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**THE TEACHING OF MEDIA  
STUDIES: A STUDY IN THEORY  
AND PRACTICE**

**VOLUME II**

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# CHAPTER 8

## TEACHING MEDIA STUDIES: FINDING A NEGOTIATED CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP

### 8.1 An overview of grounded theory perspectives:

#### The key elements

In this section the grounded theories which had emerged from the respondents' critical discourses, discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively, will be drawn together and reviewed.

There was a common consensus grounded in the respondents' critical discourses about a theory of conscientization and cultural action in Media Education, which refers to the critical role of thinking and acting. This theory involves the idea that conscientization and cultural action in Media Education qualify people to be capable of shaping, developing, modifying and constructing, to some extent, their own social reality according to the reality of the collective socio - cultural conditions.



The respondents dealt with Media Education in its broader context across the curricula and they placed Media Studies within its specialised context. Emerging from their accounts was a theory that it is highly important to construct an active pedagogy between Media Education and other subjects across the curriculum. Although Media Studies can be a separate and independent subject, their view was that teachers within the school should work and participate with other teachers in other subject areas, whether it be English or History or even Science, and to then think how Media Education can fit into that. They had a theory that Media Education was a form of cross-curricular understanding. Their theory involved a view that both Media Education and Media Studies are cultural vehicles for enabling students to become conscientized and culturally aware of the external factors which tend to shape their own reality. They also emphasised the notion that this educational innovation should be based upon the recognition that Media Studies should enable students to reflect on and to become critical of the media they watch, read and listen to. This 'civilizational capability' will enable them not only to become critical and analytical evaluators of what they encounter from the vast amount of local, regional and international varieties of the media, but it also will give them the capacity to be constructive, critical and successful producers of media texts. This attribute can be described as a form of cultural action. They could achieve this by becoming both reconstructive and deconstructive in their Media Education. In order to achieve this objective, their theory implied that it

has to be realised that mass media are no longer merely reflective, but they are constructive too. Accordingly, the mass media are key constituting factors in a large international culture, possessing unlimited ability to penetrate all cultural and geopolitical boundaries by their innovative and revolutionary technology via satellite and cable transmission.

In this regard, the respondents in their theoretical perspective had stressed the significance of enabling their students to conscientize the way they deal with the utility of technology in its wider contexts instead of becoming merely conspicuous consumers of the latter. For example, the respondents had emphasised the view that the critical, participative and conscientized methods of handling the technology of the mass media enables their students to become critical thinkers and critical autonomous creators. This can be described as a theory of the “conscientization of technology”. In their view, many people in industrial societies become only mechanical users of machines while others become preoccupied with the instructions on how to operate them. The respondents’ theory implied that they motivate their students to become independent, free and capable of using their own "self leaflet" (i.e., using their common-sense). This theory held the implicit notion that the conscientized and critical ways of dealing with the technology of the mass media by the students would enable them to understand the historical fact that the concept of technology is a humanistic

discovery. Emerging from the respondents' critical discourses was the theme that training the students during practical work to become critical producers of media texts would transform their capability further, to become critical innovators and developers of mass media's technology. This practical type of cultural action enlightened by conscientization and cultural awareness, they believed should strengthen the agenda of Media Education and Media Studies (i.e., the conscientized use of technology as opposed to the mechanical way of using it). The theory of the respondents implied that students should be the directors of the technology they use and not let it take over their lives.

In relation to entertainment the cultural views of the 1950s and 1960s which looked at mass media as rivals and competitors to education, and in particular at entertainment as a threat to 'education', are now seen by all respondents as simplistic. Contemporary theorists and practitioners in Britain point out that there is no 'sheer entertainment'. People learn from entertainment on the media even if that entertainment reinforces what they already know. The variety of American media entertainment is a fertile source of learning. People learn about how the American film producers project American social and cultural representation. Even if that representation is distorted, the critical and conscientized consumer of the media could learn much from deconstructing the programme. The respondents' theory implied that the notion of 'conscientized entertainment'

enables the students to become intellectually entertained and intellectual entertainers. They referred to the pattern of entertainment related to the notion of the critical reflection on, and cultural awareness of events and developments in the society and beyond. This, they believed, was the intelligent alternative to the idea of 'entertainment for the sake of it'.

The theorists and Media Education practitioners in the State of Qatar interviewed in this study focused on the importance of learning English as another conscientized way of obtaining pleasure from American entertainment. They pointed out that this helped students to read a book in English or a newspaper, and to hold a conversation with an English speaker. As shown in chapter 6 there has been an enforcement of the fact that English is the first spoken foreign language in the State of Qatar.

An important theme emerged from the Qatari respondents' critical discourses that entertainment and pleasure' from an Islamic perspective, are concerned with a number of critical questions of the kind, 'what does pleasure mean?' If the entertainment industry is observed to show interest in certain societal phenomena (e.g., the life of people in the West) and tends to reinforce what people already know, the second critical question is 'which things are interesting and which are not?'

The respondents stressed in their theoretical perspective that Media Education should focus on the cultural history of the variety of ways in which societies obtain pleasure to comfort themselves and alleviate restraints. Students provide themselves with pleasure by different and various cultural means. They obtain pleasure by planning social occasions in certain ways. They obtain pleasure by working out certain systems of representation. They obtain pleasure by practising certain religious forms of worshipping and other ways. The mass media, in the view which is shared by the British respondents have arrived at the end of a very long line of development, beginning with cave paintings then audio-visual media and global television's transmission. These are all entertaining. The respondents emphasised that students should be alerted to the concept of "conscientization of entertainment" which is a reflection and critical awareness of different ideological, political, psychological, aesthetic and economic issues.

In the view of the British respondents students should be enabled to specify the role of Media Studies in relation to entertainment. In a Media Studies classroom, teachers and students should participate with conscientized awareness in talking about what pleasure is about, why people enjoy entertainment, what they get from pleasure and entertainment.

The Qatari respondents highlighted in their theory the notion that the role of Media Studies should be to encourage people to enjoy gaining pleasure from the perspective of “Islamic conscientization”. The Islamic conscientization rejects mass media’s entertainment and any type of entertainment which contains the function of deception. The theory of “Islamic conscientization” expects people to learn beneficial things from entertainment, such as learning English and becoming culturally aware of other nations’ representation of their cultures.

“Islamic conscientization” rejects the Marxist tradition that the entertainment function of the mass media exists only to deceive the citizens about their true role in the society. This Islamic approach understands things in terms of realistic cultural consciousness and the Western media exist as a very important primary mechanism not for deception and delusion but for learning through Islamic eyes. As Al-Karadawi (1995) has clearly argued as long as people are aware of their Islamic faith nothing is going to change their belief. Islam has the notion of profound forms of pleasure which are channelled and organised (e.g., the marriage, the sword and the horse dancing, singing during occasions which do not violate the principles of Islam). Islam has the notion of profound visions of the world through (e.g., travelling for knowledge, trade, meeting people from other countries).

While the Qatari respondents were concerned with the historical review of both the folk media and its integration with the Islamic media when it began in the 17th century, they linked this to a theory of cultural approach with comparative outlook in both cultural and modern media. Such a perspective, in their view, looks at cultural phenomena very broadly rather than looking at a particular medium. This theory, therefore, emphasises more interdisciplinary pedagogy in teaching and training the students rather than adopting the process of studying a specific medium.

The other aspect emerging from their accounts which is shared by the British samples, is to teach and train their students not to neglect the cultural relationship between Media Studies and Arabic, accompanied by basic English. As the British and the Qatari respondents argued, if there is to be Media Studies at secondary schools the study of literature should not be taught in isolation from the study of the mass media, as both are important elements of the living culture. This is because Islam, as a cultural vehicle for cultural participation, believes that the impartial, distinct and extensive vision of the world as one unit is a civilizational necessity. The theory of cultural action derived from both conscientization and awareness can be said to be a new Islamic pillar. For, conscientization and awareness are natural outcomes of the critical thinking, as beautifully argued by Al-Akkad, a popular Moslim philosopher (1964), in his remarkable book *Al-*

*Tafkeer: Fareeda Islamiya (Thinking is an Islamic Pillar)*. As will be discussed in a later section, Al-Gazali (1985) reinforces the view that Islam continuously inspires people to become alert and attentive as these two characteristics formulate the conscientized and reflective acquisition of the critical mind.

In a recent article published in *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (The Middle East)*, an Arabic daily Newspaper located in London, Tolob (1995) has written about the Moslim philosophers such as Iqbal and Jaroodi. He has described them as the reflectors of the Koranic philosophy. In his view the Koranic philosophy inspires people to become conscientized in their perception of the world, conscious of what goes around them and aware of how they construct their reality within the wider reality of the socio-historical conditions. (Tolob, 1995: 17). These theories were grounded in the Qatari respondents' critical discourses. In their view, the introduction of Media Education into schools is an Islamic obligation and national responsibility. Because Islam, they believe, welcomes every means which enable people to think deeply and critically for the good of their fellow-human beings and for a better and prosperous future for their planet. The Qatari respondents emphasised that the idea of introducing Media Education into Qatari schools aims, among other objectives, at reinforcing the Islamic concern of ideological and cultural collaboration with the West rather than imposing a single form of

ideological control by the West upon the rest of the world as discussed in chapter 6.

A central theme which emerged from the respondents' critical discourses was concerned with a positive and conscientized criticism of 'media imperialism'. Whilst they criticised the wide-spread claim that the media are 'American' as Tunstall (1983) argued, to the extent that they had achieved 'ideological and cultural supremacy' over the world, the respondents argued that it was necessarily to use American media in their own conscientized ways and for their own cultural purposes.

Liebes and Katz, in their cross - cultural audience research book of 1990 *The Export of Meaning* have also dealt with this point. However, the respondents rejected the view that American mass media's products (e.g., Dallas) attempt to intrude with a single ideological assertion or a dominant ideology on viewers. At the same time the respondents, especially, the British samples, did not deny that the West maintains an institutional control over the mass media in the world particularly in relation to news media. They believed that the Americans have the technology and the market in regard to media production but their theory was that the world should negotiate a cultural relationship with the United States. On the other hand their theory involved the view that countries such as Qatar should

produce their own indigenous cultural production and try to make it compatible and exportable to the West as a global cultural form of co-operation instead of hostility and conflict. As discussed in chapter 6, the Qatari respondents by and large believed that this ought to be the case.

The respondents' theories argued that forms of moral stances towards the mass media should be rejected. Their rejection was mainly based on a theory that what is needed is a critical and conscientized form of Media Education which involves a critical cultural relationship between education and students on the one hand, and between education and the media of mass communication, on the other. They presented views which emphasise the approach that every student in the classroom should be regarded potentially as the generator of his/her own theory in Media Education. This notion is mainly based on the cultural principle that the classroom is a form of cultural mobilisation in which theories get generated. The ultimate aim of this participative approach to education, they believed, is to enable the students not only to become critical consumers of the mass media through the process of reflection, decoding, deconstructing and processing information, but rather to become more than that. Their purpose was to enable the students to be critical and active producers of media texts. This school of educational and cultural thought and this theoretical position is based on a democratic model of student participation and cultural integration between education and the mass

media. The position has been argued that in understanding the relationship between education and the mass media, students ought to be alerted to the importance of their own reflections on the educational messages transmitted by the mass media. This conscientized, participative, critical and active approach to Media Education aims mainly, in the view of the respondents, at developing an interactive pedagogy between education and the mass media while at the same time reinforcing the concept of the school as a cultural, social and educational institution in which education fulfils its purposes by lively participation between the teachers and the students. This notion of 'lively participation' rejects necessarily, they believed, the authoritarian theory of banking educational knowledge which approaches students as passive recipients of other people's knowledge while ignoring the fact that they have a body of knowledge of their own. This feature in their view was one of the weaknesses of the 1970s screen theory in Britain, which its pioneers constructed as esoteric academic knowledge from their institutions of higher education, using teachers in schools as simply the channels for passing their knowledge to the students. This approach, the respondents believed, underestimated the ability of both teachers and students in Media Education and it can be seen as a characteristic of 'education imperialism'. Having learned from this experience, the theorists and the practitioners of the 1990s in Britain do not approach education and mass media as rivals and competitors, but more as cultural allies. An attempt is being made to educate

citizens to become conscientized and to find a means of cultural education within which social, educational, economic and political factors are key concepts: a form of education in which students' capabilities of interpreting the many different societal phenomena are encouraged. This is, in their view, a form of cultural action based on participative and conscientized education. The Media Studies theorists and practitioners both in Britain and in Qatar also rejected the view that television watching, by inhibiting the imagination, had a bad effect upon reading. They held the view that television could be a stimulant to the imagination and could also help verbalisation. This process, in their view, is an outcome of a conscientized and critical way of viewing television. This possibility was widely neglected in the past because of claims about media and television's negative effect on the education of children. The respondents also dismissed the view that electronic media pose threats to the survival of traditional literature. It has been argued that modern media can enable students at school to understand traditional and classical literature in new ways. The process of visualisation via modern media can reinforce the verbalisation of the Shakespeare play, for instance.

Those interviewed in this study dismissed the view that electronic media pose threats to the strength of traditional literature. It has been argued that modern media can enable students at school to understand the traditional and classical

literature in new ways. The process of visualisation via modern media can reinforce the verbalisation of the Shakespeare play, for instance.

While traditional literature existed a long time before the advent of the electronic media in Britain, a kind of folk media also existed in the United Kingdom as Hoggart (1957) argued in his classic study *The Uses of Literacy*. However, the British theorists and practitioners neglected this crucial aspect of cultural heritage. It is important to note that the Qatar media theorists and practitioners in this study referred to the cultural folk media and Islamic folk media as parts of the courses they teach at the Qatari University. However, these ideas were not developed in detail by the respondents. This researcher believes that if a negotiated cultural relationship is to be found, then the cultural folk media will be an essential part of it. This point will be interwoven throughout the next section in depth and more detail. For, the challenge for Arab and Moslim societies (among others) is how to find a negotiated cultural balance between, and synthesis of, Western media values and Islamic history, culture and values. These ideas will be explored further in more detail.

## **8.2 How can a negotiated cultural relationship be constructed**

### **8.2.1 General discussion**

The State of Qatar is an Islamic developing country, in which the process of encoding of the products of the mass media is ostensibly monopolised by the Government for national development, among other purposes. It is also the case that media productions, most notably American, are commonplace. It is therefore, essential to find a negotiated cultural relationship between Islamic values and American media on one hand, and to find an interactive relationship between the Islamic folk media (the vehicles of Islamic values transmission for almost fifteen centuries) and the modern media of mass communication which transmit American values.

In this section of the chapter an attempt will be made to construct a possible interactive relationship between the cultural folk media of Qatar, which is derived mostly from the Islamic folk media (e.g., the medium of the mosque), and the transnational values from Western media, mainly from the United States of

America. To outline what such a negotiated cultural relationship could be, it is important to refer to the key themes, in relation to this debate, which are grounded mainly in The Holy Qur'an and The Revelation.

## **8.2.2 Finding a negotiated cultural relationship**

A close examination of the Islamic cultural heritage shows that transferring experiences from non-Moslim cultures to Moslim cultures is an Islamic principle. In the seventh century the Prophet asked one of his disciples, Zaid Bin Thabit, to transfer the experiences of the advanced nations (i.e., The Romans, from whom much European culture originates, the Coptic, Abyssinian Christian cultures, Persian, who were the second super power after the Romans when the Prophet began establishing the state of Islam in Al-Madina (in Saudi Arabia) and the Jews). According to Al-Tilmisani (1980):-

**"the Prophet ordered Zaid to mix up with Romans, Coptics, Abyssinians and Persians to transfer their experience to Islamic culture in Al-Madina. Zaid learnt Latin (on which most European languages is**

**based) in order to translate their books into Arabic"**

**(Al-Tilmisani, 1980: 208).**

Khan (1977) quoted Zaid as saying:-

**"the Prophet ordered me to obtain the experiences of the Jews in Writing and reading. I even wrote letters for the Prophet to the Jews and also read their letters which they wrote to him" (Khan, 1977: 233).**

According to the Holy Qur'an the great creator Allah(God) encourages people to keep reflecting on Allah's signs of creation as a means of improving the critical mind:-

**"So God makes clear His signs to you, haply you will reflect in this world, and the world to come "**  
**(The Holy Qur'an, II: 215).**

Allah also, according to the Qur'an, motivated people to think about and to reflect on Allah's signs of creation:-

**"Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day and the ship that runs in the sea with profit to man - kind, and the water God sends down from heaven therewith reviving the earth after it is dead and his scattering abroad in it all manner of crawling thing, and the turning about of the winds and the clouds compelled between heaven and earth - surely there are signs for a people having understanding" (The Holy Qur'an, II: 155 - 160).**

In order to remind people not to take things for granted, Allah urges people to observe their own physical build. How the baby develops inside the womb, how the brain controls every element of the body etc. Allah said:-

**"and inside yourselves. Do not you comprehend?"  
(The Holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalaha, 1993:  
205).**

Allah privileges people with the capability of researching for knowledge, people who try to learn, people who keep improving their talent, people who cooperate

with other people from different cultures for the good of the human kind etc.

Allah stated:-

**"Allah will exalt those who believe among you and those who have knowledge to high ranks" (The Holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalah, 1993: 203).**

**"O man-kind, verily we have created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and have made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous" (The Holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalah, 1993: 208).**

The first verses of the Holy Qur'an to be revealed to the Prophet are those words which emphasised repeatedly the notion of reading. Allah said:-

**"Read: in the name of thy Lord who createth, createth man from a clot. Read: and thy lord is the most Bounteous, who teacheth by the pen, teacheth**

**man that which he knew not (The Holy Qur'an, 96: 1-5, cited in Kennedy, 1986: 30).**

The critical mind according to the Holy Qur'an is based on natural interest, genuine talent, the willingness to gather knowledge which ultimately leads to understanding in its wider and general terms. Allah said:-

**"are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?. It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive a dominion" (The holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalah, 1993: 203).**

In the Holy Qur'an the degree of closeness to God is only based on two measures: Believing in God and having knowledge with the intention of using it for the good of man-kind:-

**"God will raise up to suitable ranks and degrees, those of you who believe and who have been granted with knowledge" (The Holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalah, 1993: 203).**

Allah urges people in The Holy Qur'an to seek knowledge and gain experiences as these two among others formulate a conscientized form of Islamic cultural action:-

**“And of his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variation in your languages and your colours, verily in that are signs for those who know” (The Holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalah, 1993: 33).**

Finally, it is important to conclude the Qur'anic evidence of the global conscientized vision of the world by the following verse which states that The Prophet was not regional but international in his approach:-

**“We have not sent thee, but as a universal (Messenger), To men giving them Glad tidings, and warning them (against sins), but most men Understand no” (The Holy Qur'an, cited in abu Jalalah, 1993: 209).**

Further, the Prophet advised people to be constructive, independent in their views, critical of what they experience and reflective. He said:-

**"Do not say I agree with the majority of the people, if you are certain that they are wrong. Be confident and say your opinion" (The Hadeeth, cited in Al - Gazali, 1985: 33)**

The Prophet has also urged people to reflect on each other by recommending that:-

**"the human-being is a mirror of his/her human fellow" (The Hadeeth, cited in al-Gazali, 1985: 71).**

The Prophet has also, advised people that:-

**"the devout believer who is strong is more preferred by God than the weak one" (The Hadeeth, cited in al - Gazali, 1985: 349).**

In his remarkable book *The Reflections of the Critical Mind*, Al-Gazali (1985) argued that the notion of strength is not only restricted to physical aspects, but the Prophet means the strength to be independent by (e.g., doing your work by your self, to be your self equipped scholar etc.) (Al-Gazali, 1985: 10).

In a country like the State of Qatar the modern media are completely owned, controlled and financed by the state; therefore the people in the State of Qatar, especially the indigenous, do not tend to rely on it as the only source of cultural values and information. Influential for many citizens are Islamic cultural folk media through the medium of 'majalis' and the mosque, as well as the private Islamic circles. The modern media, made possible through the economic prosperity in the country, especially since the 1970s, have been playing a key role in transferring the messages of both Islamic and folk cultural media into another form. Those messages mostly transfer to people the values of Islam. This is one aspect of the interaction. However, while the modern media have been serving the traditional media to some extent on the local level (i.e. in Qatar), the international relation is undeveloped.

On the international level, the American-born producer Al-Akkad, using American film technology, has produced, with Moslim (mainly Arab and Libyan) financing, two successful and major films about Islam and the Arabs. Those two

films have been very successful all over the Islamic world and the Arab world, and they are seen as an excellent example of cultural interaction between the culture of American Hollywood and the culture of Islamic and Arabic interests.

Within Qatar and other Gulf states the Islamic folk media have not yet made a cultural breakthrough in terms of producing a series or films representing the social daily way of life on which Islam is mainly based. It can be argued that this ought to happen and that Media Education in Qatar ought to help it to happen. This is not for the sake of an anachronistic position of protecting Islamic culture from Western corruption but because in the inevitable global village of the world the State of Qatar is exposed to modern Western media transmitted through the increasing numbers of television sets, home video cassette recorders (HVCRs) and satellite transmissions via dish and cable. For a negotiated cultural relationship to be constructed, it will be important to build upon the strengths of Islamic folk media while at the same time learning from the technology, the theory and the cultural techniques of Western media.

Having said that, local media production should not be imitative of, for example, 'Dallas' or any other American series, but rather true to Islamic values, reflecting the objective nature of Islam as a religion and a culture which has for a long time been misunderstood by the West. According to Al Maududi (1950),

**"Islam is a complete way of life and is universal in terms of geography and time" (Maududi, 1950: 10).**

He explained:-

**"the comprehensiveness of Islam and indicated that it does not admit a conflict nor even a significant separation between spiritual life and mundane every day life" (Al-Maududi, 1950: 10).**

To reflect further upon that, one could say that the comprehensive nature of Islam is an important factor that encourages Moslims to achieve and transfer all kinds of knowledge. The acquisition of modes of teaching experience, (e.g., Media Studies teaching) is an important means for the transmission and the achievement of knowledge. The Prophet said that:-

**"acquisition of knowledge is a duty upon each Moslim, male or female" (The Hadeeth, cited in al - Gazali, 1985: 376).**

**"The Moslim, male and female who travels abroad for seeking knowledge is a struggler 'mojahid'" (The Hadeeth, cited in al-Gazali, 1985: 376).**

The Prophet has encouraged all man-kind to gain knowledge. He said:-

**"acquire knowledge even if it is in China" (The Hadeeth, cited in al-Gazali, 1985: 376).**

Islam's respect to knowledge seekers goes even beyond all of that. The Prophet said that:-

**"a Moslim, male or female who dies while she/he studies inland or abroad will be a martyr" (The Hadeeth, cited in al-Gazali, 1985: 400).**

Thus, Islam values and encourages seeking knowledge in all its forms by all available means. This is, from the point of Islam, one of the most important signs of the great creator which God manifested to man-kind. Sayeed (1986) said:-

**"there lies God's signs and those who attempt to know them are designated by the Qur'an as knowledge, an honourable title conferred by God on linguistics who are motivated by this world view"**  
**(Sayeed, 1986: 81).**

Islam also seems to be misunderstood by the West in regard to women.

According to Hansen (1968):-

**"Islam and the Arab came into contact with the two greatest of the time, the Persian Civilisation and the Hellenistic-Byzantine. The Arab brought Islam, the new and strong religion and in return adopted the main elements of the cultures of conquered regions. The seclusion of women from the outer social life was a phenomenon which existed within the Hellenistic-Byzantine area"** (Hansen, 1968: 213).

Hitti (1970) had this to say about the Moslim women:-

**"Moslim women led troops into battle, social occasions, their wit and musical talents were admired" (Hitti, 1970: 333).**

During the pearl-diving period which ended in the middle of this century,

**"The wives of the pearl divers fulfilled a role similar to that of the heads of the families. They attained some links with the outside world in the form of shopping for food and organising their homes" (Al-Misnad, 1984: 42).**

A leading women pioneer in Qatar female education during the 1950s made enormous efforts among the Qatari families to reinforce the Islamic notion that education leads to developing the critical mind. Mahmood has described her attempts to found the first female school in the State of Qatar. She said in an interview:-

**"I had to persuade them (the girls' parents) that education is a duty for every Moslim, male or female, which would enable them to become critical**

**of their roles in the society then; they gradually saw that girls' education was not sinful" (quoted in Al-Misnad, 1984: 65).**

According to Al-Misnad (1984):-

**"Qatari women are now entering governmental services as civil servants, social welfare workers and teachers and in other fields such as the private sector, engineering and medicine" (Al-Misnad, 1984: 44).**

Gilsenan (1990), an American anthropologist who has spent more than twenty years studying life in the Middle East, takes issues with popular stereotypes in the West about Moslems, as has been referred to in last chapter e.g.,

**"militant Moslems whose political aims are cast in the language of religion and who do not fear violent confrontation with their enemies, have been stereotyped as religious fanatics with a thirst for blood" (Gilsenan, 1990: 460).**

In 1977 the United Arab Emirates, apparently angered by the media stereotype of the Arab and Islam in the Middle East in Western media, hosted a conference in London. The conference published an important book, *The Arab Image in Western Media*. A key theme was to try to change the stereotyped and distorted images of the Arab image in Western media.

