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C O M M U N I T Y   T E L E V I S I O N

THE CONSTITUTION OF A MEDIUM ANALYSED BY MEANS OF

SARTRE'S PROGRESSIVE – REGRESSIVE METHOD

<u>M.A. Thesis   1974</u>

<u>Volume One</u>

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Community Television : The constitution of a medium analysed by means
of Sartre's Progressive-Regressive Method.

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ABSTRACT

The work is presented in two volumes. The first volume is intended as
a protracted introduction to the second.

Volume One

This volume is divided into two parts with an introduction. The latter

draws attention to the fact that the word television no longer refers

exclusively to broadcast television; it now embraces several different

forms which have little more in common than the cathode ray tube (CRT)

image. Methods of feed and distribution vary considerably and these

formal elements condition different patterns of human work and associa-

tion. According to McLuhan this is tantamount to saying that the term

television embraces several different media.

This is not generally seen to be the case and consequently the different

forms of TV become confused one with another. Conclusions drawn through

experience of one form of television are automatically attached to the other forms, and this usually means that work with CCTV or portable video is compared unfavourably with broadcasting, or that those working with CCTV or portable video automatically identify their work with that of the broadcasters. This damages the integrity of the different media and media operations, and it impedes development. There is a need to differentiate more clearly between them.

Differentiation would be simple enough if media were definable simply in formal terms, as McLuhan would have us believe. But forms may mediate between men in different ways according to the meanings men bestow on them. The confusion, then, exists at the level of intention. We need an approach which embraces both the formal and the phenomenological.

We have such an approach in Sartre's material dialectic. Using Sartre's formula: man is mediated by things to the exact extent that things are mediated by man; we may dialectically oppose particular human relations conditioned by the formal character of the medium (i.e. McLuhan's approach), and the constitution of particular forms by human praxis (i.e. the phenomenological approach).

The dialectic unfolds or develops in <u>time</u>, and herein lies the beauty of the method. At a given moment, two particular forms or two particular actions may appear similar; but in temporal sequence they will appear quite different. At a given moment, two men with 'TV' cameras may appear to be operating within the same medium, but if we take into account their respective actions in preceding and succeeding moments, the work of one might turn out to be very different from the work of

the other.

PART ONE Sartre's "Search for a Method" : A Summary

Sartre's Questions de Methode was published in 1960 along with the

first volume of a much longer treatise, the Critique de la Raison

Dialectique, to which it was prefixed as an introduction. It was

written originally in response to a request by a Polish review for an

article on The Present Situation of Existentialism. Sartre saw in this

suggestion an opportunity to express, in a country with a Marxist

culture, what he saw as the existing contradictions in its philosophy.

In particular he criticised the lazy formalism of modern Marxist writers

such as Lukacs.

The article was revised for publication in 1960. It sets forth speci-

fically those ways in which Existentialism seeks to modify Marxism and

to change its direction. The result is a method whereby the existential

Marxist may hope to understand both individual persons and history.

Surprisingly, it is a contemporary Marxist, Henri Lefebvre, who supplies

the basic principles for the method. He suggests that a living

community appears first in a horizontal complexity or as a particular

social structure. But this structure has, as its counterpart, a

vertical or historical complexity. The two complexities react upon one

another. In order to study such a reciprocity of interrelations with-

out getting lost, Lefebvre proposes a three-stage approach: first

comes a Descriptive phase, guided by experience and by a general theory;

then there is an Analytico-Regressive phase which attempts to discover

precise dates; and finally there comes a Historic-Genetic phase in

which there is an attempt to rediscover the present, but elucidated, understood, explained.

To this, Sartre adds his notion of the project, by which he means that the most rudimentary behaviour must be determined both in relation to real and present factors which condition it and in relation to a certain object, still to come, which it is trying to bring into being.

Lazy Marxism is progressive; it is a method of pure exposition resting on the long analyses of Marx himself. The Existential approach is regressive. But the regressive biographical facts on which it concentrates show only the traces of a dialectical movement, not the movement itself. It leaves to be discovered the enriching movement of totalisation which delivers each moment from its antecedent moment. Sartre's analytic-synthetic method, then, is an attempt to unite the progressive-regressive approaches of Marxism and Existentialism, respectively, in a continuing cross-reference.

PART TWO Community Television : The constitution of a medium
            analysed by means of Sartre's Progressive-Regressive
            Method.

Sartre's method is concerned with understanding, or making intelligible, the constitution of particular human collectivities.

The present work recognises a collectivity of people and groups of people in the U.K. who have, as a common project, the use of television in community development. Community TV is the medium in which and through which these people and groups are identified one with another.

To look at it in another way: community TV is constituted as a part-
icular medium in and through the common praxis of the people and groups
who subscribe to the notion.

We may establish and protect the integrity of this medium, and disen-
tnagle it from confused notions associated with 'television' in general,
by using Sartre's method to analyse its constitution as a materialis-
ation (objectification) of the collective project of the videast
community.

We discover, firstly, that community TV proper (as opposed to 'local'
TV) exists in the U.K. more so in what has been said and written about
it than in actual practice. Our descriptive phase, therefore, repre-
sents the ideal form of the medium or the collective ideal of the
videast community.

The second phase of analysis returns to the first proposal to set up a
community TV service in the U.K. (in 1969) and plots successive events
up to 1973 when the present work was begun.

At this point it becomes clear that the historical reality of community
TV quite rudely contradicts the ideal notion. The third phase of
analysis begins to resolve this contradiction in terms of a double
dialectic:

(i) The dialectic between the ideal form of community TV and real
     anterior conditions (i.e. the contradiction between the collective
     project of community videasts and its objectification under
     particular socio-material conditions).

(ii) The dialectic between the ideal as collective project and the individual projects of videasts (i.e. the objectification and alteration of individual projects mediated by the ideal).

Volume Two

The purpose of Volume One is not to reach conclusions but to clarify what is meant by community TV, and to explicate the circumstances under which the Bentilee community video project was conceived.

The Bentilee experiment was an action-research project undertaken between October, 1972, and June, 1973, on a large housing estate in Stoke-on-Trent. Bob Jardine and I organised the research under the supervision of Ronnie Frankenberg, Professor of Sociology at Keele University.

We kept day-to-day notes throughtout the fieldwork, and these we later edited and put together with relevant reports and transcripts of audio- and videotapes to compile a Project Diary. This Diary represents Volume Two of the present work.

C O N T E N T S

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE   Sartre's "Search for a Method" : A Summary

PART TWO   Community Television : The constitution of a medium
            analysed by means of Sartre's Progressive-Regressive
            Method.

Section 1 Process and Product : An ideal description of Community
           TV in its horizontal complexity.

Section 2 Community Video in the UK, 1969-1973 : IRAT

Contents cont'd

PREFACE

Between October 1972 and June 1973 Bob Jardine and I undertook an action-research project on a large housing estate in Stoke-on-Trent, under the supervision of Ronnie Frankenberg, Professor of Sociology at Keele University. The purpose of the project was ostensibly to investigate the use of portable videotape recording equipment in community development.

During the fieldwork we kept day-to-day notes which we subsequently edited and put together with relevant reports and transcripts of audio- and videotapes, to make up a Project Diary.

Since the project finished, Bob has concerned himself mainly with analysing the data contained in the Project Diary. The present work is intended to complement his analysis by providing a protracted introduction to the project. It represents a crititical review of the literature on community TV/video in the U.K., informed by personal experience.

It must be emphasised that the purpose of this critical analysis is not to reach conclusions but rather to explicate the circumstances under which the Bentilee project was conceived.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

I

Raymond Williams begins his essay on <u>Communications</u> (1968) by pointing out that the term 'communication' has come to mean more than just "the passing of ideas, information and attitudes from person to person"; now the term is also used to refer to "a line or channel from place to place" (op. cit. p.17), e.g. telecommunication landlines, television networks, railways, etc.

Similarly we find that words like 'television' and 'media' have assumed extended meanings in common use. There has been a shift in meaning from the general to the particular or from the abstract to the concrete.

Nowadays 'media' is not simply the plural of 'medium'; when we speak of 'the media' we refer particularly to the mass media — the press and broadcasting.

And 'television' no longer refers simply to "the viewing of distant objects and events by electrical transmission" (1); when we speak of television these days we usually refer to what Edward de Bono would call the <u>dominant idea</u> of television, i.e. broadcast television.

To explain: in his book <u>The Use of Lateral Thinking</u> (1971) de Bono writes about that function of the mind whereby ideas become

(1) All dictionary references are taken from <u>Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary</u>, edit. William Geddie. London : W. & R. Chambers, Ltd., 1966.

synthesised into patterns. The notion owes much to Gestalt psychology in general, and to the phenomenological principle of <u>intentionality</u> whereby consciousness is said to constitute its own objects. De Bono says that once a pattern becomes established it is difficult to see it once more in terms of its elements. Not only this, but it becomes harder to see that the original ideas themselves are patterns which may be broken down further. He claims that:

> "The effect of the dominance of old and apparently adequate ideas is often underestimated. It is assumed that an old idea should be regarded as a useful stepping stone to something better until that something turns up. This policy may be practical but it can inhibit the emergence of new ideas ... New information which could lead to the destruction of an old idea is readily incorporated into it instead, for the more information that can be accommodated, the sounder the idea becomes. It is like putting some drops of quicksilver on a surface. If you make one drop larger and larger, it approaches the neighbouring drops and as soon as it touches them they lose their identity and become shifted bodily into the larger drop. As with dominant ideas, the big drop always swallows up the smaller one." (op. cit. pp. 25-26)

In his book <u>Lateral Thinking : a textbook of creativity</u> (1967) de Bono refers to the process just described as <u>centering</u>:

> "There is a tendency towards <u>centering</u> which means that anything which has any resemblance to a standard pattern

will be perceived as the standard pattern." (op. cit. p.37)

It follows, as de Bono suggests in the same book, that the sequence in which information is apprehended (i.e. the sequence of arrival in de Bono's terms) is instrumental in the structuring of a particular pattern.

Amongst the techniques de Bono has devised for creative thinking is the analysis of standard patterns with a view to restructuring their elements in any number of ways to aid the possibility of discovering a better or more useful combination. This technique bears some resemblance to the method proposed by Sartre (1960) (2) for making intelligible human collectivities. Both men use a similar graphic analogy. De Bono speaks of vertical and lateral thinking and Sartre speaks of horizontal and vertical complexities. But they have labelled their diagrams differently: de Bono's lateral thinking corresponds to Sartre's vertical complexity inasmuch as these terms both refer to an historical development - the process whereby individual ideas or individual persons become constituted as a particular whole (pattern or social group). Setting aside the incongruence in terminology, it is clear that both men agree that an understanding of a constituted whole as a living, transient, and hence changing and changeable structure, requires a regression through the sequence of events conditioning its contitution. (3)

We have remarked that the term 'television' has become, to all intents and purposes, a code label for broadcast TV and all that it involves.

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(2) Following Lefebvre, 1953.
(3) De Bono's thesis, which he expands in The Mechanism of Mind (1969),

Broadcasting is an institution; it is a social phenomenon constituted as a particular synthetic unity of hardware and human work and association. Any new ideas about television (not in inverted commas) immediately become associated with this dominant pattern even if only in a negative way, i.e. even if the ideas deliberately reject the dominant principles of broadcasting.

When de Bono speaks of the mass media (including broadcast TV) he refers to them simply as purveyors of packaged information; he relates the principle of dominance only to the packaging:

> "Whoever offers packaged information (radio, television and the
> printed word) has the right, perhaps even the duty, to arrange
> that material in a presentable manner, and that implies some
> dominant theme. It is only too easy to accept the neatly
> organised packages that result. For this reason the wealth
> of new information that is made available by the media
> mentioned above very rarely gives rise to new ideas in the
> audience who, through laziness, remain dominated by the idea
> of those who present the information." (1971, p. 28)

This may well be so, as far as it goes, But if we extend and relate

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(3) (continued from previous page) and on which he bases the works quoted here, assumes that mind is a passive memory surface which only provides an opportunity for information to sort itself out into patterns. This apparently contradicts the notion of intentionality which is basic to the phenomenology of Sartre (see Being and Nothingness (1969) and Edmund Husserl's Ideas (1931) particularly the chapter on perception). However, I feel that the ideas of dominance and centering are not directly incompatible with the idea that consciousness actively intends that which is perceived since they may be thought of as conditions under which the act takes place.

the principle to the broadcasting system we find that it, too is

packaged information; it represents a lot of different ideas patterned

in a particular way. This pattern dominates the thinking of both

audiences and those concerned with programme production. New ideas

which vaguely relate to it become centred on this pattern.

'Television' then may be thought of as a dominant pattern which

inevitably (or so it seems) swallows up new ideas involving television

technology. Roderick Maclean, Director of Glasgow University's

television service, takes this line in his book Television in Education

(1968):

> "Because we fail to differentiate clearly enough the separate
>
> and very various uses of television, because we are inclined
>
> to associate with any one of its applications the conclusions
>
> that spring from its use in a quite different context, because
>
> in short we use the single word 'television' indiscriminately
>
> to describe activities that would be given a dozen different
>
> names if they were in print - because of all that ... the word
>
> itself conjures up a whole host of loosely connected
>
> associations, most of them derived wholly from the domestic
>
> receiver in the sitting room at home." (op. cit. p. 7)

Maclean blames a lack of adequate terminology for the lumping together

of ideas and things under the label 'television' - things which would

be more at home, perhaps, considered in different contexts. It might

be better if television was seen as a generic term since it embraces

closed-circuit systems and cable networks as well as systems based on

the use of modest, easy to operate video-tape recording and playback

equipment. While it is true that these systems have very real associations with broadcast TV it must also be clearly understood that they may be operated completely independently of broadcasting and fulfil completely different functions as media (see section IV of this introduction). While they are all referred to simply as 'television', with no consistent effort to differentiate between them, it is all too easy to ignore the considerable differences they exhibit - not least in terms of the hardware involved and particularly in terms of patterns of human association conditioned by their various operations.

In the sequence of arrival, broadcast television was first on the scene and it has had more time to imprint its pattern in our minds. The idea of broadcasting must inevitably dominate until new syntheses involving kinds of television hardware become equally well known and equally well defined. As Maclean says:

"One begins an argument by using the word, as we all do, to mean broadcast television. We cite evidence based on our experiences as broadcasters or as home viewers. Then in a sentence we slip in some reference that can only apply to closed-circuit television - a world that is often as different from broadcasting as the textbook is from the popular magazine. And then, still using the same words (for we are desparately short of adequate vocabulary in these developing years) we find ourselves back on the broadcast side of the argument again and making heavy weather of it." (op. cit. p. 5)

II

This sort of confusion was well demonstrated in a Granada Television

programme in the Open Night series which took as its subject public

access to television production and distribution facilities. This

particular programme was recorded at Granada's Manchester studios on

the evening of Friday 20th July, 1973 (see Project Diary account) and

broadcast nationally in different regions on the subsequent two

evenings. Mike Scott chaired the discussion between a studio audience

made up of a specially selected cross-section of the television-viewing

public and representatives from different kinds of television. These

representatives were: Julien Critchley, M.P. who, as an ex- television

critic, was thought to hold an informed opinion on broadcasting;

Maurice Townsend and Peter Lewis who, as Managing Director of Greenwich

Cablevision and Manager of Bristol Channel respectively, represented

different approaches to localised programme origination and

distribution by means of cable (4); and Bob Jardine and myself as

researchers into the use of portable video equipment as a community

development tool.

Producer Peter Heinze loosely structured the discussion so that the

first half of the programme was given over largely to the issue of

access to broadcasting facilities. Clips of film and videotape were

shown from programmes such as BBC 2's Open Door to demonstrate results

achieved so far in this area, and these were discussed. After the

commercial break it was the turn of the cable companies, and

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(4) During 1972 the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications granted
    licences to cable companies to make and distribute their own
    programmes in five areas – Greenwich, Bristol, Sheffield, Swindon
    and Wellingborough – for a trial period. The present terms are
    that the stations in these areas must produce only programmes of
    local interest and are not permitted to recoup their losses
    either through increased subscriptions, advertising revenue or
    local authority subsidy.

discussion was centred around more clips of film and tape. During the last five minutes or so of the programme a piece of film was shown of our own activities in Bentilee (see the Project Diary account for Tuesday 26th June, 1973, when this film was made) and we were called upon to give our opinion - informed presumaby by experience - as to whether people in general wanted access to television. I say 'presumably' because our research was not designed to answer such questions.

Since these three different kinds of television were represented on the same programme they were inevitably confused one with another by experts and audience alike. The essential point was lost: the different systems offer different services and relate persons differently one to another. The general assumption was that the difference between the systems lay simply in the degree of sophistication - of excellence. The point was not made that different services require different techniques and standards, at least, the point was not accepted even if it was mentioned.

Consequently, Julien Critchley - supported by a section of the studio audience - restricted his contribution to criticisms of locally originated programmes on the grounds that they did not come up to broadcast standards in terms of both production and technical qualities. He was right, of course, but his argument was a red herring. One would never expect material recorded on a half-inch portable video-tape recorder to approach the technical standard achieved by the BBC or the ITV companies. But on the other hand one would never expect, say, a housewife to successfully operate, on an occasional basis, the complicated equipment necessary to produce recordings "of high quality

both as to the transmission and as to the matter transmitted", as the
1954 Television Act puts it. If the housewife is to be given an
opportunity to operate television equipment to make programmes then
it must be comparatively easy to handle. Also, if equipment is to be
readily available to her it must be cheap. Portable half-inch equip-
ment fits both of these requirements and it has the added advantage
that it may be used almost anywhere without the need for large crews
and elaborate preparation. A lowering of technical standards is,
therefore, a necessity at a local level where money is scarce if a
service is to be provided at all, and to criticise such a service on
these grounds is therefore a waste of time.

