of interpretational skills: (a) By furnishing the necessary information for adequate interpretations of problematic program elements, parents may be contributing to their children's mastery of television's narrative conventions and of the implicit principle that the parts of a program should be treated as components of a superordinate whole. (b) Explicit parental commentary on the truth value of television programming may be one basis on which children's perceptions of the validity and generalizability of television programming are formed. However, parental influence in this regard can apparently be less explicit, too.

(2) Assumptions concerning the articulation of cognitive categories: A child's classification system for environmental objects and events may be affected by the addition or elaboration of categories derived from: (a) the parental "translation" of televised images into verbal concepts or (b) the classificatory principles implicit in parental comparisons between television characters and real-life people.

(3) Assumptions concerning overt behavioral consequences: (a) Children's overt behavior in response to television may be affected by: (i) parental advice in connection with a televised situation capable of being linked to some response by the child; (ii) parental approval/disapproval or other reward/punishment following the initiation of behavior that may be linked to television. (Less explicit means of parental influence are, however, also a possibility.) (b) Aside from potential consequences for children's future actions, parental advice occasioned by television may also be an important element in the formation of their children's patterns of overt verbal behavior.

(4) Assumptions concerning the development of social relationships: Parental responses to children's identification with television characters may affect children's developing social relationships by: (a) providing guidance concerning social characteristics that a child perceives himself/herself as sharing with the television character; or (b) providing a model for the child's own pattern of response to the social type exemplified by the television character in question. Furthermore, (c) social "skill," in general, rather than any particular type of relationship, may be affected by parental participation in children's identificatory play.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The final subtype of consequence referred to immediately above would, of course, be a very poor candidate for empirical testing and has been included in this discussion primarily as an indication of the complexity of the subject and as a hint at how much has been left unsaid. On the other hand, this exception aside, the preceding discussion has been oriented towards types of processes and attendant consequences that appear to the authors to be more readily subject to empirical investigation. In this section, methodological issues involved in such an investigation will be discussed. The discussion will deal separately with two orders of evidence required for the verification of the propositions developed thus far: (a) evidence that the sequences of parent-child interaction do occur as described or, where the description is incomplete, evidence on the missing segments; and (b) evidence confirming, failing to confirm, or modifying the posited consequences of these interactions.

The descriptions of television-related parent-child interactions given above have been based primarily on the series of interviews with parents from which illustrations have been excerpted throughout this paper. These are open-ended interviews, soliciting information on 26 prespecified types of television-related parent-child interaction and on whatever additional types a parent can supply. In connection with each of the items covered by the interview, the respondent is first asked to indicate whether a certain kind of situation occurs in his/her family (e.g., children's questions about things they haven't understood, discussions of the accuracy of televised portrayals, comparisons between real-life people and television characters, and so on). Positive responses are followed by a request for specific examples, and various probes are used to obtain descriptions of the behavior of all participants in a cited occurrence, as well as of its time and place.

This kind of interview is probably the most convenient way of getting information on television-related parent-child interaction. However, data from such interviews are very likely to contain at least two types of bias. First, because of the controversial nature of the subject (*viz.*, the role of television in people's lives), respondents may assume a defensive posture and skew their answers accordingly. In the data drawn upon for this paper, for example, parents occasionally appeared to be exaggerating the importance of educational television in their children's lives, under-reporting the amount of television-based interaction, and so forth. Second, regardless of the intentions of the respondent, inaccuracies in reporting are bound to result from the respondent's lack of specific training as an observer of the complex behavior under investigation (*cf.* Birdwhistell, 1970, pp. 190-191; Messaris, 1977). These inaccuracies are likely to involve imperfect recall, unconscious assimilation of the reconstructed information to social stereotypes of parent-child interaction (*cf.* Bartlett, 1932), and selective inattention to aspects of the interaction—in particular, modalities of behavior other than the lexical—that are not ordinarily included in everyday accounts of one's past social encounters.