While Gilsenan recognises that contemporary political struggles in the Moslim World have involved physical violence, he tends to understand this violence as only one element in a far more fundamental struggle over the definition of what it means to be a Moslim. He stated:-

**"Moslims must come to terms with a modern world in which their traditional societies have been ravaged by colonial and neo-colonial exploitation by the West" (Gilsenan, 1990: 460).**

In chapter 6 there has been an emphasis made by respondents AQ, BQ and CQ on the notion that those Moslims who reject the American mass media exportation to their cultures on the basis of moral panic and moral judgement, always do so because of the American exploitation of their countries, as Gilsenan confirmed. Respondent B, in chapter 5 has also made the point that the American mass media

exporters to the Third World, in which the Islamic nations are a key factor, tend to underestimate the capabilities of the Third World to produce their own mass media products, mainly for exploitative purposes. Gilsenan praises the attempts of Muslims to achieve their goal i.e.,

**"Their goal is to rebuild an authentic Islamic way of life, free of Western domination and exploitation and yet responsive to the problems and needs of life in the twentieth century" (Gilsenan, 1990: 460).**

This clearly echoes what Moududi (1950) said about Islam as a way of life, as has been stated earlier. Gilsenan's views about Islam are interesting because he is not a Muslim writer. Having studied Islam as a way of life for twenty years in the Middle East, Gilsenan dealt with Islam objectively rather than dealing with it from moral or political perspectives.

Having provided the evidence from the Qur'an, The Hadeeth (the Prophet's revelations), the Islamic literature and from the writing of non-Muslim writers on the importance of acquiring knowledge, all of this makes it legitimate for Qatari television to export already existing folk cultural media (e.g., songs related to the diving industry, plays, drama), to the West (with subtitles), to make this cultural

heritage popular in the West as popular as, say, 'Dallas' is in Qatar. The Qatari folk cultural songs are particularly aesthetically rich, as is the case with the cinema, as has respondent C in chapter 5 maintained (see appendix 1: 430-431). According to a British women-writer, Graham who visited Qatar in 1978 and studied in depth this aspect of Qatari culture, by the means of interviewing Qatari women:-

**"When the ships were sighted at sea after four months' absence we women took cats and palm leaves with us and made for the beach. As soon as the sails were clearly visible we called out: Away..Away..We drive you away, oh sea..oh our big sea, bring us happiness. We would beat the sea with the palm leaves and squeeze the cats until they wailed 'waw'. This sounds like 'rojo', meaning 'they came back' in Arabic. Then we tied pieces of cloth to the palm leaves, dipped them in kerosene and set them on fire. We wanted to burn the sea so that the divers [the love ones]could never go back to it" (Graham, 1979: 172).**

This kind of two-way flow of global media co-operation will, no doubt, reduce the gap in media cultures. Having said this, it is important for the State of Qatar to begin serious research into the observations of perceived 'media imperialism' which have mainly been causing a moral panic among parents and teachers. It is also important that research should begin into the influence of both folk cultural media and Islamic folk media on Qatari people of different ages. In addition to that, it is as important to content-analyse imported Western programmes. Studies by Santoro <sup>1</sup> (1984) show the importance of this. Santoro's conclusion is that,

**"in many popular television series the hero is a rich, elegant white American, who goes about the world dispensing peace and justice" (Roncagliolo and Janus, 1984: 370).**

Accordingly, content analysis research ought to be seriously implemented by the Qatari authorities, not to 'protect' but to enable our children and adolescents to be critically aware of what they watch. In this way they will not simply be passive recipients of various Western cultural ideologies and stereotypes but have the capacity to be independent, critical users, and reflective viewers.

If this is to happen, then a proper system of Media Education must be in place in Qatar. If a negotiated cultural relationship is to be found, then it must arise from the formal education system through schooling and higher education, including teacher education, and historical, cultural folk and Islamic cultural media as well as the modern electronic media of mass communication.

For the good of young people in Qatar, it can be argued that those institutions ought to work out an educational policy based on cultural Islamic participative integrity, which is rooted in Islam, as has been shown, enabling young people to open their minds to cultures while holding a pride in their own values which derive from Islamic culture.

### **8.3 A possible Programme of Media Education in The State of Qatar: General description and discussion**

This section of this chapter suggests how a possible programme of Media Education in Qatar might be constructed as a way of implementing what has been called a negotiated cultural relationship.

In constructing such a programme the assistance of the *UNESCO* organisation will be crucial. As Wells (1987) points out, *UNESCO* is committed to the support of indigenous cultural and educational programmes and works to promote training policies in the Third World (Wells, 1987: 128).

The State of Qatar has already received the benefit of *UNESCO* expertise when the Ministry of Information and Culture established the Audience Research Department in 1981.<sup>2</sup> As a result of that successful experience, itself part of a negotiated cultural relationship, *UNESCO* could also contribute to establishing a programme at the University of Qatar for training teachers to teach Media Education and Media Studies.

This programme could be devised by committees from the University, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information and Culture working under the supervision of *UNESCO*.

Before proceeding to detail the aims of such a programme, it is relevant to note *UNESCO's* view of the appropriate approach to Media Education. It covers:-

**"... all ways of studying, learning and teaching at all levels (primary, secondary, higher, adult education,**

**lifelong education) and in all circumstances, the history, creativity, use and evaluation of media as practical and technical arts, as well as the place occupied by media in society, their social impact, the implication of media communication, participation, modification of the mode of perception they bring about, the role of creative work and access to media" (UNESCO, 1984: 8).**

It is the view of this study that all these areas should be included in a Media Education programme as well as the influence of Islamic folk media on values and information, together with the inclusion of cultural folk media especially in its dominance of the Arts (e.g., painting, poetry, writing, plays, songs).

The programme should also include studies of the interactive relationship between Islamic and cultural folk media and the modern media. These studies should focus on the current cultural interaction in order to enable students to develop this cultural interaction further.

The involvement of *UNESCO* in establishing this cultural programme is crucial for two main reasons: first, *UNESCO* is a high status international organisation

which is concerned directly with education and cultural matters in the Third World; second, *UNESCO* is a major source of published works and articles about Media Education, especially in Third World contexts.

*UNESCO* has urged Third World countries to ask for *UNESCO* expertise in establishing programmes for training Media Studies teachers:-

**"International co-operation should also in our view extend to providing facilities for the training of Media Studies teachers, particularly from countries where the needed resources are inadequate. Methods for promoting training of this kind have been successfully developed by *UNESCO* over the years" (Madison, in *UNESCO*, 1977: 10).**

With the assistance of *UNESCO*, a Media Studies and Media Education programme for Qatar could be provided along the following lines:-

A programme enabling students and teachers to study various aspects of modern media of mass communication in the contexts of a greater understanding of Islamic and cultural folk media could be established. This would involve activities which

would lead them to work out an interactive relationship between these two cultural forms. The intention here would be to give expression to the deep-rooted conviction that,

**"Islam is workable at any time and in any place"**

**(The Hadeeth, cited in Al-Karadawi, 1995: 8).**

By using media technology which is lavishly available in the State of Qatar, the students would be encouraged to produce their own media artefacts and creations. Subsequently, the programme would lead them to be aware of how media work; to become reflective about modern media by applying it to their Islamic and cultural folk media; to become critical users and critical producers of media representing the negotiated cultural relationship.

Such a programme will be designed to alleviate their dependence on the West in the field of cultural production and even in the field of media technology production.

The Media Studies and Media Education programme should enable the students to look at themselves as respondents living in a global culture with other people.

This, in itself, is an Islamic principle, as the evidence from The Qur'an, The Hadeeth and the Islamic writing has demonstrated.

The teaching of Media Studies in Qatar should motivate the students through practical work to create exportable forms of Islamic and cultural folk media. This will help, among other things, to encourage them to look at their national culture in an international and broader context.

The programme should also be community-wide, to encourage the students and teachers to participate with people (e.g., housewives, children, public workers), in informing them about the importance of using their Islamic and cultural folk media in reflecting on what the imported media show. This would assist in reducing moral panic about modern media which is mostly based on assumptions.

The Media Studies programme should respect the fact that the students are bound to come to the classroom with a certain body of knowledge which the teachers ought to respect, add to, and develop. This will be a direct cultural 'lesson' from the experience of screen theory in Britain during the 1970s (i.e., the Qatari programme) will avoid the domination of theory.

The students should be educated to see that transnational mass media is not simply a threat. It is, rather, a key component in the possibilities for global cultural co-operation. The aesthetic richness of both the Islamic and cultural folk media of Qatar ought to be compared to the rich aesthetics of the cinema. This will lead to the possibility of creating a global cultural appreciation which contributes, among other things, to the better understanding of other cultures.

The teaching of Media Studies and Media Education to students and teachers in the State of Qatar is an urgent necessity. It can be achieved through the strategy of a negotiated cultural relationship as described in this study. It could be implemented by a programme of Media Education as described here.

The research for this study has drawn together the theoretical insights and practical suggestions of teachers in both Britain and Qatar. From this original and comparative exercise it is hoped that Qatar can produce its own distinctive and authentic approach to the teaching of Media Studies.

### **8.3.1 The objectives of the programme**

The two main objectives of this programme are:-

1. to provide the teachers with initial and essential concepts and skills about the media of mass communication.
2. to promote the concept of conscientization and cultural awareness of what the mass media produce.

This second objective can be made possible by enabling the teachers to acquire the processes of identifying, analysing and becoming critical of mass media's issues locally and internationally. A critical social science and humanistic perspective based on participative and conscientized approach should be adopted. This method requires studying the mass media within their Islamic, folk and modern context. the role of both Arabic and basic English should be emphasised. For, the teachers should obtain training in visual, oral and writing skills.

### **8.3.2 The nature of the Programme**

The programme should demand a period of one year divided into three terms full time enrolment as a form of in-service training for practising teachers. These would be teachers who are already qualified in the teaching of other subjects but who have interest in training in a new subject.

### **8.3.3 The content of the programme**

The content of the programme is designed to provide the teachers' with critical facilities to study and work with the mass media. In addition, the programme is designed to obtain a follow up mechanism with the latest outcomes on research into the mass media world - wide. During these three terms the teachers should acquire:-

- a. understanding of certain pressure groups, organisations and the individual's participative and conscientized contribution to them;
  
- b. perspective into the socio - historical and cultural conditions of The State of Qatar and the international mass media, into their nature and into the circumstances under which they function.
  
- c. background about the theories of the mass media in its historical advent and relating this to the factors under which they arise;

- d. insight into knowledge sources. Hence, the conscientized and critical acquisition of sources of knowledge of which the mass media are important part is required. This is enhanced by the dramatic changes in mass media's technology.
- e. cultural awareness of the role of English Language as the main vehicle of the media of mass communication. This entails the civilizational necessity to produce and export Islamic and folk media to the Western World which is in it self a tremendous form of cultural action.
- f. ability to acknowledge that every medium requires a certain formula of writing in working with various media of mass communication.
- g. understanding of the notion that the mass media are a hybrid into which a variety of perspectives feed (e.g., semiotics, politics, sociology). Neither the Islamic and folk media, nor the modern mass media should be studied in isolation from these perspectives.
- h. tracing the ethical issues the modern mass media may have in addressing its delivery to Islamic societies which requires an objective outlook based on conscientization and cultural awareness rather than on moral judgement.
- i. Obtaining skills of, among others, producing media's texts.

The three terms could be designed as a form of practically orientated course which should bear in mind the notion that the subject of Media Studies has a balance of practical work and theory:-

### **8.3.3.1 The structure of the proposed programme**

**Term 1: an introductory study of the media of mass of communication:-**

- a. Theories of the mass media.
- b. Research into the 'assumed' effects of the mass media.
- c. Constitutions of the mass media.
- d. Concepts of the mass media.

**Term 2: Islamic Media and Folk Media V the modern media of mass communication:-**

- a. The origins of the Cultural Folk Media.
- b. The Patterns of the Cultural Folk Media.
- c. The Influence V the Importance of the Cultural Folk Media in people's lives.
- d. The Emergence of Islamic Media.
- e. The Integral Pedagogy between Islamic Media and Cultural Folk Media.
- f. The Islamic Media and Cultural Folk Media in Modern Times.
- g. The Islamic Media and Cultural Folk Media and the Modern Media of Mass Communication: Collaborative Pedagogy.

**Term 3: Placement**

The trainees could choose a certain placement in which they should practice what they learnt during the first two terms. There could be a number of mass media institutions (e.g., the television and radio stations, the news agency and the press houses: newspapers and magazines) as well as locations of cultural and Islamic media (e.g., the majalis, the mosque).

### **8.3.4 Description of teaching methods**

The teaching methods for this course involve the following possibilities in order to relate theory to practice. To give examples one could say that, the course should train the teachers to pursue their own interests and enthusiasms. For example, pursuing individual project work such as making a video about an aspect of folk media (e.g., about a majlis informal chat or writing a journalistic article, interviewing people in the street by using a tape recorder), which may be their own research projects, where they are doing practical work and they are having to work in a range of different media and have different kinds of requirements.

The trainees will also by and large be working in groups (e.g., in a team work on broadcasting a bulletin at a studio in which one person is trained to use the vision

mixer, another one works on the sound machine while another trainee is inside the studio reading the news).

They could be talking to each other in groups to train to possess a form of pedagogy awareness which is interpreting the body of knowledge each trainee comes with to the classroom (e.g., a political issue, an economic issue).

The trainees could watch a video together and discuss it afterwards. They may analyse the daily papers together and give their comments and reflections on them. They could get engaged in outside shooting to learn how to use the video camera, the microphone and so on.

The course could invite a distinguished personality such as an editor of a certain paper to train the candidates to ask questions about his paper's policy and other related matters. They may discuss the ways they make sense of an American programme such as 'Dallas' by content-analysing it.

The candidates could train to put subtitles on an indigenous media production (e.g., a speech in a mosque or a discussion in a mosque about an issue or a folk song) in order to export it to the West.

### **8.3.5 Possible sources of resistance to the proposed programme**

This programme may face five main sources of resistance:-

1. Political resistance: Because the mass media's institutions in the State of Qatar are run by the State, the relevant authorities could see in the programme a threat to the State's monopoly of the mass media. However, as demonstrated above, a critical approach to other cultures has deep roots in Islamic thinking and this would constitute a persuasive argument.

2. Islamic resistance: The Moslim authorities may question some Western perspectives the programme will have to teach for the purposes of cultural comparison (e.g., Marxist theory in relation to the mass media).

As the programme emphasises the role of enabling students to become critical, some Moslim authorities could fear that some students with insufficient knowledge about Islam may become critical of some Islamic practices.

Having said that, the programme's answer to this possible resistance could be that teaching students to become critical, occupies the heart of "Islamic conscientization".

Islam therefore, is not alien to this form of critical education. As shown in this chapter The Holy Qur'an consistently addresses the mind urging it to become critical.

The other answer could be that the programme would enable students to become critical and conscientized producers of Islamic media texts and exporters of these media texts to the West. This, the programme suggests would introduce the Islamic media into the Western countries. On the other hand this would enable the Qatari students to see the West and certain ideologies with their Islamic critical eyes.

3. Cultural resistance: The Qatari society has solid and rooted cultural traditions (e.g., segregation between girls and boys). These traditions could be violated by, for example, the emphasis of the programme to work and participate in the community.

Almost every household in the Qatari society has a house maid and a driver from poor countries, the programme could be seen by some families as an opposition to this social trend, for, the programme stresses the notion of independence rather than dependence.

Some families might see in the programme a threat to its unity in relation to girls - students by emphasising the notion of questioning rather than becoming passive recipients of orders (arranged marriage, driving).

However, the programme could remind the families that Islam opposes the notion of exploiting people from poorer countries by paying them insufficient wages.

As for girls, the programme could enlighten the tribes and the families that Islam rejects the social oppression of women. In the seventh century for instance, Islam gave the woman the right to choose the man she is going to share her life with in the presence of her parents. Islam's conceptualisation of the wife as a source of love, safety, security and warmth could be emphasised.

The programme could suggest also that the teaching of Media Education and Media Studies would enable the students to be culturally competent and conscientized in the way they perceive the world about them.

As Islam gave the women the right to total integration they therefore should be enabled to become critical of tribal and cultural social behaviours which contradict the principles of Islam.

The proposed programme also could enlighten them that Allah and the Prophet do not distinguish in relation to education between women and men. The Programme could remind them of Amina Mahmood, the Qatari pioneer women who transformed Qatari women from illiteracy to the age of education in the 1950s. Mahmood convinced the women's parents of the Islamic principle that women should be educated and because of this the parents allowed their girls to go to school.

4. Professional resistance: The programme will attempt to train interested teachers of secondary school with a BA or BSc degree for one full - time year in order to qualify them to teach Media Studies at secondary school.

The Ministry of Education which is the employer of these teachers may pose an objection for one reason or another (e.g., shortage of teachers at secondary school).

The programme may face negative response from the teachers for a variety of reasons (e.g., no willingness to start learning again, or teaching a new subject whose future is unknown).

Another professional resistance to Media Education may be caused by the mass media's operators in The State of Qatar. Some media's professionals might assume that the role of Media Studies in education is to criticise the way they run the media institutions. This obstacle could be a serious one in the process of any possible collaboration between them and the Media Studies teachers.

Nevertheless, an answer to the first point could be that the Ministry should create a variety of subjects within its National Curriculum including Media Education. It could be said that this helps in establishing a cross curricula understanding.

As people in Qatar are exposed to a variety of mass media from all over the world which could confuse the children and the young, Media Education could be

the appropriate educational means to organise culturally and Islamically, this universal flow of the mass media. This would have positive results on the whole educational system because it would create students with a consciousness capable of making the job of the educational system more effective.

As for the resistance from the teachers, the programme could suggest to them that training for a new subject would revive their old information about their existing subjects.

The programme could suggest also that training for a new discipline would enable them to open up new horizons in the future. Media Education, it could be argued will keep them in touch with the technologies of the media which are increasingly changing.

As far as the professionals are concerned, the programme could suggest that collaboration between them and the programme is important and necessary sources for its success. This collaboration could have many facets.

For example, borrowing media professionals to give lessons about the technique of the media. The lessons could take place in the media institutions themselves. This helps to make students and the programme' teachers appreciate the work the

professionals carry out for the nation. On the other hand it makes the professionals feel that they would not be excluded by the programme.

The other advantage of such a collaboration and partnership is that it links the students' learning reality to the wider reality of the socio-cultural conditions in which the media institutions are an important part..

5. Economic and financial resistance: As the international recession is affecting the economy of which The State of Qatar is a part, the government may object to importing and recruiting trainers for the programme and allocating other budgets for training equipment which obviously involves high expenses.

However, the programme could suggest to the relevant authority that, for example, they may borrow or second professionals from the local media institutions who may be willing to teach and train the candidates as part of their work.

By the same token the programme is not going to cost them in relation to the training equipment which can be borrowed from the already existing media institutions. This researcher believes that when these clarifications are made clear

to the relevant authority in the government there will be no difficulties in implementations.

One could conclude by stating that despite these possible sources of resistance, they are not insurmountable. This programme could make an important and valuable contribution to education in Qatar.

## **8.4 Recommendations for further research and policy development**

Great stress must be placed on the necessity to carry out further research into comparative cultural areas of study between Islamic culture and Western culture. Although there are many forms of materialistic co-operation between Islamic and Western countries, there are too few cultural attempts on both sides to understand each other's culture, an issue which has often, been subjected to emotions and moral judgement.

Further research by seconded Ph.D. students to Western Universities from Islamic countries should emphasise the need for conducting cultural comparative

research between their countries and the West by the use of qualitative methodologies, especially the method of interviewing.

This strategy of research is more appropriate in social sciences for obtaining first hand knowledge in the area under research. From experience, this approach helps to narrow the cultural gap between the Moslim researcher and his / her interviewees and vice versa.

As far as Media Education and Media Studies are concerned, as one area of comparative cultural research, further research is needed into the role of mass media rather than giving in to rhetoric and assertion without providing evidence into their claimed effects.

The educational authorities and the mass media agencies in the State of Qatar need to accept the urgency of introducing Media Studies into all Qatari secondary schools.

The media's institutions in The State of Qatar should adopt practical methods to content-analyse exported media's products not for the sake of protection as much as for the sake of being aware of the contents of these products.

They should subsidise, support and sponsor the ideas of Qatari actors and actresses to produce indigenous productions of cultural folk media that reflect the Qatari, Islamic and Arabic culture and make these forms of production exportable to the West.

The media's institutions should also support the attempts of this programme to introduce Media Education into secondary schools as a means of enabling people of Qatar from early age to become critical producers of their own media texts.

These suggestions could be carried out through basically three means. First, subsidy of production, subsidy of distribution and subsidy of training. The media's institutions should carry out frequent audience research to keep in touch with their audiences' response to what they do.

The educational magazine *Al-Tarbiya* (Education) may pave the way to such a programme of teaching Media Education and Media Studies by publishing teaching materials about Media Education and Media Studies which could be stimulating to teachers of relevant subjects.

These materials should be made pertinent to their concerns and ideas that they may want to teach about, as well as providing them with something new and up-to-date.

These materials should be about ways of studying images, or studying television programmes, or studying the aesthetic values of the cinema. Such publications could be potentially useful in establishing a starting basis. It could assist with creating an enthusiasm and an interest amongst teachers.

The Qatari educational policy makers should realise that the principles of Media Education are similar to those grounded in the Holy Qur'an and the revelation which are the urgency to motivate people to become conscientized and critical of what they watch, read and listen to. Hence, they should consider introducing Media Education into schools.

Further research is needed in relation to narrowing the gender inequalities in both Islamic and Western cultures because of cultural misunderstanding and stereotyping on both sides. Therefore, further research is required into the capability of Media Studies to achieve this goal.

The policy makers in The State of Qatar should acknowledge the fact that only through education can they enable people to grasp a conscientized awareness of the mechanisms and technology by which media's discourses are produced. Regardless of the high cost which training teachers of Media Studies could entail, the Qatari policy makers should consider the long term outcomes of such an investment.

# NOTES AND REFERENCES

## Chapter 1

1. The history of media research shows that the origin of research was related to the work of two prominent pioneers of The Behaviourism School in 1922: Lashly and Watson. Their study was concerned with the popularity of cinema and its effects on young people. It must be noted that Media Studies originated with The Behaviourism School. This school provided the first models of research into the effects of mass media.
2. Despite the fact that the rise of cinema inspired psychologists to look into its impact, the press and popular theatrical shows had a profound impact which was not echoed by research.
3. The United Kingdom and the United States of America have been two major leaders in media research.
4. It is helpful to have a brief summary of the historical background.

- \* The printed media began in 105 AD. with the Chinese lead in making paper and ink. See Schramm W., *Mass Communications* p. 5, in the bibliography.
- \* In 450 block printing was practised in Asia.
- \* 868 witnessed the birth of the oldest preserved block-printed book, *The Diamond Sutra*.
- \* Between 900 and 1450 book scribes developed high skills, moveable type developed in China, and cast metal type in Korea.
- \* Just before the middle of the fifteenth century Gutenberg and others apparently perfected the system of casting metal type, and applied it to bookmaking with a practical hand press and oil varnish ink.
- \* 1456 - the 42-line "Gutenberg Bible".
- \* 1456-1550 Beginning in Germany, printing swept over Europe.
- \* Caxton established an English press in 1476. Aldus was operating his famous press in Italy in 1494.

- \* 1539 First press in Western Hemisphere - Mexico.
- \* 1621 First coranto (news sheet) printed in Amsterdam (First English Coranto, 1622).
- \* 1638 First press in American colonies. The oldest extant book printed in America - The Bay Psalm Book - published in 1640.
- \* 1665 First English newspaper, London Gazette.
- \* 1690 First American newspaper, Public Occurrences, Boston. It lasted one issue.

This is a small portion of the chronology of media, particularly the press. For more reading, see: Schramm, W. (1960) *Mass Communication*, second edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), pp 5-14. Also see: Williams, R. (1962) *Communications*, revised edition, (London: Chatto & Windus), pp 22-35.