Professional production techniques are beyond the grasp of the layman
who is likely to become actively involved in local programming only
occasionally, and if such a service is to exist professionalism must
be left to professionals and other standards must be applied.

A local television service is comparable in some respects to that
provided by the telephone. When we use the 'phone we do not compare
what we hear with radio drama or broadcast newsreading; we do not
expect our friends or even the local government official (for example)
at the other end to construct sentences perfectly or to speak in
rhyming couplets! We expect, simply, to receive and pass on informa-
tion relevant to our particular circumstances and according to our
personal, limited powers of expression and verbal command, and those of
the persons with whom we choose to communicate. We are never tempted
to compare what we hear on the telephone with what we listen to on
radio even though in both cases we apprehend sounds brought to us by
technological means from more or less distant places.

A comparison between broadcast and cable television on the one hand, and radio and the telephone on the other seems all the more relevant when we remember that radio signals are broadcast over the air and telephone signals are carried via landlines. The important thing to bear in mind is that different relations exist between the sender and the receiver of information when the information is broadcast indiscriminately and when it is directed along a cable.

To return to the Open Night programme: after the recording everyone, including the studio audience, expert guests and production team, crowded into the canteen to exchange views on how it had gone. The recording, by the way, was not edited, so there was no opportunity during the recording to discuss progress. Almost everyone expressed disappointment over what had happened. Members of the audience complained that too much of the programme had been given over to clips of film and videotape and that there were too many "professionals" present whose comments stole much of the remaining time. The point was made that since the programme was supposed to be about public access to television, the presence of so many professionals whose opinions eclipsed those of the representatives of the public, was contradictory. The professional guests themselves felt that they had not had enough time to put forward their points of view satisfactorily. Peter Heinze agreed that he had tried to cram too much into too short a time. He felt that the discussion had touched on many important issues but somehow none of them had been explored.

For the Open Night production team, that particular recording - just one of many to them - did not have that elusive magic which makes a broadcast television programme good. It was plain to everyone

concerned that the discussion, as well as being hurried and over-crowded, was inconsistent and confusing. I watched the programme when it was broadcast a couple of days later and I wondered if the viewing audience could make out what the issue under discussion really was. It would probably have been none-the-less confused and confusing if there had been more time for people to put their points of view because these would have been points of view on different issues and not different perspectives on the same issue as the format of the programme implied.

The programme failed not because it lacked magic but because the whole idea of the programme was bedevilled by a kind of magic right from the research stage. This sort of magic is described by Sir James Frazer in his book The Golden Bough (1970) as sympathetic magic. According to Frazer there are two kinds of sympathetic magic: homeopathic or imitative magic, and contagious magic. The principles of both are formulated on mistaken assumptions:

"Homeopathic magic commits the mistake of assuming that things which resemble each other are the same: contagious magic commits the mistake of assuming that things which have once been in contact with each other are always in contact." (op. cit. p. 15)

Implicit in Peter Heinze's choice of studio guests were the assumptions that: a) because we were all concerned with television our work necessarily fell into a single context, and b) because the cathode ray tube (CRT) image played some part in our various activities, the television to which we all referred was the same thing.

The programme itself tested these assumptions. It was not the purpose of the programme to reconcile opposing views. It set out to review what the production team saw quite simply as access to 'television'. Access alone proved to be an inadequate context in which to contain the issues involved in the work of all the guests. It failed to provide a common milieu within which opposing views might have been defined and related.one to another because different factions amongst the guests and in the studio audience were expressing views on different issues. The idea of access is necessarily different when it is related to the different kinds of television.

Studio guests found themselves trying to answer questions or criticisms unrelated to their particular concerns, or trying to introduce ideas which were relevant to their own fields but more often than not irrelevant to the discussion that was actually going on.

Mr. Heinze's assumption that the work of his guests fell naturally into a common context was mistaken. Broadcast TV, cable/CCTV and community TV are particular manifestations of television. There is no ideal form which exists independently of its manifestations, at least, there is no well-defined ideal as there is when we speak of the ideal form of a piece of music existing independently of its particular performances.

Marvin Farber (1966) defines an <u>ideal object</u> as that which is "meant as the same in repeated experiences" and can be objective without being "real", "existential" or "factual" (p.50) and he gives mathematics and logic as examples of ideal forms since these are not real in the same sense as natural objects but they mean the same in

repeated experiences. Michael Phillipson (1972) suggests that "a good example of an ideal object would be that of a melody which is the same although played in different keys, on different instruments, or by different players" (pp. 130-131).

Television does not have an ideal form in this sense. Indeed, there is no such thing as 'television'. 'Television' is a myth. Strictly speaking there are only televisions or television systems. If we seek 'television' in that which is common to all of these systems we discover that the true common denominator is as basic as the CRT image itself coupled with the function of passing visual and audio information from A to B. Beyond this we begin to talk in terms of one or other of the particular systems. For example, if we include the transmission of TV signals over the air as an essential characteristic of 'television' then we are also implying a particular relation between the broadcaster and his audience, i.e. active programme producer — passive programme consumer. Nowadays this relation is not character- istic of all TV systems so broadcasting should not be included as an essential characteristic of 'television', even though, historically speaking, television was constituted primarily as a broadcasting system.

While we are on the subject of the historical primacy of broadcasting: Roderick Maclean attributes this fact to, "a number of historical and organisational accidents" (1968 p.1). One of these, he says, is that "for a quarter of a century television has grown up primarily as a vehicle for entertainment and journalism"; another is that no matter what kind of programme we receive in our homes, "whether it be news, or a religious service, or music hall, or a schools broadcast, (it) is all part of an output subject to centralised control: no longer

monopolistic in Britain, but largely centralised" (ibid.).

John (Hoppy) Hopkins and his colleagues in the television department
at the Institute for Research in Art and Technology (IRAT) take a
more positivistic approach and claim that:

"The present structure of television as a mass-communications
medium was largely adopted from the kind of organisation
essential at the time of its establishment for the production
of a film or the publication of a national newspaper. This
was a logical consequence of the technological circumstances
which then prevailed, necessitating the facilities of a large
studio, expensive equipment and highly skilled staff."
(Hopkins et al, 1972 p.50)

Raymond Williams follows the historical development of broadcasting
in his book: Television : Technology and Cultural Form (1974).
Although we cannot dwell on the issue here, I should like to point out
that Williams portrays this development neither as accidental nor as
a logical consequence of technological circumstances. Rather, he
rejects the formalist tradition altogether and treats the development
of television forms as a kind of on-going dialogue between human
intention (culturally conditioned maybe) and technological possibility.
This approach falls within a similar dialectical materialist context
to that in which we will in later chapters be analysing the emergence
of television as a community development tool.

But to return, once again, to the Open Night programme: the programme
inevitably centred its interest in access to TV on broadcasting – not

necessarily because more time was allocated to this form - but because the approach of the production team and the audience was dominated by the idea of television as a mass medium. This was plainly indicated by the concern expressed by some members of the studio audience and Julien Critchley over what they took to be a deterioration in production and technical standards. This centering caused these people, firstly, to ignore the fact that broadcasting continues alongside locally originated programming, which means that a professionally packaged product is still available when required; and, secondly, to involve themselves completely with style so that they became blinded to the possibilities of revolutionising the content and purpose of programming through local origination.

In the best of good faith Peter Heinze set up the Open Night programme in such a way as to compare the modest results achieved so far by the cable companies and by community action teams, such as ourselves, unfavourably with broadcast television programming.

This was done purely by implication: broadcast TV, cable TV and community video were all included in the same package thus implying that they are different aspects of the same thing, i.e. 'television'. But 'television', as we have suggested, is practically synonymous with broadcasting. The function of broadcasting as it happens is to entertain and to inform on matters of general interest and it is expected to do so according to certain arbitrarily specified standards. By implication, therefore, the functions of all systems incorporating television technology of some sort must be the same. But the broadcasters obviously have better facilities and more experience for fulfilling this function, therefore they must make a better job of it

than low budget local stations or enthusiastic amateurs. Q.E.D!

III

I do not mean to imply any kind of sinister intent on Peter Heinze's part, or even that the broadcasters misunderstand and hence misrepresent the views of those concerned with public access. Indeed, it seems to me that for a professional producer Mr. Heinze is exceptionalally keen to open the doors of this studio to the public otherwise he would not promote a venture like Open Night. And Granada Television as a company has, in my experience, maintained good links with the community it serves for many years. Beyond this, BBC 2's Open Door and more recently London Weekend Television's Speak for Yourself programmes have been regularly putting studios completely at the disposal of outsiders, and Peter Lewis who presents Speak for Yourself and who also manages the Bristol Channel cable-casting experiment was himself previously a member of the IBA establishment. Of course, the cynic might suggest that no matter how community minded the broadcaster may be, the project of the broadcast TV programme planner and producer remains essentially that of filling programme schedules with entertaining, general interest items, and by jumping on the bandwagon of public access they are simply fulfilling their function and simultaneously reducing costs. But, as far as we are concerned, whether the broadcaster who champions public access to his medium is being deceitful or whether he is deluding himself is another matter.

It is of far more interest to us that the lack of means to differentiate adequately between broadcasting - the dominant form of TV - and

other forms like community video has led to confusion not only in the
minds of the broadcasters and the general public but also in the minds
of the innovators whose project is ostensibly to use the technology
in radically different ways.

To illustrate this we may look to the first proposal in this country
to set up a local community television service. Being the first of
its kind this proposal has influenced subsequent work in this field;
this is demonstrated in part two of our text. Yet it presented a
misleading and contradictory argument precisely because it concerned
itself with the field of broadcasting when there was no real need.

The proposal was put forward in the autumn of 1969 by IRAT's TV
department or TVX as it was then called. It was later published in a
research report by John Hopkins et al. on Video in Community Development
(1972). The intention was essentially to make use of easy to operate
portable videotape recording and playback equipment to involve the
people of Notting Hill in the making of local interest programmes for
distribution via a series of public viewing sites in the neighbourhood.

IRAT's argument for setting up such a service took the form of an
attack on what it called the centralised system of television, i.e.
broadcast TV. It criticised the broadcast networks for their inability
to stimulate audiences to participate more in local community life and
it went so far as to suggest that centralised television actually
inhibits such participation:

"There appears to be little evidence to suggest that
networked television services provide, or can provide,
more than a minimal amount of real stimulation to participate

in community life at a local level, the level at which it
is actually lived." (op. cit. p. 50)

"Recent sociological, cultural and anthropological research
suggests strongly that habitual televiewing has effects
which are to a marked degree detrimental towards the healthy
functioning of a democractic community. The most important
of these effects creates the apprehension that habitual
televiewing may become an end in itself, a large scale
substitute for genuine participation in the life of the
community". (loc. cit.)

IRAT claimed that its proposal was "inevitably a step in the direction
of decentralisation" and that, at the outset it (made) the presumption
that some process of decentralising mass-communications media is not
only possible but is also desirable". (ibid. p. 49)

In view of IRAT's criticisms of broadcasting and since it is reasonable
to assume that only that which is already constituted as a centralised
system may be decentralised, we might be forgiven for assuming that
IRAT's argument was for the eventual breaking down of the networks
and for their replacement by local community services.

This, of course, was not the case. Elsewhere in the proposal it said
that the decentralised structure favoured by IRAT was intended only
to "complement" the existing, centralised system which IRAT agreed
"is indispensable in many of its functions":

"A structural approach at community level by using (portable)

equipment could be invaluable in the context of community
development and could extensively complement the national
television service". (ibid. p. 51)

And in spite of IRAT's intention, with regard to decentralisation,
"at least to initiate that process to a practicable degree", it was
not the Institute's aim to do away with the networks in the long
run either:

> "If this present project may be regarded as prototype to be
> modified in terms of experience, it is possible to imagine
> a situation where a number of such services exist (i.e.
> local community services). They could be linked by G.P.O.
> video lines and constitute a network which could be
> accessible to the public at large whilst complementing
> the national comprehensive television service." (ibid. p. 56)

IRAT's argument was contradictory. In the first place it set up the
broadcast networks as a whipping boy and accused them of not being
able to fulfil a function for which they were never intended. In the
second place it used terms which implied an intention to transform the
existing, centralised system when in fact the intention was simply to
set up another, non-centralised system to complement the original one.

This complementary system was meant, apparently, to function in the
context of community development. Community development concentrates
on particular issues of local concern. It entails the participation
of local people in the exposition and analysis of their problems and
it encourages them to plan and take action themselves. Broadcast

television functions at a national level where local events of limited interest to the vast majority tend to dissolve into larger scale issues. If there is a need for local TV services it is not because the national system does not function well at this level, it is because a suitable form of television can be shown to play a useful role in community development. This is what IRAT's proposal should have set out to do. Instead it got bogged down in superfluous criticisms of broadcasting and it offered sadly inadequate evidence in support of its claim that the use of portable video could be invaluable in a community context.

Why was IRAT's argument contradictory? This will be answered more fully in later chapters, but for now suffice it to say that because the proposal invariably referred to television as a mass-communications medium and because the different forms of television all go under a single label, IRAT mistakenly assumed that the television it proposed to incorporate into community development work was essentially the same thing as that operating nationally.

Far from exhibiting a radically new approach to television, IRAT's proposal confirmed the dominant idea that it is, per se, a mass-communications medium.

IV

Now if, as our purpose is, we wish to explicate and come to some under-standing of the emerging form of television: community TV, we must first of all find a means to dispel confusion and to differentiate this form of television from the others.

If we can assume that any medium must be defined in terms of both

technical and intentional elements (i.e. that it comprises a technology

and its received uses conditioned by the motivational meaning context

within which it is operated), then we have been saying up to this point

that there is confusion between the different kinds of television in

respect of their intentional characters. For in purely formal terms

the different systems of television are quite readily distinguished.

Indeed, we will find that by neglecting intentional elements for a

moment and by taking a formal approach we can at least begin to clarify

the situation.

Roderick Maclean takes a formal approach in his book on Television in

Education. He tells us that we would stop confusing one application

of television with another if we didn't always refer to television as

if it were a single medium. For by referring to it as a medium we are

led into assuming that it is invariably a mass-medium because of the

overwhelming influence of broadcasting.

Maclean's point is simultaneously helpful and unhelpful. We will find

the idea that television is not a single medium useful; but the

reasoning behind the remark is contradictory. His ideas are based on

a simplistic definition of a medium and when he uses the term television

in a general way, it refers to an ambiguous entity representing an ideal

combination of all its particular forms.

Maclean's argument runs as follows: he says that "we fall too readily

into the habit of speaking about television as a medium - a colloquially

convenient description which can soon obscure that fact that television

in reality effects a merely technical conjunction of many quite

different media" (1968, p.2). He defines a medium in terms of the

effect of form on subject matter and says that " we rightly describe
any form of human communication as a medium when it exerts some
recognisable and fairly constant modifying and adapting effect upon
the material with which it deals" (ibid.). He gives <u>drama</u> and <u>the</u>
<u>press</u> as examples of what he means. (One suspects that if by nature
of his own position he was as much of an insider in relation to these
media as he is to television then he might not see them as quite such
consistent objects. Not only this, but it could be said equally of
drama and the press that they each provide a common context for a
variety of different media.)

According to Maclean then television is not a medium as such, rather
it makes use of the methods associated with the media it carries. It
cannot be a single medium, he says, because if it were "it would impose
the same stamp on everything it transmitted, and have the same adapting
influence on everything from a boxing match to a documentary" (ibid.
p.3). Hence, television has a host of applications from broadcasting
entertainment programmes to micro-teaching.

Maclean's use of the term <u>television applications</u> is ambiguous. Some-
times he appears to be referring to <u>studio presentation</u> techniques and
sometimes to different TV <u>systems</u>. The former is consistent with his
point that television uses the techniques of the various media it
carries and in this instance the technical aspect is obscure (particu-
larly in respect of distribution). The second meaning refers to pure
techniques ranging from broadcasting to closed-circuit TV systems of
one kind or another.

As we have suggested, Maclean's idea that <u>television is not a single</u>

medium can be useful, but we must remove it from the context of his argument and place it, instead, in the context of Marshall McLuhan's formalism. In the process of removal the words take on a different meaning. They no longer suggest that television is not a medium; they imply instead that television is a collective term for a variety of media. For in McLuhan's terms a medium is similar to a technique. It is the form which interests him and not the content. Indeed, he dismisses the need to take subject-matter into account in media studies in a typically concise statement: "the content of any medium is always another medium" (1967 pp. 15-16). As far as McLuhan is concerned, television is a technique which intervenes between the content/medium and the viewer and therefore it is itself a medium.

McLuhan defines a medium in terms of the effects of its intervention; in other words, in terms of the personal and social consequences of its mediation or in terms of the patterns of human work and association conditioned by its presence. In these terms the various systems incorporating the CRT image may be shown to mediate social situations differently. One has only to compare the patterns of work and the relations set up between persons by the producer ⟶ consumer, industrial model of broadcast TV with those conditioned by , say, the consumer operated, portable mini-studio system devised by the TV Research and Training Unit at Goldsmiths' College, London (see Tony Gibson, 1968), in order to appreciate that different forms of television mediate different social situations. These two examples represent extremes. In systems theory jargon they mediate one ⟶ many, and one ⟷ one relations respectively. Between these extremes, depending on the hardware available, there are numerous variations and developments - as can be seen from the flow diagrams of varying

complexities turned out by the systems theorists (see, for example, Kirk and Hopkins, 1972a, pp. 30f).