Because of the potential for these types of bias, it seems necessary for research in this area to use other sources of data in addition to interviews with parents, despite their privileged access to the events being investigated. Above a certain age, children are one obvious source of supplementary data. However, as Greenberg, Ericson, and Vlahos (1972) and Rossiter and Robertson (1975) have noted, children's accounts of television-related family interaction may

also be biased, partly in the same ways as parental accounts, but partly also in an opposite direction, that of minimizing the extent and impact of parental control in these matters. In view of these potential limitations of self-report data, the needs of the investigator in this general area may, depending on the problem, require going beyond interviews to observation.

Because of the technical difficulties and the expense entailed in installing video (cf. Bechtel, Achelpohl, & Akers, 1972) or even less complicated (cf. Allen, 1965) recording devices in people's homes, observation must involve the actual presence of an observer in the houses of informants. Furthermore, because the observer's presence may, before it ceases to be a novelty, generate unacceptable adjustments in the behavior observed, this kind of observation cannot be limited to the briefer period of contact typically employed in interviews. Thus, Murray (1972), Anderson et al. (1979), Reid (1979), and Lull (1980) have all conducted repeated visits with informant families, while Lull (in press-a) has also employed observers who actually "lived in" with families for several days. Some accommodation to the presence of the observer obviously must persist, regardless of the length of the period of observation. There is some evidence, however, that television-related behavior is less vulnerable to this kind of accommodation than other aspects of family life (Lull, in press-a).

The time requirements of observational work have obvious consequences for limits in sample size. It is, therefore, appropriate to think of it as the stage in which hypotheses can be formed and elaborated, rather than as the actual arena in which they will be tested (cf. Anderson, 1979). In an area like the one under consideration here, any explicit hypothesis intended for immediate empirical testing cannot easily avoid having to account for several variables simultaneously (age of the child, SES, several dimensions of parent-child interaction, etc.). Thus, large sample sizes are also unavoidable, and observational data must eventually yield to other measures. However, as Lull (1979) demonstrates with a particularly vivid example, observational data may be an indispensable adjunct to the elaboration of hypotheses in the preliminary stages of research in the area discussed here, and the emphasis placed on such data in the preceding paragraphs has been predicated on that assumption. With reference to the processes of parent-child interaction described above, direct observation would make possible: (a) greater detail and specificity in the formulation of these processes; (b) the specification of situational variables related to these processes; and (c) estimates of frequencies of occurrence of each process. In combination with interviews, then, direct observation should furnish the first order of data required for the validation of statements about these processes, namely, data necessary for the verification or completion of descriptions of the interactional sequences involved.

The Measurement of Consequences

The measurement of the posited consequences of the processes discussed above involves methodological problems which go beyond those discussed thus far. These problems differ, to a certain extent, depending on which of the several categories of consequence covered in this paper is involved.

Interpretational competence. Children's abilities to interpret visual narratives are typically measured in one of three ways: (a) through verbal "reconstruction" of the narrative (e.g.,

Murphy, 1973; Zazzo & Zazzo, 1951); (b) through questions about the content of specific incidents, about the connections between incidents, and so forth (e.g., Desmond, 1978); (c) through picture-sequencing tasks, in which children are asked to order still pictures extracted from a videotape, film, and the like (e.g., Leifer et al., 1971). In a methodological study in which children's performance on the first of these tasks was compared with their performance on the third, Zazzo (1952) found that "visual" reconstruction was consistently more easy than "verbal" reconstruction. Although this particular finding was confounded by the fact that the amount of initial information available to the children in the two situations was very different, it nevertheless suggests the possibility that the visual task taps the measured skill (comprehension) more directly and is, therefore, the more valid measure. It may be useful, therefore, to inject here a word of caution on the appropriateness of such a conclusion. For one thing, it is not at all certain that the process of attending to even a purely visual narrative is, under ordinary circumstances, devoid of some form of "inner verbalization" (cf. Bandura, 1969; Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1966). Perhaps more important, it should be pointed out that the task of verbal reconstruction does have an equivalent in most children's everyday experience, whereas that of visual reconstruction does not. Specifically, investigators who have studied children as viewers in their homes have repeatedly encountered, especially among young children, spontaneous verbal "reportage" concerning the unfolding televised events (cf. Murray, 1972; Winick & Winick, 1979). Indeed, in one study on children's responses to film (Siersted & Lund Hansen, 1951), such "spontaneous" remarks, coupled with photographs, were used as the main source of evidence on children's interpretations. In short, it is not clear that the visual measures are the most appropriate, despite the possibility that verbal reconstructions, especially when they occur after the fact, may contain elaborations not necessarily corresponding to the nature of the original experience (cf. Williams, 1969). In any event, if the investigator is interested in the child's perception of characters' motives, causal links in the plot, and so on (e.g., Collins, 1979), some use of verbal measures, especially of the second kind listed above, seems inevitable.