5. Most researchers on both sides of the Atlantic usually focus on the impact of television. By doing this they neglect the influence of video on audiences.
6. From the very beginning media, regardless of the form, created an atmosphere of concern among parents and teachers. However, the research into their effects started very late.
7. The present history of English politics is based on this point. Names of the English newspapers of the eighteenth century were: London Gazette and The Daily Courant, London. To clarify this point further, Schramm (1960) (see Bibliography) stated:

**"Reporters were compelled to resort to all sorts of subterfuges and indirect methods in order to get information. It is upon this information, gathered in this way, that much of our present history of English politics is based." (Schramm, 1960: 4).**

8. Probably the media's involvement with publicising the Parliamentary sessions has been enhanced by televising them.

9. Reviewing the history of a particular medium (e.g., cinema) in a particular point of time (e.g., the 1920's) does not necessarily mean that the medium which was discussed had no impact any longer. Television does not supersede cinema.
10. Despite the fact that this passage was written in 1851, the controversy about the role of media is still discussed in these terms.
11. The age of cinema, unlike the ages of press and theatre, coincided with the rise of The Behaviourism School, which started looking into the question of effect.
12. Actually this study inspired more studies later, such as the "Payne Fund" studies. This research method was known as the stimulus-response approach. This theory assumed that the mass media had a direct and observable influence on the audience, just as an injection does on a patient. For more reading on this theory, see: Brown, R.L. (1971) 'Approaches to the historical development of mass Media Studies in Tunstall, J. (Ed.), *media Sociology* (London: Constable) pp 41-56. Krippendorff, K. (1981) *Content Analysis* (London: Sage), pp. 15-17.

13. In the United Kingdom there has always been a great concern about the bad impact of media on education.
14. The main reason for American propaganda research was to find out whether the United States was actually dragged into the First World War because of Allied propaganda. For more reading on this subject, see: Katzen, M. (1975) 'Mass Communications: Teaching and Studies at Universities' (Paris: *UNESCO*), pp 70-80.
15. Although Thompson's protests were written almost thirty years ago, they are still aired today, particularly in relation to school and media.
16. Both Hall and Whannel based their interest in teaching on understanding modern arts, especially cinema and music, in order to be more capable of teaching their pupils.
17. Both Murdock and Phelps who wrote an influential book in 1973 *The Mass Media and Secondary School* work for the Centre for Mass Communication Research at Leicester University. This Centre was initially established in 1966 in order to teach critical approaches to the media as a reaction to the invasion of American media into the United Kingdom. Murdock and his

colleagues Halloran and late Elliott published a book based on case studies (1970) entitled *Demonstration and Communications*. They showed their attitude very sharply against the American impact on the British media. They, of course, referred to the British students' demonstration of 1968 protesting peacefully against the Vietnam War. They concluded that despite the peaceful nature of the demonstration the British media unfairly handled the event.

18. The question of media entertainment is always controversial.
19. The psychological definition of adolescents is those who are between the ages of 13 and 18 years.
20. This age in particular is more susceptible to pop music because of adolescents' attempts to look for a symbolic idol.
21. For more reading on school and pop culture see: Thompson, D. (1964) *Discrimination and Popular Culture* (London: Penguin) pp. 112-174.

Hall, S. Whannel, P. (1964) *The Popular Arts* (London: Hutchinson) pp 276-312.

22. In 1926 was the emergence of the first radio network, NBC Blue (ABC) and CBS, 1927. MBS, 1934.
23. Hall and Whannel referred in their book *The Popular Arts* to jazz music in particular (see pp 13-15).
- 24.. The whole focus of Himmelweit's research was on a huge sample of British children in seven main cities. Her concern with children was because of the emphasis placed on Freudian doctrines which saw the child as formed in important ways by the age of six.
25. The notion of 'triggering effect' was an important one. Television is not necessarily the cause of bad behaviour among children. Other factors should be taken into consideration (i.e., parental role, family upbringing etc.). See: Klapper, J. (1964) *The Effects of Mass Communication* (New York: Free Press) pp 61-65. Also see: Halloran J. *Control or Consent* (1963) (New York: Sheed and Ward) pp 30-38.
26. Root claims that families ought to be held responsible for their children's behaviour. Television could only be a contributory factor. This is much in

agreement with researchers who found this conviction some twenty years ago, such as Halloran (1963) and Klapper (1964).

27. Root meant (1986) that "**the alien box in the corner**" has been put there by the British families themselves.

## Chapter 2

1. For the purpose of this chapter, 'Contemporary Studies' are defined as those concerned with two main issues during the 1980s: first, the relationship between the 'mass media' and the 'social behaviour'; second, the increasing concern about the rise of Media Education.
2. Whilst some writers such as Howitt (1982) blamed the decline in social behaviour on mass media, especially television, other writers such as Roots (1986) argue against this. She blames the latter on the parents, who tend to use the television as a scapegoat for their lack of parental role (see also chapter 1).

3. These two examples are from Howitt's book, *Mass Media and Social Problems*.  
He, though, does not provide any statistics.
4. Some writers such as Howitt (1982) tend to ignore the surrounding factors such as upbringing, predispositions, parental role which play a great part in influencing the children's behaviour. Whilst television, among other forms of the mass media, plays a contributory part. Thus, it is not to be entirely blamed.
5. Despite the fact that Howitt's book was written in 1982, the writer expresses the same views expressed in the 1920s and 1930s. In those periods, the mass media were seen as a total menace.
6. The word entertainment was much used in the 1960s, (e.g., when Thompson argued that the "entertainment industries" would destroy the students' school morals, referring to the American-style films). Howitt (1982) claims it is entertainment which is the main function of the mass media. This is an interesting contradiction.
7. Howitt (1982) refers obviously to his book: *Mass Media and Social Problems*.  
For this book, see bibliography.

8. McQuail gives one example for media effects, such as dressing for the weather under the influence of a weather forecast, but this is a trivial example.

9. Although this study is old, Schramm and his colleagues (1961) claim in the same study that it is the youth who are most active in this relationship. It is they who use television rather than vice versa.

See, also, Enzensberger's statement of 1976:-

**"...The question is therefore not whether the mass media are manipulated, but who manipulate them" (quoted in Alvarado et al. op, cit.,: 39. See bibliography).**

10. Although Cullingford's book was published in 1984, he did not refer to Howitt (1982). Whereas Howitt (1982) placed the blame entirely on the mass media, most notably television, for the decline in social behaviour, Cullingford (1984) is more cautious. He, for instance, mentions what I keep calling the surrounding factors such as parental role, apart from television.

11. Cullingford's survey was based on 5000 children on both sides of the Atlantic. His findings question a number of myths about the effect of television.

However, this area is endlessly controversial. Probably he is right in terms of the sample he measured, but even this number (5000 children) in the sample does not necessarily represent all the children in both the United States of America and the United Kingdom. My own research in Qatar (1981) in relation to this followed the following pattern:

Qatar was divided into 4 quotas. 100 children from Doha (the capital city of the state). 50 other children were selected from each quota. The 250 children were aged 5-12. It was found that 90% of our sample were affected in a variety of ways by what they perceived on the television. It was obvious that television is almost the main source of entertainment and to a degree 'communication' and 'information' (source: Audience Research, Ministry of Information and Culture, 1983, Doha under the supervision of the *UNESCO*).

12. Both sides of the Atlantic have predominantly been pioneering the usage of television as education.
13. The limited success of television as education is probably associated with the fact that the youth tend to turn to television as a medium of entertainment such as 'Top of the Pops', rather than a medium of education.

14. The State of Qatar, for instance, ranks at category No. 1 among all countries in the entire world in terms of possessing 600 sets (television) for each 1000 people, providing the fact that the total population of the State of Qatar, both indigenous and expatriate, is 500,000 (Basher, PhD thesis: 'Development of the "Uses and Gratification Theory", a case of Qatar', 1984, University of New York at Buffalo, USA, p. 34).
15. In Qatar, for instance, the government followed suit. It introduced the 'television education' based on assumptions about its effectiveness.
16. Concern about 'media' impact on youth education could be traced back to Plato's Republic (400 BC). The popular theatre was believed to have a great influence on Greek youth.
17. These three writers collaborate as a team throughout their book: *Learning about the Media*.
18. A French sociologist, argued (1971) that:

**"... the school is required to perpetuate and transmit the capital of consecrated cultural signs,**

**that is, the culture handed down to it by the intellectual creators of the past, and to mould to a practice in accordance with the models of that culture a public assailed by conflicting, schismatic or heretical messages - for example, in our society, modern communication media. Further it is obliged to establish and define systematically the sphere of orthodox culture and the sphere of heretical culture (Bourdieu, 1971, in Young: 178).**

19. For example, Lord Reith, the first Secretary General of the BBC during the 1920s, described his struggle with the Home Office (according to his remarkable book: *Into the Wind* to found the Foreign Language Broadcast which led eventually to the foundation of the first and largest Foreign Language Broadcast in 1938. This Broadcast Department was the Arabic Department.

The driving force behind this development was, according to Lord Reith mainly, to contain the influence of both radio Bari in Italy and the German-Arabic service which were directed toward the Arab world, especially Palestine and Egypt.

20. Williams wrote in 1962 about teaching media in his book, *Communications*, in which he reinforced the historical impetus for the necessity of Media Education.

## Chapter 3

1. Those two writers were particularly concerned with the cultural invasion of American Hollywood film into the United Kingdom. They claimed that education would kill the influence of films.
2. Both recent writers, Stables and Bazalgette, contemplate this point of view, that the 1986 and 1989 educational reforms in England and Wales were a culmination of the very early attempts
3. Apart from the fact that Leavis was a colleague of Richards at the Cambridge School which asserted its belief in culture, art and tradition, Leavis was also co-author with Thompson of a landmark book entitled *Culture and Environment*(1933). Their main thesis was that the media act with society as agents of cultural decline. This period came to be known as

the legacy of Leavis and Thompson. It is important to indicate here that they referred to cinema basically as agents of cultural decline. For more details on Leavisism and Thompsonism see Chapter 1.

4. English as literature and art has often been seen as classic studies or 'texts' while media 'texts' (studies) has always been seen as modern.
5. Richards (1924) and Leavis (1933-1952) were determined to protect the main three values of British society - culture, art and tradition against the influence of the Press, cinema and radio. Strangely enough, they apparently did not mention 'theatre'. For the latter was also blamed for its bad influence on children (See Chapter 1 for more details on this particular point).
6. Richards (1924) *Principles of Literary Criticism* has been considered by many writers as a major influence on literature, art and culture in this country, if not on both sides of the Atlantic.
7. The quotation comes from the preface of the book
8. This critical analysis of Richards is presumably still valid today.

9. This comparison reminds me of an Arabic saying: "The mistakes of 'medical' doctors get buried, while the mistakes of teachers remain living among us".
  
10. He presumably referred to the United Kingdom. Leavis expected the educated and intellectual minority in the United Kingdom during the 1930s to protect the culture from apparently, the new media, cinema and so on. He seemed to have in mind the middle class or what many people call the establishment.
  
11. Leavis looked at the Press then as an aspect of mechanisation which like any 'machinery' neglected the value of individuality.
  
12. Leavis' criticism of, apparently Hollywood films, was shared by Thompson, who held the same view (See Chapter 1).
  
13. This passage was repeated here from Chapter 1 for the purpose of following the events of English and Media Studies in order.
  
14. This point was also mentioned by the writer of this work in Note 5, Chapter 1.

15. This, for instance, is what Elm College students do in Stanmore, a London suburb, according to respondent AT in chapter 7 (see appendix 2). It is a very modern and radical step.

## Chapter 5

1. Respondent A had compared the historical well-known Hitler 'Holocaust' against the Jews in both Nazi Germany and Poland with the recent British Government 'literary holocaust' against the introduction of Media Education into the National Curriculum for England and Wales. This was rather overstated and must be seen as evidence of her anger.
2. While this is true for England and Wales, the situation of Media Studies in Scotland is different. According to Visocchi and Brown (1989):

**"Media Education in Scotland has reached a significant stage in its development. Two recent and connected initiatives are an indication of this: they are the publication of the Media Education**

**Curriculum Guidelines in 1988, and the establishment of a related research project which is due to be completed in December 1989" (Visocchi and Brown, 1989: 187).**

The educational authorities do not seem to have any opposition to the teaching of Media Studies in Scottish secondary schools, unlike their counterparts in England and Wales. Apparently, the Scottish authorities seem to be more liberal in this important area of Media Education.

3. 'Screen theory' was developed during the 1970s by some British educational writers (e.g., Masterman). Educationally, one of its outcomes was concerned mainly with producing academic knowledge for teachers of Media Studies in schools.

Some Media Studies teachers such as respondent B criticised the theory for underestimating the theoretical potential of both teachers and learners in schools.

4. It may be that this point, among other reasons, made John Patten, the Secretary of State for Education, in June 1993, remove both Media Studies from the

National Curriculum, and Media Education training from higher institutions for teacher education. This development caused a huge dispute between teachers and the Government in England.

During the Newcastle teachers' conference which took place in June 1993 Corry, a teacher, said during the conference that the Government onslaught on Media Studies and Media Education was related to the fact that the Government :-

**"does not want us to reflect and does not want us to criticise" (The Guardian, June 3, 1993).**

5. According to Williams (1958)

**"Marxist interpretation of culture did not become widely effective in England until the thirties of our century ... Marx outlined, but never fully developed, a cultural theory. His casual comments on literature, for example, are those of a learned, intelligent man of his period, rather than what we**

now know as Marxist literary criticism "(Williams, 1958: 258).

6. Ang also wrote 'Watching Dallas' in 1982, eight years earlier, in which he analysed letters from Dallas viewers, from two perspectives: the ideology of mass culture, and the ideology of populism. According to him:-

**"The populist ideology derives its attraction from its direct mode of address, from its ability to produce and ensure immediate certainty. Its discourses are anti-intellectual and consist mainly of no more than short slogans, as the saying 'There's no accounting for taste' makes clear. The populist ideology functions therefore mainly at a practical level: it consists of common-sense ideas which are assumed almost 'spontaneously' and unconsciously in people's daily lives. The ideology of mass culture on the other hand is mainly of a theoretical nature: its discourses possess great consistency and rationality, they take on the form of more or less elaborate theories. The ideology of mass culture is therefore**

**an intellectual ideology: it tries to win people over by convincing them that 'mass culture is bad'" (Ang, 1985: 114).**

## **Chapter 6**

1. Basher (1984), Boyd and Starubhaar (1985) and Boyd and Najai (1984) all neglected to examine the folk media in the Gulf states.
2. It is necessary to look at this concept and the notion of this key word in its historic and contemporary contexts. According to the British cultural scholar Williams (1976):-

**“Ideology first appeared in English in 1796, as a direct translation of the new French word ‘ideologie’, which had been proposed in that year by the rationalist philosopher Destutt de Tracy. Tracy read a paper and proposed to call the philosophy of**

**mind, 'ideology' or the science of ideas, in order to distinguish it from the ancient metaphysics. In this scientific sense, ideology was used in epistemology and linguistic theory until the nineteenth century. However, new 'ideology' is mainly used in the sense given by Napoleon Bonaparte. In an attack on the proponents of democracy who mislead the people by elevating them to a sovereignty they were incapable of exercising', he attacked the principles of the Enlightenment as 'ideology'. In this sense ideology, now as in Napoleon, is mainly a term of abuse."**  
**(Williams, 1976: 153-157).**

3. *UNESCO* publishes a yearly journal called *Media Studies in education:*

*Reports and Papers on Mass Communication.* This journal of 1977 was chosen because of its variety of reports on *Media Studies and Media Education in Western Europe.*

4. The known pillars of Islam are five: testifying that there is only one God and that Mohammed is the Prophet of God, doing the five daily prayers, giving

Zakat (charity), fasting Ramadan (a month a year), making Haj once in life time (a journey to Macca).

## **Chapter 7**

1. For a discussion of the importance of 'becoming critical' in English teacher education, see Carr's book of 1986 of that title in the bibliography.
2. There are two meanings of 'virtual reality'. The first is theoretical and controversial and is related to the old-new debate about whether television, for instance, should show real violence or fictional violence.

The other meaning of 'virtual reality', refers to the modern technological device which gives respondents the experience of 'being there' in virtual reality in a given situation.

## **Chapter 8**

1. Santoro analysed the content of programmes and commercials on Venezuelan television. The following stereotypes repeatedly emerged from the children's replies:-

The 'heroes' are from the United States, while the 'villains' are from other countries, chiefly from Germany and then from China (Iran, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya).

The 'heroes' are whites who are rich and are usually policemen, detectives or soldiers.

The 'villains' are black and poor, and they work chiefly as labourers or peasants, or in offices.

Santoro's conclusion is that in many popular television series the hero is a rich, elegant, white American, who goes about the world dispensing peace and justice (Roncagliolo and Janus, *op. cit.*,: 370). Accordingly, content analysis research ought to be seriously implemented by the Qatari authorities

not to 'protect' but to enable our children and adolescents to be critically aware of what they watch. In this way they will not simply be passive recipients of various Western cultural ideologies and stereotypes but rather have the capacity to be independent, critical users and reflective viewers.

2. The researcher was the first head of this department.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Chapters 5 & chapter 6

**A. Questions which were put to teachers of mass Media Studies at the London Institute of Education (LIE) (Respondents B, C and D), The British Film Institute (the BFI) (Respondent A) (chapter 5), and teachers from Qatar Higher Education.(QHE) (Respondents AQ, BQ and CQ) (chapter 6):-**

1. Why, in your view, is it important to teach Media Studies to beginning teachers and to experienced teachers?
2. What would you say are the characteristics of an effective Media Studies teacher in a secondary school?
3. Media Studies can be approached from different perspectives (e.g., from a moral stance, an aesthetic position, a political position, an educational position). What approach do you regard as most important, and why?
4. What writers in Media Studies do you regard as most influential and most important, and why?
5. Buckingham is very critical of the domination of mass Media Studies by certain forms of theory and a relative neglect of classroom applications or practical work. Do you agree with this?
6. Cullingford argues that the educational potential of mass media (especially television) has been over-stated. What is your view?
7. Howitt argues in his study *Mass Media and Social Problems* that the main function of the mass media is 'entertainment'. How far do you agree with this?

8. Mass media operators always claim that the media are the mirrors of society. They say that if the society is 'ill', the media must show this 'illness'. What is your own view?

9. There is a concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think that this is simply a 'moral panic' or do you think it might be a serious concern?

10. How could the State of Qatar, in your view, begin to establish institutions and programmes for the study of mass media? What could we learn from the experience of Britain?

## **B. Notes to the interviews**

\* Respondent D's accounts were not taped for technical reasons.

\* The accounts of teachers from the Higher Education in the State of Qatar were not taped either for their personal reasons. Additionally, most of their accounts were translated from Arabic to English (see chapter 4 for more detail).

\* During the interviews the interviewer referred to himself as 'the researcher' and as I.

### **\* Respondent A's interview (chapter 5)**

**I: (Question 1) Why, in your view, is it important to teach Media Studies to beginning teachers and to experienced teachers?**

This is one of the questions I wanted to ask you about first. You want me to talk about beginning teachers and experienced teachers. Do you want me to concentrate on the broadness of that range?

The researcher: Yes, that will be fine.

Are you thinking here about teachers who want to teach about the media, or do you mean any teachers?

The researcher: Teachers who want to teach about the mass media in secondary schools.

I would rather use the term Media Education. The way I like to use that is as a much broader term. I don't see it as opposed to Media Studies. I see Media Studies as a part of Media Education, but I tend to use the term Media Studies to refer to special courses where both students and teachers are deliberately embarking on something that is concentrating entirely on the media. Media Education is a broader term that includes that but also includes other ways in which the media might be taught. If the emphasis here is, why is it important for teachers to go on learning about Media Studies, I think it is because Media Studies is really still in its early stages. A lot of what has been written about Media Studies is written on the basis of assertion and hypothesis and I don't think it's grounded enough in classroom practice. I think the subject is beginning to change. It is also continuing to change because it is a hybrid: it calls upon different, more traditional subject disciplines. There is a continual struggle about what Media Education should be and might be. Even within Britain there isn't a very stable consensus about what Media Education is. There is probably more of a consensus than there has been in the past but it is still not a very stable consensus. I think its institutional position is also precarious. For those reasons the subject is constantly in development, and teachers need to revisit it and to relearn approaches and theories that relate to Media Education. Also, of course, there are always new people coming in to Media Education. I am not sure what you mean by 'experienced teachers'. There can be experienced teachers who have never taught about the media but who want to begin.

The researcher: I mean those who have been teaching Media Education, following your definition, within a particular subject (e.g., English). This is what I mean by 'experienced teachers'. By 'beginning teachers' I mean those students who have been studying in higher education (like the Institute of Education in London) to be qualified as media teachers.

You see, those two groups are both very small groups. There is by far a larger number of groups and people whose need to learn about the media is far greater. All teachers in their initial training ought to have an element of Media Education teaching to ensure that when they are using media or asking the students to look at evidence for inspiration or whatever kind of material they are looking at, they bring a fairly consistent set of critical attitudes to that task.

The researcher: Don't you think these small groups of students who are studying to be qualified as media teachers reflect the fact that the National Curriculum in Britain keeps cutting down on Media Studies within the curriculum.

Well, they don't keep cutting down on it. Firstly, the National Curriculum is only just in place now we didn't have one before the last couple of years, and there is a place for Media Education in that National Curriculum. There is a way in which you can say that in some senses Media Education is much more established and has much more official status than it ever had before.

The researcher: You mean over the last couple of years?

Yes. It now has a legal requirement in the National Curriculum.

The researcher: The hope has always been, from the mid-70s, to remove Media Education from the periphery of the curriculum to the core.

It is in the core curriculum. I have a very long term mission which consists of replacing English and possibly other subjects in the humanities with something with a broader grouping called Media Education of which English would be a part. That is a very long term aim. Pragmatically, what you can look at now is the fact that Media Education is actually in the core curriculum. It never was before. It was only an option minority subject taught very much on the periphery. In fact in practice it still is like that but in theory, if you look at the legal requirements, there is a requirement within the core requirement for every child to learn about the media.

The researcher: If we go back to your views about why we teach teachers to be teachers of mass Media Studies. What are your views as a woman writer in the Media Education field?

If it is the role of teachers to enable children to participate fully in their own culture (which I think it is), their own culture includes media, both as a means of their receiving entertainment, information, ideas about the world, and as a potential means of expression and communication for them. Those children are not fully educated unless they have access to the media in those kinds of ways.

The researcher: And to be critical of what they perceive on the TV?

Yes, critical in the full sense. I mean critical in the sense of being able to make evaluations of it, place it in context and relate it to other texts, to think what possibilities there might be for it to be different, to think what kind of pleasures it makes available.

The researcher: So it is to bring children into full participation in their culture? Mass media, and particularly television, is important in their culture?

I wouldn't single out television. As a person who works in the British Film Institute, I would single out cinema, video and television as all being important. In some ways I do not see Media Studies as concerning itself only with mass media. I see it as being concerned with minority media, such as independent video, cinema from other cultures. I think children should be alerted to all the possibilities of the media, not just with what they watch anyway. Education never just deals with what children already do. It may do that, but it puts it in a broader context.

**The researcher: (Question 2) What would you say are the characteristics of a successful Media Education teacher in a secondary school?**

I don't think they are different from the characteristics of any effective teacher. There is nothing special about them. An effective teacher is one who is sensitive to the children, who understands them, who respects their point of view, who has a good dynamic relationship with them, who has a clear-cut idea of where to go, who has at least workable theories of how they are going to learn, who is open to possibilities that may come up in the course of teaching. The fact that media happens to be the context of that is what I happen to be concerned with but the effectively is not special to media. You can be a rotten Media Studies teacher.

The researcher: I can sense from what you are saying that you think, as I do sometimes, that some authors use media as a scapegoat.

Yes, but you also get the converse of that. A lot of writers about Media Studies say that Media Studies has some sort of special magic about it that will make your teaching more effective. Well, it hasn't.

The researcher: For example, you remember in 1985 there was a parliamentary debate about copycat -

Yes, that's a recurrent debate. But that's not a debate within education.

The researcher: And then Root said that was wrong, because television doesn't lead to copycat delinquency. What do you think of that?

Not by itself, no. I think people do take advice from television. I would think in relation to how to kill someone or how to perform a

criminal act that is rather rare because television takes quite a lot of trouble to disguise ways in which criminal acts might be performed. I think people take advice from television in terms of how to deal with each other in personal relationships. It's a wild guess, but I think people take more positive advice from television than negative advice. When they see someone behaving in a way they think is attractive and they think is effective in reconciling a couple or dealing with a child, that is probably more influential in their lives than something bizarre or cruel or unpleasant, unless they are already disturbed people.

The researcher: Do you think that some parents in Britain, because they want to escape their responsibilities, blame it on the alien 'box in the corner'?

You say 'parents'. I think when people blame television it is nearly always in relation to someone they don't know. It is always 'other people', not us. Parents are more concerned with the exchange of their daily lives, things like children not doing homework because they are watching too much television, or conflict about which programme to watch. It plays a role in problems about who exerts power and who can get what they want within the family unit. That is how television gets blamed.