The CRT image does not exist in a vacuum. It is _always_ incorporated into particular feed and distribution systems. The total feed $\longrightarrow$ CRT image $\longrightarrow$ distribution system represents a particular from of television, and different forms of television mediate social situations differently, i.e. they are different media. When we refer to television, depending upon the context, we are necessarily referring to one or other of its particular forms and, if we are to begin to sort out the confusion between the various forms we must be careful to refer to each only in terms of its particular mediating function.

V

The formula we have just put forward is limited in its application. By neglecting the intentional element in media we are unable to explore associations between different média of television which are very real in practice and in experience. For example, most of the media of television are discovered in the field of educational television; here they may well remain discrete in terms of the heirarchy of general social forms they mediate, yet there is a unifying factor: the all embracing project _education._ This project permeates mediations at all levels in the systems heirarchy and gives to each a new kind of particularity.

Community television is another example. We discover most of the TV systems in operation within this context, from broadcasting (_Open Door_, _Speak for Yourself_), through cable-casting and public viewing (see CATS, 1972), to the use of small CCTV systems in group and inter-group

discussion sessions (see Jardine, October 1971, for example). All
these operations differ considerably in form and immediate purpose
(e.g. Speak for Yourself is basically a general information service
while video in the hands of action groups working at a community level
is used with particular ends in view) yet they are associated and
unified by a collective project which aims at allowing and encouraging
people to take action on their own behalf - whether this action results
simply in the making of a TV programme or whether it means confronta-
tion with the Local Council over a specific housing problem.

We may put this in de Bono's terms and suggest that in the case of ETV
the dominant, organising idea is education and the various manifesta-
tions (the various systems-in-use) centre on this. In the case of
community television the dominant idea is that of community action or
community development.

In phenomenological terms de Bono's dominant idea becomes the motiva-
tional meaning context which conditions our experience of the world
and consequently our actions in the world. It is itself a medium in
and through which we invest matter with meaning. Indeed, for the pure
phenomenologist the very objects of our consciousness are media since,
by nature, they are always other than the reality to which they refer.

But whatever terms we care to use, essentially we are saying that, while
McLuhan's point still holds (i.e. that the form of the medium conditions
a particular set of human relations), man for his part (as a meaning-
giving entity) also mediates the material world.

This raises certain key issues:

(i)

McLuhan's formalist approach discovers media as preconsituted wholes (i.e. syntheses of various technologies with their received uses) which seem to appear on the human scene as a result of a kind of immaculate conception. By admitting the element of intention as a constituting element we begin to see these syntheses as the result of human action in the material field.

(ii)

McLuhan's formalism describes the technological character of a fully constituted medium and the patterns of human work and association it conditions as they appear all in one moment. The formalist stops _time_ and describes the material and social forms in their _horizontal complexity_. However, the idea that it is man who in the first instance organises the material elements into wholes brings with it a sense of _history_. Media condition social forms but, a moment before, these media were born out of the then prevailing social conditions.

(iii)

Once time has been set in motion we realise that each moment is born out of the _preceding_ moment only to _proceed_ to the next. Man creates his media which, in turn condition social structure. This necessarily implies a preceding social structure which was not subject to the conditions of the newly created medium. This is implied even in McLuhan's approach which states that "it is impossible to understand social and cultural _changes_ without a knowledge of the working of media" (1967a, p.8). The acceptance of social change through mediation in McLuhan's work indicates a fundamental contradiction there. For his media do not appear to change as a result of the new social conditions they have been

instrumental in creating. However, if we are to include intention as a definitive element in our own approach to media, then we must also accept that men and media enter into a **reciprocal, developing** relation in which each conditions change in the organisation of the other.

(iv)

When we admit intention as a definitive element it does not enter as an extension of the formalist formula; on the contrary, it enters into dialectical opposition with it. McLuhan's approach may be seen as semi-dialectical inasmuch as it concentrates on that moment in the dialectic when the relations between men are a function of, and are conditioned by, the inhuman. The notion of intention belongs to the phenomenological approach which directly contradicts formalism. This approach (5) assumes that _things_ such as media are social facts; the social world is a subject world and not an object world; in other words, social reality is the existential product of human activity, sustained and changed by such activity and, as such, does not constitute a reality divorced from its members. Social facts are _intersubjectively_ (Shutz, 1971 p.10f) produced by the members of society and to this extent they come to posses a degree of objective facticity. _Social structure_, for example, refers to members' sense of social structure. It does not refer to a real, objective, factual social world in the Durkheimian sense – existing _out there_ and to which members of society are subject. It means that the members, in perceiving, defining and

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(5) We refer here particularly to the _social phenomenology_ of people such as Shutz and Cicourel as opposed to the pure phenomenology of Husserl from which, admittedly, the former approach has been developed.

explaining (apprehending) this world externalise and objectify it
through the means by which apprehension can be articulated. To use
social phenomenological terminology: a medium is a synthetic unity of
material and ideational objects intersubjectively constituted and
sustained within a culturally conditioned motivational meaning context.

VI

(i)

> "The major discovery of the dialectical experience ... is
> that man is mediated by things to the exact extent that
> things are mediated by man." (Sartre, 1960, p.165)

This is an example of what Sartre calls dialectical circularity and
he puts it forward in his Critique de la Raison Dialectique (1960) as
an example of the kind of thought we must have if we are to make the
human scene intelligible. Intelligibility is primarily a question of
understanding the way in which a plurality is constituted as a whole
(as a totality), whether as a whole subject or as a whole object.

For Sartre the dialectic is not a determinism. Men submit to dialectic
just insofar as they make history dialectically. If man is mediated by
matter then he is mediated to the extent that he invests matter with
meaning. It is the active inertia of the meaning-laden material field
(the practico-inert) which turns back on man and transforms his
intentions. His intentions objectified in matter necessarily take on
a certain independence - a thingness - which lays them open to a host
of different interpretations. It is at this moment in the dialectic
that man is said to be mediated by matter.

On the other side of the coin man mediates matter through what Sartre
calls praxis, or his meaningful actions in (because he is himself a
material being) and through matter. It is through praxis that the
undifferentiated sectors of materiality are synthesised into meaningful
wholes.

(ii)

Sartre's approach reconciles the approaches of the formalist and the
phenomenologist. It has developed out of a concern for what he feels
to be the smug formalism of contemporary Marxism.

According to Sartre, living Marxism is heuristic; its theoretical
principles and antecedent knowledge should appear to regulate its
concrete research. But, he says, the analyses of contemporary Marxists
no longer embrace the facts; writers such as Lukacs have fetishized the
purely formal entities of analysis and have reduced it to a simple
ceremony. Sartre proposes a method which, within the general perspec-
tive of Marxist dialectical materialism, attempts to rediscover real
men in real social situations; it is a method by which the existential-
ist Marxist may hope to understand both individual persons and history.

Both Sartre and Marxism, of course, concentrate on the organisation of
human collectivities mediated by totalised matter. The present work
is more concerned with a different moment in the dialectic. We are
interested in the organisation of matter (the totalisation of matter)
into meaningful wholes with men as the mediators. None-the-less we
share Sartre's concern over the predominance of formalism, partly
because our field of study is obscured by an ideal form of 'television'
which seems to comprise all the particular forms and their intentional

characters boiled into one, and partly because of the predominately

formal approach which has been taken so far by community TV operators

and commentators.

For us, the form of any medium must be analysed within the particular,

living, meaningful context in which it has been developed, otherwise

it is no longer a medium but simply a collection of inert elements. A

medium is a medium because it mediates between men. But men create

their media from otherwise inert elements through their meaningful use

of them. Through praxis inert elements become synthesised into active

wholes. We cannot study these wholes in a vacuum for if we attempt to

we simply end up by integrating them into new ideational syntheses

which tell us nothing of their original reality-in-context.

(iii)

We are concerned that the formalist literature on community TV in the

U.K., like Marxist analyses (but with the accent on the medium), also

fetishizes its theoretical principals. In this case these principals

are those of general systems theory. The extensive use of jargon

coupled with the impressive intrinsic consistency of the theoretical

principles tends to cloud the fact that the work is still in its

infancy and real knowledge is scarce. There is a need for much more

field work, yet the spurious scientific authority invested in the

subjective observations of community TV apologists by the use of systems

theory jargon belies this. In truth, if this quasi-objective veneer

were peeled away from much of what has been written on the subject, we

would find firstly a lot of playing around with hardware systems at

both a theoretical and a practical level and secondly the partial,

subjective accounts of those already sold on the idea of making

television facilities available to the public. Faith predominates over experience; the theory of community TV advances steadily and crystallises into truths while the social circumstances surrounding its conception and development remain unknown at a phenomenological level.

The present study takes the view that community TV is a social phenomenon discoverable in the work of real men in particular situations. These men are also responsible for the greater part of the literature presently available. But in our view their depersonalised accounts are only partial totalisations which seem to obscure actual field work experience. The literature on community TV to date is a mass of contradictions. It delights in formalising procedures and inventing systems, yet the entity which emerges under the name of community TV turns out to be little more than wishful thinking, for it often bears little resemblance to the meagre and choked field work it describes.

By using Sartre's method we hope to produce a description of community TV in its particularity and, at the same time, to surpass some of its contradictions by comparing what has become a collective ideal with the historical facts.

In Sartre's terms we will assume the position of totalising third in respect of other workers and writers in the field, and produce our own totalisation which we hope will bring us closer to the reality of community TV. We do not feel the need to try and sell the idea of community TV, only to describe what has happened so far. We wish, as much as possible, to allow the phenomenon to explicate itself in its own terms.

In practical terms the underlying project needs to be dredged up from beneath the sludge of confused intentions if only to put an end to the kind of vague grant applications we ourselves have submitted in unsuccessful attempts to raise money for field work (see the Bentilee Community Video and Project Diary). Perhaps grant-giving bodies might be more forthcoming if community videasts appeared to know what they were about.

Having said this it must be added that our own totalisation, while it may take a different approach, is equally as subjective and partial as the others. Its purpose is not so much to explain all as to enter into contradiction with the others and produce a broader perspective.

P A R T   O N E

S A R T R E ' S   S E A R C H   F O R   A   M E T H O D

A   S U M M A R Y

SARTRE'S "SEARCH FOR A METHOD" : A SUMMARY

Introduction

Questions de Méthode was published in 1960 along with the first volume

of a much longer treatise, the Critique de la Raison Dialectique, to

which it was prefixed as an introduction. The Critique gives its

title to the total work published in French by Gallimard. So far,

no English translation of the complete work has appeared, but an

English version of Questions was published as a work complete in itself

in 1963. This is Hazel E. Barnes translation published by Vintage

Books under the title: Search for a Method. In 1964 Tavistock

published a book by R. D. Laing and D. G. Cooper in which the authors

summarised three works by Sartre, including both Questions and the

Critique. This book was called Reason and Violence and, in the authors'

estimation it condenses the original works to about one tenth of the

scale.

The present summary uses Reason and Violence as a guide to the essential

issues in Questions, and it has turned out, therefore, to be just as

ruthless if not more so. The intention behind including this summary

here is partly to define as clearly and concisely as possible the

method used in the second part of the text - the analysis of community

TV (its formal and intentional character). The summary is not intended

as a criticism or defence of the method and so it quite happily omits

the greater part of Sartre's illustrative material. But there are

instances where it was felt that Sartre's text does not adequately

cover a particular point - perhaps relating to a previous work of his

- in which case information has been included from other sources.
For the most part, however, pieces within quotation marks are taken
from Hazel Barnes' English translation, and extended references are
accompanied by the page number in that work.

Probably the most important reason for including this summary here is
that the analysis of community TV which follows after deliberately
limits its field of study with no attempt to relate to broader issues.
Questions however sets out to discuss its method within a broader
field of enquiry and it establishes its theoretical principles in
relation to this field.

Sartre wrote Questions (or an early, incomplete version of it)
originally in response to a request by a Polish review for an article
on The Present Situation of Existentialism. In his preface to
Hazel E. Barnes' translation of the complete version, Sartre says that
in 1957 the idea of defining "the nature of an intellectual quest"
did not really appeal to him and he would have refused the request of
his Polish friends if he "had not seen in the suggestion a means of
expressing, in a country with a Marxist culture, the existing
contradictions in its philosophy".

As Hazel E. Barnes points out in her introduction to Search for a
Method, the work "sets forth specifically those ways in which
existentialism seeks to modify Marxism and to change its direction",
as well as to propose a method "by which the existentialist Marxist
may hope to understand both individual persons and history".

Prior to the publication of this essay, it was generally believed

that Marxism and Existentialism were irreconcilable. Sartre overcomes

this contradiction in the first part of his essay. There he describes

Marxism as the only "living philosophy". He takes the view that

Philosophy does not exist:

"In whatever form we consider it, this shadow of science,

this Grey Eminence of humanity, is only a hypostatised

abstraction."

But, he says, there are philosophies - or rather only one philosophy

at a time which is alive and which, "under certain well-defined

circumstances ... is developed for the purpose of giving expression

to the general movement of the society". And this dominant philosophy

may not be superseded until the historical moment which it expresses

has been passed.

There may be lesser systems in addition to the dominant philosophy but

these do not merit the title philosophies, they are only ideologies.

Sartre calls them auxiliary disciplines and into this category he

places sociology and psychoanalysis. Existentialism, too, he sees as

an auxiliary discipline which may contribute to but never contradict

or supersede the dominant philosophy - Marxism - in our present

historical situation.

Indeed, he says in no uncertain terms that Existentialism is "a

parasitical system living on the margin of knowledge, which at first

it opposed but into which today it seeks to be integrated".

In what way, then, does Sartre see Existentialism changing the direction

of Marxist philosophy? Mary Warnock sums up his argument in her

introduction to Being and Nothingness (1969):

> "The Marxist method, he says, is unduly a priori. Everything
>
> which has ever happened is forced by it into the mould of
>
> dialectical materialism, with the result that Marxist
>
> thinkers tend to overlook actual facts, or at least to
>
> glance at them cursorily. We are led to believe therefore
>
> that Existentialism, marked ... by an almost obsessive
>
> interest in the concrete and the actual, will breathe new
>
> life into Marxism by interiorising it, by rendering it
>
> concrete and by presenting the dialectic from within.
>
> Sartre claims that Existentialism, by still concentrating
>
> its attention on the individual, can show how the concept of
>
> class, with which Marxism is concerned, arose. There is an
>
> empty space, a mere abstraction, at the very centre of
>
> Marxism, Sartre says, and it is this space which he plans to
>
> fill with a concrete anthropology."

Mary Warnock goes on to say that when we turn to the Critique de la

Raison Dialectique, which follows Questions, Sartre's undertaking

"seems to have been abandoned". She isolates the concept of praxis

(which she defines as "deliberate human action" and "the action of the

conscious human being upon his non-conscious environment") as the link

between the two works. She continues:

> "It was supposed, in Questions de Méthode, that concentration
>
> upon the intentional element in praxis would necessarily
>
> entail concentration on the concrete detail of the agent's
>
> environment, that is, upon the actual facts which helped him

frame his plans. Existentialism would explain what it was like
for an individual freely to choose from among the various
possibilities open to him. But besides this, the concept of
praxis is said to be that which carries within itself a proof
that human thought about the world is dialectical in form.
New facts are supposed to emerge from the marrying together,
in action, of the incompatible elements of thought, or plan,
and physical environment, against which the plan has to be
measured. By examining the nature of human praxis, Sartre
thinks that a foundation can be laid for a general history
and anthropology of the world. And by the time we come to
the Critique de la Raison Dialectique itself, the concrete
and the particular have altogether been given up in favour
of considerations of the nature of action in general, and of
the advance of history in general."

This apparent contradiction may be resolved by remembering that Sartre
says that Questions logically belongs at the end of the Critique.
For it is the Critique which supplies the critical foundations for the
method Sartre proposes. The shorter essay is placed first, partly
because he feared it might otherwise seem that "the mountain had brought
forth a mouse" (as he puts it in his preface to the Critique), and
partly because Questions was written first.

Not only this but it should be born in mind that so far we have been
treated only to the first volume of the Critique. The second,
according to Hazel Barnes, will concentrate on History in process and
Truth in its becoming (referring to Sartre's own preface to the
Critique). Perhaps it will be here that Sartre develops his concrete

anthropology.

Criticism of Contemporary Marxism

The first section of <u>Questions</u> goes under the heading: <u>Existentialism</u> <u>and Marxism</u>, and it was this part of the complete essay which was written for the Polish review.

Sartre's criticisms of Marxism are not aimed at the framework laid down in <u>Capital</u> and <u>The German Ideology</u>. Indeed, as he points out in his preface to <u>Search for a Method</u>, Sartre traces his own understanding of the Hegelian dialectic directly through Marx:

> "From Marxism, which give it new birth, the ideology of
>
>   existence inherits two requirements which Marxism itself
>
>   derives from Hegelianism: if such a thing as Truth can
>
>   exist in anthropology, it must be a truth that has <u>become</u>,
>
>   and it must make itself a <u>totalisation</u>. It goes without
>
>   saying that this double requirement defines that movement
>
>   of being and of knowing (or of comprehension) which since
>
>   Hegel is called <u>dialectic</u>."