Perceptions of validity and generalizability of program content. The degree to which children perceive various categories of television programming as accurate portrayals of reality has been investigated through explicit questions in several studies. For example, respondents have been asked to indicate degree of agreement with statements such as: "The programs I see on TV tell about life the way it really is" (Greenberg & Dominick, 1969, p. 338): "The people I see in adventure stories are just like the people I meet in real life" (McLeod, Atkin, & Chaffee, 1972a, p. 208). While direct questioning may be the best method to use with older children or adolescents, as in the two cases cited above, its use with younger children is problematic: As long as one does not believe that young children treat television as real "by default," a child's possible inability to verbalize a distinction between reality and television, that is, to deal with the *concept* of a potential difference between the two realms, cannot be taken as conclusive evidence that he/she implicitly treats the content of television programming as a valid contribution to his/her developing stock of knowledge about the real world. It would seem desirable, instead, to use some indirect method of validation in such cases. For example, degree of belief in certain stereotypes associated with television can be taken as one indirect measure of the truth value implicitly or explicitly assigned to the medium (cf. Gross & Morgan, in press)—but only so long as other sources of confirmation or development of these stereotypes can be ruled out.

Cognitive categories. Although certain features of a child's system of cognitive classification may be explicit, it cannot be assumed beforehand that this kind of material is accessible to direct questions. Measurement of the number, type, and salience of classificatory dimensions that a child—or its parents—imposes on various aspects of reality must therefore be a matter of inference from less direct data. Perhaps the simplest kinds of test of this type are the various sorting tasks developed initially by anthropological linguists (e.g., Carroll & Casa grande, 1958) for the measurement of covert categories. In a study by Quarfoth, for example, children were asked to sort pictures of television characters into piles, "to put the ones together that belong together" (Quarfoth, 1979, p. 212). This kind of task permitted the investigator to infer the presence of a cartoon-puppet-"human" character distinction, and so forth. Somewhat more demanding on the subject, perhaps, are various scaling techniques in which degree of similarity between pairs of objects must be judged and the underlying structure of classificatory dimensions is obtained on the basis of a large set of judgments (e.g., Reeves & Greenberg, 1977; Reeves & Lometti, 1979; Alexander, 1980). The disadvantage of measures involving sorting or scaling is that they require the subject to perform a relatively unusual task. The use of these techniques presupposes, therefore, an assumption that the cognitive patterns being measured are relatively constant across types of situations that elicit them. In an attempt to avoid having to make this assumption, Peevers & Secord (1973) have introduced what they consider a less "artificial" measurement instrument, namely, subjects' "free" or "naturalistic" descriptions, which are then analyzed for classificatory principles by the investigators. A written version of this kind of measure has been used by Alexander & Wartella (1979) to assess the relationship between children's perceptions of television characters and their perceptions of real people. However, as Alexander (1980) points out, the cognitive processes involved in discriminating among objects and sorting them into categories may differ from those involved in describing individual objects. Therefore, the assumption that tasks involving "free" description will give the investigator access to a subject's system of classification should be treated with caution.