The researcher: In 1988, when I tackled the question of television and violence in the Gulf States, I stated that television is only a contributory factor, it is not a prime cause of violence in the streets. But there are other factors - the parental role, the upbringing, traditions etc. Do you agree?

I think it is a reasonable hypothesis. I also like Halloran's notion that television makes us more fearful, that because people have such wide access now to stories about the awful things that happen to you in the world, which always have happened anyway, now because you know about them it makes you fearful to go out in the streets, frightened of travelling around, frightened of letting your kids go out. It creates more fear and alarm than actual acts.

The researcher: Do you think that when television shows, for example, rape etc. that it manipulates people to some extent?

It doesn't show rape much, does it?

The researcher: In Qatar television they are raping. Religion and custom do not keep people from raping. It does not appear on the news. In this country we hear nearly every day about rape, burglary, shoplifting. Do you think the media manipulate people and make them live in fear?

Yes, although it is always dangerous to single out television. If that didn't match up to people's everyday experience and that of their friends and the stories they tell each other, and I'm not saying that television doesn't influence what stories people choose to tell one another. There is a complicated relationship about how people recount their daily lives and how television recounts it for them.

**The researcher: (Question 3) Media Studies can be approached from various perspectives, e.g., from a moral stance, from an aesthetic position, from a political position, from an educational position. What approach do you regard as most important?**

I don't know what you mean by these really. What is an education position?

The researcher: Do you agree with television education, for example?

Do you think that children learn quite a lot from television education? Some writers like Cullingford refer to it television education. Governments like the United States and Britain lead the world as far as television education is concerned and they based their establishment of television education on sheer hypothesis. They thought that children would learn quite a lot from television education. Some thought it could assist the teachers, others thought it could replace the teachers. The governments of the Gulf States followed suit. So you are really trying to define what Media Studies is.

The researcher: Yes. The Centre for Mass Communications at Leicester University tackle the issues of mass media influence (Jim Halloran, Peter Golding) from a particular perspective, the Marxist or socialist perspective, because they are against the American cultural invasion of this country. In your book you tackled Media Education from a very interesting point of view.

If you are talking about the academic tradition influencing what I do, I suppose cultural studies would be a major one, but there are others - semiotics and sociology. I don't like lining up Media Studies very firmly with one academic tradition. I think it's a hybrid and a lot of different theories feed into it equally.

The researcher: You approached it in your book from the cultural studies view. You said in your conclusion that you disagree with elimination of mass Media Studies. You want people to be exposed to Media Studies as much as possible. Because we live in a free country without censorship.

I think it is a universal entitlement. Having said that there is a lot of censorship: self-censorship, parental censorship, governmental censorship

The researcher: So if a child of ten watched Rambo on television, with all its violence, do you agree that if one parent sat and watched the film with him and explained to him what he was seeing, that could have an effect on the possibility of future violence the child might be engaged in?

Might do. But maybe the parent is interested in violence. What is much more significant is whether that parent hits the child a lot. Are that child and parent in a domestic culture which is violent? How do they resolve their problems in that family? Does that parent hit the other parent?

**The researcher: (Question 4). What writers in Media Studies do you regard as most influential and most important, and why?**

Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall. They both in different ways provide usable theories. They don't just tackle the mass media. They encourage you to think about media within a broader cultural context and they offer you ideas about how people engage with their culture that seem to make sense.

**The researcher: (Question 5). Buckingham is very critical of the domination of mass Media Studies by certain forms of theory and the relative neglect of classroom applications or practical work. Do you agree with this?**

Yes. I have worked with David Buckingham quite closely and I am extremely sympathetic to his views. Talking from my position in a national institution, which is different from his institutional position, I would want to add that I think it is very dangerous for Media Studies to promote itself through rhetoric and assertion without providing evidence about classroom practice and what goes on. Too many of the claims it makes are too easily shot down.

**The researcher: (Question 6). Cullingford argues that the educational potential of mass media (especially television) has been overstated. What is your view?**

You have to distinguish between when you set out on purpose to educate somebody by using television, which I think is always a hazardous enterprise (if you set out to teach someone to change a light

bulb you probably could do it with television effectively). The narrower and more simply focused, the better chance you have of teaching something. But education is interesting because you really do not always know what you are teaching - if you knew what you were teaching all the time you'd cut your throat! You do not know what they will do with ideas of power relationships, information, the sort of person you are, etc. when they go out of the classroom. That is what is good about education for someone like me who doesn't want to control people and know what goes on in their heads. It's possibly bad about education for people like Saddam Hussein, who does want to control people.

The researcher: He wants his people to be passive.

Yes. It depends what kind of educator you are. If you have notions of education that are very hard, rigorous and authoritarian, television is probably going to be a bit of a dangerous medium for you to play with. It might do some of the things you want it to do, but it might do other things as well and you won't know what they are.

The researcher: Do you think that for the usual school subjects like Geography and Mathematics, where we teach students, television would be useful?

It depends on the television. If you look at education on television, some of it is good and some of it is terrible. It is no different from any other television, or any other style of teaching, or any other cultural product. Some of it is more imaginative and sympathetic and inspiring than others. It's not television - it's who makes it.

The researcher: A friend of mine kicked television out of the house 30 years ago and said he did not regret it because his children had been reading and listening to the radio but no television because he said television kills people's imagination. What do you think of that? People become dependent in terms of sound and vision. I mean children of seven, eight, nine or ten. You think watching television doesn't kill or handicap their imagination?

No.

**The researcher: (Question 7). Howitt argues in his study *Mass Media and Social Problems* that the main function of the mass media is to entertain. How far do you agree with this?**

What function for whom?

The researcher: For people, for viewers, for users.

No, I do not agree that it the main function. It is one of those sorts of statement that is a slogan type of statement that I don't find very interesting. So what's entertainment? How would you know? I wouldn't know whether to agree with it or not. Probably not.

**The researcher: (Question 8). Mass media operators always claim that the media are the mirrors of society. They say that if the society is ill, the media must show this illness. What is your own view?**

'Must' in the sense of 'ought to' or 'are bound to'?

The researcher: Bound to.

They inevitably will. It might not be immediately evident. I'm thinking for example of analysis of 'Young Mr Lincoln', which just looked on the surface like a typical Hollywood product and through their analysis they say there are fissures and contradictions within this that reflect the contradictions in the society that produced it, contradictory ideas about the nature of American society and the nature of power.

The researcher: So the educationists always keep disagreeing with the media?

You always could. The 'mirrors of society' notion is obviously of recent history - they are not just mirrors because they reflect back and they construct. I don't know if society is 'ill' and what that means.

The researcher: We are talking about society as a whole, we are not talking about a particular society.

If society is ill, I find that a peculiar sort of ...

The researcher: This aspect of daily action in everyday life, would not fail to emerge on television or radio in some form or another, in drama etc.?

It might. I think even if you were to repress or disguise aspects of what goes on in society, the fact of that repression or restriction would show itself in some way. You might have to undertake some sort of analysis in order to show that.

The researcher: This is true in Qatar, for example. We do not show and announce all these things but people know all these things themselves and they lose to some extent therefore their credibility in their own everyday mass media.

There is a lot of discussion of what is shown on television without consideration of the fact that people are quite capable of noticing and thinking about what is not shown on television, what is excluded as well as what is included as part of the message.

**The researcher: (Question 9). There is concern in Qatar, where I come from, about the invasion of American culture through the mass media, I mean here basically the cinema, or cinema and television. Do you think this is simply a moral panic, or do you think it might be a serious concern? When I say moral panic, moral panic on the side of the families towards their kids.**

I would probably be concerned. I am concerned about it here. If you look at any cinema complex, you see that a huge percentage of the films are American. There is some notion that we are trying to be Europeans, and people are not very open to culture products from the rest of Europe, let alone the rest of the world. We see generally in Britain, for example, this is not only going across television and cinema, but also popular music and other forms of entertainment. People in Britain experience virtually nothing from the Islamic world.

The researcher: Especially in these days really because we are becoming a small world with all this mass communication.

Yes, I think that countries like Qatar, as well as countries like Britain ought to be subsidising and protecting their own national cultural production - subsidising, supporting, ensuring that the people within the country, nationals of Qatar, get to make television programmes that express their own culture and, let's hope, are exportable to other countries and other cultures. That is only going to happen through subsidy of production, subsidy of distribution, subsidy of training.

The researcher: They can do that, but they can't tell people what to watch or not to watch. This is one of your principles, to let people choose.

Yes, but you do have to struggle about what gets circulated, what gets shown and what doesn't get shown. You say people should watch whatever they want to watch, but what they watch has already been so massively controlled by the marketplace

The researcher: The governments in the Gulf did not know what to do, because the people in the Gulf had been bombarded by satellites from sky and from land, from France and from Britain. I mean, Britain is more reserved about what they show on their television, for example, sex films, but television from France or Denmark or Poland is less

reserved than the British - so they didn't know what to do. I suppose we have to depend on their self-censorship. I agree with you that you should let people do whatever. I have been attacked for saying let people decide what they want, like Dubai, like Bahrain, for example.

The question needs to operate on a different level: how do you regulate and control Qatar's cultural production? How do you seek to influence what is available, in terms of adding to it. For example, if 'Top Gun' is showing in 49 cinemas in Qatar it is hardly censorship to say actually we'd rather it was only shown in 40 cinemas and film from the Arab world was shown in the remaining nine.

The researcher: Cinemas are no problems because they censor it. Sometimes they even censor a kiss between a man and his wife in a film. But this would require involvement from other countries (to censor their films). But people subscribe and buy all these dishes and watch everything. I watch the 6 o'clock news, I watch my friends at the BBC in my bedroom in Qatar, 4000 miles away.

**(Question 10). How could the state of Qatar begin to establish institutions like yours here, like the Institute of Education in London, and programmes for the study of mass media (or for Media Education, which you prefer). What could we learn from your experience, because we in Qatar are concerned about establishing institutions for Media Education to teach people and to make them more critical and bring them into full participation in their own culture? How could we benefit from your experience?**

It is difficult to answer because I am extremely ignorant about Qatar and what kinds of institutional arrangements are possible. The things I would suggest are not individual to Britain, they come from the experience of looking at how education has developed in other countries. We are actually about to publish a book called *New Directions in Media Education: World-wide*. I am one of the editors. It is an anthology of writing about Media Education in different countries all over the world. The last section of that book contains reviews of Media Education in different parts of the world and recommendations. The report of Commission 2, almost at the end of the book, lists the ideal conditions for the development of Media Education, and might be quite useful.

The researcher: You agree that the moral panic in Qatar, yes moral panic. You agree that in Britain it was the case in the 1920s, since even the advent of the rise of the theatre in this country. And you agree that, yes, we are becoming a small village. I wanted to ask you in the last question about the model for Qatar in Media Education.

You may not be able to transfer it to Qatar.

I: Regardless of the language, of their religion, customs, the discrepancy in the culture - ?

I don't think you can disregard those things.

I: Are you saying it is not appropriate to transfer the model?

I think you have to look at our model and think about them critically and think about how they might relate. For instance, nothing will transfer here totally. I suggest the principles. I suggest that you have to think of it in terms of a programme of probably a minimum of ten years. It is not something you are going to start next year.

I: So before you in England founded the British Film Institute I'm sure you learned from someone else's experience?

No we didn't. It was founded in 1933, and it was founded in order to try and raise the status of cinema as an art.

I: You did not learn from the Hollywood films, for example?

No, when it was founded it was probably fairly --

You won't get a useful answer out of me on that side, because what we are looking at now is part of a long evolution in this institution, and also a very long evolution nationally. One of the things that has happened here has been a grassroots movement by teachers working with their own enthusiasm and their own interests and beginning to make links with each other and share ideas about how to teach about the media. That was fostered not just by this institution, although it was to some extent, but also by educational administrations that were prepared to make equipment and film video and lend it to schools. So that kind of infrastructure was very important, and it is very important, I think, that Media Education will not develop successfully unless it has as one of its elements an enthusiasm by teachers themselves. It is not that can be imposed in countries where the government has said 'We think there should be Media Education' - the teachers either misinterpret that or they don't do it. That won't work.

I: If I want to employ advisers to work in a mass media institute in Qatar, I'm not going to bring advisers from Egypt and other Arab countries, because they don't have the proper experience. For example, I will have advice from Britain and America because I know these people are more advanced than those in my own native world. If I invite an adviser from one of these two countries, what do you think he/she could do for the institute? How do you think we could benefit from what you

have experienced, your mistakes and successes? I am sure your work has culminated in lots of successes. What could you do if you were invited to be an adviser to the institute, after you had time to study and comprehend our society in Qatar?

Who invites her?

I: The government.

Which ministry?

I: The ministry for the promotion of culture.

Not the ministry of education?

I: No, the ministry of education is different, of course.

The first thing I would say would be, 'What is the relationship with the ministry of education?' What is the relationship between this ministry that takes the initiative to invite a foreign person, and the ministry of education? If you want to introduce Media Education in your schools, then the role of the ministry of education is crucial.

I: Regardless of the ministry, we could have a mass media institute, and the ministry for the promotion of culture would be in charge of it. You would have to think, looking at your society, where would be the most appropriate place to locate Media Education development. There is no right answer. We have certain advantages by being outside the ministry of education. We are not funded by the ministry of education, we have no responsibility to them. We are funded by the ministry of culture here, so that means we have a certain freedom to set our own agenda. They fund us but they do not oversee what we do day by day.

I: Like the Foreign Office and the Bush House foreign language department?

Yes, I suppose. That gives us a certain freedom but it also means that we can be very easily ignored and marginalized and set aside. Wherever you locate a centre of influence, or a centre of training or a centre of research, etc., that will carry with it certain possibilities but also certain disadvantages and if you want to set something up, to create an influence, you have to think about where, within the Qatar complex, is the best place to locate that. I think that is the first thing. One of the ways in which we started to influence teaching about the media quite effectively was to publish teaching materials that were attractive to teachers because they linked up with concerns that they already had and

with ideas that they already wanted to teach about, as well as giving them something new. We published materials about how to study images, or how to study bits of television, how to study bits of cinema. Those publications were very influential in that helped to create that grassroots group that I said was very important. It helped to create an enthusiasm amongst teachers and an interest. Another thing that was very important in our context, and it might not be elsewhere, is that we were able to help set up examination courses at the age of 16 and 18 in higher education, so we established the basis of an academic tradition of its own. That was very important. We published books about media. We commissioned and published books about media that were relevant to Britain and that perhaps challenged academic positions in other countries. We say, we have our own Media Studies tradition here. We had some of the material translated, particularly from French, so we were drawing on other traditions, but also we were also commissioning writing and beginning to create an intellectual field in which people could begin to think, we know what this is, it is something that interests us, it is something that we want to know something about. It was only after those kinds of things were in place that it so happened we were in a position to look at things like legal requirements and curriculum demands. You can't start at a point where you say, you all ought to be teaching about the media, and then people say, well what will that look like? You have probably to spend five years publishing materials, making them available to use, running courses and conferences that give people a face to face experience of what it means to analyse media, talk about them, make media products and so on. You create an ambience in which that interest can start to grow. It is possible that you might be thinking in terms of different institutions. You might be thinking of working within an existing publishing house or an existing section of broadcasting, an existing college of teacher training, or co-ordinating the specialist efforts of those different institutions. You might not necessarily want to create another body that was going to effect these changes all by itself.

I: In Qatar we are basically concerned at this time about establishing Media Education in schools. We have just started teaching media at our university - we have a mass media section, but we are not satisfied with their standard of teaching mass media in schools. They brought somebody from Egypt to be in charge of this. They have been debating and arguing with the ministry, but again, the university has nothing to do with the ministry of education. It is funded by the government, but is an independent body. I have published articles in Arabic and English, saying we do not have to start from where Egypt started, we can start from the more advanced world. This is a big issue now in the Gulf States, especially after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. (We do not want advisers from countries like Egypt and Syria, which sided with America,

because they are soaked in American ideas and bureaucracy, and some are corrupt. I want expertise from well advanced countries like Britain, and to avoid the mistakes of other countries.)

Maybe one of the most useful things to start with would be to take back with you a range of our publications, the ones that we found effective. I don't think it would be appropriate for them to be translated just as they are but it would be possible for them to be adapted so you could do the same kinds of work but with images from your own newspapers and excerpts from your own television.

I: A friend of mine had his PhD from Buffalo University in America. He developed a kind of model called the (Uses and Gratification Theory) This annoyed the Egyptians and the Syrians, who said, how dare you bring a model of a theory. Simply, because this theory was first established by a Jewish. I am not interested whether he is Jewish or Christian - he gives me expertise.

I still think it's an interesting theory myself.

I: (We brought that model from America and we developed it.)

(End of interview)

## **\* Respondent B's interview (chapter 5)**

**I: (Question 1) Why in your view is it important to teach Media Studies to beginning teachers and to experienced teachers?**

I suppose for the same reasons as it is important to teach it to students in schools. I would rather say the importance of the media rather than the influence of the media. What happens when you talk about influence is that you tend to assume a stimulus and response. You tend to assume a passive audience. I think it is more neutral and better to talk about the importance of the media, so those statistics about how much time children spend watching television, how much media of all varieties they consume, so that simply for that reason the media are an important element in people's lives and what goes on within society, are something that one would talk about or teach about in the same way as one would teach about any other aspect of social life. I would give a fairly neutral answer like that. In terms of teaching teachers, we teach both beginning teachers in initial teacher training and also experienced teachers on in-service courses. I think one of the difficulties we've experienced is that with beginning teachers in initial teacher training,

there is so little time that is now available to train teachers. We are actually having to drop one of our courses which trains beginning teachers because of the changes that have happened in teacher education.

I: Is it the time or the money?

These things are connected, but it is to do with an ideological push on the part of the government. What they are wanting to do is to put the training into schools now. This has happened with in-service training for experienced teachers as well, so that rather than having teachers come in to an institution like this for courses of training, what they are now doing is pushing it into schools much more, so that for example with experienced teachers with in-service courses, it is now much, much harder for them to come. It is almost impossible. Five years ago teachers would have a year and they could come and do a course here. We have a one-year MA course and the majority of people coming on that course were seconded teachers who were paid for by their local authority. That is pretty much finished now. What is happening with initial training is also that they are shifting much of the training into schools so the amount of time that we have here with students is going to be very, very limited. The possibility of giving them an in-depth training in Media Studies or Media Education is going to be quite limited, which is obviously a great pity from our point of view. I think we are having to shift much more to in-service training and away from initial training. For teachers who do not have a background in the area there is an enormous amount of work to be done. You can do short courses but if you are going to encourage people to engage with it properly you need long courses. It is not going to be enough to have two or three afternoons - you need a more substantial form of training such as a one-year full-time training course like we have been offering. Now that is going to become more difficult. It is also important because of the background that people come from. There are very few people who do a first degree in Media Studies, because it is still a developing subject in higher education. It is developing very rapidly, and also at the upper levels in schools. Media Studies A-level is taking off quite dramatically, so it has become much more popular there. But it is still the case that the majority of people who come here to do Media Studies, either to do an initial training or an in-service training, haven't got that background.

I: You mean that many people cannot take the risk of doing a degree in mass media in the teaching profession?

It is not that people wouldn't like to. Certainly the courses there are in higher education are massively over-subscribed - there are places where

there are 20 students for every one place that is available. Many, many people want to do it. It is just that there are very few institutions still that offer courses in Media Studies.

I: Is this because the government keeps dealing unfairly with the mass media within the British National Curriculum?

Well, the National Curriculum is different. I'm talking about higher education now, and in higher education I think it has taken quite a long time for Media Studies to be accepted as a serious subject - as a properly academic subject - but that is now happening quite quickly, I think. There are many more institutions will now have Media Studies, communication studies, cultural studies courses. It will now be the case that you will have many more people going into teaching who have a first degree in the area, whereas at the moment those people are a very small minority. Even on our initial training course, it is still a minority of people who have a relevant first degree in Media Studies. The answer to the 'Why?' question is obvious, but it is important to be aware of how the changes in teacher education are affecting the position of a subject like Media Studies. For example, if you took History - teachers who are going to teach History mostly have a first degree in History, whereas teachers going to teach Media Education won't generally have a first degree, so they need to become aware and learn about the subject as well as learning about how you teach it. There is a bigger job to be done in teaching. At the same time the government, because it is pushing it all into schools, is making it much harder to do the job properly in the way that it really needs to be done.

I: Do you prefer to call it 'Media Studies' or 'Media Education', because Cary B. for example, prefers to call it 'Media Education'.

The distinction I would use is that Media Studies, I would say, is a specialist academic subject which is taught at GCSE, A-level and in higher education. Media Education, I would say, is where the subject or the study of the media is part of other subjects. It needn't happen within a specialist subject - it can happen within Social Studies or English or Art or whatever.

**I: (Question 2) What would you say are the characteristics of an effective Media Studies teacher in a secondary school? We are hoping to benefit from your experience, to transfer it to the Gulf States.**

In many ways they are the characteristics you would expect of any effective teacher. Particularly, I think one thing that is very important is a willingness and an ability to listen to students and to take on and attempt to understand students' perspectives. That is important because Media Studies is going to be an area in which students already come

with a lot of knowledge. That may be different from the teacher's knowledge but in certain areas it is likely to be more specialised and more in-depth knowledge than the teachers can possibly ever possess. It seems to be very important as a Media Studies teacher to listen to, and to recognise, that knowledge as important. That is particularly important for media teachers. Another thing I would say which is general but also specific to media teaching is really to do with how you manage the classroom. Compared with a lot of other subjects, Media Studies is a subject which, because it has a balance of practical work and theory, or practice and critical study, because it is a subject that should allow students to pursue their own interests and enthusiasms, is the kind of subject which is not going to lend itself to front of class transmission teaching. It is the kind of subject which is going to require a more flexible classroom organisation, and that poses particular kinds of challenges. I'm thinking in particular of when students are pursuing individual project work, which may be their own research projects, for example, where you are doing practical work and students are having to work in a range of different media and have different kinds of requirements. They will also by and large be working in groups, so there are particular challenges that are posed to do with classroom organisation. I think it requires somebody who is able to be flexible at that level, but is also going to be quite rigorous and efficient in terms of how they organise their classrooms. Those are two general things I would require from teachers but I think they are probably particular to media teaching. Another issue that comes in you will have come up against the debates about Media Education across the curriculum. I think although you have Media Studies as a separate subject, what you would also look for in a media specialist within a school is an ability to work with other teachers in other subject areas: that ability to identify what the aims and objectives of a particular area of study are, whether it be English or History or even Science, and to then think how Media Education can fit into that - where these people already use media but how the Media Studies teacher can enable them to use media in a way that is in line with their aims and objectives. That kind of cross-curricular understanding is important. It is important just in terms of getting your subject on the map, certainly in secondary schools.

**I: (Question 3) Media Studies can be approached from different perspectives (e.g., from a moral stance, an aesthetic position, a political position, an educational position). What approach do you regard as most important, and why?**

It depends what you mean by all those words.

I: (Some?) people derive from a kind of Marxist or socialist approach

I think that is an approach that I would also broadly derive from, although some people might not think that. In broad terms, it is a political project. Media Education is a political project. It may involve other things, like kids acquiring practical skills, or what you might call aesthetic qualities - for example in practical work, design involves developing skills to do with artistic expression. It involves more general education things to do with, I guess, cognitive linguistic development, and so on. There are a whole range of things that might be going on, but it seems to me broadly speaking that the purpose is a political one in the sense that - it is difficult to talk about this without simplifying it, but it seems to me there is an argument for Media Education as a form of empowerment, by which I mean that it is a means of enabling students to make explicit what they know and to reflect upon their own experience of the media which, as I've said, is a very important part of their social experience. I wouldn't say that young people are passive victims of the influence of the media. It is more complex than that. Nevertheless, what Media Education enables them to do is to reflect upon their experience, to gain some kind of control of that experience, so that they not only become more effective and critical users, but also more effective and critical producers, or at least have that potential to become media producers. That, it seems to me is a political process, but it is political in broad terms. One criticism I would have of some other perspectives, particularly coming from the Left, is that they tend to position students as somehow helpless dupes of the media - as victims - and the teacher then comes along with enlightenment and tells them the way the world is. It seems to me that kind of approach doesn't work in classroom terms. It is not an effective approach to teaching because students resist it or reject it, but also it seems to me something that mistakes what students already know and understand. It underestimates their existing critical abilities.

**I: (Question 4) What writers in Media Studies do you regard as most important and influential, and why?**

People who have been writing about Media Studies for teachers?

(I: Yes).

Masterman has to be the most influential figure in the last ten years or so. *Teaching About Television* and *teaching the Media*. Those two books definitely have to be the influential books, I think more so than the others. There is also Manuel Alvarado's *Learning the Media*. There is another book that came out around that time called *Teaching Popular Television* by Mike Clark. But I guess it would have to be Len

Masterman's *Teaching about Television, Teaching the Media* that are the two most influential books.

I: So these people are the theoretical pioneers in Media Education? The answer would be different if you looked before then but I think certainly now that is the case.