His argument is really with contemporary Marxist writers, in particular Lukács (1) who, he says, does not even suspect the possibility of resolving the contradiction between the views that historical material- ism provides the only valid interpretation of history and that Existentialism remains the only concrete approach to reality. The

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(1) "Lukács who so often violates history", Sartre (1963, p.28)

present day Marxist, he continues, deals not with living totalities,
as did Marx, but with general singularities or fixed entities. Living
Marxism is heuristic. Its theoretical principles and antecedent know-
ledge should appear to regulate its concrete research. Marx himself
dealt with living totalities (such as the petite bourgeoisie in the
18th Brumaire of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte - Napoleon's coup d'etat on
9th November, 1799) and these define themselves in the course of his
exposition. But the analyses of present-day Marxists have become
meaningless because they are reduced to a simple ceremony. The purely
formal entities of analysis have been fetishized. Such analysis is no
longer a matter of studying the facts in the general perspective of
Marxism to enrich knowledge and illuminate actions:

> "Analysis consists solely in getting rid of detail, in forcing
> the signification of certain events, in denaturing facts or
> even in inventing a nature for them in order to discover it
> later underneath them, as their substance, as unchangeable,
> fetishized synthetic notions. The open concepts of Marxism
> have closed in. They are no longer keys, interpretive
> schemata; they are posited for themselves as an already total-
> ised knowledge. To use Kantian terms - Marxism makes out of
> these particularised, fetishized types, constitutive concepts
> of experience. The real content of these typical concepts is
> always part Knowledge; but today's Marxist makes of it an
> eternal knowledge. His sole concern, at the moment of analysis,
> will be to place these entities. The more he is convinced that
> they represent truth a priori, the less fussy he will be about
> proof." (p.27)

Marxism then is said to have a theoretical base and it embraces all human activity, yet "it no longer knows anything. Its concepts are dictates". On the other hand, auxiliary disciplines, such as sociology and psychoanalysis have "real attainments" and know "a great many details" respectively, but they lack a firm theoretical foundation.

"In view of this twofold ignorance, existentialism has been able to return and to maintain itself because it reaffirmed the reality of men ... Existentialism and Marxism ... aim at the same object; but Marxism has reabsorbed man into the idea, and Existentialism (2) seeks him everywhere where he is, at his work, in his home, in the street." (p.28)

Until Marx it was always the case that history was made without self-awareness. But despite Marx's "most radical attempt to clarify the historical process in its totality" this is still one of the most striking characteristics of our time. On the contrary, the shadow of Marxism has itself obscured history because "it has ceased to live with history and because it attempts, through a bureaucratic conservatism, to reduce change to identity". (p.29)

So, for the time being real man is not known. This is not to say, like Kierkegaard, that he is unknowable. It is just that he escapes us at present because the only concepts at our disposal for understanding him are borrowed from idealism (whether it be from the Left or the Right).

There is a conflict between revolutionary action and the scholastic

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(2) Specifically Sartre's Existentialism.

justification of this action which prevents Communist man, wherever

he may be, from achieving any clear self-consciousness.

Yet Marxism remains the dominant philosophy of our age because we have

not gone beyond the circumstances which engendered it:

> "Our thoughts, whatever they may be, can be formed only upon
>
> this humus; they must be contained within the framework
>
> which it furnishes for them or be lost in the void or
>
> retrogress" (to pre-Marxism). (p.30)

Hence Sartre agrees with certain fundamental statements on Marxism.

For example, he quotes Engels as saying that:

> "... it is men themselves who make their history, but within
>
> a given environment which conditions them and on the basis
>
> of real, prior conditions among which the economic
>
> conditions (however much influenced they may be by other
>
> political and ideological conditions) are in the last
>
> analysis nothing less than the determining conditions
>
> which constitute throughout its length the conducting
>
> wire which leads us to understanding." (p.31)

He also refers to a statement by Garaudy in Humanité, (17th May, 1955):

> "Marxism forms today the system of co-ordinates which
>
> alone permits it to situate and to define a thought in
>
> any domain whatsoever - from political economy to physics,
>
> from history to ethics." (p.31)

Sartre also takes the Marxist definition of materialism as "the

primacy of existence over consciousness" (3) and says that:

"Existentialism, as its name sufficiently indicates, makes

of this primacy the object of its fundamental affirmation."

(p.32)

In a lengthy footnote he explains that:

"... the methodological principle which holds that certitude

begins with reflection in no way contradicts the anthropological

principle which defines the concrete person by his materiality.

For us, reflection is not reduced to the simple immanence

of idealist subjectivism; it is a point of departure only

if it throws us back immediately among things and men, in

the world. The only theory of knowledge which can be valid

today is one which is founded on that truth of microphysics:

the experimenter is a part of the experimental system.

This is the only position which allows us to get rid of all

idealist illusion, the only one which shows the real man in

the midst of the real world. But this realism necessarily

implies a reflective point of departure; that is, the

revelation of a situation is effected in and through the

praxis which changes it. We do not hold that this first act

of becoming conscious of the situation is the originating

source of an action; we see in it a necessary moment of the

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(3) A definition which Lukács has used to distinguish Marxism from
    Existentialism in his book Existentialism and Marxism.

action itself – the action, <u>in the course of its accomplishment</u>, provides its own clarification." (p.32)

The weak point of Marxism remains the theory of knowledge. When Marx writes: "The materialist conception of the world signifies simply the conception of nature as it is without any foreign addition", he claims to observe nature from a position outside it from which he may contemplate it objectively, or as it is absolutely. Having assimilated himself with pure objective truth through the elimination of all subjectivity, he confronts a world of objects inhabited by object-men whose behaviour is conditioned solely by natural laws. By contrast, Lenin writes that consciousness "is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately accurate reflection", and immediately removes from himself the right to write what he is writing! In both cases subjectivity is suppressed: Marx places us beyond it and Lenin places us on this side of it.

The game is played on two levels, as Sartre puts it: "there is in Marxism a constituting consciousness which asserts a priori the rationality of the world (and which, consequently, falls into idealism); thus constituting consciousness determines the constituted consciousness of particular men as a simple reflection (which ends up in a skeptical idealism)." (p.32) Both conceptions misrepresent the real relation between man and history.

The two positions are contradictory and they cannot be reconciled by a "dialectical theory of reflection" for they are essentially <u>anti-dialectical</u>.

"When knowing is made apoditic, and when it is constituted

against all possible questioning without ever defining its

scope or its rights, then it is cut off from the world and

becomes a formal system. When it is reduced to a pure

psycho-physiological determination, it loses its primary

quality, which is its relation to the object, in order to

become itself a pure object of knowing. No mediation can

link Marxism as a declaration of principles and apoditic

truths to psycho-physiological reflection (or 'dialectic').

These two conceptions of knowing (dogmatism and the knowing

-dyad) are both of them pre-Marxist." (p.33)

It is possible to lapse into idealism not only by dissolving reality

into subjectivity but also by denying real subjectivity in the name

of objectivity. For Sartre, the truth is that "subjectivity is

neither everything nor nothing; it represents a moment in the objective

process (that in which externality is internalised), and this moment

is perpetually eliminated only to be perpetually reborn." (p.33)

By adopting Existentialism as an auxiliary discipline, Marxism will

have a means of approaching experience to discover concrete syntheses.

Such syntheses may be conceived only within a moving, dialectical

totalisation which is history or, as Sartre puts it, (from his strictly

cultural point of view) " philosophy-becoming-the-world".

Lefebvre's Method

Now, if Sartre accepts the primacy of existence over consciousness and

the more precise definition of materialism which Marx gives in Capital,

i.e., "The mode of production of material life in general dominates

the development of social, political and intellectual life", then what

is the essential difference between him and other Marxists?

Sartre poses and answers a similar question himself in the second part

of Search for a Method. He says that he sees "the statements of Engels

and Garaudy as guiding principles, as indications of "jobs to be done,

as problems - not as concrete truths". He sees them as such because

they seem insufficiently defined and therefore capable of numerous

interpretations. Thus, they can be no more than "regulative ideas" to

him. On the other hand, "the contemporary Marxist ... finds them clear,

precise, and unequivocal; for him they already constitute a knowledge".

Hence:

"If I turn to the works of contemporary Marxists, I see that

they mean to determine for the object considered its real

place in the total process; they will establish the material

conditions of its existence, the class which has produced it,

The interests of that class (or of a segment of that class),

its movement, the forms of its struggle against the other

classes, the relation of forces to each other, the stakes,

etc. The speech, the vote, the political action, or the

book will appear then in its objective reality as a certain

moment in this conflict. It will be defined in terms of the

factors on which it depends and by the real action which it

exerts; thereby it will be made to enter - as an exemplary

manifestation - into the universitality of the ideology or of

the policy, which are themselves considered as superstructures.

.   .   .

...This method does not satisfy us. It is a priori. It

does not derive its concepts from experience - or at least

not from the new experiences which it seeks to interpret.

It has already formed its concepts; it is already certain

of their truth; it will assign to them the role of constitutive

schemata. Its sole purpose is to force the events, the persons

or the acts considered into prefabricated molds." (pp.36-37)

For Sartre, then, "everything remains to be done; we must find the

method and constitute the science".

Strangely enough, following Sartre's criticism of contemporary Marxism,

it is a Marxist, Henri Lefebvre, who in his opinion has provided "a

simple and faultless method for integrating sociology and history in

the perspective of a materialist dialectic". Sartre paraphrases the

passage in Lefebvre's Perspectives de Sociologie (1953) in which he

states the basic principles:

"Lefebvre begins by pointing out that a living rural community

appears first in a horizontal complexity; we are dealing with

a human group in possession of techniques and with a definite

agricultural productivity related to these techniques, along

with the social structure which they determine and which

conditions them in return. This human group, whose character-

istics depend in large part upon great national and world-wide

structures, offers a multiplicity of aspects which must be

described and fixed (demographic aspects, family structure,

habitat, religion, etc). But Lefebvre hastens to add that

this horizontal complexity has as its counterpart a vertical

or <u>historical complexity</u>: in the rural world we observe

'the coexistence of formations of various ages and dates'.

The two complexities 'react upon one another'.

        •   •   •

In order to study such complexity (in cross section) and

such a reciprocity of interrelations - without getting lost

in it - Lefebvre proposes 'a very simple method employing

auxiliary techniques and comprising several phases:

a) <u>Descriptive.</u> Observation but with a scrutiny guided by

     experience and by a general theory ...

b) <u>Analytico-Regressive.</u> Analysis of reality. Attempt to

     date it precisely.

c) <u>Historical-Genetic.</u> Attempt to rediscover the present,

     but elucidated, understood, explained.'

We have nothing to add to this passage, so clear and so rich,

except that we believe that this method, with its phase of

phenomenological description and its double movement of

regression followed by progress, is valid - with the

modifications which its objects may impose upon it - in all

domains of anthropology." (pp.51-52)

<u>Mediations and Auxiliary Disciplines</u>

In 1894 Engels wrote in a letter to W. Borgius:

"That such and such a man and precisely that man arises at
a particular time in a particular country is, of course,
pure chance. But cut him out and there will be a demand
for a substitute, and this substitute will be found, good
or bad, but in the long run he will be found. That Napoleon,
just that particular Corsican, should have been the military
dictator whom the French Republic, exhausted by its own warfare,
had rendered necessary, was chance; but that, if a Napoleon
had been lacking, another would have filled the place, is
proved by the fact that the man was always found as soon as
he became necessary: Caesar, Augustus, Cromwell, etc. ...

.   .   .

So with all the other accidents, and apparent accidents of
history. The futher the particular sphere which we are
investigating is removed from the economic sphere and approaches
that of pure abstract ideology, the more shall we find it
exhibiting accidents in its development, the more will its
curve run zig-zag. But if you plot the average axis of the
curve, you will find that this axis will run more and more
parallel to the axis of economic development the longer the
period considered and the wider the field dealt with."
(Marx and Engels, 1970, p.695)

For Sartre, Existentialism considers Engels statement an arbitrary
limitation of the dialectical movement - "an arresting of thought, a
refusal to understand". Engels is saying, Sartre believes, that the
concrete character of a particular man is an "abstract ideological
character", for only the middle axis of the curve - whether it be of
a life, of a history, of a party, or of a social group - has anything

real or intelligible, and this moment of universality corresponds to
another universality, that of economics proper. Existentialism, on
the other hand, "intends, without being unfaithful to Marxist principles,
to find mediations which allow the individual concrete - the particular
life, the real and dated conflict, the person - to emerge from the
background of the general contradictions of productive forces and
relations of production". (p.57)

Sartre says that contemporary Marxism shows Flaubert's realism, for
example, in a reciprocal relation with the social and political
evolution of the petite bourgeoisie of the Second Empire. But it leaves
to other (auxiliary) disciplines, which lack fundamental principles,
the task of showing the genesis of this reciprocity and why, for
instance, Flaubert preferred literature and why he wrote those
particular books. Present day Marxism can say nothing about the all-
important phrase: 'to belong to the bourgeoisie'. Flaubert was not
born bourgeoise, but he was born into a family which was already
bourgeoise: "It is ... inside the particularity of a history, through
the peculiar contradictions of this family, that Gustave Flaubert
unwittingly served his class apprenticeship. Chance does not exist ...
in the way that is generally believed. The child becomes this or that
because he lives the universal as particular". (p.58)

(i) Existential psychoanalysis as an auxiliary discipline:

> "Today psychoanalysis alone enables us to study the process
> by which a child, groping in the dark, is going to attempt
> to play, without understanding it, the social role which

adults impose upon him ... . Psychoanalysis alone allows
us to discover the whole man in the adult; that is, not
only his present determinations but also the weight of
his history." (p.60)

Hazel E. Barnes points out, in a footnote to her translation of
Questions, that when Sartre refers to psychoanalysis it is not to the
traditional Freudian kind with its dependence on the concept of the
unconscious and universal symbolism but to an Existential psychoanalysis,
indebted to Freud, but consistent with the notion of Existentialism as
a philosophy of freedom.

Sartre presents the fundamental principles of Existential psychoanalysis
in Being and Nothingness (1969, pp. 557-575). Here we are told that
man is a totality and, this being so, everything about him is reveal-
ing since even in his most superficial behaviour he expresses himself
as a whole. Psychoanalysis then tries to decipher man's observable
behaviour patterns - to define them and to throw light on what it is
that they reveal about him.

Existential psychoanalysis takes for granted a fundamental, pre-
ontological comprehension which man has of the human person. Each
person, it claims, possesses a priori the meaning of the revelatory
value of human behaviour even though most people, without guidance,
may neglect the implications in a gesture, a word or a sign. Its
point of departure, then, is experience, for truth is not encountered
by chance; it does not belong to the domain where one must seek it
without ever having any presentiment of its location. The essential
task is a deciphering and a conceptualisation.

This is accomplished using a comparative method. Each example of human behaviour is indicative of a fundamental choice which must be elucidated. At the same time this choice is obscured by accidental features and its historical occasion. Only a comparison of these modes of behaviour can grasp the unique revelation they all express in different ways.

When Sartre refers to empirical psychoanalysis he restricts his field to a number of Freud's original metapsychological positions. He says that empirical and Existential psychoanalysis have certain things in common; both consider that there are no primary givens such as hereditary dispositions, character, etc. But Freudian analysis has decided upon its own irreducibles (the libido, the will to power, etc) so that instead of tracing the life of the person to its own ultimate issues (as Existentialism attempts to do) the empirical observer at some point ceases to make his observations from inside the relationship between himself and the subject and begins to make judgements about the subject as if the latter were no longer a person but some inhuman biological entity.

Reductive biologism explains all and nothing. To use the example of Flaubert again: the literary disposition of the young Flaubert may be resolved according to Freudian universal patterns, Sartre says, into "a combination of typical abstract desires such as we meet in the average adolescent" (e.g. the need to feel intensely). Flaubert's calling thus becomes explained away as the need to feel intensely, disguised and chanelled into becoming the need to write. But this is no explanation. It is itself exactly that which must be explained.

Existential psychoanalysis (and to a large extent Freudian psycho-
analysis) considers the human being as a perpetual, searching
historisation. It prefers to discover the meaning, orientation and
adventures of this history rather than to uncover static, constant
givens. It considers man in the world and does not imagine that one
can question the being of a man without taking into account his
situation. Psychological investigations of both kinds aim at
constituting the life of the subject from birth to the moment of the
cure; they utilise all the objective documentation that they can find:
letters, witnesses, intimate diaries, social information of every kind.
What they aim at restoring is less a pure psychic event than a twofold
structure: the crucial event of infancy and the psychic crystallisa-
tion around this event. Here again we have to do with a situation.
Each historical fact from this point of view will be considered at
once as a factor of the psychic evolution and as a symbol of that
evolution. For it it nothing in itself. It operates only according
to the way in which it is taken, and this very manner of taking it
expresses symbolically the internal disposition of the individual.

Existentialism proposes a method "destined to bring to light in a
strictly objective form the subjective choice by which each living
person makes himself a person; that is, makes known to himself what
he is". (1969, p.574) Consequently:

> "... the choice to which (it) will lead us ... will always
> remain particular; that is, we will not achieve as the
> ultimate goal of our investigation and the foundation of
> all behaviour an abstract, general term - libido for example
> - which would be differentiated and made concrete first in

complexes and then in detailed acts of conduct, due to the

action of external facts and the history of the subject.

.   .   .

(Existential analysis) thereby abandons the supposition that

the environment acts mechanically on the subject under

consideration. The environment can act on the subject only

to the exact extent that he comprehends it; that is,

transforms it into a situation. Hence no objective descrip-

tion of this environment could be of any use to us." (ibid)

Sartre says that Existential psychoanalysis has not yet found its Freud

but "we can find the foreshadowing of it in certain particularly

successful biographies". Sartre himself demonstrates the principles

he lays down for existential psychoanalysis in his biography of

Jean Genet (1963). Here he discovers Genet's project or his original

choice of self and shows how this choice provides the intelligible

basis of all Genet's acts and experiences.