Overt behavior. With regard to validity, direct observation is obviously the most desirable method of measurement of overt behavioral patterns. However, while in-home observation, even when a family is not directly engaged in television viewing, may not be too problematic to negotiate, the observation of older children in other contexts and, in particular, in unsupervised peer-group situations is likely to be hampered by serious initial barriers of trust (cf. Fine & Glassner, 1979). At the very least, the problem becomes one of excessive time requirements. Hence the obvious need, especially in large-sample work, for reliance on self- and other-report. These considerations apply also to the measurement of opinion, viewed, as it is here, purely as overt verbal behavior. In other words, opinions in this sense should either be observed directly or be reported on in connection with specified classes of eliciting situations. The latter alternative differs from that of typical opinion polling, in which the possibilities of cross-situational variation are usually unaccounted for, since only one situation—namely, that of the interview itself—is examined. As an alternative or in addition to reports of actual behavior, investigators sometimes ask respondents to describe their behavior in a hypothetical situation (e.g., Dominick & Greenberg, 1972). Answers to questions of this sort may not be good indicators of a child's past behavior, but, as indicators of likely future behavior, they may be extremely useful, for reasons to be discussed below, with reference to the measurement of social relationships.

Social relationships. If the interest of the investigator is in the observation or changing patterns in a child's current social relationships, the methodological considerations noted above apply here, too. However, if one's interest is in the contribution that present learning may make to unobservable future behavior, the situation is much more complicated. Since the types of future behavior that one is interested in (e.g., parenthood, relationships with employers, etc.) may have no direct counterpart in the present behavior of the child, the question becomes: Is there any realm of a child's overt behavior in which one can observe that "portion" of its future roles that it has already learned (and may, of course, subsequently unlearn)? The answer may, of course, be no, but there is some evidence to support the notion that certain kinds of play may fit this requirement. While games with conventional rules have been seen as providing training for expected future roles, and associations between game style and social structure have been demonstrated empirically (e.g., Caillois, 1979; Eifennann, 1971; Roberts, Sutton-Smith, & Kendon, 1963), an argument can be made that "fantasy play"—play involving make-believe and lacking conventional rules—is the arena in which a child rehearses what he/she has already learned (cf. Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1979). On the basis of this argument, contexts involving some element of "make-believe" (i.e., questions about hypothetical situations, semiprojective tests, observations of natural play, etc.) can be used deliberately to elicit clues to future behavior; and, in at least one case (Erikson, 1955; 1972), long-term follow-up studies have been claimed to support the methodological presupposition of this kind of measurement.

Other Research Considerations

In concluding, it should be noted that any work in this general area that attempts to go beyond the exploratory stage must deal explicitly with at least two variables not discussed here, namely, children's age and family's social class. The precise manner in which age is accounted for will vary, of course, depending on whether the researcher is working within a general theoretical framework that posits uniform developmental stages; but, so long as he/she makes some assumption of structural discontinuity in the developmental path (cf. Overton & Reese, 1973), age, as the best initial index of a child's position on this path, must be controlled for: As Ward, Wackman, & Wartella (1977, pp. 105- 106) have argued, it is obviously possible that unvarying family environments may differ in their developmental implications at different ages.

Considerations of social-class differences, on the other hand, are a necessary part of any research that would seek to link the kinds of intrafamily processes discussed here to the operation of the broader social system. A prominent possibility for such a link is provided by the work of McLeod and his associates, mentioned earlier, on family communication patterns (McLeod & Brown, 1976). On the one hand, the family types that they describe appear to be associated with characteristic patterns of television-related interaction among family members (e.g., Lull, in press-b). On the other hand, the dimensions along which these types are distinguished may also be related to class differences: While McLeod has repeatedly cautioned against the assumption of a simple relationship here (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972, 84, pp.86-87; McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972, pp. 129-131), the partly parallel work of Bernstein (1971) and his associates—especially Douglas's (1973) admittedly tentative discussion of social mobility—suggests that the search for connections, even if very complex ones, between "micro-interaction" patterns and social-structural variables may not be fruitless.

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