**I: (Question 5) I don't know if you would like to answer this! Buckingham is very critical of the domination of mass Media Studies by certain forms of theory and a relative neglect of classroom applications or practical work. Do you agree with this?**

Of course! That is something that I have written about. I am arguing for two things really: firstly, for the importance of practical work within media teaching, but also for the importance of looking at classroom practice. I'm not then arguing that the theory is irrelevant. What I'm arguing is that these things should be brought together. I am not arguing for practice for the sake of practice. I am arguing for practice that informs theory, and theory that informs practice. In the same way I am not arguing for classroom practice simply for its own sake. What I'm arguing for people to think through classroom practice in terms of academic theory, but also the other side of that is to say, well, academic theory needs to be asked 'what is its purpose? what is its relevance?' and in particular, 'what is its relevance to students?'

I: I like what you said, for example, about the screen theory books often reinforcing the status quo. I think that's right.

I: To me you sounded radical compared to other people like Masterman.

It is partly, it seems to me, a question of what you might call the relations of production, of knowledge, so that what you had certainly in the 70s was an idea that the academics produced the knowledge and then the teachers looked at what the academics had done and filtered it down to students. Teachers then become a channel for academic theory. That seems to me to privilege academic theory unduly, and also to underprivilege what students and teachers can do. My argument would be that you need to look at what students themselves, that is, children in schools, can generate their own theory. The classrooms are the places where theories get generated. They are not simply places where theories get disseminated or transmitted, and those theories then come from somewhere else.

**I: (Question 6) Cullingford argues that the educational potential of mass media (especially television) has been over-stated. What is your view?**

He is talking (in his book, chapter on televisual communication) about the potential of television to educate, isn't he, not just educational television, but more general output television that maybe aims to teach things?

I: Yes, the potential of television to educate has been over-stated by governments, like the US. Therefore other people like the Gulf States follow suit.

You can say that is true in a lot of developing countries.

I: They just took the power of television for granted. 'This television in lovely - we will have television in every house and everyone can sit in and watch it, and they will benefit from it.' The reality can be the opposite - that television does inhibit the ability of intellect and imagination to some extent, unlike reading, for example. When you read a book or a novel we always imagine about what we are reading.

I don't agree with that opposition between television and reading in that way. It seems to me for example that when you read a book you visualise, because a book is not visual, but equally when you watch television you verbalise. For example you will see expressions on people's faces, and you will then speculate about what those people are thinking. Whereas a book would probably have to tell you that directly: this character is thinking this now, whereas television would do that through visual means which you would have to translate into verbal thinking. I don't think you can say that one medium is superior to another in terms of the kind of thinking it makes possible. That I would very strongly want to reject. I think you are right in terms of the way in which television -And you could say the same about other technologies, like computers, print and literacy - If you look at research about literacy, at how literacy campaigns in developing countries, for example, what they find is that idea that literacy itself is a good thing, and brings about progressive social change, intellectual cognitive development and benefits and so on - actually that view of literacy is quite mistaken. There is a book by Kenneth Levine which is called something like *The Social Construction of Literacy*. It looks at *UNESCO* and how *UNESCO* promoted literacy. What it says is that you can't separate literacy, the medium, print or whatever, from the social uses. What I would argue against is again the notion that any medium in and of itself can be educational or not educational, or that some media can be more positive than others in educational terms. It depends very much on the

social uses to which the medium is put, and the context in which it gets used. Now I think when it comes to TV, the point is essentially that television is primarily seen as a leisure technology. It is primarily used for that reason, for entertainment, for relaxation, and it is used only secondarily to inform yourself about the world. What that means is that when you are wanting to use television to educate, you have to somehow break the way in which it is usually consumed by people. In schools children are used to seeing television as putting their feet up, relaxing, which is absolutely fine. There is a danger of being too puritanical and saying every use of television has to be a kind of work and it is only valid if people work at it. Nevertheless, if their main use of television is for relaxation, if you then want to use television to educate, you have to disrupt that expectation, to make them look at it in a different kind of way. I think that goes for how you use television in media teaching, but also it goes for how you use television in education generally, so that when you use television in media teaching, one of the hardest things is just to get people to look closely at what it is you want them to watch - to just get them to not relax but to look very hard and study what it is. I think that also applies if you want to use television in other subjects - in History or Geography or whatever. You need to break with the way in which they normally watch television and get them to look at it hard and to look at it critically. I think that can be done. I don't think the medium in itself has a fixed or limited potential and no medium can be said to have a more limited potential in that way.

**I: (Question 7) Howitt argues in his study *Mass Media and Social Problems* that the main function of the mass media is 'entertainment'. How far do you agree with this?**

Well, I suppose it depends what you mean by 'entertainment'. What does he mean when he says 'entertainment'?

I: It is sheer entertainment. There is no learning in it.

I think that is a false distinction.

I: Can I take you back, for example, to 1964. Many writers argued that every value pupils learn at school gets destroyed by the entertainment industry, such as cinema and television. Writers like Thompson said that. Now Howitt in the 1980s reinforced this belief.

Well, I don't believe that people don't learn from entertainment. It seems to me that people always learn from entertainment, even if that learning is a kind of reinforcement of what they already knew, but it's still a kind of learning. Let's take a situation comedy like 'Only Fools and Horses'. The reason why we are able to make sense of that

programme, the reason why it is funny, is because of a whole set of social knowledge that we already have, which may be a set of social stereotypes about the working class or Cockneys living in London, or about gender roles, and so on. But in watching that programme that knowledge is reinforced, it's changed or it's added to, or whatever. There is a real kind of learning process going on there. So although I believe the BBC Charter says 'education, information and entertainment', the distinction between those categories is very blurred. There is a problem with using the word 'entertainment', particularly as you said it, 'sheer entertainment', as if this was somehow mindless, and didn't involve thinking or learning of any kind. It seems to me it does.

I: So the concluding view is that people can and do learn from entertainment.

Yes.

**I: (Question 8) Mass media operators always claim that the media are the mirrors of society. They say that if the society is 'ill', the media must show this 'illness'. What is your own view?**

I suppose the obvious answer is yes, they are mirrors of society, but they are distorting mirrors. What the media show will always inevitably be partial, although what the media show, if it is going to make sense to us, must connect with what we already know about the world. If the media simply showed us lies or chose things that were simply untrue then we would be unlikely to believe it and therefore it would be unlikely to be pleasurable and we would therefore be unlikely to watch it. The media must to some extent reflect our own experience or must connect with our own perceptions of the world if we are going to be able to make sense of it at all. Nevertheless, of course the media are not a neutral window on the world.

I: They tend not to represent reality in a proper way?

There is a danger then of assuming that there is a way of representing reality in a proper way. There is no such thing as a mirror that will simply show us the way the world is. Documentary news is inevitably partial, selective, and takes on some points of view and neglects others, and so on. That is unavoidable.

**I: (Question 9) There is a concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think that this is simply a 'moral panic' or do you think it might be a serious concern?**

I think it is probably both, and the difficulty is to sort out what is the moral panic from what are the genuine causes of concern. You will be familiar with all the debates about media imperialism. I think one of the things that happened in that debate is that there has been a shift in recent years away from the idea that American media exert this extraordinary ideological control over the world. That view has been criticised now. What we have now is that it tends to underestimate developing countries. It underestimates the intelligence of people in those countries and also their ability to take on and use American media in their own ways and for their own purposes. Recent cross-cultural audience research - there's a book called *The Export of Meaning* by Liebes and Katz, which is about the international reception of 'Dallas' - there you find that different national or ethnic groups make sense of this quintessentially American ideological product in very, very different ways. Some groups will be explicitly critical of the programme. Other groups will accentuate certain things and ignore other things. They will make sense of it and use it in very different ways, but the idea that the programme contains a single ideological position or an ideology which is then imposed on viewers is one that I think has to be abandoned. What you have to look at is the diversity of ways in which people in different national cultures make sense of American TV or American media. That is one point. Nevertheless, I do think there are institutional questions to do with Western control (particularly American) over institutions of media, and particularly of news media. For example, the big international news agencies are by and large going to be controlled by the West, by America and by Europe. That is significantly going to affect the kind of information that is available to you. That is certainly an issue. There are also economic questions, which are the case in Europe as well, in that it is much cheaper to buy in American TV products than to produce your own products. That is one of the big issues around at the moment in children's TV in that it is much cheaper to buy American cartoons than for British TV companies to produce their own home-grown drama programmes. That inevitably means that things that are nationally specific or even specific to particular cultural groups within a nation are going to drop out of the picture. They are not going to be represented. So I think that is an issue as well. There are very definite, genuine reasons for concern, but the answers to them are not simple. On the one hand, as we were saying before you started the tape, there are inevitably going to be issues which take the form of moral panics, because now that we have satellites, you have material beamed in from other cultures which would never have been available in Qatar before. That will have all sorts of effects, probably quite contradictory effects. There is a danger with that, while acknowledging those effects, of in a sense blaming the messenger and not looking at the message. There is a danger of blaming television for importing all sorts of dangerous things from outside which may have already been there in

some way. Television then comes to be the single source of all these ideological and moral evils from outside - sex is an obvious area. That was certainly the case around panics about popular music in the 1950s. Young people, adolescents, seemed to be corrupted by sex, embodied in Elvis Presley and that kind of popular music, which now looks ridiculous. What is most ridiculous is the idea that somehow before all this came along they were not sexual. There is a danger there of confusing the bigger moral issues with the issues that are specifically to do with media. That has got to be sorted out.

I: I go along with this.

**(Question 10) How could the State of Qatar, in your view, begin to establish institutions and programmes for the study of mass media? What could we learn from the experience of Britain?**

It is hard to answer because I don't know enough about Qatar. What kind of university system is there? What proportion of young people attend? So Media Education has not yet the status of being a serious study?

I: We are concerned in Qatar to teach mass media as an integral subject within the curriculum like Geography and Mathematics.

One thing to think about at higher education level is where Media Studies fits. You have implied that you have Media Studies, communication studies, cultural studies, which all define the area in slightly different ways. Media Studies is probably the most specific of those, or even film studies, which is the most specific. Media Studies is broader, but communication and cultural studies are even broader. Communication studies will widen it out to include theories of communication, the psychology of communication, etc. Cultural studies might widen it out to include sociological work on leisure, for example. How you define the field is important. The other thing that is important, certainly in this country, is the relationship between Media Studies and English. Particularly by that I mean the study of literature and to a lesser extent language at higher education level. I would say that both in schools and higher education, while there is an argument for people having specialised study of media, in a sense there is no real reason or logic for their study of literature being separate from the study of media. I would want to make an argument not so much for Media Studies but more for cultural studies, for something that includes much more of a definition of culture.

I: What I meant by the question was that we want to benefit from your experience. We want to start where you are at this time.

I think historically that is the way it has gone. Certainly in the early 70s in higher education the move was very much to establish film studies. Part of what went on around that body of theory was that in some sense it wasn't fully theoretical. It wasn't a proper subject. While it has a value to define the area theoretically, it seems to me that where we are now, twenty years on from that, is that we are arguing from a much more inclusive notion, not of film studies, or even of Media Studies, but of cultural studies. In a sense what we learned from that is that to see film studies as an attempt to revolutionise the humanities to some extent that changes the pattern, at least insofar as we are now talking about cultural and communication studies. We are talking about something that is across disciplines, which looks at cultural phenomena very broadly rather than looking at a particular medium. If you were doing it now, that is what you might look for, something more interdisciplinary rather than medium specific.

I: In order to establish an institution like yours here to teach -

Here it is different. This is a teacher training institution. What we do here has to reflect or relate to the ways in which subjects are defined in schools. If there is a subject called Media Studies in schools, then we can offer courses in Media Studies and people recognise them, whereas if we offered courses in cultural studies when there isn't a subject called cultural studies in schools, then people wouldn't necessarily recognise what they were. To some extent the way in which teacher education defines its subject fields, the fields it is going to cover, has to be led by what happens in schools. I would say that obviously you will need to start small, and start with small courses within bigger courses. One thing that seemed to be important here is allowing the possibility of different levels so that as well as having full-time one-year courses such as we have here, you need the possibility of much shorter courses - one day courses, or shorter in-service courses for experienced teachers, and to allow for routes for them to progress from one to the other, so you can build up from a shorter course onto a longer course and then onto a full-time course.

(End of interview)

## **\* Respondent C's interview (chapter 5)**

**I: (Question 1) Why in your view is it important to teach Media Studies to beginning teachers and to experienced teachers?**

Some of these answers I will make very simple - some I will make more complicated. I think I will make this one relatively simple. I think

there are two ways of thinking about this which apply to the British context and will apply in different ways to other national contexts I suspect. The two different approaches are in relation to whether we see Media Studies as a specialisation in the school or educational curriculum, or whether we see it as the opposite a generalisation. To take the second of those two things first: I think I would argue (not in much detail here, but I could do) that broadly speaking, in my view, all teachers need to have some experience of thinking about the mass media, which for the sake of this interview I would define as predominantly television, film, popular music, radio, the press. There may be other media but that would be my main group. It seems to me that all teachers, for their own development, are going to need to know about those media, because undoubtedly they are coming into contact with them themselves, as teachers, as adults, as citizens, in other words, into whatever category of humanity they may fall. Professionally they are going to come into contact with them through the students they teach, who are going to be dramatically informed by the students' experience of those things, inside as well as outside the school. All teachers in my view should have some exposure to Media Studies. In the British context these days that is often referred to as Media Education across the curriculum, that is to say it is the notion that teachers should be aware of media, should be interested in working with media, and should use media to inform their general teaching across all subject areas. That is one way of looking at it and I guess, broadly speaking, that general approach would refer to developed, developing and even non-developed countries. All teachers in all schools everywhere in the world are going to need to have some general relationship to the mass media. In certain national contexts, and Britain would be one of these, a more specialised form of address would be required. In Britain, as in some other countries, Media Studies is now a formal part of the school curriculum. There are designated subject areas, usually called Media Studies, sometimes called film studies, sometimes slightly differently called curriculum studies, and those areas of work need specialised, qualified, skilled academic servicing by teachers who know what they are doing. What we mean there are teachers who are equipped to teach to levels for pupils in the later stage of secondary schooling, around the age of 16, General Certificate of Secondary Education, and we also need a new wave of teachers to service the specialised Advanced Level examinations at 17/18 years of age in both film studies and Media Studies. I won't say much more about that group because I think that group are going to get referred to further down the list, but there we are clearly talking about a specialised form of training, the professional specialists, in depth, following their training along all the kinds of professional lines you'd expect of professional teachers in other subjects. I guess those are the two answers: a generalised form of media awareness for all teachers across the curriculum, and then for certain

professional groups a more specialised, intensive training to enable them to teach specialist forms of Media Studies at the official examinable levels of GCSE and O-levels.

**(Question 2) Characteristics of the effective Media Studies teacher in the secondary school?**

I would expect a Media Studies teacher in a secondary school to know a lot about the subject. There is a subject there which has a body of knowledge attached to it: a body of knowledge I understand to involve an awareness of media history in the relative form, an awareness of media theory, a group of theories and ideas that have spread themselves around that history. Substantial engagement with that body of knowledge I would say is the first characteristic I would be looking for I would secondly be looking for a teacher who understands that body of knowledge in pedagogic terms that is to say, a teacher who is able to interpret the complexities of that body of knowledge in line with the curriculum needs of given ranges of students. We are talking about primary kids at the early stages, secondary, or end of secondary students. A pedagogic awareness means the interpretation of the body of knowledge. It also means being very open and responsive to what we mean by pedagogy itself - modes of teaching. There is a whole argument which there isn't time for this afternoon about whether or not Media Studies itself embodies a specific pedagogy. Certain writers in the field argue that is the case: that to do Media Studies a very special form of progressivist teaching is required. I guess we associate that principally with the work of Len Masterman. That may well be true at certain moments in this area. I am not entirely convinced it will be true throughout the teaching of Media Studies. To me that question is still a bit more open. I think the pedagogy of Media Studies involves a whole range of pedagogies. It involves some very traditional, direct teaching. It involves other forms of student-centred learning, and so on. I suppose finally, to state the obvious, I would expect Media Studies teachers to be highly organised, highly professional, highly media literate. I would expect them to know what is going on in media in a contemporary way, and I would expect them to be media competent in terms of using basic media technology, such as it exists in many schools. The technological position is not yet as impressive as it should be and it has to be improved.

**(Question 3) Different positions from which Media Studies can be approach moral stances, aesthetic positions, political positions, educational positions which approach does one regard as most important?**

I suppose this depends on where you stand, doesn't it? In the interests of this institution, I've got to say that my first interest in Media Studies has to be educational. I draw a salary in order to provide a training or an education service to teachers and now some non-teachers as well, but the broad framework in which I and my colleagues at work is within an educational provision framework. Having said that, the question then arises well, what does an educational position involve? It seems to me it involves two things: it involves a technical servicing (in other words, I would expect the teachers I produce to be very, very competent teachers of A-level and GCSE and primary kids. If they are not good at that I have failed. On the other hand I would expect to be producing informed and educated general citizens, because those teachers are only teachers for a certain part of their human lives. Outside their working day they are general citizens, and part of the work I do with them provides them with knowledge and attitudes that they will find useful more generally. I suppose what I'm saying is all these components, all these strands, feed together, some of them more significantly than others. For example, the aesthetic position referred to here has dominated much of the work in film studies very rightly, because as we know, film and cinema are aesthetically extraordinarily rich as forms. To talk about cinema you have to have a very highly developed understanding of how uniquely the audio-visual medium operates. I think it is arguable whether you need to bring that same aesthetic to, let's say, the discussion of the press. Newspapers do not offer the same kind of rich aesthetic experience that the cinema does, and in between, I'm not sure that television does, although television comes closer. So I think some of the work we do here offers aesthetic consideration in relation to cinema in a way it wouldn't when we are talking about the press or television. Moral and political positions and stances I think are complexly interwoven. The teaching of Media Studies in recent years has actually been very strongly influenced to a very high degree by a whole stream of thinking coming in from political philosophy, coming in from sociology, coming in from theories of society where the media are seen as key agents in socialisation, either as determining agents, or as agents for creating individual subjectivity, or as agents for creating political hegemony and so on. Whether or not one agrees with those perspective, the fact is that they do represent a dominant paradigm in the research. Moral approaches to Media Studies sounds to me a little bit more vague. I think morality is an absolutely central issue. It can't be disentangled from political and philosophical questions, but as I think about it I'm not sure we have a very strong tradition of moral teaching about media. Where it exists, it tends to be a negative tradition. Moral tradition in teaching about the media tends to be traditionalist, that teaches people how to protect themselves from media and how to distance themselves from media. I'm really not convinced that is the most helpful way forward. I would argue for a more involved commitment to thinking

about media, to working with media. It's got to have a political philosophy behind it. That can go in a number of directions. For me the moral stance would arise from that particular kind of politics. I suppose I am fudging it a bit. I would say that all those approaches are important. Some are a bit more productive than others. Some have been more historically important than others. To me professionally the education would have to come first.

**(Question 4) What writers in media studies do you regard as the most influential?**

When I looked at this list again, that particular question strikes me as almost a curriculum in itself. Do you think we -could come back to that question, because it threatens to get me to offer a kind of shopping list? I could go on for ever on that, giving a long list of the key people. I'd rather go on to the others and perhaps think about that at the end.

**(Question 5) Buckingham is very critical of the domination of mass Media Studies by certain forms of theory and a relative neglect of classroom applications or practical work. Do you agree with this?**

This is my colleague, David Buckingham, so I know the position well and I think I know what I think very well. I think I know what the arguments in the area are, and I think they are most clearly articulated in the introduction to David's book, *Watching Media Learning*, as well as his articles. I kind of sympathise with the argument, although I am not simply sure of its truth. I think the introduction to that book isn't really very clear as to what these theories are.

I: You don't think that the theorists have been neglecting the practical aspects of media teaching?

Well, if we are talking about that book and that introduction, I don't find the historical sketch very convincing, for two reasons. One is that I'm really not certain how powerful what he describes as screen theory is. Screen theory becomes a kind of villain, the villain of the piece that has done all these terrible things. When you read that introduction, it is very hard to find out what it is that it has done wrong, and I think a longer and more sympathetic examination of screen theory would show that actually it has been incredibly productive of approaches to teaching. That is the first thing I would say. The second thing I would say is that screen theory came along long after the start of Media Studies teaching. Media Studies teaching has been going along very happily since at least 1950. That was when the Society of Film Teachers was founded by educational technologists and others who were interested in developing media work with school students. That society and its various publications flourished for twenty years before the journal *Screen* came

along and we saw some of the theoretical development that David attacks occur. In those twenty years a huge body of expertise was brought up by teachers around the country. Whether or not they were just wiped out by screen theory - well, I don't think that happened. Those teachers continued. Many of them benefited from screen theory, as it's called. Screen theory as such, even if there is such a thing, enjoyed a fairly brief period of popularity in a short period in the early and mid 70s. Media teaching continued to expand and develop and to go along its own lines of development. I think that what I would say on the screen theory side, is that there is a historical error. We need to go back well beyond screen theory and take a longer historical view. Screen theory then becomes a little moment on the chart. I am not convinced that it was as negative a force as he argues. That is on the critical side. At the same time, I'm sure he's right more work is needed on classroom application and on practical work. That is certainly true. More and more is needed, but I would point out that work on classroom application and on practical work has been going on since 1950. All the earliest use of all the journals and publications coming out of the Society of Film Teachers which eventually became publisher of Screen, are full of discussions of classroom teaching. They are full of discussions of practical work. I'm kind of agreeing with that demand and that call but then I think that call has been there for about forty years now. I don't think it is a new call that David or any of the current newer generation of theoreticians have invented. I think if they went back a bit beyond the mounds of Screen, they would see that that line has been there. I would also say, to round that point off, I don't see a lot of point calling for classroom application. I think there is a need to think about that. There is a need to do work on that. I don't think it can be the be-all and the end-all, for the simple reason that not all Media Education and Media Studies goes on in the classroom. Yes, it may go on there. It is going to go on elsewhere as well, in the family and in the culture at large. Media Education has got to take a large brief. It has got to think quite broadly about where things are happening, what it is going to address. I'm partly agreeing with him, but I'm partly calling for a slightly bigger historical picture to place all of that.

**(Question 6) Cullingford thinks the educational potential of the mass media has been over stated.**

I would say two things then. I would say that firstly we are thinking narrowly about education. We are thinking about the educational use of television. Although it does exist in Western countries, notably in the United States and Britain, it has always existed in a very minimal form. Britain has quite a good record in this respect but if you look at the actual output of educational material in Britain and certainly in the States, it is very low-key and in recent years has been reduced even

further. We won't go into all this, but the deregulation of British television has threatened the stability of educational broadcasting. It has threatened that less money will be spent, that fewer educational programmes will be made, and so on. It is not really clear in my mind that the historic levels of provision are going to be retained. We have yet to see that in the era of deregulation there are very strong threats posed to education broadcasting. That is one remark to make. The second remark to make is where the educational potential has been over estimated in the sense that it has been assumed, mistakenly in my view, that television will do the work for the teacher or even will do the work for the system as though simply transmitting an educational message could be the be-all and end-all. It can't be the be-all and end-all because the transmission has got to be introduced into a pedagogic context. It has got to be set into a system. It has got to come out amongst learners. It has got to be used by teachers. I suppose we are coming back here to some of the earlier questions. In my view there is only any point in making educational broadcasts if you have a teaching work force who are themselves trained and expert in using television material. We all know that one of the worst things you can do in any educational broadcast is turn the television on and let it speak for itself, which we know many teachers, through no real fault of their own, have tended to do in class. You want a lesson on Geography, press the button, switch it on, and sit back. There has got to be a more interactive relationship with the classroom, the pupils, the teacher and the television programme. They have got to do things with it. They have got to stop it and talk about it. They have got to do exercises in relation to it. I don't know of any country in the world where there is that degree of fit between broadcasting and the schooling system. Broadcasting tends to be over there, the schooling system over there. The teachers take the bits they fancy. They are not really sure what to do with them. There needs to be a closer mesh between the two, I think. So there is a lesson there for countries looking to the West for models for development, which is: if you want a good educational broadcasting system a) produce some good television and b) train your teachers to work with those programmes. That is the key link.

**(Question 7) Howitt argues that the main function of the mass media is entertainment. How far do you agree with this?**

I am happy to agree with it as long as we understand what the term 'entertainment' means. I am not sure any body does really. This term 'entertainment' is often a stumbling block in getting Media Studies going, because people say 'Why bother? It's only entertainment.' I am very happy with the word, but I always want to ask what the word actually involves. The word seems to me to involve a lot of different things, some of them absolutely and crucially ideological. So, for

example, if entertainment involves pleasure, and it certainly does, the immediate question then is 'What does pleasure mean?' If entertainment means showing interest in things. Or if entertainment means showing interest in things, the question then is 'Which things are interesting and which are not?'