In Questions Sartre attempts to assimilate his psychoanalysis into

Marxism by portraying the method as a means to reinstate concrete

regions of the real. He claims that it is a method preoccupied above

all with establishing the way in which the child lives his family

relations in the interior of a given society:

"And this does not mean that it raises any doubts as to the

priority of institutions. Quite the contrary, its object

itself depends on the structure of a particular family, and

this is only a certain individual manifestation of the

family structure appropriate to such and such a class under

such and such conditions." (p.61)

The family is constituted in and through the general movement of history and psychoanalysis, in discovering the particular family as mediation between the universal class and the individual, discovers the point of insertion of a man in his class.

(ii) Sociology as an auxiliary discipline:

As Laing and Cooper point out in their introduction to <u>Reason and Violence</u>, Sartre refers explicitly to only a limited range of American social scientific thinking in <u>Questions</u>. He criticises the work of "all Gestaltists" (and in particular Kurt Lewin) because "instead of seeing in (totalisation) the real movement of History", they fetishize it and realise it in hypostatized, ready made totalities. Sartre illustrates his point with these quotes from Lewin: "It is necessary to consider the situation, with all its social and cultural implicat- ions, as a <u>dynamic, concrete whole</u>" and "The structural properties of a dynamic totality are not the same as those of its parts".

According to Sartre, such a position produces a <u>synthesis of exter- nality</u>, and to this given totality the sociologist himself remains external.

> "(Lewin) wants to hold on to the benefits of teleology while
> at the same time maintaining the attitude of <u>positivism</u> -
> that is, while suppressing or disguising the ends of human
> activity. At this point sociology is posited for itself and
> is opposed to Marxism, not by affirming the provisional

autonomy of its method - which would, on the contrary,

provide the means for integrating it - but by affirming

the radical autonomy of its object. First, it is an

ontological autonomy. No matter what precaution one

takes, one cannot prevent the group, thus conceived, from

being a substantial unity - even and especially if, out of

a desire for empiricism, one defines its existence by its

simple function. Second, it is a methodological autonomy.

In place of the movement of dialectical totalisation one

substitutes actual totalities. This step naturally implies

a refusal of dialectic and of history exactly because

dialectic is at the start only the real movement of a unity

in process of being made and not the study, not even the

functional and dynamic study, of a unity already made. For

Lewin, every law is a structural law and expresses a

function or a functional relation between the parts of a

whole. Precisely for this reason, he deliberately confines

himself to the study of what Lefebvre calls horizontal

complexity. He studies neither the history of the

individual (psychoanalysis) nor that of the group."

       •   •   •

Finally, it is a reciprocal autonomy of the experimentor

and of the experimental group. The sociologist is not

situated; or if he is, concrete precautions will suffice to

desituate him. It may be that he tries to integrate himself

into the group, but this integration is temporary; he knows

that he will disengage himself, that he will record his

observations objectively." (pp.68-69)

Sartre takes similar exception to Kardiner's notion of <u>basic</u>

<u>personality</u>, a structure presumably produced in any given society

by the <u>primary institutions</u> of child-rearing that are specific to

that culture. Sartre quotes Kardiner as saying that the basic

personality is situated "halfway between the primary institutions

(which express the action of the environment on the individual) and

the secondary institutions (which express the individual's reaction

upon the environment)". (4) He sees this notion as a fetish if we

are meant to take this personality as an objective reality imposing

itself on the members of the group, and he replies:

> "It is true that the individual is conditioned by the social
>
> environment and that he turns back upon it to condition it
>
> in turn... But if we can determine the primary institutions
>
> and follow the movement by which the individual makes
>
> himself by surpassing them, why do we need to put on these
>
> ready-made clothes along the way? The basic personality
>
> fluctuates between abstract universality a posteriori and
>
> concrete substance as a completely <u>made totality</u>. If we
>
> take it as some sort of <u>whole</u>, pre-existing the person
>
> about to be born, then either it stops History and reduces
>
> it to a discontinuity of types and styles of life, or it is
>
> itself going to be shattered by the continuous movement of
>
> History". (p.71)

Laing and Cooper believe that while Sartre's criticisms may be

necessary, they do less than justice to Kardiner's work which, however

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(4) See Kardiner A. (1951) "Basic Personality Structure", in
    <u>Psychological Theory</u>, Ed. Melvin H. Marx. New York : Macmillan

contentious, at least clearly outlines the problems dealt with in work such as Ruth Benedict's, which concentrates on the relations between institutions in a society and discusses them analogically in terms of one-person psychopathology. They also suggest that Sartre does not deal adequately with work in group dynamics following Lewin, nor with that of Parsons, Bales and Shils. Neither does Sartre seem aware of the extent to which some of his criticisms have been anticipated by American sociologists themselves. (5)

Sartre is equally critical of contemporary Marxist critiques of American Sociology. For example, Marxists claim that it provides ideological tools for the ruling class by which it can help to support itself. Sartre sees this as a sweeping, global judgement which, while it might be true in specific cases, does not detract from the great deal of concrete success this sociology has achieved. Its methodological advances must be conserved in future social thinking even if its own internal crisis does point to a lack of philosophical orientation. In this prospective form, with its absence of theoretical foundation and with the precision of its auxiliary method - research, tests, statistics, etc. - sociology as a temporary moment of the historical totalisation discounts new mediations between concrete men and the material conditions of their life; between human relations and the relations of production; between persons and classes (or other groupings).

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(5) For example, by Znaniecki in his account of the contradiction in Sociology between the viewpoint of <u>social structure</u> and that of <u>social change</u>, as a result of which analysis proceeds from two isolated perspectives and the results are then simply added together. See "Basic Problems of Contemporary Sociology" in <u>American Sociological Review</u>, vol. 19, October 1954.

Indeed, Sartre goes on to posit research as "a living relation between

men" and to situate the sociologist as being himself "an object of

history". Hence "the sociologist and his <u>object</u> form a couple, each

one of which is to be interpreted by the other; the <u>relationship</u>

between them must be itself interpreted as a moment of history". (p.72)

By taking precautions sociologists may overcome the tendency to betray

sociology into mechanistic anti-dialectical idealism. The group never

has and never can have the type of metaphysical existence which people

try to attribute to it:

> "We repeat with Marxism: there are only men and real relations
>
> between men. From this point of view, the group is in one
>
> sense only a multiplicity of relations and of relations among
>
> these relations. And this certitude derives precisely from
>
> what we consider the reciprocal relation between the sociol-
>
> ogist and his object; the researcher can be <u>outside</u> a group
>
> only to the degree that he is <u>inside</u> another group - except
>
> in limited cases in which this exile is the reverse side of
>
> a real act of exclusion. These diverse perspectives demon-
>
> strate to the enquirer that the community as such escapes
>
> him on all sides." (p.76)

The Project

> "The most rudimentary behaviour must be determined both in
>
> relation to the real and present factors which condition
>
> it and in relation to a certain object, still to come,
>
> which it is trying to bring into being. This is what we

call the project." (p.91)

Sartre accepts without reservations Engels thesis that men make their
history themselves but in a given environment which conditions them.
To this extent man is the product of his product since the structures
of a society which is created by human work define for each man an
objective situation as a starting point. The material conditions of
his existence circumscribe the field of man's possibilities (the
socially and historically conditioned goals towards which the agent
surpasses his objective situation). There is always a field of
possibilities no matter how restricted it may be. It is not an
indeterminate zone but, on the contrary, a strongly structured region
which depends on all of History and which contains its own contradictions.

"It is by transcending the given toward the field of

possibles and by revealing one possibilty from among all

the others that the individual objectifies himself and

contributes to making History." (p.93)

The agent may not know the reality of his own project even though it
influences the course of events through the conflicts it manifests
and engenders.

A man defines himself by his project; his peculiar structure is the
immediate relation with the Other than oneself, beyond the condition
which is made for him. It is the ceaseless production of self by work,
gesture, action. Human existence is a perpetual state of being - beyond
-itself-towards, hence it is not a stable substance but a perpetual
disequilibrium. That which Sartre terms choice or freedom arises from

an individual's realisation of certain possibilities to the exclusion
of others as he is impelled through the field by this impulse towards
objectification.

The concept of praxis defies attempts to explain the works or the
attitudes of a person by the factors which condition them. Such attempts
reduce the complex to the simple by denying the specificity of things.
The dialectical method, on the other hand, aims at something completely
opposite to this reduction. The dialectical movement surpasses by
conserving, but the terms of the surpassed contradiction cannot account
for either the transcending itself or the subsequent synthesis; "on the
contrary, it is the synthesis which clarifies them and which enables
us to understand them". (p.151)

What we need to examine is the choice which gives a life or synthesis
uniqueness, and Sartre claims that in order to grasp the meaning of
any human conduct we must use what German psychiatrists and historians
have called comprehension, which is simply a means of knowing through
the dialectical movement which explains the act by its terminal
significance in terms of its starting conditions. Sartre provides
the following example of what he means:

"If my companion suddenly starts towards the window, I
understand his gesture in terms of the material situation
in which we both are. It is, for example, because the room
is too warm... This action is not inscribed in the
temperature; it is not set in motion by the warmth as by a
stimulus provoking chain reactions. There is present here
a synthetic conduct which, by unifying itself, unifies

—

before my eyes the practical field in which we both are.
The movements are new, they are adapted to the situation,
to particular obstacles. This is because the perceived
settings are _abstract_ motivating schemata and insufficiently
determined; they are determined within the unity of the
enterprise... If I am to go beyond the succession of
gestures and to perceive the unity which they give themselves,
I must myself feel the overheated atmosphere as a need for
freshness, as a demand for air; that is, I must myself become
the lived surpassing of our material situation. Within the
room, doors and windows are never entirely passive realities;
the work of other people has given to them their meaning, has
made out of them instruments, possibilities _for an other_ (any
other). This means that I _comprehend_ them already as
instrumental structures and as products of a directed
activity. But my companion's movement makes explicit the
crystallised indications and designations in these products;
... and conversely the indications contained in the utensils
become the crystallised meaning which allows me to _comprehend_
the enterprise. His conduct _unifies_ the room, and the room
defines his conduct." (pp 153-154)

Comprehension, then, is nothing other than my real life or the total-
ising movement which grasps myself, the other person, and the environment
in the synthetic unity of an objectification in process. Any simple
observation of the social field should make us realise that the
relation to ends is a permanent structure of human enterprises and that
it is on the basis of this relation that real men understand actions
and institutions. It should be established that our comprehension

of the other is necessarily attained through ends which, far from

being mysterious appendages to acts, simply represent the super-

session of the given in an act which passes from the present to the

future.

The Progressive - Regressive Method

The realisation of a possibility leads to the production of an object

or of an event in the social world. Existentialism confirms the

specificity of the historical event (the book, the act, the life, etc.);

it seeks to restore to the event its function and its multiple

dimensions. Marxists do not ignore the event, of course, but they see

it only as a particular expression of a general concept, such as: the

structure of society; the form which the class struggle has assumed;

the relations of force, the ascending movement of the rising class; the

contradictions which at the centre of each class set particular groups

with different interests in opposition to each other.

The Marxist method is progressive. It rests on the result of long

analyses (the work of Marx himself). Marxist aphorisms show how for

the best part of a century Marxists have tended not to attach much

importance to the event. For them the duty of the event is simply to

verify their a priori analyses of the situation, or at least not to

contradict them; and political theorists use it to prove that what has

happened had to happen just as it did. They can discover nothing by

this method of pure exposition, according to Sartre, and the proof of

this is the fact that they know in advance what they must find.

"Existentialism reacts by affirming the specificity of the

historical event, which it refuses to conceive of as the absurd juxtaposition of a contingent residue and an a priori signification." (p.126)

The Existential approach is regressive. But the regressive biographical facts on which it concentrates show only the traces of a dialectical movement, not the movement itself. It leaves to be discovered the enriching movement of totalisation which delivers each moment from its antecedent moment. Sartre's analytic synthetic method, then, is an attempt to unite the regressive - progressive methods of Existentialism and Marxism respectively, in a continuing cross-reference.

PART TWO

COMMUNITY TELEVISION

THE CONSTITUTION OF A MEDIUM ANALYSED BY MEANS OF

SARTRE'S PROGRESSIVE - REGRESSIVE METHOD

SECTION 1

PROCESS AND PRODUCT

AN IDEAL DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY TV IN ITS HORIZONTAL COMPLEXITY

1.1 Introduction

Sartre's method with its auxiliary disciplines is applicable at all
levels in a hierarchy of mediations from the macro-social down to the
individual biography. The present work can do little more than hint
at the broad cultural implications of community TV (i.e. at its place
in relation to the dominant social movement of our time), and neither
does it pretend to explore the individual projects of the principal
actors in any depth. Rather, our analysis is situated somewhere around
the level of community studies where the material and human elements are
seen broadly as wholes which must be explicated in relation to one
another.

In particular we are concerned with contradictions between a) the nature
of the medium as it represented by men in verbal and graphic form (i.e.
as it is mediated by men), and b) the historical reality of the medium
as it has materialised in the work of men. Of course, individual
projects must be taken into account in some measure since these
represent particular manifestations of an underlying social project.
This social project may be explicated by resolving the contradictions
between individual projects.

As a point of departure let us take the term community television itself
and clarify our terms of reference.

From the literature on community studies it would seem that the notion
of community is open to several interpretations. With reference to
community television, however, use of the term community consistently
refers to the local community.

The very first proposal to set up a community TV service in the U.K.
specified the Notting Hill area of London as a suitable locale for such
a project, and it listed those characteristics of the area which made
it particularly suitable (see Hopkins et al, 1972, p.54).

The North Kensington community TV project (NKTV), as the name suggests,
was also concerned with a particular locality. The same goes for the
Bentilee Video Project (described in the Diary) and for the several
experiments in local programme origination for cable-casting.

In each case, apart from the cable experiments, community TV has been
put forward as a community development project and the localities
chosen have been development priority areas with particular kinds of
problem to tackle. It has been an explicit aim of these projects to
instil a sense of community where it has hitherto been lacking.

The cable-casting experiments, on the other hand, are localised by
nature of the technology. They cannot claim a particular concern for
or sympathy with the local communities on which they have descended,
since from the social action point of view they have been situated
arbitrarily. Their project is not so much to instil a sense of
community as to encourage as many households as possible within the
locality to subscribe to piped television. In order to do this the
cable companies do try to fill their programme schedules with material

of local interest and, indeed, under the terms of their licence they are obliged to do so. In practice this obligation has been interpreted to mean that the familiar, broadcasting, scheduled programming model must be applied to local issues and talent.

Peter Lewis refers to the distinction made by the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (which has had much more experience at this kind of thing) between local and community programming in respect of cable-casting. The former, he says, is "programming about local affairs and events made by a (commercial) station"; the latter is "programming made by the local community" (December 1973, p.6).

However, depending upon the way that this is interpreted it can be a misleading distinction. For in practice community programming in this country is little more than scheduled, local programming made with the help of unskilled, unpaid local labour. This of course may well be due to the terms of the licence under which local origination for cable-casting is permitted by the Government (e.g. cable companies are expected to maintain reasonable standards of production yet they are not permitted to operate on a commercial basis).

In this country then, community and local programming amount to the same thing as far as cable-casting is concerned. For both kinds are subject to the same project which is to manufacture programme/products for scheduled distribution. In this kind of system the nature of the product conditions the means of production.

For the North Kensington and Bentilee projects in particular the work, as we have said, fell more within the context of community action than

that of 'television' programme-making. In this context the emphasis is on the <u>process</u> of recording videotapes and on the particular purposes to which recorded tapes are put. In other words, the nature of the product is determined by the relations of production.

Since this kind of community TV has not yet managed to make use of cable distribution facilities it might be better if we refer to it as <u>community video</u> to distinguish it from the kind of community TV claimed by the cable companies.

While the <u>community</u> in community TV is usually taken to refer to a locality, there is another sense in which the term may be interpreted and which may be of use in the present context. Ronnie Frankenberg suggests, in his <u>Communities in Britain</u>, that "community implies having something in common" (1966, p.238), and George Goetschius, in his <u>Working with Community Groups</u>, says that in one of its common uses community designates "an ethnic, religious, or similar general category within a larger social unit ... By extension it is used in the same sense to designate professional or vocational groupings" (1969, p.215).

In this sense we may think of community TV as a term referring to a group of people having in common a similar approach to the use of television technology. If we may take as an operational definition of the common project of this community: the use of <u>video</u> in community development (thereby excluding the use of video by the cable stations for scheduled programming) we may **begin** to explicate the horizontal complexity of this community as an <u>ideal</u> which is commonly held by its members.

The following is an attempt to describe some of the main characteristics
of the ideal as represented by the community of videasts in this
country.

1.2 Process and Product

These are always seen as a couple. The basic principle of community
video makes a distinction between the production of video-tape or film
as a process in its own right, and as a production for the separate,
final product. In a review of Hopkins et al (1972) Time Out magazine
(23rd February 1973), Andy Farjeon observed that:

> "Process encompasses all aspects of using the hardware in
> a creative way within the framework of a geographical or
> demographic community. Ideally the film-maker enters the
> community and attempts to involve the people in the production
> of tapes or films relevant to their social situations,
> giving them as much control over each stage of the produc-
> tion as possible, and limiting his or her own role to that
> of guide, activator and technical advisor. The participants
> are reassured from the outset that anything they may do or
> say in front of the camera will be erased immediately if
> they are not satisfied with it or if it embarrasses them;
> that only those persons or groups chosen by them will see
> the recorded material; and that the camera will never be
> allowed to intrude.
>
> It is a philosophy, if you like, of sensitivity and co-
> operation in the use of media, and it attempts to escape
> from the syndrome of the movie production crew who crash

into a community, ravaging it in the name of news report-
age, taking what they want from it without regard for
local feeling or needs, and then exploiting the people
with their use of the final product.

It entails a radically new approach to software origina-
tion; it is no longer good enough to see film or video
as the vehicle of the producer's self-expression or ego,
it has to carry the community's voice its needs and
aspirations.

With this approach in mind, the introduction of film or
video into a community tends to fuse the members, to
strengthen their sense of community ... The tapes made
are often used to promote discussion and participation at
public viewings or meetings: after a problem or grievance
is explored on the tape, the meeting is asked, 'is this
your problem? If so, what can we all do to alleviate it?'

Thus the process of completing a programme or tape acts
as a catalyst to further action. The tape may also,
although not necessarily, make a good product in its own
right when completed and may be kept by the community as
documentation, or used to serve as an example of what can
be achieved by neighbouring communities with similar
problems. Or it may even be taken right out of the
community for wider showing, as has happened with some of
the films in the National Film Board of Canada's list (the
Fogo films, VTR St. Jacques and others)."

<u>VTR St. Jacques</u> (1) illustrates exactly what is meant by process. Peter Lewis described the film in <u>New Society</u> (9th March 1972) basing his description on the account given in <u>Challenge for Change Newsletter No.4</u> by Dorothy Todd Henaut and Bonnie Klein - the two National Film Board producers involved:

> "Saint Jacques is a poor area of central Montreal afflicted by bad housing, unemployment, poor recreation and education facilities, and bad medical care. A public meeting in March 1968 elected a citizens' committee who, on receiving no help from provincial and civic authorities decided to take matters into their own hands. Their broad objectives were 'to work as citizens to gain as much control as possible over their own lives'. Within a few months, they had opened a community clinic and also formed a VTR/film group which included the two <u>Challenge for Change</u> members. Both groups had recognised a mutual convergence of ideas and needs.

> The task of the VTR/film group was 'to sensitise the inhabitants to the area of their common problems and to communicate the committee's hope that together they could act to change their situation'. The equipment used $\frac{1}{2}$" portable VTR and video camera with microphones. Dorothy Henaut and Bonnie Klein showed the rest of the group how to use this. Technically it is very simple to operate.

> There followed then the various stages of development which,

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(1) Available from the NFBC's London Office.

with an almost Piagetian inevitability, can be paralleled in the other Canadian communities where film or video has been used in a similar way. First comes the shock of self-recognition familiar to anyone who recalls first hearing themselves on soundtape. 'It helped me a lot to know myself. you see how you function ... It develops your critical senses ... You become two people – he who acts, and he who watches himself act.' Next, what one might call the sand-play stage: 'when various members of the VTR group started taking it to their homes and photographing their children, we got over our diffidence about using the equipment, as we learned how simple it was to use. Or, to translate the citizens' description: we tamed or domesticated our VTR'. Next comes the awareness of the environment, encounters with other people. 'People could tell it was another citizen like themselves doing the interview, and they had more confidence in us than they would in someone from the Canadian Broadcasting Commission or the NFB, or other media.' The immediate playback which videotape allows, gave the participants the chance to comment on their own responses, and, when programmes on specific subjects were prepared, to share in the editorial decisions.

For people who have always associated their dealings with authority with form-filling and printed instructions, the visual medium begins to act as a catalyst. They see for the first time a possibility of speaking about their problems, of having a say in how their statements are presented, of

seeing the reactions of authority (since these too can be

VTR'd), and assessing those reactions in a way that is

impossible when faced with the impenetrability of an

official letter.

Portable video, used in this way, does not necessarily

require a cable television system. Playback in St. Jacques

was through monitors set up in the street or in hired halls.

But a cable system is a very convenient outlet for material

 of this kind. Because cable time is cheap compared with

air time, debates and hearings can be screened at length

which broadcast stations would usually find impossible.

The experience of St. Jacques, and of a number of other

places in Canada where Challenge for Change launched similar

projects, shows that citizens can quickly learn to use

portable video like most of us use a pen as a means of

personal expression and communication." (op. cit. p.492)

From reports such as that of VTR St. Jacques and others, the Centre for

Advanced Television Studies (CATS), the latest successor to TVX (the

TV department at IRAT), has formulated the following definition of

process:

"Process is a word to describe the flow of information

within a system of people through media and in time.

This system allows for the externalisation/recording of

the emotional as well as the semantic information in a

directed activity programme, and so includes internal

group processes as well as external processes into the total
field.

Together with recording of external processes this makes a
record of the unified field at each stage of the whole
programme, which is then referred to at later stages. It
is referred to so that the overall temporal flow of the
programme can be re-evaluated at each stage relative to the
entry of new factors." (Hopkins et al, 1972 p.9)

1.3 The Community Development Process

In their book on The Community Development Process (1965), Biddle and
Biddle describe three kinds of process:

i) "... a series of stages or activities through which individuals
are expected to pass automatically" (e.g. physical growth,
inevitable deterioration of a neighbourhood, etc.).

ii) "... a procedure, set up by some person, to which other persons
are expected to conform" (e.g. industrial methodology, like
an assembly line or series of steps to have the 'phone
installed or unemployment benefits, etc.).

iii) "... a progression of events that is planned by the participants
to serve goals they progressively choose. The events point
to changes in a group and in individuals that can be termed
growth in social sensitivity and competence. The essence of
process does not consist in any fixed succession of events

(these may vary widely from group to group and from one time
to another) but in the growth that occurs within individuals
within groups, and within the communities they serve. The
process is one that is motivated by participant choosing.
Even if it has been initiated by a paid encourager, it has
not genuinely started until the participants themselves
begin to assume the responsibility to direct and keep it
going."

The ideal community video process as it was formulated in 1.2 corres-
ponds most with the third category, yet the first two categories are
applicable to some extent. In the description of the St. Jacques
project we read that once Dorothy Todd Henaut and her colleague had
shown local citizens how to operate the portable video equipment,
"there followed ... the various stages of development ... with an almost
Piagetian inevitability". In other words, it is agreed that there is a
series of stages through which individuals are expected to pass auto-
matically when given access to video hardware. The second category,
which suggests a procedure set up by some person, to which other persons
are expected to conform, may not at first seem applicable to a process
rooted in "a philosophy ... of sensitivity and co-operation in the use
of media" (1.2). However, there is a model for community organising
which is for the most part implicit in what we are describing as the
community video process and this model may be attributed to the
American, Saul Alinsky.

CATS includes a schematic description of Alinsky's method in its
comprehensive report on Video in Community Development (Hopkins et al,
1972). The description is attributed to Dorothy Todd Henaut. Alinsky's

is the only model of community organisation referred to explicitly in the U.K. literature.

Following Cox et al (1970) we will distinguish between Alinsky's method and other models such as <u>locality development</u> and <u>social planning</u> by referring to it as <u>social action</u>.

"Social action presupposes a disadvantaged segment of the population that needs to be organised, perhaps in alliance with others, to make adequate demands on the larger community for increased resources or treatment more in accordance with social justice and democracy. Its partici-pants aim at basic changes in major institutions or community practices. They seek redistribution of power, resources, or decision making in the community or changes in basic policies of formal organisations." (loc. cit. p.5)

1.31 Alinsky's Method

According to Dorothy Todd Henaut (in Hopkins et al, 1972, pp.103-6), Alinsky's method necessitates the intervention of a trained, professi-onal organiser to activate the latent forces of dissatisfaction in a resigned, powerless community, so that it can gain control of its own environment. The organiser is responsible for stimulating conflict between the self-conscious community and its enemy - the larger power structure represented by the city establishment. The process begins when the organiser gets himself invited into the community:

"If an organiser is deeply concerned about a particular

community, nothing prevents him from going in and generating enough interest in the idea of organising that he will be invited to do the job."

Supported financially by the community, he spends a period of months feeling his way in, identifying natural leaders and convincing them of the necessity for organisation. Simultaneously he is unveiling the latent dissatisfaction and discontent in the population. He is breaking down the rationalisations that justified accepting an unacceptable situation.

"He is using a new vocabulary, in which the word self-interest becomes a dynamic force instead of a shameful word ... Recognising the basic self-interests of all concerned is essential. He also employs the concept and dynamic of power."

Yet he listens more than he talks; he asks questions rather than supplying answers. At no time does he give the impression that he is dictating ideas; rather, the people are discovering things themselves, and are in fact unfolding their own latent ideas. Their priorities are their own. The needs they express are their own.

The organiser and local leaders locate all the small interest groups in the community. Common problems and multiple interests are discovered. The aim is to bring about an official founding assembly, representing all the various member groups, to form a community-wide organisation.

In order to gain valuable experience before its struggle with the established power structure, the community organisation engages in

skirmishes with smaller targets.

"The actions are chosen to involve the participation of a
maximum number of people, and the community as a whole
eventually feels that the organisation really represents
them, even though in fact a relatively small number in
the community may be militant in the action ... From
then on, the organisation will be concerned not only
with small tactics aimed at specific problems (e.g. slum
landlords) but also with obtaining recognition from the
established power structure as the official spokesman
for the community."

The inevitable, insulting, arrogant and repressive gestures of the
establishment to this challenge to its usual hopeless and apathetic
methods of handling the community may be enough to galvanise the organ-
isation into the cohesiveness it may have lacked until them. The
powers-that-be will not give up their control without a fight, and their
tactics are many and varied, commensurate with the power that they have
and intend to maintain.

The relatively powerless community must now distinguish the enemy more
clearly and the organiser must ensure that this is done in as personal
a manner as possible.

"The issues appear black-and-white, and the community's latent
anger is aimed at obtaining victory on vital issues and
achieving recognition as a community responsible for itself."

Once the organisation has become recognised by the establishment, negotiations begin designed to bring control of their environment to people living in the community (i.e. control over urban renewal, public transport, health and welfare services, etc.). This stage should be reached two or three years after the organiser joins the community, and when it is reached the organiser's presence is no longer necessary.

It is important that the organisation is structured in such a way that in the quest for local leadership the charismatic personalities do not form an oligarchy or political power group unconcerned with the masses they ostensibly represent. This is done by making leaders responsible first and foremost to their own small interest groups. The groups' obligation is to the organisation which, in turn, depends on the smaller groups' support for survival. Besides this, having responsibility for the community brings out the capacity for responsibility in local people.

In the absence of the professional organiser it is now up to local leaders to win over the more clear-sighted middle-class liberals in the city, who on the one hand know that the poor are perfectly right and that drastic changes must be made, while on the other hand they shy away from strong vocabulary (identifying more comfortably with the vocabulary used by the establishment) and are ill at ease with concrete action.

1.4 Process as Education

Process as it is formulated by CATS (1.2) conforms more closely with the Biddles' third descriptive category. It is the ideal process in

process, an end in itself. It comes into operation as soon as community
members begin to assume the responsibility for directing and perpet-
uating the work originated by the paid organiser.

Process is associated with education in two ways: firstly, the organ-
iser is considered to be a kind of educator who leads community members
through the initial stages to the point where they can take over from
themselves: and secondly, the ideal process is considered to be an
educational process or more correctly, a process of self-education by
means of which persons and groups come to understand themselves, each
other, and their environment.

1.41 The Organiser/Educator

According to Biddle and Biddle (op. cit. ch.15), the community organiser
is "an educator who becomes a friendly consultant to ... a committed,
thoughtful, yet active group". They claim that the emphasis is laid
upon a process of inward-originated growth (within community members)
and they point out that this idea reflects the original meaning of the
verb to educate.

> "It means to lead out (it is assumed that there is something
> within to be led out). Training for community development,
> therefore, provides a point of view and social atmospheres
> that, hopefully, will make actual the good potentials that
> are assumed to be within the learners. The skill required
> of the teacher then is less the ability to instruct effect-
> ively and more the ability to provide the circumstances
> that expedite self-chosen learning."

In the community videast's view (mediated by Alinsky's notion of social action) the "something within to be led out" is the latent dissatisfaction that community members are assumed to harbour. The assumption is that "the silent poor and the silent majority are all suffering from the need to participate in the decisions that affect their lives" (2) and that, as a result, there is "growing frustration with always being on the receiving end, with never being able to respond". (2) The problem from the organiser/educator's point of view is to help community members to objectify their dissatisfaction or to manifest it in particular issues. To do this he must discover just the right issues. This is why he must listen more than he talks. His position is similar in this respect to the participant-observer as described by Ronnie Frankenburg:

"A central paradox of the participant observation method
is to seek information by not asking questions ... It
often happens to the field-worker that the questions he
is asked are more important than the questions he asks.
This because in social science, while one knows the
problem one is interested in, one does not necessarily
know at first the precise questions to ask, or whom to
ask, and when to ask them.... It is sometimes quicker
and more economical to wait for questions and answers
to come to you."

The community organiser of course is not concerned only with gathering

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(2) Dorothy Todd Henaut, "Powerful Catalyst for Change", in
    Hopkins et at, 1972, p.15.

information. He must also be able to put this information to effective use. The Biddles balance the dual role of the organiser as follows:

"Community developers will be more convincing educators

when they are aware that their approach illustrates a

pattern of research more than a pattern of instruction.

They depend not upon telling and other formal instruction,

but upon helping people discover the experiences that may

cause them to bring about favourable changes in themselves

and in others. They seek for answers, but also for

development. The hope for development invites the disci-

pline of action-research."

1.42 The Animator/Resource Person

According to Hopkins et al (1972), organisers in community video are variously called animators, activators, enablers, facilitators, and so on. Such labels obviously attempt to describe the active and passive qualities simultaneously expected of such persons. Animators, we are told, are essentially people who possess, among other skills, "a knowledge of people's communications behaviour in society/communities/ groups". (loc. cit. p.7)

Where video is involved there is a need, besides the animator, for a video resource person, i.e. a person trained in the basic skills needed to operate video hardware. CATS maintain that organisers using video in community development require, ideally, the skills of both the video resource person and the animator. This more or less goes without saying and in practice the label - video resource person -

implies the skills of animator as well. For example, in an intro-
duction to CATS's training course for <u>Video Resource Personnel</u>,
prepared for the <u>Communications and Community Development Conference</u>
at Liverpool University in May 1972, John Kirk says that:

"Two things are needed in any situation where media resources

(hardware) become available to community groups. People

accessing these must have:

(i) an understanding of group communications processes

based on an equalitarian ethic

(ii) an understanding of the operation, service and

systems design problems in fitting media hardware

to the needs of the community."

The role of the video resource person must vary then, between that of
teacher, in the traditional sense (since he is in possession of infor-
mation which must be passed on to community members if they are to be
able to operate video hardware themselves), and that of helper, or
encourager (since the aim is to help the community to realise its own
potential for action).

1.5 <u>Video as Catalyst</u>

The role of the community developer is self-destructive in the classic
heroic sense. He aims to initiate a process which, if he is successful,
will remove the necessity for his presence. The life of the video
resource person is not expected to be a very long one once he has
<u>released</u> the hardware (made it available) and <u>demystified</u> it (given

instruction in its operation and strategic use). Indeed, we are told
in TVX's 1969 Community Television proposal that "video equipment is
itself information which, when circulated, can be a powerful factor
in opening up possibilities of real community participation".

Inasmuch as he is seen as one who activates latent forces in groups of
people, the community developer is often referred to as a social
catalyst. The term has been picked up by videasts, but in terms of
community video it is not the resource person who is considered to be
the catalyst but video itself (or 'video', rather). The term 'video'
implies more than just video hardware. It includes process and the
various operations and strategies associated with it. Indeed, human
praxis in respect of community video has become so closely associated
with the hardware that it is now seen as an inherent quality of the
hardware. Video equipment acts as a kind of totem. Videasts identify
with one another through the qualities they associate collectively with
the hardware. Consequently, video in itself is considered to be the
catalyst, and it has even been suggested that 'video' acts as a sort
of extra person in group sessions.

1.6 Process : a summary

"Video is a complete information system in itself. It has
input (camera and mike), storage and processing (videotape
recorder - VTR), and output (monitor). Portable video
allows complete control of the means of communication by
the people in a community. They can use the camera to
view themselves and their community with a more perceptive
eye, do interviews and ask questions pertinent to their

specific context, edit tapes designed to carry a partic-

ular message to a particular audience that they have

chosen and invited themselves. The process these steps

involve can help people achieve an understanding of them-

selves and their community, clear lines of communication

within and beyond the community context, and reduce feelings

of powerlessness. Involvement with process - the means of

production - is the prime use of video in the development

of community organisation and action..." (Taken from

Steve Herman's paper, The Video Process in Community Devel-

opment, prepared for the Communications etc. conference at

Liverpool, 1972.)

1.7 Product

Dorothy Todd Henaut says that:

"Most film-makers feel that their film is their own personal

expression or vision of people and events, and they must

have absolute control over the whole process, from shooting

to editing, in order to create a proper work of art ...

They are trained to think in terms of the product and not

in terms of the process, or of the effect they are having

on subject or audience." (in Hopkins et al, 1972, p.18)

Steve Herman (in the paper quoted in 1.6 above) says that:

"The communications facility of a society is its greatest

resource. Communication has two elements - information

and response. Without both there is fear, ignorance, mis-

understanding and uncalled for reaction."

Film and television, constituted as mass media, are product-orientated

industries. Because they operate a one-too-many system allowing for

little or no response from the audience, and because audience reaction,

if represented, is treated first by professionals before it reaches the

screen, fear, ignorance and misunderstanding are thought to prevail.

   "The need for a real exchange of information and ideas

   among the various groups that make up the fabric of our

   society grows more pressing every day." (Dorothy Henaut,

   loc. cit. p.17)

Dorothy Todd Henaut continues:

   "Instead of being an instrument to facilitate these exchanges,

   the media as presently constituted usually exacerbate these

   frustrations by filtering citizens' opinions, when solicited

   through the well-dressed eyes of professional journalists

   and communicators."