I: This goes back to the 1960s.

It goes back further than that. It goes back to the rise of Hollywood. There is a long social history of the ways in which societies give themselves pleasure. They give themselves pleasure by various means. They give themselves pleasure by organising social life in certain ways. They give themselves pleasure by producing certain representation systems. They give themselves pleasure by evolving certain religious beliefs, and so on. The mass media come along at the end of a very long line of development which is very much based, beginning with cave paintings - coming along the line, coming into theatre, coming along to the audio-visual media. All those things are entertaining. It just so happens that entertainment covers a multitude of different ideological, political, psychological, aesthetic issues (that is the other question). I find the cinema entertaining because I love watching big pictures moving on a screen and hearing fantastic quality Dolby stereo. That is entertaining, but at the same time, what entertains me about the cinema is watching social representations being worked out. When I go and watch an American film, I learn something. You get a certain representation of American society. So I think we learn as well. Now the job of Media Education, Media Studies, comes in here, because the job of Media Studies and Media Education will be to make that entertainment a little bit finer, because Media Education is going to come along and say - it is going to ask questions of definition. It is going to ask about pleasure, for example. What kinds of pleasure get derived? It is going to ask about learning. 'So you think you are learning when you see films about Americans. What kinds of things do you learn?' 'So you think you learn something about human nature when you see human dramas on film. Well, what kinds of representation do you see and understand?' So I think Media Studies comes along and puts the pressure on a bit. It says OK, yes, enjoy these things, gain pleasure, gain pleasure, gain whatever it is you subjectively wish for in your mind, and then when you've done that, let's talk a little bit more about what those things are, about why you enjoy them, about what you get from them. At the end of the line, certain exponents of Media Studies will argue that actually by the time you have asked that question about pleasure, you are really attacking or even denying the entertainment function of the mass media. Critics coming in from the Left school of thought, critics of the Marxist tradition, will argue that the entertainment functions of the mass media are the functions of deception. They will argue that in a capitalist society the entertainment

function of the mass media exists to deceive the citizens about their true role in the society. They will operate a classic Marxist formula that in bourgeoisie society we understand things in terms of false consciousness and that the media exist as a very important primary mechanism for deception and delusion. To a certain extent that is a very important and attractive thesis because of course it simplifies life enormously. If you can believe that mass media simply deceive and dupe people, then it is very easy to say that their entertainment function is a sham, it is an illusion. But again, life isn't as simple as that. The complexity for mass media exists in the fact that they do all these things. They do give very profound forms of pleasure. They do offer profound visions of the world which we would have no other means of obtaining. I have no other means of seeing all the things that are going on in the world unless they are represented to me by the media. At the same time we know that the media are typically controlled either by state government or by dominant business concerns which inevitably give them certain preferred inflexions. So they are not innocent. They have very specific social characters. Thinking about the entertainment role means thinking about those inflexions as well.

**(Question 8) Question 8 is this one about media as mirrors of society. They say that if society is 'ill', the media must show this 'illness. What is your own view?**

Yes, it is an unresolved debate, isn't it? I think whichever way you argue it, it come down to a question of realism. The debate about media as mirrors of society is a debate about realism. It is a debate about to what extent media can truthfully hold a mirror up to nature, as Shakespeare first put it. We know that this debate is itself double sided. We know that audio-visual recording and transmissions systems are among some of our most highly sophisticated ways of presenting images of the world around us. We know, as we were saying a moment ago, that they come to us through very complex social filters. Those complex social filters are the producing institutions: the television companies, the film studios, the newspaper houses. Some of these have very close links with political interests. Some of them are far removed from political interests. So the realism question is institutionally reflected. Whatever the technological means of reproduction are, however perfect the photographic reproduction, the acoustic reproduction, the systems of relaying and circulation are going to be very complicated and have social interest in that way. What does it mean? The call that media will not show the illness in society seems to come again from a very particular moral viewpoint. It is a view point in Britain I associate with certain positions on the Right, I suppose. There are some very strong religious voices in Britain calling for the clean-up of television, clean-up of media and so on. I'm not really sure what those calls are for, because

a lot of the things that those complainants regard as illness, I don't think I would. There are certain voices on the Right that would like to cut down on the representation of sexuality on the mass media. I would argue the other way. I would say that sexuality is a dramatically underrepresented area. There is very limited representation of sexual behaviour and sexual preference.

I: Unlike other countries, such as France, where sexuality is clearly represented by different forms of media, especially television and cinema.

It is a more inhibited culture, particularly where sexuality is concerned. What would the other forms of illness that are complained about?

I suppose there were talking of news. This is where it gets very complicated in terms of whether we are talking about news coverage. There are very specific debates about news coverage: how you include a news agenda and what you include or don't include. It seems to me that if these things are occurring in society then news coverage has no option but to cover them. But there are still debates about how you create a news agenda. A rather different argument would apply if you are talking about fiction - how you create fictional representation of social reality. I think that begins a much more complex issue. Soap opera is often the area that people invoke.

I: Eastenders for example.

Yes, Eastenders for example. David has written a very famous vehicle for trying to juggle some of these issues, positive visions of metropolitan life interlinked with rather more negative and rather more black and rather more desperate visions. That is part of a much longer debate about what fiction is there for. That is the question about entertainment. Entertainment in relation to soap opera is partly a question of producing the boring old effect of sameness, a reassuring, cosy vision of the world that we all relate to, and on the other hand producing some surprises and some shocks, producing characters who don't do what they are expected to do, producing the occasional disaster, the occasional calamity, jerking the spectator out of that cosy relation to the screen. I think the realism question is the fundamental theoretical question here, then there are a series of moral debates about what people in the argument feel television should be about. I think there are then some generic arguments about which genres we are talking about: news, actuality, fiction, particular kinds of fiction. Nobody complains that Shakespeare shows all the horrible things that he does in his plays because other arguments come into force with Shakespeare; but may be if they come into force with

Shakespeare, may be they should come into force with plays on television as well.

**(Question 9) Qatar and mass media. Now I've got to confess that I simply don't know much about Qatar.**

I do know about the arguments about media imperialism, and I would say on those grounds that yes, this is a serious debate for any nation state engaging in mass media. It is inevitable, and I don't see what can be immediately done about it. Britain is a very good example of this. Britain, in many respects, is another state of the United States when it comes to media culture. We always have been, because we are small. I have forgotten what the population of Qatar is. Can you remind me?

I: 500,000 inhabitants.

Tiny, in other words. OK, Britain has 55 to 56 million - somewhere in that range. We have always been an outpost of the United States where media culture is concerned, in two respects: first, in relation to cinema, where there is one simple logistical problem. The reason there is no such thing as British cinema (there are British films, but on the whole there is no longer anything you can call British cinema -

I: The cinema in this country has been oppressed, hasn't it, over the years, unlike television and broadcasting, partly because of the ideological background?

It's partly that, but it's even more fundamental than that. It's partly just economic, which is that if you want to make a movie costing \$20 million (which by Hollywood standards is cheap) you can't recoup your money in Britain alone. The audience isn't big enough.

I: Yes, the market is limited.

You have to sell it somewhere else, and the biggest English-speaking audience is in the United States. So if you want to make a film, really the first audience in your mind is somewhere else. It is not the domestic audience. By the same measure, if you are not going to make many films yourself, you are going to have to buy them in from somewhere, and that somewhere will be Hollywood. As far as television is concerned, as you say, television has been more creative in a way because the costs are lower, the economy is different where television is concerned, and there have been very strong protection measures to protect the percentages of foreign programming material. I think it is 14% -I think that is right. The permitted amount of imported material to be shown over a given period of transmission is 14%. In the era of deregulation that itself may be eroded, I don't know. Therefore there is

a problem here which is not just about the mass media, I think. It's probably about the size of a country and the economy of a country in relation to dominant world powers. Qatar is relatively small. Britain is a bit bigger but is still small. By any standards North America is going to set the power relations in this respect. I don't think it is a moral panic. I think it is simply a fact of life. The question is then what one does with it. There are two kinds of response, I think. One is to create a negotiated cultural relationship with the United States, which is to accept that situation and to say, well, in itself this is no bad thing. We enjoy American movies. We will negotiate in relation to American culture and national culture. That is one possibility. I think that is what has happened in Britain. The other possibility, which I think raises its own problems, is the desperate attempt to create a very highly designed version of national culture, which some of the smaller nation states around the world are currently moving towards. One understands why that happens. It is happening in Britain at the moment, in Scotland and Wales. It has been happening in Ireland for a long time. The creation of a strict national cultural image - I'm not convinced that is the solution. Wherever that has happened around the world it has tended to lead to a certain amount of inwardness and a certain kind of - almost a bogus sense that we are different and we are not like the (people) over there. In the spirit of internationalisation I think one has to be open.

I: As far as Qatar is concerned, we are very open. We have been bombarded from sky and from land by media products from all over, now we have the satellites from France, Holland, the States.

Satellite transmission, you see, just opens a whole new ball game because unless the state introduces some draconian legislation then there is no protection (if one wants to use the word 'protection'). As long as the technology is available the imagery and the messages.

I: And the money is available to buy the technology. It is available in the West.

Yes. So this is a whole new dimension in relation to media imperialism. It is no longer simply in relation to North American culture because the stuff going around Europe now by satellite isn't particularly North American. It is being exchanged across a lot of boundaries. I think there has got to be some balance between developing national culture, but nonetheless a national culture which is reasonably outward looking, if that is not a contradiction in terms. American material, where traditional transmission systems are concerned, is always going to be irresistibly cheap. The country that has a population of only 500,000 is going to find that rights on American material are going to be so cheap: one hour of 'I love Lucy' is going to cost so little money to buy

that the possibility of filling one hour of television with home-produced material. Qatar and North America are so different to begin with. Britain and North America are so similar in so many ways to begin with, that the issues look a bit more dramatic. There is the linguistic issue, for example. Britain and America share the same basic language. Wherever you come across the linguistic, perhaps religious, bigger geographical differences, then there is the question of how much you think the difference itself is a valuable thing to preserve.

I: (Americans are very different in their) habits, customs, the way they talk. The dialogue in the films is full of swearing. All the popular films are full of bad language. The British do not seem to do this so much

They would if they made any films.

I: because they think they can express themselves better through their language - they would say 'extremely good' instead of 'fucking good'. American have a more radical language.

Yes, American English is a much more radical, harder edged language. It is more fluent. It is less profound but it is more fluent.

I: A lousy language, it sounds to me.

It is also a language where some people are saying that it is approaching the state that Elizabethan English was in hundreds of years ago. It's like a melting pot for English, because the country is a melting pot. By the year 2000, Spanish will be the majority language in the United States. The English language in the United States has taken so many bits of vocabulary and expression from so many other languages.

I: I remember once Regan said 'I will whip his ass' about Carter, for example.

That is interesting, because there you have a presidential figure using street talk. It's not just the language; it's how different layers of society are able to use different language registers, whereas in England everyone speaks according to the kind of language level they are stuck in really, don't they.

I: I'm sure if an Englishman goes to New York or Washington and tries to speak to an American, he/she will find himself a stranger because the words they use are really very strange to us here.

Yes, it means that a lot of American movies, however curious and difficult the language, are acceptable in England; most English material

travelling to the United States is incomprehensible. Eastenders appeared to be like a piece of art television as far as the Americans were concerned. They couldn't understand the accent. English accents are impenetrable for American viewers, and English television material just isn't acceptable. They cannot understand what people are saying.

**(Question 10) This question sounds like one you should answer for me.**

I: No, it is information we need, because we are trying to transfer your models to our country. If we want to establish an institution for teaching mass media, what would you advise us to do?

I don't know enough about the educational system in Qatar. What high level institutions are there?

I: We have one university, and we have a Media Studies section at this university. We are taking it seriously.

I think there is no mystery to any of these things. Most of it is due just to hard work, and getting on and doing it. In Britain, as I say, the history goes back at least forty years, and it is a history with two or three main dimensions which keep interlinking and then moving apart. One dimension is the establishment of powerful higher level work, in other words, university level work - the creation of a strong university department. This itself means two things: it means the department teaches, undergraduates probably. The department runs a teaching programme with a degree in the subject or part of a degree in the subject. It also means the department does research. It does not just hand on existing knowledge. It develops knowledge itself in various ways. That seems to me a simple principle - what it teaches and how it teaches it. What it researches and how it researches it is a different issue. You can have long debates about what the most important parts of research are, but if you've not got a research framework to begin with you are not going to make much progress. The second level, which may lead to that or not, is the development of work in schools. In Britain this argument has raged down the years. Where is it best to start - at the top end or at the bottom end? Nobody can ever get their head around that because actually universities and schools are all different and separate. In Britain it has grown in a topsy-turvy way: universities have done it, schools have done it, primary schools and colleges, and now you have this fantastically rich Media Studies world in Britain, but it is all a little bit chaotic. The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. But that is no dramatically bad thing. It means that there is a lot of flexibility in the system. Different places do it in different ways and it all seems to kind of work. In a situation with a smaller population, there must surely be the chance to be more rational about it. There must be the

chance to have a tighter relationship between schools, teacher training, universities. A population of 500,000 is roughly the size of a British local education authority, let's say Coventry or Leicester or Nottingham or Grimsby. The chances there are to do something more coherent. I think what one actually does - what the exact curriculum, the exact agenda is - gets further down the line. The first issue is to get the relevant people to make a broad agreement that you want to do something, you want to be part of it, you want to get in the system. You don't have to spend a million dollars but you do have to spend some money. Then it has to grow organically. You can't just impose. You can't just say 'OK Qatar, this is what Media Studies is'. You've got to have X, Y and Z and then it can produce these results. You've got to get a system going and then see what it leads to. It will undoubtedly take quite a long time. As I say, in Britain it has been going for forty years, but you are still asking me questions, to some of which there are no answers. I spent some time the year before last in the Soviet Union, which has a very distinguished record in certain aspects of media work, notably cinema. It has some very distinguished commitments to the use of media with children. But really when you go around the place there is not as much happening as you expect, and there was nothing I found quite as sophisticated as are going on in British classrooms. Down the years they have had much more money, a much more centralised system, and yet it hasn't quite worked out. They are going to have to start again from scratch now, I think. Their problem is going to be the opposite to Qatar's, which is now that they are so big and so fragmented, goodness knows what will happen - and of course they are so impoverished. I took them lots of video tapes - a lot of pre-recorded cassettes. I took a rather beautiful edition of 'Gone with the Wind' and I didn't know it at the time, but when I arrived 'Gone with the Wind' had just opened in Moscow for the first time since 1939. The film had taken fifty years to reach the Russian audience and now here I was with a video recording, which was like a piece of gold dust. It was a bit sad. I went round the new cinema museum, and was shown the new computer suite, which was admirable and I congratulated my guide on it. He just said 'What's the point of having computers if there is no paper to print them on?' It is really a mind boggling situation in one of the most powerful nations in the world (End of interview).

## **Appendix 2 (chapter 7)**

### **A. Questions which were put to teachers of mass Media Studies currently working in London secondary schools (Respondents AT and BT) and Washington, Borough of Sunderland.(Respondents CT, DT and ET):**

1. In your judgement, what are the main aims of teaching mass Media Studies in schools?
2. As a teacher in this London secondary school, do you think that the National Curriculum has a positive or negative influence on mass Media Studies?
3. Would you prefer to teach mass Media Studies as an independent subject rather than teaching it within English?
4. Some media writers (e.g., Jane Root, 1986) claim that the media are used as 'scapegoats' for the perceived ills of the society. Other say that the media help to cause the problems. What is your own view?
5. Some media writers (e.g., Tucker, 1960) claim that "... The mass media can be a positive assistance in education ..."; others say that the educational potential of mass media, especially television, has been over-stated. What is your view?
6. Would it be true to say that every teacher must be well-informed about the mass media?
7. Some people say that teaching media in schools helps, among other things, narrow the gap between middle class students and working class ones in the classroom? What do you say?
8. In 1964 Dynes Thompson claimed that every value students learn at school is destroyed by the mass media. Do you agree?

9. There is a concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think we should take this threat seriously?

10. Do you think that secondary schools in Qatar should introduce Media Studies in their curriculum?

## **B. Details of the Secondary School Sample**

\* "AT" is a male teacher at a London Secondary School

\* "BT" is a male teacher at a London Secondary School

\* "CT", "DT", and "ET" are female teachers at a Secondary School in Washington, Tyne and Wear.

### **\* Respondent AT's interview (chapter 7)**

**(Question 1) Why in your view is it important to teach Media Studies to beginning teachers and to experienced teachers?**

One obvious answer is that it is an expanding subject and there is a shortage of good Media Studies teachers. I suppose it is important for the teacher to learn about the subject of Media Studies because it is the kind of discipline that can inform good practice in other subjects as well - I would say certainly in History and in English, Sociology, and the study of the humanities generally. The kind of theoretical perspectives that are drawn on for teaching about the media, which come from a post-structuralist, post-determinist, revised Marxist perspective, I think are all essential for the teaching of certain subjects, insofar as they involve a cultural relativism as opposed to a 'Here's a text. It's good, enjoy it' approach that you often find in Leavisite versions of English. The media are such an important factor in the lives of young people. Teachers need to be aware of that and to be able to use the media as a resource when teaching whatever subject it is. What I think is important is for the teacher not to have stereotypical versions of what the child or young person's relationship with the media might be. I think most teachers would probably have a fairly cynical view about what that means: the old stereotypes of the couch potato or the student hooked like a junkie to his computer console or the Hollywood film as popular entertainment/ideological polluter. I think all of those discourses would undoubtedly surface, for example, if you were to do a survey with teachers here. Why teach about soap opera? - I'm sure 90% of the people would say 'To tell the students that what they are watching is a

load of rubbish and really what they should be watching is something far more educationally beneficial.'

I: To be more particular what they watch, or perceive?

Yes. The critical factor is important. I think that we perhaps underestimate what students already know about the media. We tend to resort to rather simplistic stereotypes when we are characterising relationships between texts and young audiences. We are in danger of misinterpreting it. Adults making readings of children's experiences - it isn't necessarily true. What Media Studies has lacked in the past is an interactionist perspective, insofar as it hasn't really engaged with the meaning of watching television, for example. All it assumes is that there is a kind of powerful influence on a passive, vulnerable audience. Especially for experienced teachers, there would be a kind of suspicion of bringing popular forms into the classroom, a suspicion which I think needs to be eradicated. If you are going to teach anybody anything, you have got to know what they are thinking about, what their reactions are, what they like, what they don't like, and why, the words they use to describe it, the discourses by which something becomes good and something becomes bad. If you are going to gain the respect of young people, it seems to me that you have got to connect with the kinds of things that they find important. Media Studies is part of that process. I think we have got a lot to learn from students. My students come up with such creative ideas, for example in their practical work. Advertisers say that young people are the hardest people to reach insofar as they are the most cynical about what they watch. They are the most media literate. Their skills of making sense of television codes and conventions are well honed. They are really quite on the ball compared to older generations who have lost it a little bit. I think there is a lot to gain from students' existing knowledge, and to problematise that knowledge as well: why do they know things? why do they have these opinions? where do they come from? who says them first? who are the people who lead us? One of the problems perhaps with some of the Media Studies that has been done in the past is that the media tend to get isolated as the sole influence on young people's lives, and I think that is wrong. There has been an over-emphasis on that. Television is a very important influence on the way people get their information, but it is not the only way people get information. People process information as well. The ideological message in the text doesn't necessarily transfer wholesale to the audience. I think it is a far more complex process than that.

**(Question 2) I'll come back to this question. (Question 3) Media Studies can be approached .... an educational position. What approach do you regard as most important, and why?**

For me, what Media Studies is about is the student having a more informed knowledge about how the media work. That would embrace all of these things really. I'm not really interested in moral stances. I think moral stances are loaded usually. Aesthetics, yes.

I: I am interested in the moral stance is because most of the research which was done since the 1920s has been motivated by the moral ethic.

I am not saying it is the only motivating force, but it is one of the motivating forces which inspired researches from the behaviourism school, for example, to look into the impact of the theatre, the cinema, the radio, and so on. That's right - which leads to all these sort of tinpot effects theories and people putting kids into laboratories and telling them to watch violent films and hit bobo dolls afterwards. That is the problem. The problem with public debate about the media - the Mary Whitehouses, the Norman Tebbits, the press, Prince Charles, all these people - they are all laden down with such an moral agenda, an agenda which is not so far away from a demand for greater censorship really. You can take that thing about Nintendo at the moment: 'Nintendo killed my son' in the Daily Express. It is really about adults not being in control over a technological form that children are able to control. People also worry about pleasure - the virtual reality debate that is going on at the moment. They are all worried about the effects on personality. The liberal argument is that virtual reality will make people antisocial, asocial. They will lose their sense of perspective. I think all that is nonsense and it is just a kind of liberal guilt about pleasure. If something is good fun they must be suspicious of it. That seems to be one of the logics that runs through public debate about the media. Certainly there are many beautiful things and many ugly things. I would certainly encourage students to give an honest appraisal of their aesthetic relationship with the text. Political position - definitely, politics of the media. I think on the whole students are very ill informed about that. I think they have got a suspicion about it, but they don't really know about the explicit connections between, for example, horizontally integrated companies, and the relationship between hardware and software. I am not a conspiracy theorist, but the control of the media by politicians and by the establishment -. I am on the side of the Sun here, when they say there is an establishment plot to muzzle the press. I think that is absolutely right. That is what is going on. Yes, politics, different ideological perspectives, manipulative, hegemonic, culturalist, Marxist, functionalist - all of these things, definitely.

I: Can I conclude that your answer to Question 3 is that you agree with these approaches in varying degrees?

Yes, apart from the moral stance. I would never encourage my students to make a 'politically correct' response to something because

they felt they ought to or because they felt it was the 'right' answer. That isn't what it is about.

**I: (Question 2) Can we go back to this question? What would you say are the characteristics of an effective Media Studies teacher in a secondary school?**

Enthusiasm, an ability to listen to students. By enthusiasm I mean having lots of energy, lots of enthusiasm for new things. Bowdriar talks about the 'ecstasy of communication'. There is so much going on in the media that it is impossible to keep up with it. I'm an expert in popular music but even then I find it impossible to keep up even with the genre in terms of what is going on. We spend a whole term teaching pop music to our first years. They get to make videos and design promotional packs for a new band. So - someone who is in touch with what is happening. There is no point in not knowing what is on television, what kids are reading, what are the popular books at the moment, what bands people are going to see, what alternative comics, cabarets (an area that has been neglected). Publishing is another area that has been neglected a bit. Someone who is on top of it, who is on the ball, who reads a wide variety of texts that students also read and doesn't feel guilty about it, or doesn't feel embarrassed about it; someone who has got access to a good video library and is aware of what is on television, films; someone who is prepared to listen, to be non-judgmental, not dismissive of students' pleasures - on the contrary, without trying you have got to actually find them interesting. If you don't, there is no point in being a media teacher.

**(Question 4) What writers in Media Studies do you regard as most influential and most important, and why?**

My favourite writers are Martin Barker, who wrote about the video nasties, moral panic, and the horror comics of the '60s, the big American horror comics of the '50s. I find him an excellent writer. I like his wit, the fact that he is not coming from this '70s Left position where the aim is to uncover political incorrectness and wean students off it - I think that is well out of date now, and not very relevant either. David Buckingham, definitely, because of his incredible scholarship and his research and concern with practical teaching. Masterman claims to have written a textbook for teachers but it is not really. It is really Masterman's opinions about the media. That is the problem. If you use that as a blueprint for teaching, you are going to come up with some horrendous teaching, I think. You are going to come up with 'This is what the teacher thinks. This is what you have to know. If you don't agree with me you are wrong', which I think is not what teaching is about. David Morely, of Uxbridge University, who is working on the meaning of television viewing and the role of television in the family.

Gender technology - how the distribution of technology around the house is gendered. And the way families control children's use of technology. Excellent stuff. He has just written a book about audiences and cultural studies, which I haven't read yet. Judith Williamson, for her work on film, especially the way she has made the study of popular Hollywood cinema respectable again. The trouble with the 'Screen' view is that it says popular Hollywood cinema represented a form of illusionism, with all the aesthetic techniques that it uses. The answer was Godard, anti-realism, the experiment with form, radical avant garde modernist texts, but as you know, if you speak Albanian and someone else doesn't speak Albanian, they tell you to go away. That is the reaction to experimental cinema. I'm into experimental content, not experimental form. Williamson said that film is interesting because it is the one public medium which actually explores our fears and anxieties in a way that television doesn't really do. Television is very superficial. Popular music does, but it is really what people do with pop music that is more interesting: organising raves or clubs, forming bands etc. But film text is really interesting because it explores our fears and anxieties, particularly horror films, the ones that politicians get most hit up about. They are for me the most interesting texts.