In contradistinction and in an attempt to redress the balance, community

video operates a two-way communication system in which the emphasis is

placed on process or the means of production. Consequently, "the need

for a fancy, professional product is virtually non-existent". (Woodside,

May 1970)

   "Product is secondary, sometimes entirely absent; and its form

is largely determined by process from which it evolves."

(Herman, op. cit.)

The community videast does not see himself simply as one who uses video as a community development tool. He sets himself and his work up as an alternative to the broadcasting establishment. The community of videasts sees itself as the "powerless community" in comparison with and in relation to the broadcasting establishment, and it imagines that its approach to the use of video hardware is a step towards democratising 'television' in general. The distinction it makes between process and product is an ideological one and not just a methodological one.

Product sums up in a word the videast's distaste for the undemocratic approach of broadcasting, his scathing criticisms of product for product's sake is diluted somewhat by the fact that product does have a place in his own ideology. He avoids actually contradicting himself, however, by referring to his product as edited software (software in turn being recorded videotape, exposed film, etc.). Software, CATS tells us, "is often not erased but kept, it may also be used as documentation: a record of past process". It continues:

"Often, but not always, these kept tapes will be edited

to make a more interesting product, which can then be

used in a variety of different ways including distri-

bution outside the originating group." (Hopkins et al,

1972, p.11)

1.71 Distribution

CATS seems to be about the only organisation to have taken it upon

itself to investigate systematically the possibilities for distribution and exchange of software. CATS's approach is that of general systems theory. It sees 'television' as a world of systems within systems ranging from television constituted as a <u>centralised</u>, mass medium (i.e. a one-too-many system), to television as a <u>decentralised</u> system facilitating dialogue on a one-to-one, many-to-many basis.

Taking this approach, in <u>Video and Community Development</u> (1972), CATS says that:

"In the field of distribution we find a high variety of methods, ranging from the blanket coverage given by mass media broadcasts, to the user-motivated operation of a videotape mail-order service, and the mobile street play-back vehicle." (p.123)

Elsewhere (3) John Hopkins adds "video theatre/cinemas, cable TV systems, libraries, low powered transmitters", to the list of possible means of software distribution. In the same place Hoppy makes the point that once a piece of software exists it may be distributed by any or all of these means, but in general, the most effective means of distribution will include a number of methods, "each of which reaches a certain section of the community best". In terms of systems theory, he tells us, this is known as a <u>hybrid solution.</u>

Still in the same place Hoppy discusses the feasibility of distributing

(3) "Videotape Distribution : notes on feasibility studies", another CATS <u>Liverpool Conference</u> paper.

community originated software by means of broadcasting, cable-casting, and other methods. In respect of broadcasting he says, for example, that:

> "By the end of the decade, and in some places perhaps at
> the moment, there will be small numbers of persons served
> by local transmitters. Normally these transmitters will
> be operated as part of a regional or nation-wide network.
> But the decentralised mode of this network would allow
> each transmitter to transmit software germane to its own
> service area."

Also in respect of broadcasting he points out that, until 1976, one-quarter of the channel capacity available for TV transmissions is being kept in reserve for the allocation of the fourth TV channel. In other words: "this channel space could be used for experimental broadcasting without the risk of interference".

On the subject of cable-casting he says, for example, that the complete wiring of new towns such as Cwmbran and Milton Keynes and, on a smaller scale, housing estates, overcomes the problem experienced in cities where only subscribers, who may not constitute a community as such, may receive programmes. This also means, he says, that commercial operaters would find these areas interesting whereas they might not be attracted to slum clearance areas.

Broadcasting and cable-casting at the moment represent only possible means of distribution. Among the other methods Hoppy discusses he mentions some which have actually been tried. For example, there is

Inter Action's _Media Bus_, a project devised and directed by Ed Berman

in association with Audrey Bronstein. (4) Also, there is what Hoppy

calls "perhaps the most interesting and least publicised type of grass-

roots distribution", which is simply a team going out with portable

recording and playback equipment. This was the method first put forward

in TVX's 1969 proposal where it was intented to select certain places

frequented by members of the community, such as launderettes, shop-

windows, church halls, etc., and to use them as public viewing sites.

The proposal developed the idea by suggesting that several sites could

be linked by G.P.O. landlines which, in effect, would have created a

closed circuit, cable system.

NKTV restricted itself to the mobile unit method of distribution and so

did the Bentilee project. In the case of NKTV this was not entirely

intentional.

1.72 Access to Hardware

If distribution takes the form of an exchange of software between

community video groups, then the question of access to hardware arises.

In his paper on distribution, Hoppy says that:

"It is questionable whether any form of electronic media

activity can be supported by a community without massive

outside support, especially in the initial stages."

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(4) See "A Media Van", by Justin Wintle in _New Society_, 12th March 1973
    and "Community Media Van", by Rod Morrison in _Architectural Design_,
    July, 1973.

To overcome the necessity for massive outside support in the way of capital to buy hardware, community videasts suggest that equipment may be borrowed from educational institutions and the training departments of many large companies. There are precedents. For example, preliminary experiments leading to TVX's Community Television proposal were conducted during the 1969 Camden Festival with equipment loaned free by Sony (UK) Ltd. Also in 1969, TVX carried out some work in Deptford as a joint project with the Television Research and Training Unit at London University's Goldsmiths' College, using the Unit's newly bought Sony portable system.

"The equipment may not be cheap enough for your group to
go out and buy a set, but there are ways around this
difficulty. The main sources of video equipment in this
country at the moment are educational institutions. If
you are a student, the chances are that your college or
university already has some equipment of this kind. It
is probably locked away somewhere so you may not even
know about it. You could try approaching the powers-
that-be to let you use it for purposes other than record-
ing the occasional lecture.

If you are not a student but involved with a community
group of some kind and feel that this equipment might be
of use to you, you could also try approaching your local
college or university possibly through interested students."
(Jardine and Hickey, May 1972)

Hoppy's Liverpool paper on distribution claims that, "it is really

important for all models of distribution to be regarded as action-research". CATS has already carried out some research sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Britain to investigate on a national scale hardware resources available to local community groups. This research was carried out by means of a questionaire sent to educational institutions (mainly) and other organisations known to be in possession of hardware, asking them to describe their resources, their projects and the circumstances under which they might lend/hire out/exchange equipment and/or software and/or other services to outsiders. The results of this investigation have been published as the UK Video Index (1973) published and described by CATS as "a guide to the most active individuals and groups working with video in the U.K.". It is, according to CATS, "one of the new generation of information sources: user-oriented, very compressed, and designed for computer random-access retrieval".

1.8 Postscript

Section One has listed the main concepts commonly held by those working in the field of community TV. The following three sections will examine some of the ways these ideas have been developed and manifested in the work of particular groups operating in the United Kingdom. This survey (representing the vertical complexity of the medium: community TV) begins in the late 1960's when the term community TV crept into use, and follows the short history of the medium up to 1973.

COMMUNITY VIDEO IN THE U.K., 1969-1973 : IRAT

2.1 Introduction

The first proposal to set up a community TV service in this country was
put forward in the autumn of 1969 by the television and video depart-
ment (TVX) of the Institute for Research in Art and Technology (the
London Arts Lab). Since then the TV department at IRAT has, under a
couple of different names, been responsible for a systematic research
programme concerned with community video and public access.

IRAT has turned out to be one of the more durable manifestations of the
now exhausted, so-called British Underground movement which was born,
as a self-conscious entity, in October 1966 with the first issue of the
newpaper International Times (IT). The movement was very much the
creation of 'the media', particularly the press, as Charles Nicholl
points out in a recent article in the Telegraph colour supplement (28th
September 1973). The Underground depended upon the media for sustenance,
and the media eventually fragmented and transformed it. But the Under-
ground also represented an attitude towards the media - an attitude
which was to materialise in the constitution of IRAT and which remains
implicit in the continuing work of the Institute (as its project) even
though the Underground as such has practically disappeared. Therefore,
in order to understand the project embodied in IRAT's video research
programme, and the methods used, we must first take a brief look at the
motives and the style of the Underground movement from which it emerged.

2.2 IRAT in Context

It was the responsibility of the Underground press, according to Charles Nicholl, to "discover the Underground, to centralise its readers into an intuitive sense of community". If this is so, then the movement has undergone something of an identity crisis. For apart from IT, none of the several, major Underground newspapers and magazines, aimed at a national readership, have survived: two of them, Friendz and Ink, have completely disappeared and in May 1973, OZ Publications Ink, the trading company behind OZ magazine (which first appeared in February 1967) went into voluntary liquidation.

Such a crisis was inevitable, according to Nicholl:

"The label Underground always concealed a vague and un-
helpful generalisation. Now perhaps there is nothing
behind it at all - the debris of an ideal, diminishing
echoes of a war cry that no-one quite understood." (op.cit.)

The label was always pretentious. Jonathon Green, who ran OZ while its editors were on trial in 1971, is quoted in Nicholl's article as saying that Underground is a term "much beloved of Fleet Street writers, TV producers and media men of all types, but it is not so popular among those supposedly thus described". Green continues:

"If any respect is due to true underground movements -
the Weathermen of America, the Baadermeinhof Gruppe in
Germany, the Tupamaros and other Third World Freedom
Fighters - then the Underground in any valid sense has

not yet arrived in England. What does exist is a number

of people, mainly young, whose intention is to create

some form of Alternative Society." (ibid.)

We must distinguish therefore between the Underground and the left-wing

revolutionary movements currently producing papers like Red Mole,

Anarchy, and Freedom. Again according to Nicholl, "the Underground

notion of revolution has more to do with behaviour than ideology". He

quotes Roger Hutchinson, the present editor of IT, as saying:

"The function of the Underground press is to shake people's

assumptions. IT is totally anarchic, it has no structures

and no respect for anything. I think very highly of organ-

isations like IS (International Socialists), for without

them there would not be any point in IT. But we don't want

to be like a high-school lecture; we want to entertain

people. You never teach anyone anything. They teach them-

selves." (ibid.)

Nicholl defines the Underground as "not so much a doctrine, more a way

of life", and the Underground press is, " and expression of that life-

style - communal, egalitarian, drug-oriented". But while the movement

seems difficult to define in conceptual terms ("It is something tribal,

to be lived rather than explained", says Nicholl), it is possible to

define in time and place. By October 1966:

"... the tribe had assembled. Its focal point was Notting

Hill Gate; its tribal markings were long hair, electric

music and drugs. And a nucleus of that community - people

like John 'Hoppy' Hopkins, Michael X, Mick Farren and
Alexandra Trocchi - were involved in ventures somehow
expressing the community's novel and urgent sense of
identity." (ibid.)

Hoppy featured large. He was involved with the Notting Hill Free School,
Fantasy Workshop, and Spontaneous Underground at the Marquee Club. He
also co-edited IT with Jim Haynes and Tom McGrath, promising in the first
issue "to blow your mind, open your pores, delight, enrage, explode,
give hope to the alienated, advice to the arrested, directives to the
Government". (ibid.)

Felix Dennis, one of the editors of OZ before it folded, admits in
Nicholl's article that "a lot of the Underground writing was downright
shoddy, but the idea was to create papers for the people, not necess-
arily something appealing to writers and intellectuals". (ibid.)
Nicholl puts it another way:

"The Underground style emerged - hyperbolic, surreal, jokey and
intuitive. Capable of infantile simplification, but also
passionate in its bias, having no pretence of objectivity to
anaesthetise it." (ibid.)

The community expanded and diversified in 1967, holding demonstrations
and festivals, and opening Underground clubs such as U.F.O., Middle
Earth and the Roundhouse. For a time, says Felix Dennis, "it was a
really effective alternative". But "the initial explosion of the
Underground press encouraged a multitude of papers whose only contri-
bution was to dilute the energy and fragment the audience that IT and

OZ had built up". This, plus the inability of the Underground press "to operate independently of the establishment against which it is theoretically pitted" (according to Green), contributed to its difficulties from 1971 onwards.

Nicholl argues that the Underground was the creation of the press: the Underground press gave its readership a sense of community and established the members of that community as a group in the eyes of the outsider. But, he says, it "failed to sustain and centralise the community energy it unearthed back in 1966. The Underground has dispersed — into politics, into drugs, into second thoughts". (ibid.) He quotes Mick Farren — another editor of IT — who admits that he does not see much future in the Underground press:

"I think it's going to diversify — a lot of localisation, small community-oriented papers, low-key economics." (ibid.)

Nicholl suspects that such a development might paradoxically be the Underground's hope for survival. He points out that there are now seventy-three alternative community papers, ranging from London publications like Brixton's Own Boss and Islington Gutter Press, down to Voices of North Devon and Throbbing Dung from Halifax. There are papers for minority groups — Spare Rib for women, Gay News for homosexuals, Grass Roots and Blackbored for the Black community — and there is the startling success of Time Out, selling its blend of entertainments listings, progressive Arts and radical, investigative journalism to forty thousand Londoners weekly. The implication here is that the fragmentation of the Underground as it was in the mid and late sixties need not be seen as a failure of the press so much as a movement towards

decentralisation - simply a change in the complexion of the Under-
ground's image. Inasmuch as the original, national Underground news-
papers and magazines, which were produced by comparatively few
activists and spokesmen, have been replaced by a proliferation of
limited interest broadsheets and low-budget, localised papers, control
over Underground media has truly been decentralised.

The formation of IRAT in 1969 attempted to rationalise this movement
towards decentralisation. Hoppy and his colleagues who drafted its
constitution chose to adopt the process of fragmentation as a working
principle and made a bid to preserve a kind of unity in diversity.
They dealt with the problem by succumbing to it:

> "The Institute for Research in Art and Technology was formed
> in June 1969, as the name suggests, by a group of twenty-
> five artists and technicians interested in exploring
> communications technology free from the constraints of
> existing organisations.

> Our way of doing this is to work ourselves in terms of a
> decentralised organisation. Each department ranging from
> printing through film and TV to the theatre, art exhibitions
> and semionics, is autonomous and each uses its own section
> of the Institute's four-floor factory premises in central
> London. Relations between the different department activities
> is largely informal, but many of the people are involved in
> the work of more than one department.

> Each department reflects, in its own terms, the model de-

centralised structure of the Institute as a whole. TVX, the TV and video department, currently consists of thirty-odd people who contribute their interest and energy part-time plus one full-time co-ordinator." (NECCTA Bulletin No.5, May 1970)

The formation of IRAT depassed (in Sartre's terms) an unstable, indefinite situation (sustained by what Nicholl calls a "collective euphoria") towards a more clearly defined and intentionally structured way-of-being and way-of-working together. Its project remained that of the Underground, i.e. to operate as an alternative to the 'system', but for Hoppy and his colleagues it was no longer enough simply to reject the ways of established intitutions, it was necessary to rationalise their way of being - to create an ideology.

In respect of television this ideology has found its most complete expression to date in the Institute's research report on <u>Video in Community Development</u> (Hopkins et al, 1972), the television department at IRAT (variously known as TVX, Vision Teleproductions and, lately, CATS - the Centre for Advanced Television Studies) proudly and indeed quite rightly advertises this report as the only standard reference work in the U.K. It deals mainly with Canadian and North American experience yet it does include IRAT's own proposal to set up a community television service in Notting Hill, which it put forward in 1969 when, as the proposal points out, the field of study was "almost totally unexplored ... and consequently, reliable information (was) scarce". (op. cit. p.52) (1)

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(1) References to works in Hopkins et al, 1972, are taken from the second, Ovum edition.

In fact, the National Film Board of Canada's Challenge for Change
project had been underway for nearly four years by then, using firstly
film and then videotape in community action. But information about
this project and others was indeed scarce when IRAT began operations,
and consequently the TV department had to provide its own theoretical
base on which to build.

2.3 Social Matrix and Interface

The first move was to adopt a general systems theory (2) approach,
applying concepts such as feedback and catalysis. Hoppy was largely
responsible for formulating the theory and relating it to the use of
video in group situations in a short research paper called Social
Matrix and Interface. The paper was not published until 1972 when it
was included in IRAT's Video in Community Development report. In this
report we are told that the research paper was intended to "make
explicit - rather than intuitive - knowledge of the mechanism of social
communication processes and the organisation of groups in society".
(1972, p.107) Interface, or the area concerned with information
exchanged between both individuals and groups, was an essential feature
of the mechanism described, and it was in this area that a place was
found for video:

"When communication is videotaped, the interface is video

hardware itself, because video hardware is necessary for

recording and playback to take place." (ibid.)

(2) See Bertalanffy's "An Outline of General Systems Theory"; British
Journal of the Philosophy of Science : 1:134-65, 1950; or anything
by Boulding or Ashby.

The paper came to several conclusions, two of which adequately sum up the theoretical suppositions implicit in subsequent work:

"In all cases, working in relation to people and groups has shown that it is possible to increase flow of information across the interface; that this communication increase is usually characterised by intensification of personal and group activity; that this increase in interpersonal communication is universally welcomed.