**(Question 5) Buckingham is very critical of the domination of mass Media Studies by certain forms of theory and a relative neglect of classroom applications or practical work. Do you agree with this?**

Yes, totally agree. I think that hidden agenda is in the examination syllabuses as well. The kind of questions that students are asked in examinations are a disservice to what goes on in Media Studies classrooms. It's the same old seventies debates about powerful media, passive audiences, institutions. I would definitely say that was true. With practical work, the hidden assessment criteria is that if the student is able to display modernist techniques to the film or video or newspaper, then they have learned something. If they simply reproduce what the media do, then they don't know anything. I think that is wrong. Even the act of reproduction shows very finely tuned knowledge of codes and conventions, for example. To expect them to produce modernist texts is a very middle class way of assessing people. It is a culturally loaded way of assessing students. If Media Studies is meant to be an egalitarian pedagogy, then I'm afraid at the moment the forms of assessment we've got basically reflect a hidden agenda which doesn't really reward knowledge about the media. What examinations currently reward is in fact the student's ability to write well. It's all about language. I feel that more and more when I am teaching students to pass exams, Media Studies exams, we are not really talking about the media. We are talking about how to construct sentences, how to use long words, how to use words that we know will impress the examiner.

Practical work was obviously an innovation, and that was wonderful. I am still suspicious about the integration of theory and practice, and whether that actually goes on. I think that students will often produce practical work that they think the teacher wants to hear or see. I'm yet to be convinced that that is working, although it is through practical work that a student can demonstrate creative ability, innovation, or simply knowledge about something. As far as the kind of research work that goes on, students have to go away and write 3000 word essays. I think it is important that students set their own agenda for that. They have got to set their own topic. You can't help talking about syllabuses, because that is how students get assessed. Definitely certain forms of theory - screen theory, '70s feminist theory. If you follow the text books, then you'll end up with problems. You've got to evolve your own thing. You've got to decide what Media Studies means for you and what it means for the students, and their expectations.

I: And we can learn from the students within the classroom.

Within the classroom, yes.

**(Question 6) Cullingford argues that the educational potential of mass media (especially television) has been over-stated. What is your own view?**

I am not sure what that means.

I: Cullingford claims that governments, notably the United States and Britain, based their idea of educational television on sheer observation and hypothesis. Our countries in the Gulf followed suit, and they went through the same mistakes that Britain and the United States have done. Cullingford does mention in his book *Television and Children* the importance of teaching via this medium just because of its viability, just because the power of television has been for a long time taken for granted by these governments. Therefore, these governments said 'Well, we can use this medium, television, as a means or a tool for education.' He said this assumption has been over-stated. What is your view?

I would say it has got to happen with something else. You can't just put on a television programme and expect them to learn from it. The modality of the programme is less than a real-life teacher for a start. I would say that it has to happen in tandem with something else, as part of an overall unit. If you think of the *Open University*, that is taught through television programmes, and I suppose that works, but most television isn't like that. Most television isn't intended as educational, is it? I would say that an argument that states that the mass media are good educators is a kind of an argument which is saying 'Let's wind

down schools then. We don't need schools.' That is a dangerous argument.

I: That is Cullingford's argument, that some governments, and some people who are in charge of education in this country, mistakenly claim that television can replace the teacher.

I don't think that is true. That is a very asocial model of learning. It's as if they will have us learning in boxes or on computers at home. I think that is wrong. I think that misses the point about what is going on socially in education in classes, when people are talking to each other.

I: For instance, Ferguson, in his article written in 1985, I think, 'Children's Television' said that even programmes which had been made for children inhibit the children's ability for intellectuality or imagination.

I agree. Television can't answer back. Television can't answer questions.

I: Absolutely. This is the bottom line of Question 6. Can we go on to Question 7?

**(Question 7) Howitt argues in his study *Mass Media and Social Problems* that the main function of the mass media is 'entertainment'. How far do you agree with this?**

Not at all. That is a sort of functionalist, bland - . I think you have to separate out the media as well. Different media have different functions. I think pop music is probably mostly about entertainment insofar as the texts themselves are pleasurable. All mass media texts aim to be pleasurable and they aim to be bought, so they are entertaining. But the main aim of the media is to make a profit, I would think.

I: One of the writers in this country in the 1960s, when he was talking about the invasion of Hollywood in this country, said that every value our students learn in the schools are destroyed by what he called the entertainment industries.

Yes, I agree with that.

I: This writer, Howitt, has the same opinion, that the main function of the mass media is 'entertainment'.

No, I would say that that was a quite reactionary opinion, typical of the suspicion of popular forms that is going on, especially if they come

from America. It's like chewing gum: if you chew gum you must be a delinquent. It is nonsensical.

I: We are all individual therefore, we find things that attract us in terms of our experience, the people we meet, films we watch, songs we sing.

I agree that media producers aim to produce pleasurable texts which people buy, so the texts become commodities generated for profit. I think that is definitely what is going on. That is tied up with moral arguments about the media. I think it under-theorises the relationship between text and audiences. It lacks that interactionist pedagogy that I was talking about earlier.

**(Question 8) Mass media operators always claim that the media are the mirrors of society. they say that if the society is 'ill' the media must show this 'illness'. What is your own view?**

They are simply reproducing what is there, so they are beyond blame - yes, I know that argument.

I: This has been a sort of rivalry between educators and the mass media since the 1950s, since the Bradford educational conference.

I've got no opinion on this question really. I do think mass media reflect what is going on and I also think they have to create what is going on. They create demand for products, for example, through advertising, or they create demand for a new record or a new film, or they invent new stereotypes, the 'New Man'.

I: Do you think the mass media in Britain, for example, does reinforce the status quo like it does in the Gulf States?

Yes, probably. I think it reinforces ignorance about the status quo. I don't think it reinforces the status quo itself, but I think it reinforces a misinformed opinion.

I: Let us pick an example, about the Maastricht Treaty. The Danish people had the right to say no at this time, but the media in this country reinforced what the Conservative Party wanted. There was no referendum on Maastricht.

People are powerless to disagree. Even if there was massive disagreement, people wouldn't even know about it because it wouldn't get reported.

I: In this particular instance, there is no difference between - let's say for the sake of argument - the mass media in a democratic society - An illusion of democracy, yes.

I: with a Parliament which represents 57 million people, and the Gulf, where mass media are controlled, managed and run by the governments in the Gulf.

That is true.

I: If the media, for example, BBC1, BBC2, ITN, Channel 4, the papers said there must be a vote on the Maastricht Agreement, I'm sure that at the end of the day the Conservative Party would be obliged to say let's have a referendum.

Or the Kurdistan thing. The public saw the images on television and there was such an outcry that the government were forced to do something. I don't think the media are democratic in any sense at all. I certainly don't think we live in a democracy in England now. I think we live in an illusion of democracy. I think the Parliamentary system is not democratic and is fatally flawed. I don't think the media are controlled by politicians, but they are controlled by people with the same interests. I think they have the same interests. I am a hegemonist rather than a manipulative theorist. I don't know about the Gulf states but as I know that the royal family in Qatar control the media.

I: The mass media in the State of Qatar are in fact run by the people of the State. Our government, in my own experience is different from other Arab governments where injustice is common place.

That is horrendous (this Respondent has apparently, a pre-misconception that the royal families in the Gulf control the media). There is the old Althusserian argument that the media are part of the ideological state apparatus insofar as there are two ways of controlling society: either you control it with tanks or you control it ideologically. In the Western democracies, the media perform the role of ideological control. I think there is still a lot of mileage in that.

**I: (Question 9) There is a concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think that this is simply a 'moral panic' or do you think it might be a serious concern? Who is voicing the concern?**

I: Families with children, because there is too much American stuff on the television, like 'Rambo', 'Die Hard' etc. It is increasing all the time.

If the Qatar media are so censored then it might be quite a good thing then.

I: They don't censor American stuff for some reason, unless it is sexual.

But even then people are going to ask questions. They are going to say, why has that been cut out? What are we not being shown here, and why? It might actually be quite a good thing.

I: Basically religious, you know.

But then people might begin to question the straitjacket. I can see that it is a serious concern. I can see that people who have the concerns are very serious, but what they are concerned about is control, isn't it? Mass communication industries are excellent at penetrating - you don't have to have a passport to get through. If it contributes to the lessening of control, it is probably a good thing. I've no worries about the so-called invasion of American culture. Invasion is a loaded word, you see.

I: You think education is one of the best ways to give students a sort of self-censorship of what they watch, instead of imposing censorship from outside?

Yes, definitely. I don't want to start imposing self-censorship though. I don't think Media Education is about that. I think that goes on anyway. People in their every living moment are making judgements and decisions about what they are thinking and doing, and how they are behaving. I don't think it is about self-censorship so much. I would say it was about being more informed about the media.

I: I mention this because when I did my MA research, I did part of my research in the Gulf states. One of the things I found out was that when the parents, or one of the parents sits with the child, especially between 6 and 10, 10 and 14, while they watch a violent American film the impact of the film becomes less with the child psychologically, because the parents tend to explain that the blood is not real, how the cameras are moving, cutting down the illusion.

I am slightly suspicious of that, because I think that people are able to make very clear judgements about whether something is real or not. Even 2 year old kids know when they are watching cartoons. They know that when Tom and Jerry beat each other up it doesn't matter because it is not a real cat and mouse.

I: I do myself disagree with this. I agree completely with Cary B when she warned against literary holocaust as far as the mass media are concerned. Let the mass media function in society and, in my view, teach children in school and at home through Media Education. Sometimes this education becomes organised at school, or is informal at home through parents teaching children about what they watch. I agree that parents should discuss with their children what they watch on the television.

**(Question 10) How could the State of Qatar, in your view, begin to establish institutions and programmes for the study of mass media? What could we learn from the experience of Britain?**

I don't know anything about Qatar. One of the problems you are likely to face is that anything you are likely to want to do in Media Studies, for example, examining censorship, is automatically going to come up against the censors. Is it? The government presumably control what goes on in schools. You have got to get Media Studies on the curriculum, have the government think it is doing one thing, and you know that it is doing something else. To get Media Studies established in Qatar you have got to tell people it is about how to use a camera - that it has got a vocational thing. You tell them that communications industries are expanding, satellite television beams all round the world, people need to be multi-skilled, and there is a massive need for skilled journalists, camera operators, writers, etc. So you give it a whole vocational edge. Then when you have got the children in the classroom, you start talking about censorship, propaganda, representation, the interesting things. Operating a camera isn't interesting in itself.

I: Do you agree that the theoretical aspect of Media Education improves the viewing of young people and makes them more critical of what they see?

I think they are already selective and critical before they come into the Media Studies classroom. What we do is to make them more informed. I think there is a difference between being informed and being able to make selections and judgements. It probably does to a certain extent. I know that my students change a lot, for example, over the course of two years, and that their tastes change as a result of what they do on the course. They tend to take more risks in what they watch. They become more critical, I suppose, and more aware. You open the windows for them because you point out to them that there are other media than the ones they are using. For example, they all listen to Capital Radio, but when you point out that there are other kinds of radio that are much more interesting and don't patronise them, they find that interesting. Our education system is also controlled by politicians, so mass Media

Studies has also had to come in saying that it is one thing, and actually doing something else. It has got in because it is about how to use a camera, and I don't really think that is interesting at all. It's the politics of the media that is more interesting. Central government controls every aspect of the curriculum, the finance, etc.

I: Are you talking about the mass media across the National Curriculum at this moment, for example?

No, I am talking about government intervention in the curriculum. Now you have got prescriptive things. In English, for example, you are meant to study certain texts, and that is it. This is a completely conservative, traditional view of the role of education. It is a worry about losing control. Obviously the government is a very authoritarian one and want to control every aspect of what goes on. I think basically the hidden agenda is reinforcing a class based society, whereby there are some people who understand what the hidden agenda is and do well out of education, and there are other people who don't. They get failed and the system carries on. People learn not to ask too many questions, and they don't even know what the questions are anyway.

I: Since we have mentioned the National Curriculum and the government and its intervention in the mass media and schools, are you happy at the position at this moment of the mass media within the National Curriculum?

I think Media Studies has got to maintain its identity as a separate subject.

I: That is Masterman's argument, to relate it to the core.

Yes, a holistic approach. I agree with that too. I think it is very idealistic, and I think it is very empire building, slightly colonial. He knows the answer and everyone else doesn't. I think Masterman doesn't know the answer. Masterman has got a lot of theoretical problems. Media Studies needs to maintain its identity as a subject. To combine it with Sociology and English doesn't work. But we can learn a lot from what happens in other subjects, for example assessment is completely useless at present in Media Studies. I am forced to teach really within the constraints of the syllabus, so I teach towards an exam, but I try to make it as interesting as possible, whereas the exam is very dull. I think that other subjects can learn from Media Studies, but we should not be too arrogant about it, and we can learn from other subjects as well. Sociology is assessed far more fairly than Media Studies here at the moment. Assessment of media students seems very subjective. If the

examiner likes what the student has done, if it appeals to them in an aesthetic sense, the student does well. If not, he does badly.

## **\* Respondent BT's interview (chapter 7)**

**I: (Question 1) In your view, what are the main aims of teaching mass Media Studies in secondary schools in this country?**

First of all, it has such a big role in people's lives. Whether it has a big influence on them is another matter, but everybody is exposed to the media in some form or another for quite a big proportion of their lives, so that is important. Secondly I think that within schools it is an area where kids can bring knowledge of their own, enthusiasms of their own as well. They can improve their skills of analysis, but also learn production skills to some degree, and hopefully interlink the two things, theory and practice, which they are unlikely to get elsewhere outside the school. Unless they work in the media they are unlikely to get that experience. So there is the theory and practice, that practically engages with things that they are interested in, the big role it has in their lives anyway. Discussion of the media enters into so much popular discourse and philosophy. I think that needs opening up and analysing, and we get pupils to do that in schools.

**I: (Question 2) As a teacher in this London secondary school, do you think that the National Curriculum has a positive or negative influence on mass Media Studies?**

It is still hard to say. Usually I would think people would answer 'negative' but there is potential, because it is inscribed in the English curriculum. Everyone is supposed to be doing some Media Studies, which has never been there before, so that is a positive thing. What that means in practice may be very different from place to place, so it is hard to say. In this school we have had Media Studies as a separate subject for a number of years so we are in a fortunate position. It is different with a lot of other places. I think the National Curriculum could go in a variety of different directions. Potentially it is a positive thing. It just depends how much interference and how much imposition there actually is from central government. I'm always optimistic about things, so I would say potentially positive.

**I: (Question 3) Would you prefer to teach mass Media Studies as an independent subject or teaching it within English, for instance?**

I have always done it independently, so I do prefer that. We now run a course for GCSE, where they do a joint GCSE in English and Media Studies. They are assessed separately but they are taught in an

independent way. Effectively we do both things. We teach A-level Media Studies separately and previously we did CSE separately. In the Lower School we have Media Studies within English, so I think the two things can co-exist. I think Media Studies should be in schools as a discrete subject, available as a discrete subject. Teaching it within English lower down the school means that everyone will have done some and then as they specialise at A-level or GCSE they have got an option to do a greater degree of Media Studies, so that it actually is discrete. Again it is unusual to be able to have the two co-existing.

**I: (Question 4) Some media writers (e.g., Jane Root, 1986) claim that the media are used as scapegoats for the perceived ills of society. Others say that the media help to cause the problem. What is your own view?**

I certainly favour the view that the media are used as scapegoats. It is a convenient explanation of why people behave in particular ways or believe the things they do. But I wouldn't completely reject the idea that the media have some influence on people's ideas, although what that influence is, is very hard to define and I would like to investigate. That would be part of Media Studies' role, to investigate that, rather than to assume that it's to blame.

**I: (Question 5) Some media writers (e.g., Tucker, 1960) (I'm referring here to the educational conference in Bradford.) claimed that 'the mass media can be a positive assistance in education.' Others say that the educational potential of mass media, especially television, has been over-stated. What is your view?**

That probably comes out of a period when people thought that kids wouldn't learn in classrooms if it's just teachers talking, so let's make it more exciting for them. Let's give them some TV programmes. I don't think that's the answer. Kids now take TV so much for granted that it's no big deal when it's wheeled into a classroom in Geography, etc. When I was at school, to have a video in a classroom was a big deal, twenty years ago. It was quite unusual. It would be an occasion. Now it is just part of the repertoire. It is used generally as a tool as much as any other. Obviously within Media Studies it has a slightly different function. It can be used as a production tool, so they are actually using those tools, and also as media texts to be deconstructed, analysed, however you want to use it. It is still probably very different from how it is used in most subjects. In History or Geography etc. it is just a programme to illustrate a particular point, whereas in Media Studies the programmes are there and we are analysing them, rather than using them simply to put across some information.

**I: (Question 6) Would it be true to say that every teacher must be well informed about the mass media?**

I think they should be. Whether they are or not is another matter. I can think of plenty of English teachers who reject the mass media completely, and still follow this kind of Leavisite tradition. Some I know don't even have a TV set at home, and so they are completely unaware of it. I think that to understand the kids, to understand and have some knowledge of their culture, especially teenage culture, is quite useful as much as anything because otherwise you are in danger of not knowing what they are talking about and can misinterpret things. On other levels I think it is important to have an understanding of it and not to make a set of assumptions - it's just entertainment, or it's bad for children, or it is to blame for various things.

**I: (Question 7) Some people say that teaching media in schools helps among other things to narrow the gap between middle class students and working class ones in the classroom. What do you say?**

A lot of the kids we teach here are middle class, so they are already quite well equipped for academic style writing. I think that in general the kind of courses we run in Media Studies would be adaptable for the full ability range, which is not always the case in, say, an English course. Certainly in other subjects it is not always the case. Whether it narrows the gap I am not sure. I am trying to think through my experience of different kids. Within this school, working class kids who excel may well excel in Media Studies and feel that they have got something that comes from their own culture, but I am not sure there is any difference in the end here. I'm not sure.

I: Can I just explain this question? I mean that some middle class students, for example, are affected by their parents. They read *The Guardian* or *The Times*. Others read less serious papers. Does this have any effect within the classroom when they learn about the mass media from their teachers? For example soap opera, theatre. Generally speaking people from the middle class go to the theatre.

I think in practice middle class kids - I can only speak from my experience here - in their media consumption middle class kids and working class kids are the same. It would be different for their parents. There are middle class kids here who consume various media products and will say 'My parents wouldn't watch that' or 'They don't like this' and so on. There doesn't seem to be a gap in terms of what they consume when they are teenagers. It may well change as they become adults and have to fit into certain social norms. Some products are more acceptable than others. I know from the research I have done that teachers don't

like to admit that they like popular TV programmes because it is a kind of loss of face. You watch documentaries and wildlife programmes etc. but to admit that you watch game shows is not acceptable. There are a type of teachers who do not make the effort to understand their students' popular culture of which the mass media are essential part. Teachers ought to understand that kids are products of their own cultural background. Kids usually learn what might reflect and relate to their cultural background. When people talk to me as a Media Studies teacher in the Staff room, I think what they perceive me to be doing is introducing kids to quality films or teaching against tabloid newspapers. I think assumptions are made about what it is to be middle class in relation to the media. I don't think those assumptions are there for the teenagers. They come into that discourse later on. There doesn't seem to be a gap in terms of what they consume as teenagers. There are differences in terms of what they might learn from Media Studies, but I'm not sure.

**I: (Question 8). In 1964, Thompson claimed that every value students learned at school was destroyed by the mass media. He called them the 'entertainment industry'. Do you agree with that?**

I know a lot of teachers who would agree with that. I think that people measure their own experience against images they might see on the media. It doesn't completely over-rule something else. What kids learn at school is not always as simple as teachers might like to think. Teachers often assume that the teacher teaches and the children learn, but often the teacher teaches something, the children learn some things from that and reject others. It is very similar to their consumption of the media. Some values of the media may not be at odds with the values of education. I think it is much more complex than that kind of argument.

I: The last two questions are about Qatar:

**(Question 9) There is a lot of concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think we should take this threat seriously?**

I think any culture needs its own indigenous cultural production and needs to maintain that and to fulfil the needs of its people to have stories about themselves. Much the same argument is made in Britain in the film industry in particular, and increasingly in television. At the same time I think there is a sense in which there are pleasures to be gained from American culture, and there is no point in rejecting it simply because it is American and you don't like certain American values and certain ways in which Americans might behave. It is important to maintain indigenous production and to ensure that it doesn't disappear so

that you look at American products to dominate markets. On the other hand you should not just reject American culture.

**I: (Question 10) Do you think that secondary schools in Qatar should introduce Media Studies in their curriculum?**

I only know as much as you told me about Qatar, but I think so, everywhere. I spoke to someone only a few months ago from Australia and it seems in a way there is no difference anywhere really. The same kinds of arguments are being made all around the world about how the media is expanding, exploding, etc. and also about the perceived dangers of the media. I would have thought that everywhere there are benefits that the kids can have from studying mass media. I think there is a greater argument for teaching about the media than for teaching literature as a discrete subject. No-one anywhere in the world is saying 'Shall we introduce literature into schools?'

(End of interview)

## **\* Respondent CT's interview (chapter 7)**

**I: (Question 1) In your view, what are the main aims of teaching Mass Media Studies in secondary schools in this country?**

I think the main aim in St Robert's is to increase children's understanding and enjoyment of the media. By the media I mean everything including television, film, radio, photography, popular music. We look at broad areas - how media texts work, how they actually produce meanings, how institutions and the industries are actually directly related to that and how the audiences make sense of the products and technologies and the motivations that people have got.

**I: (Question 2) As a teacher in this school, do you think that the National Curriculum has a positive or negative influence on mass Media Studies?**

At the moment there is obviously a lot of debate going on about it. Initially in the National Curriculum for English there was provision for mass media and a variety of different objectives to be met through English which did include mass Media Studies. Unfortunately at the moment there is a rewrite and a lot of Media Studies input has been taken out of that rewrite. One of the problems, I think, is that we gave in to a certain extent on the validity and the value of mass media because of the perceptions of the subject from a variety of different outside agencies who don't understand the relevance and importance and try to demean it because they think it is something that is very much a

fashionable, trendy idea when in fact it is not. We need to have an agreed definition of what mass media actually is.

**I: (Question 3) Would you prefer to teach Mass Media Studies as an independent subject or teach it within English, for instance?**

Yes, I think so, because within English there are so many criteria that have to be met, so many demands, that I think there is a place for mass media within English. But I think it needs to be seen as a subject within its own right. There are a certain set of criteria and objectives to be met and I think they ought to be met independently.

**I: (Question 4) Some media writers (e.g., Jane Root, 1986) claim that the media are used as scapegoats for the perceived ills of society. Others say that the media help to cause the problem. What is your own view?**

I think that the media do actually have an effect. I think the idea of being scapegoats is often the case. It is because of a lack of understanding. People see, for example, TV violence and we also see increased violence in teenagers. That can be a problem. They are used at times as scapegoats. That's one of the reasons that we encourage people to talk in school, to ensure that students are given the ability to discriminate between good and bad examples of media.

**I: (Question 5) Some media writers (e.g., Tucker, 1960) (I'm quoting this from a conference held in Bradford) claim that 'the mass media can be a positive assistance in education'. Others say that the educational potential of mass media, especially television, has been over-stated. What is your view?**

I don't think it has been over-stated. I think it is an integral part of the experience of everybody and that you can never negate its actual worth. It has substantial influence on the way that everybody reacts and needs to be dealt within that way.

**I: (Question 6) Would it be true to say that every teacher must be well informed about the mass media?**

Yes, definitely, because to me it is in every aspect of the curriculum so we all need to have an understanding of what it is all about.

**I: (Question 7) Some people say that teaching media in schools helps among other things to narrow the gap between middle class students and working class ones in the classroom. What do you say?**

Within my own classroom I don't actually discriminate between middle class students and working class students. I just perceive them as students within the class. So I don't look at it as a way of narrowing class barriers within my own classroom situation. But I suppose it gives us a shared understanding and gives them an opportunity to look at the world outside of the classroom so they are aware of where they come from. I suppose in that way you could say it gives them an over-riding awareness of what is actually going on. I want to add perhaps that, objective teachers should respect the cultural background her students come from. It is important to enable them to be aware of the culture they come from. Teachers actually, should enable their students to understand and respect where every body comes from. Because media Studies is about popular culture in which all people let alone students are equal members.

**I: (Question 8) In 1964, Thompson claimed that every value students learned at school was destroyed by the mass media. Do you agree?**

No, I totally disagree with that. I think that is one of the examples you talked about in Question 4, about being used as a scapegoat. Sometimes that is the way it is perceived by people. What in fact the mass media can do is to inform students to actually retain some sort of value system and have an awareness of other people's values so that they don't become too insular. They can become single-minded about what they believe in without having an awareness of where other people are coming from. It enables students to become more aware of other people's perceptions of the world.

I: The last two questions are about Qatar:

**(Question 9) There is a concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think we should take this threat seriously?**

I think that the idea of threat is perhaps too strong. people should be exposed to other cultures apart from their own. The media do this which is I think quite educating. I did have the experience of working in America and American schools for a year. I know that one of the problems we do have in Britain as well is that we are absolutely invaded by American culture. (I taught in the Mid-west of America.). I think one of the problems is that we get very stereotypical images of America which are not a true reflection of reality. You tend to see representations of the East Coast and the West Coast which are predominantly middle class, and values which are being reiterated. I think that is a danger. We need to have a broader perception of what the

real America is like. Some people do have very prototype ideas of the American person. Some of them are true but there is a lot more to America than actually meets the eye or than that which is represented on the TV or in the mass media.

**I: (Question 10) Do you think that secondary schools in Qatar should introduce Media Studies in their curriculum?**

Absolutely! Everywhere in the world should introduce Media Studies into the curriculum. I think it is a most essential part of the education of any student. We have had so much fun developing the subject within our own school, and the amount of response you get from kids is phenomenal because it does directly relate to their own experience and gives them a broader understanding of every aspect of their culture.

I: Have you got anything else to add?

Only that it is quite nice because the response we get from kids a lot of the time while they are working is that they don't see it as work. They see it as fun. They think they are not working - they are recording a programme or making a TV programme and the enjoyment factor is important. Essentially they are learning but they have a lot of fun and a lot of laughs. Much of the work we do is practically based, experiential work. We get out into the community as well, work with community associations, work with the local Press, work with the local TV stations, so they have got the opportunity to see how it is actually done.

I: If I wanted to transfer an agreeable model of teaching Media Studies from your school here to Qatar, do you have a particular model that you think would be fruitful?

We have an overall departmental plan with the aims and objectives within our institution, and I think that could be adapted anywhere. With a prototype model you are obviously depending on the culture you are going to work in. The norms and expectations of what you would get out of it would be substantially different but I think you could adapt that to suit. Within this school there are four of us who teach mass media, and the four of us teach it very differently. We each bring to it our own experiences and there is such a mass of information you can draw on that you have got the opportunity to use each other's experiences as a springboard. Initially there was just me within the school teaching mass media and that was not very nice because I was just working in a little box, and you do bring your own values and judgements to it. It is refreshing to have other people to bounce ideas off and say what we think about something.

(End of interview)

## **\* Respondent DT's interview (chapter 7)**

**I: (Question 1) In your view, what are the main aims of teaching mass Media Studies in secondary schools in this country?**

The first aim must be to give pupils some general understanding of the mass media. But I try to relate it to an extent to the way in which literature has been taught for many, many years. Literature has always been seen as the cream of popular culture. One of the main and major objectives of education, I would say is to teach the students about their realistic lives within their society. This objective involves linking the school with its community. Mass media is actually the culture as it is happening - the present-time culture, from which in the future we will take what we see as our literature. By teaching it now and seeing it as it actually is, rather than reflecting on it in the future, we are giving people the critical facility to understand and to cope with what they see around them, not only on TV and on the radio, but to put things into perspective in their own lives.

**I: (Question 2) As a teacher in this school, do you think that the National Curriculum has a positive or negative influence on mass media?**

I would like to reiterate what Miss Nugent said on that. It did seem very positive that they were going to add mass media into the curriculum, but then they seem to have gone back on that decision which is a shame because it is a very good teaching resource. As a subject in its own right I think there is definitely a place for it.

**I: (Question 3) Would you prefer to teach mass Media Studies as an independent subject or teach it within English, for instance?**

I prefer to teach it as a subject in its own right. It has a lot to offer and it also has its own values, especially the experiential nature of Media Studies. But I think it can be offered to a certain extent as a teaching resource within other subjects across the curriculum and that is why it is so useful. It actually fits into the whole curriculum and can be used in that way. It is in a way like drama: there are two sides to it. You can specialise in the techniques of the media itself, or you can actually use it as a resource. In those two distinct terms, you need to clarify when you begin what you are actually doing in mass media.

**I: (Question 4) Some media writers (e.g., Jane Root, 1986) claim that the media are used as scapegoats for the perceived ills of society.**

**Others say that the media help to cause the problem. What is your own view?**

I think it is very easy to see something on TV or radio and think that is the cause. I think it is naive to suggest that watching films of anti-social behaviour is the cause for cultural decline. A lot of people seem to forget what media aims to do, or seems to aim to do, which is reflect. It doesn't always do that, and one of the things that we have to be aware of is that it is constructed. That is one of the things that is important in understanding the nature of mass media, that the constructing gives the perspective, and can be used to people's own ends, and to give their own viewpoint. I think it is very much the case that people don't have that knowledge, or that critical perspective to be able to understand how media can be used. It can be used. It can be blamed, but in the end it is down to individuals to understand the mechanisms of the media.

**I: (Question 5) Some media writers (e.g., Tucker, 1960) claim that 'the mass media can be a positive assistance in education'. Others say that the educational potential of mass media, especially television, has been over-stated. What is your view?**

I think I would just follow through with the idea that in order to actually understand it, or to cope with it, you have to be able to understand what is happening. I don't think it can ever be over-stated. In their lives everybody experiences the media. There are so many ways in which messages are getting to us - in the car, when you go shopping, everywhere you go nowadays you are experiencing some form of media, even when you sit on the bus watching the posters as you go by (which is quite a hobby of mine). It cannot be over-stated because it is so much a part of our lives that we really need to be aware of it and to be able to use it. It is such a wonderful resource as well that to not use it would be silly. It is changing all the time. It doesn't stand still, and we shouldn't stand still and just see it as a resource that is being used, and that's it.

**I: (Question 6) Would it be true to say that every teacher must be well informed about the mass media?**

Every person should be well informed. I think that a lot of misconceptions come about because a lot of people don't understand, as I mentioned earlier, the whole aspect of the media being constructed. It is very easy to see it as the truth, the real-life thing and to take that as what is happening, and hence it is to blame for what is happening. Every single person should have some idea of exactly what happens, and how things are produced.

**I: (Question 7) Some people say that teaching media in schools helps among other things to narrow the gap between middle class students and working class ones in the classroom. What do you say?**

Again, I don't distinguish, and I don't think in this school we see any major distinction between them. But I do think that the whole idea of the experiential nature of Media Studies allows people to actually see the other side, to think about different concepts, different life styles they would possibly never think about if they didn't have that. That has got to be something that brings together and enhances a lot of knowledge that they can use in future, bearing in mind that stereotypes are going to be there, and that is why it has to be done in a critical way, in a way that they are actually critical. When they see stereotypes they can be aware and guard against them, and not just judge by what they see.

**I: (Question 8) In 1964, Thompson claimed that every value students learned at school was destroyed by the mass media. Do you agree?**

No, I do not. In every day life people experience one form or another of entertainment. They reflect on media's entertainment by talking about it and criticising it. They are not merely recipients of this kind of entertainment. They become entertainers and entertained themselves by developing and reflecting on media entertainment. I wouldn't have agreed, even if I had not heard Miss Nugent. I don't think it can be destroyed. The students are so exposed to the mass media they have to form their own judgements. They are made to. They have to filter out all the information that they actually want from it. They use it to construct meanings and put perspectives on their own lives. They use TV programmes. They empathise with characters, they see situations, and I think they use those as models to form their own judgements and viewpoints, and that is obviously invaluable.

I: The last two questions compare Qatar and Britain:

**(Question 9). There is a concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think we should take this threat seriously?**

I don't think you should take any threat from that. The mass media is something that is constructed, and as long as you understand that, anything that comes across on it you can actually deconstruct and understand, and put your own judgement and viewpoint upon it. Another question that maybe you should be asking is 'Is the American culture going to be coming over here anyway?' Cultures actually have a way of migrating to different countries by word of mouth, or in many different ways. The mass media possibly helps to accelerate this, but

perhaps this is the way that it was going to go anyway and I don't think the mass media can be blamed for that. Stereotypes obviously do come across. They happen here in England. For example, the stereotype of Coronation Street - I'm from Manchester and I know it is not like that. Yet a lot of people say, 'Oh, you're from Manchester. Do you live somewhere like Coronation Street?' Similar kinds of things come over from America. I think what you need to do is to just be aware of that, and not to see it as an invasion or any kind of threat, but just as useful information you can use. You can use the things you learn about another country, and you can take the good and disregard the bad. As is always the case with the media, it is up to the individual or the group or the education system to take what they think is of value from that and disregard the rest. We get so many messages we have to actually take what we want from them. You would go mad if you believed everything that you heard, or saw, or read. I think it is a case of the individual or the group seeing this American culture for what it is and using it to their own ends.

**I: (Question 10). Do you think that secondary schools in Qatar should introduce Media Studies in their curriculum?**

Yes, I think they should. I think they would benefit greatly from the experience and the knowledge they would gain of other people of other types and races, bearing in mind the critical ideal, the stereotypes, and the constructive nature of what they are going to see. I think it helps tremendously to be able to look at different cultures, to look at what is being broadcast and what people are saying. That is something we could all do with more of. It would be invaluable.

I: Do you have anything more to add?

No. I hope this project goes well for you.

### **\* Respondent ET's interview (chapter 7)**

**I: (Question 1). In your view, what are the main aims of teaching mass Media Studies in secondary schools in this country?**

The first aim, I think, is to make students aware of what exactly the mass media is. Their first thought would be it's television, and only television. But radio, film industry, the advertising industry, all the media technology products that they come into contact with when they are out shopping, etc. - these are all facets of the media. Another facet for them to understand is how it is made and what the intentions are of the people who operate media organisations-what sort of impact they are trying to have, and why they are trying to have that impact for example

in advertising agencies and television adverts, and how they manipulate the way people think, so this product will sell; how much psychology goes into media products; what makes a successful media product.

**I: (Question 2) As a teacher in this school, do you think that the National Curriculum has a positive or negative influence on mass Media Studies?**

I think it has a negative influence, because the Government of this country wants to eradicate Media Studies because if you educate people in Media Studies, if you educate them to be able to read newspapers with discrimination, to be able to watch the television with discrimination, to be able to listen to the radio, then that goes against everything that they want. They want to keep a large number of the population ignorant of what is going on in the country and as far as news and media is concerned, I think the National Curriculum will try and cut out Media Studies.

**I: (Question 3) Would you prefer to teach mass Media Studies as an independent subject or teach it within English, for instance?**

The level I've been teaching it is, which is just to the lower school and not for examinations, I like teaching it within English because it overlaps with the oral, speaking, component of English. It also helps them to appreciate different creative products that come within the range of English language and English literature. For a sort of preliminary level, I think it is suited to be taught within English, but then at GCSE and A-level, I think it needs time on the timetable.

**I: (Question 4). Some writers (e.g., Jane Root, 1986) claim that the media are used as scapegoats for the perceived ills of society. Others say that the media help to cause the problem. What is your own view?**

I think there is truth in both of those statements. Sometimes the media are used as scapegoats for the ills of society - you know, the idea that people who have very little money in families where someone is unemployed and receiving benefits will still want the products of the people who live in the house next door who can earn the money to buy those products. They think that they must have a television and a video in order for their self-esteem to be promoted. It is true but I don't think you can generalise because the media doesn't help cause the problems. The media usually reports what is already there. Sometimes I think that things are portrayed in the media that are sensationalised and I don't think the effect is a healthy one. There is a limited truth in both of those statements.

**I: (Question 5). Some media writers (e.g., Tucker, 1960) claim that 'the mass media can be a positive assistance in education.' Others say that the educational potential of mass media, especially television, has been over-stated. What is your view?**

I think in the past the potential of mass media, especially television, was over-stated because I think there was a big shift in education between being very blackboard and chalk oriented to suddenly user resources and including resources like television for watching film but also for television programmes and products. I think the balance is correct now and it does assist education, and there is great potential for it to be used because it is a part of life and it reflects what is going on.

**I: (Question 6) Would it be true to say that every teacher must be well informed about the mass media?**

I don't see how anyone couldn't be informed about the mass media. I would say that most people, most teachers, would be innately informed about the mass media.

**I: (Question 7) Some people say that teaching media in schools helps among other things to narrow the gap between middle class students and working class ones in the classroom. What do you say?**

I would say that it only does that in the way that any other subject properly taught would do it. I don't think it is a special feature of Media Studies, even though what is taught (is about your) experiences or how your awareness is raised about stereotypes and things like that. But I don't think it is a special feature of Media Studies. Media Studies has no magical solutions. However, it alerts students to show concern about their culture.

**I: (Question 8) In 1964, Thompson claimed that every value students learned at school was destroyed by the mass media. He called them the 'entertainment industry'. Do you agree with that?**

No. Again, that is a generalisation. Not every value that is learned at school is destroyed by the mass media. Some are positively promoted by the mass media. I think that is just a sweeping statement and I would not agree. The concept of entertainment is very important in people's lives, never mind students. The role of the teachers is to make the concept of entertainment as beneficial as possible.

I: The last two questions are about the possibility of me transferring one of your teaching models to Qatar:-

**(Question 9) There is concern in Qatar about the invasion of American culture through the mass media. Do you think we should take this threat seriously?**

No, I don't think so. There is a lot of American culture promoted implicitly and explicitly through the mass media, but I would say that the reaction of most people in this country is very dismissive. It is something that is laughable when things are promoted in an American style. I don't think it is a threat. It just gives another dimension to life.

**I: (Question 10) Do you think that secondary schools in Qatar should introduce Media Studies into the curriculum?**

Yes. I would say it is of value in any country because it does raise people's awareness about what is going on in societies and how societies are run - again, what sort of influences the media try to put onto people, educated and uneducated alike. I think it enables people to be able to think for themselves more and be independent. I would say yes.

I: We at the University of Qatar are thinking of establishing an institute teaching Media Studies and English language. English would be the primary language of education. If we invite some teachers like yourself and your colleagues from this school and other schools in Britain which do teach Media Studies, do you think we will succeed? Do you think teachers would accept this invitation to go over and teach Media Studies in secondary schools in Qatar?

Some people would, yes, because there are lots of people who look for opportunities to teach overseas. I personally wouldn't, because of family commitments, but some people would and I think it would be very successful.

(End of interview)

## APPENDIX 3: Press extracts

### A. Extracts from *The Times*

On the 23rd of July, 1993, *The Times* published an article titled 'Violence on TV'. The article argued that:-

"Programme makers at the BBC and in commercial television have been issued with strict new guidelines on screen violence in response to growing public concern about its effect on young viewers. A code published by the BBC yesterday includes the requirement that all potentially disturbing programmes start with a 'health warning' to enable viewers to decide whether to switch off. Listing guides will be encouraged to print the warnings. The revised guidelines stress the need for sensitivity in the portrayal of sexual violence against women. The 9 pm family viewing watershed is also to be emphasised to ensure that viewers are not taken by surprise by unsuitable material, a matter the BBC considers of particular importance during the summer months when children are likely to be watching more late television. The new code was drawn up by a committee headed by June Dromgoole, BBC head of purchased programmes, in response to the growing public concern about the perceived links between television and anti-social behaviour. Ms Dromgoole said: "Viewers associate the rise in violence with elements other than television. But screen violence does upset some people and, in excess, can be accused of desensitising viewers." The publication of the code coincided with release yesterday of a report by the Broadcasting Standards Council which censured the BBC's regional news programme 'Look North' over an item about the trial of the child killer Beverly Allitt, which it said was menacing and "shockingly insensitive". The BBC has accepted that the sequence was in unacceptable taste for an early evening factual programme and for the first time will be required to screen an on-air summary of the council's finding. In a separate move the Independent Television Commission has published its own guidance statement on screen violence for commercial television companies.

The commission urged broadcasters to reduce the amount of violence shown and said that it would be mounting a monitoring exercise to check they did. The commission accepts that the amount

of screen violence on ITV, Channel 4 and the BBC has declined since the 1980s and notes that less than 5 per cent of the complaints it receives concern violent programmes. It expresses concern, however, about the concentration of films containing violence on the satellite broadcaster BSkyB's three encrypted movie channels and has asked the company to examine its evening scheduling.

BSkyB, which is 50 per cent owned by News Corporation, owner of *The Times*' parent company News International, is to start its own research into the way subscribers use their film channels. A commission spokesman said: "Television companies should avoid any pattern of programming which appears to promote violence as a solution to problems or difficulties." (*The Times*, op. cit.)

On the same day *The Times* published an article titled: 'Television could be losing its cultural dominance'. It stated:

If Karl Marx were alive today, he would surely have talked of television, not religion, as the opium of the people. Television is still the monarch of the media. But the British middle classes are fast becoming bored by the box, according to a Henley Centre survey published this week. Tired of a diet of repeats, dim-witted soaps, louche advertisements and sadistic violence, they prefer to spend this leisure listening to the radio, reading books, newspapers and magazines, going to the cinema or the health club. A minority of couch potatoes make up what the Henley pollsters rather primly describe as the "cultural underclass". Members of the underclass watch far more than their wealthier, better-educated neighbours. A popular, but false, explanation for the middle-class revolt is that standards have fallen because the Thatcher decade introduced "market-place culture" into the sacred grove of "quality broadcasting". Malcolm Bradbury, the novelist, thinks that in the days of "well-written drama, plays by Pinter and Potter and Plater", there was a distinctive brand of British television which appealed to the whole nation. Instead, we now have a "culture of fragments", or in jargon, niche-marketing. But even if we accept Bradbury's rather questionable premise - after all, Pinter, Potter and Plater are still going strong on our screens - there is something illogical about the conclusion. Going for specialist markets is not in itself making television more unpopular: people actually want more local news, more personalised "interactive" series (which cable provides), and more of the carefully targeted features and newsanalysis with which

newspapers can still score over broadcast media. In fact, the public cannot express cultural preferences except through the market. The popularity of television is not declining because the Birt's and Grades are listening to the viewers too much, but because they too often ignore the vital distinctions between different markets. Appealing to the lowest common denominator is not merely vulgarising: it means limiting choice, too. The middle classes expect their prejudices to be treated with respect: after all, they are the majority nowadays. I suspect that the public and the broadcasters have fallen out for reasons that have nothing to do with the latter embracing commercial values, but a great deal to do with the vast improvements that have been made by television's competitors. I am not only thinking of the obvious rise of satellite and cable TV, but also of the resurgence of much older media. Serious newspapers are incomparably better - in news, comment, features and reviews - than they were a decade or two ago; and there are more of them, too. Radio, too, is producing better programmes than ever before. James Naughtie, who has just been chosen to succeed Brian Redhead on Radio 4's Today programme, is an interviewer and political analyst of great ability, combining gravitas and wit to a degree which few of his more visible counterparts on the box can rival. Yet his rise has largely bypassed television. People like radio because it makes more demands on their imagination than television, but allows them to do other things at the same time; the audiences loyal to Radio 3 and Radio 4 are the same people who are sick of the mediocrity on the screen. By remaining true to these people or even going further upmarket, radio will have a great future, regardless of whether the BBC keeps the licence fee. Obviously the emergence or revival of other sources of information and entertainment is not the only reason why intelligent viewers are voting with their switches against the BBC/ITV duopoly. Above all, there is a lack of intellectual leadership at the top. It is no good wishing old Reith back, nor lamenting the salad days of television in the 1960s. In those days many prophets of doom foretold the demise of the press. Now the boot is on the other foot. Just as newspapers learnt from television how to be enjoyable as well as useful, so television can rediscover a sense of purpose by imposing on itself the same editorial quality control that the serious papers take for granted. Television does not merely need more good programme-makers; it needs vision".

## **B. Extracts from *The Guardian***

On the 20th of July, 1993, *The Guardian* published an article titled 'Telly Without Vision'. It stated that:-

"Last Monday, the Sun cut its cover price to 20p in a dramatic attempt to halt the slide in tabloid circulation. It was a move which fuelled an old and fundamental debate: are newspapers threatened with extinction in the face of TV's apparently over-weening power? Fleet Street editors, government ministers and educationists (who rarely agree about anything else) are convinced that TV is responsible for poor literacy in general and the decline of the newspaper in particular. But a closer look suggests that the threat is exaggerated and the newspaper is safe. Despite the video recorder, new satellite channels and the rising number of TV sets in our homes, the amount of TV we watch has barely shifted since the mid-1980s. But its domestic role is diminishing and - like the music hall, radio and cinema before it - television could be losing its cultural dominance.

In a survey commissioned by the Henley Centre as part of its research programme on the media, 60 per cent agreed that they "would rather be out doing something than watching TV". It's a state of mind which reflects TV's role as a secondary activity and which makes it more vulnerable when we have more money to spend and more time in which to spend it. Television is therefore becoming less relevant to most people as a result of social and economic change, rather than changes in the industry. But the problem is compounded by the tangible perception of a declining performance by television itself: asked how they thought television had fared over the last year, 41 per cent said that it had got worse while only 18 per cent were prepared to say it had improved.

The growing financial and competitive pressures on television's programme-makers are hardly likely to turn this tide of disaffection. The BBC's licence fee might be safe but its value is continually being eroded, forcing the BBC to make savings. ITV companies, meanwhile, face a triple challenge as a result of the 1990 Broadcasting Act: repaying the Treasury their promised auction fees; competing for ad revenue with Channel 4 and satellite

channels; and building enough reserves to withstand potential predators when the moratorium on take-overs ends next year.

The net result is less cash available to make the kind of high-budget, high-quality programmes - from soap operas to costume dramas - which have traditionally won high ratings and great popular acclaim for British television. More air-time to fill and less money to fill it means more of the cheaper programmes which viewers consistently criticise: imports and repeats. Regardless of consumer demand, the economics will dictate it. But there is a third sense in which television may be suffering, different from both its diminishing social relevance and the economics of programme making. It is the tiredness of the medium itself. After 40 years of new formats, scripts, ideas, and personalities, we have to ask whether television's power to exhilarate is fading. In response to the statement that "most television programmes nowadays are dull and predictable", 42 per cent of viewers in the survey agreed while only 38 per cent disagreed. When the same question was put about radio, the difference was startling: only 16 per cent agreed while 62 per cent disagreed. Perhaps this shouldn't surprise us. After all, throughout television's evolution there has been a drive for editorial perfection which has almost eliminated the "surprise" factor that was a feature of the early days. Only occasionally do we experience that frisson of anxiety which used to accompany live, unedited programmes. Viewers from the 1960s will fondly recall the black Bakelite telephone that sat on newscasters' desks, the flutter of excitement when it rang, and the sense of anticipation as the receiver was replaced with the words "I have just heard that ...". Today's programme-makers are fighting back with programmes like Channel Four's Big Breakfast and The Word, but perhaps the maturity of the medium is itself the problem: there is only so much that television can do, and to a large extent it has already done it. It is dangerous to take this argument too far. Television will still offer unique access to visual forms of distraction and information - particularly in sport, drama and news. The 160 million who watched the final episode of Cheers in the US, and the consistent figures for soap operas and major sports events in the UK are testimony to television's continuing relevance. But the general impression is of a cultural force which is no longer interesting enough or different enough to dominate our lives as it has in the past. Where does this leave the newspaper? Two facts are imprinted on most people's minds: first, that sales (especially of the

tabloids) have been sliding for the last 10 years. Second, that research consistently shows television well ahead of newspapers as the most important source of national and international news. But arguments about circulation decline ignore the increase in newspaper content: the Sunday Times' nine sections are the most extreme manifestation of a trend which, according to one study, has seen a 40 per cent rise in pagination in the last 10 years. They also ignore the magazine explosion: a virtual doubling of the number of titles on the market between 1980 and 1990. There is substantially more fresh reading material available on a daily or weekly basis than 10 years ago.

Under the weight of that newsprint, is it any wonder that sales of individual newspapers are declining? As for newspapers' subservience as a news medium, of course they suffer from the immediacy of the broadcast media. But people look to newspapers for what they can deliver: editorial judgements, passion, creative writing, detailed information, considered analysis, and the amusement value of crosswords, horoscopes, comic strips, problem pages or gossip. If we are concerned about the newspaper's ability to fight its corner against the moving image, we need to find a more meaningful way of addressing the problem. Do people value their newspaper? How important is it? It is part of the fabric of their daily lives? One clue offered by the Henley study is how often people talk about what they read in the press or watch on TV: 25 per cent said they talk about what they read in the newspaper every day compared to 27 per cent who said the same about what they watch on TV. In other words, the printed word has so far survived all the audio-visual brickbats which the 20th century has thrown at it, and is still an integral part of most people's lives. The battle is by no means over, and it is not difficult to see where the next electronic threat is coming from: Sonic the Hedgehog is already in danger of being flattened by the next generation of computer games and interactive screen devices which are even now giving us Respondent quizzes and camera control at televised soccer matches. The phenomenal power of cable is likely to make today's television as quaint and anachronistic to the next generation's eyes as the Ovaltine image of radio is to ours. But the chances are that most of them will still be reading newspapers. And no doubt writing letters to the editor about the imminent demise of the newspaper in the face of those new-fangled virtual reality machines".