... catalytic activity at the interface may be greatly facilitated by the use of portable video equipment." (ibid. p.108)

2.4 Community Television Proposal 1969

July 1969 saw the publications of what CATS now advertises in its publicity handout as the first proposal in England to provide a local community television service. The proposal was put forward essentially as a community development project (and it was later published in the Video in Community Development report), the idea being to provide the residents of the Notting Hill area of London (a development priority area according to the proposal) with a service similar to that of a local newspaper - using portable equipment and a number of public viewing sites. IRAT based the feasibility of such a service on the conclusions drawn in the Social Matrix and Interface paper, but these for the most part remained implicit. For the proposal preferred to rationalise the need for local TV services in terms of what it saw as the harmful effects of centralised television (i.e. TV constituted as a

mass medium). Ostensibly then, the 1969 proposal fell more into the context of 'television' and 'the media' than it did into the context of community development, and indeed this is how IRAT saw it:

"A project designed to establish a local community television service is inevitably a step in the direction of decentralisation, and must be considered initially in a broad cultural context. At the outset it makes the presumption that some process of decentralising mass-communications media is not only possible but is also desirable, and lays claim to an intention at least to initiate that process to a practicable degree. It is widely recognised that the case for decentralisation has become increasingly important, all the more so as greater centralisation seems inevitable, and in some crucial respects, disturbing." (1972, p.49)

2.41 A Structural Approach

IRAT took the view that the detrimental effect of centralised TV is due to the way in which it is structured:

"The usual reaction towards criticism of television is to concentrate more earnestly on the material which it provides as part of its service. This concentration is inevitably confined to the content of television, and devolves around the need for constant programme changes. The conclusion reached by Professor McLuhan is that: 'the excessive tactile effects of the TV image cannot be met by mere programme changes. Imaginative strategy based on adequate diagnoses

would prescribe a corresponding depth or structural approach'."

(ibid. p.51)

The Institute understood McLuhan's term structural approach to refer to the means by which material comes to be televised and the means by which televised material is distributed. It interpreted McLuhan's statement as an exhortation to restructure these means. Its method revolved around the use of portable video equipment:

"The very recent development of small, portable and relatively very inexpensive equipment, which is also very simple to operate, for the production and viewing of television programmes, suggests structures much more flexible than the present one.

.   .   .

(It) admits in ways formerly unrealisable both origination of programme material and viewing facilities. Someone using protable video equipment running off its own internal batteries, can shoot synchronised sound and black-and-white vision which is instantaneously recorded onto twenty-minute lengths of tape. This material can be played back, edited and prepared for viewing with no processing time or extra cost involved (just as tape is used in audio recording). Furthermore, by using a portable videotape recorder (VTR), the material can be played back immediately, and no longer needs to be broadcast by way of transmission through a net-work. So programme origination does not now require the facilities of a large studio and a team of highly skilled technicians, nor does viewing necessarily require trans-

mission. An unskilled person can learn to operate this
equipment within half-an-hour. This is very clearly a
crucial development and of profound significance towards
the implementing of a structural approach to the medium.
It is inexpensive; it is simple; it is possible."
(ibid. pp.50-51)

With the possibility of anyone and everyone being able to operate the
equipment, a decentralised local service would be structured in such
a way as to allow greater access to equipment by members of the
community served.

"The chief expectation would lie in Access. (Such a service)
would make the medium available more readily and easily to
a larger number of people in a more personal way." (ibid.p.52)

The proposal envisaged five levels of interation with the public:
firstly, it saw programme origination as a creative activity and
therefore, secondly, a local service would offer facilities of
expression:

"Any group, including religious denominations, political
parties and public authorities - particularly the police
and municipal council should have the right to organise
screen time. In principle, any person should have this
right." (ibid. p.53)

A video journalist would be on hand to facilitate access and to assist
people "to communicate efficiently, which is one of the traditional

roles of the journalist in society". The video journalist would also function on the third level of interaction. This level is concerned with the provision of information, news and entertainment:

"The collection of items of news and information would

properly be left the responsibility of the video journ-

alist, and the content would obviously be of interest to

the local community." (ibid.)

The fourth level - that of _viewing_ - was concerned with the means of distributing programmes throughout the community:

"The use of videotape equipment in both programme origin-

ation and viewing facilities constitutes a closed-circuit

system (CCTV). Closed-circuit systems vary in size from

the simplest - a single VTR played back through one monitor

(TV set) - to a fully developed wire-TV network. Two kinds

of viewing systems are possible, and each is complementary

to the other.

Firstly, by using a portable VTR which contains material

recorded (tapes), viewing is possible through a series of

monitors or through a video projector (large screen). A

series of monitors might be placed at sites where the

public already gathers for some other purposes (Public

Viewing Sites). A site could be linked to a central control-

room by a video line hired from the G.P.O. These sites

could be progressively linked so that they each received

simultaneously the same programme material (which would be

in essence a wire-TV network, but would differ from exist-
ing ones in that it would link public sites rather than
domestic sets). In this event there would exist a closed-
circuit system of public viewing sites.

Secondly, by using a low-power transmitter covering a
carefully controlled area on one of the broadcast channels
unused in that area, the material could be broadcast not
only to the public viewing sites but also to domestic TV
sets.

Therefore the possibility exists of complementing a series
of public viewing sites by private homes in the community
receiving the same material simultaneously. However, the
basic service envisaged in the initial scheme is in the
provision of a limited number of public viewing sites."
(ibid. p.52)

On the fifth level of interaction with the public IRAT put forward
some of the other social functions it foresaw for a local TV service:

   "Facilities offered could be used at the outset for
   educational, therapeutic and other important purposes.
   For specific instances, as a recreational aid to patients
   in local hospitals, and possibly the establishment of a
   link with the I.L.E.A. schools network." (ibid. p.53)

Assuming that the local service set up under the initial scheme and
structured along the above lines proved to be successful, IRAT foresaw

similar services springing up all over the country to be embraced

eventually by a national system complementing that of the existing

broadcast networks:

"In the event of operation of more than one local community

television service, exchange could begin of material, tapes,

and techniques. Already there are universities with their

own closed-circuit systems; these could in principle effect

these kinds of exchange and could furthermore be developed

as local community television services for the communities

to which they relate. If this present project may be

regarded as prototype to be modified in terms of experience

it is possible to imagine a situation where a number of such

services exist. These could be linked by G.P.O. video lines

and constitute a network which would be accessible to the

public at large whilst complementing the national compre-

hensive television service." (ibid. p.56)

2.5 Further Experiments

Three years after the proposal was written, Hoppy himself was critical

when he introduced it in the Video in Community Development report.

In particular he thought that methods of actually approaching the

community had not been clarified. Indeed, one would have thought

that a project which, in the words of the proposal, was intended "to

explore on a public basis the potential for providing a local

community television service" (1972, p.49) would have been, in the

first instance, community oriented as opposed to a systems design

project. Particularly so when, as the 1972 report reminds us, the

proposers "at that time had only limited experience of community use
of video, and no access to comparable experience from other sources".
(ibid.) (4)

This limited experience, which we assume to represent the field-work
implied in the Social Matrix and Interface research paper, extended
to "a series of experiments" (according to the 1969 proposal) carried
out at the Camden Festival in May 1969. These experiments took the
form of test viewing sessions held in a cinema, a local housing assoc-
iation meeting, and Arts Centre, and several dance halls and bars.
Material used ranged from entertainment to the examination of social
issues. It was discovered that:

> "Viewer interest was at its highest where the content of the
> programmes and material used was directly related to the
> viewer, and the closer the relationship the higher the
> interest and stimulation." (ibid. p.52)

Considering the shortness of the experimental period, and the extra-
ordinary circumstances under which the experiments were carried out,
one might conclude safely that people, on the whole, find it a novel
and exciting experience at first to see themselves, familiar faces
and familiar places on a TV screen. There is no evidence here however
to suggest that interest and stimulation will be sustained when the
novelty wears off. Yet TVX decided, on the strength of this limited
experience, that:

(4) This was omitted from the Ovum edition.

"One inescapable conclusion was that if material shown
was closely related to the viewer, public viewing
situations were now feasible." (ibid.)

Test viewing sessions provide no evidence to show that people in
general are interested in recording their own material. It might well
be that some members of an audience are willing to have a go, but this
is no case on which to base the need for local TV as a public service.
Yet on the strength of such evidence, IRAT leapt in and designed a
costly and elaborate system which was envisaged as only the first step
towards building a national network.

The 1969 proposal did not mention any more experimental approaches
towards the Notting Hill community in particular, but it did say that
because its field of study was almost totally unexplored at that time
and reliable information was scarce, a second series of experiments
was to be carried out later in the year with the co-operation of the
Institute of Contemporary Arts and other interested bodies. This, of
course, led one to believe that the intention was to carry out more
experiments with video at a community level. However, this was not
how things turned out.

2.51 The Vision Roadshow

In December 1970, TVX featured large in an event called The Vision
Roadshow at the I.C.A. Presumably The Roadshow represented the kind of
experimental work that IRAT undertook with the I.C.A. after the publi-
cation of the 1969 Community Television proposal.

On the Roadshow press release, The Vision was described as "a new TV programming collective formed by Paradise Productions and TVX". The show included a videotape called Stones in the Park (featuring the Rolling Stones Hyde Park Concert), billed as "the first English video production and the forerunner of this year's TV pop festival productions". Apparently it had already been shown "extensively on U.K. campus circuit, and on Swedish and West German TV", and it was shot entirely on one camera by Hoppy and his wife, Susie.

Also included in The Vision Roadshow was a black-and-white videotape dub from 2" colour videotape made as a BBC 2 Late Night Line Up pilot. This tape was made by TVX along with an Arts Lab team and guests from the U.S.A., France, S. Africa, Sweden, Australia and West Germany. Twenty people, we are told, "took over a BBC colour studio for half a day and this is what happened". According to the press release, this was "the first really free TV situation in the history of the BBC"; the tape was never broadcast, "but The Vision is now working regularly with BBC 2's Disco 2".

The only tape shown at the Roadshow that had anything to do with the use of video in community development was one made by NKTV, which was a part of neither TVX nor The Vision; it was based at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. NKTV had quite strong links with TVX, however. Bob Jardine, who initiated the NKTV project, got the idea of using video as part of a public service from TVX members - Hoppy, John Kirk and Gordon Woodside - when he joined in a project they were running in collaboration with the TV Research and Training Unit at Goldsmiths'. This was in the Spring and early Summer of 1970. NKTV came into operation in the following October using equipment

borrowed from TVX, and Gordon Woodside joined the NKTV team soon after.

But despite its close links with TVX, NKTV developed an approach to community video which was independent and original. While TVX seemed more concerned with infiltrating the established broadcasting system (at least, judging by the selction of tapes it presented at the Roadshow), NKTV concentrated on fieldwork at a community level.

The selection of tapes representing TVX's work in the Roadshow did not bear witness to its joint project with the TV Unit at Goldsmiths'. This was intended as a community development project - carried out in connection with Albany Trust and its work with squatters in Deptford, South London. However, it is not really surprising that tapes from this project were not included in the Roadshow since the video team hardly ventured out of the studio at Goldsmiths' and into the community. Typically, much more effort was put into formulating systematic methods of approach than into fieldwork.

2.6 Video in Community Development

It would appear that when TVX closed down as such at Christmas 1970, after eighteen months operating under that name, the problem of how to approach the community had still not been properly tackled. Most of TVX's efforts had betrayed a fascination for broadcasting which yielded only ideas for alternative systems and examples of 'turned-on', non-professional product.

At this time the Arts Lab underwent a change of address, but members of the TV department remained in the old premises, handed over the

responsibility for continuing fieldwork to NKTV, and settled down to
investigate work done outside the U.K. This research was commissioned
by the University of Southampton and the results were published as a
report for the Home Office Community Development Project.

The report was put together by Hoppy, Cliff Evans, Steve Herman and
John Kirk, under their latest collective name - CATS. Video in
Community Development first became available from IRAT in February
1972 as an edition of seventy-five xeroxed copies. A second, revised,
paper-bound edition followed in November, 1972, published by Ovum as
Volume I No.1 of the Journal of the Centre for Advanced Television
Studies (JCATS).

An IRAT publications list, dated May 1972, describes Video in
Community Development as:

> "A definitive work. In three parts (introduction, proposal
> writing, work in the community), this research report is
> based on an extensive examination of developments in
> Canada and the U.S.A. Written partly as a programmed text,
> it is designed to give readers unfamiliar with the field a
> good basis for decision-making in setting up and operating
> projects."

Video in Community Development consists of two parallel parts: a
reference file and a programmed text. As Andy Farjeon points out in
his Time Out article:

> "The programmed text is rather simplistic (do we need to

be told that 'Writing materials will be useful for making
notes'?); but the reference file is indespensable. Canada's
Challenge for Change programme, Winnipeg's Institute of
Urban Studies, the various New York video centres and theatres,
Montreal Videographe: all these and others are discussed and
criticised either by Hoppy or by their own management."

In effect, the programmed text format ensures that the minimum of
commentary and critical analysis by CATS comes between the reader and
the articles, proposals, reports and interviews reproduced in the
reference file. The text simply provides a horizontal structure to
contain a diversity of opinion and practice, and to unify the field.

The report devotes a whole section to Work with the Community. This
section brings together articles by Dorothy Todd Henaut, Ron Blumer
and Michael Shamberg - reproduced wholesale from Radical Software and
Guerrilla Television. It also includes a transcript of a taped inter-
view with Henry Lanford of the NFBC, TVX's Social Matrix and Interface
paper, and a schematic description of Alinsky's method of community
organising. The section as a whole is a spurious attempt by CATS to
come to grips with an aspect of the work of which it had little direct
experience.

The section concludes with some generalisations drawn by CATS from the
articles reproduced. Among these, at the level of setting up projects,
it is recommended that the primary objective should be to facilitate
communication processes within a community rather than to carry on
research directed from outside. It is interesting to note, in the
light of this statement, that CATS itself has not undertaken any

projects at local community level since the publication of the 1972 report. Rather, it has seen itself in the role of trainer for resource personnel, and as a kind of research co-ordinating body.

In March 1972 (between the publication of the first and the second editions of <u>Video in Community Development</u>), CATS held a seminar, for the Home Office Community Development Project, at which it was decided that further research should concentrate on: an evaluation of available portapak systems and other hardware, leading to the establishment of a common European standard; the establishment of training schemes for video resource personnel; an investigation of funding and hardware resources; and strategy. The seminar took it for granted that the need for video in community development had been established and that methods had been consolidated.

In respect of strategy, the idea was to set up a small, full-time working party to co-ordinate activity related to the other research priorities and to build up "an anthology of experience".

In respect of training, the seminar regarded the training of resource personnel as urgent "in view of the proliferation of video hardware in the U.K., and the evident lack of requisite skills among those with access to hardware". (Hopkins et al, 1972, p.139) CATS claimed that to meet this lack of skilled personnel it was at that time developing its own training programme and was interested in cross-referencing with other programmes.

2.7 <u>CATS Video Training Manual</u>

IRAT's TV department has shown an explicit interest in education ever

since it was formed. TVX's 1969 <u>Community Television</u> proposal put
education forward as one of the social functions of a local TV service,
and it suggested the possibility of establishing links between the
proposed Notting Hill Service and the I.L.E.A.'s schools cable network.
In 1970, founder-member Gordon Woodside was apparently searching for
"a method of applying more creative uses of (video) equipment in
schools", under the name of ETVX. (NECCTA Bulletin No.5) And at the
same time TVX was working jointly with the TV Unit at Goldsmiths'
College which was itself primarily concerned with the use of TV in the
field of formal education.

The 1972 report with its programmed text format was designed explicitly
to educate the reader and, following the associated Home Office seminar
in March 1972, CATS published a video resource personnel training
manual which was again designed partly as a programmed text. In the
case of this manual - <u>CATS Video</u> - the programmed text is not merely
simplistic but often insulting to the reader's intelligence. Not only
this, but the whole manual complicates what might otherwise have been
straightforward, useful information in pocket-book form by including
irrelevant and distrubing graphics and unnecessarily emotive language.
For example, there is an acknowledgement to "righteous people every-
where trying to save the world", and a plea to "let the fucking freaks
put it together themselves". Such presentation demonstates a lack of
respect for, and understanding of, the 'average' community member who
is likely to become involved in social action. The manual seems more
like an in-joke than an effective vehicle for information.

CATS members would doubtless disagree that their approach to education
has always smacked of condescension - especially in view of the fact

that the ideology explicit in their literature respects the learner's integrity and presupposes that in the final analysis the learner is his own teacher. But if we compare pieces of the CATS Video text, taken from the section which deals with the purely technical operation of the portapak, with pages from, say, the operating manual for the Shibaden SV 707 portable VTR, we can see quite clearly that the Shibaden text, although framed in simple, everyday terms, addresses the reader as an intelligent person capable of responding effectively to concise and plainly stated instructions; while the CATS pages are cluttered with superfluous graphics and instructions on how to acquire the information offered. (See Appendix A)

It has often been said in community video circles that the portapak is so simple that 'even the housewife' can operate it. Yet the instructions supplied with a typical twin-tub washing machine seem to credit the 'housewife' with a greater degree of practical application than CATS Video. (See Appendix A) The video training manual not only talks down to her (if indeed the 'average housewife' in a development priority area were likely to read it) but it also assaults her with coarse language and ghastly picture strips. If CATS was truly concerned with co-operation as opposed to exploitation in the media then surely its literature would take into account the tastes and sensibilities of the people for whom it is supposed to be written (i.e. the self-organising community in need). Indeed, it seems as if the CATS manual is meant only for those already of similar mind and of similar persausion to IRAT and its Underground-bred anarchic disregard for convention (i.e. that predominantly middle-class community of 'drop-outs' who appreciate things like innovation in graphic design and who treat social work as an academic excercise).

2.8 UK Video Index

In all fairness to CATS, the CATS Video training manual is not the only manifestation of its training programme. Among IRAT's so-called Liverpool Papers (papers prepared for the Communications and Community Development Conference at Liverpool University in May 1972) there is an introduction to, and an outline of, a training programme for Video Resource Skills. This particular course was timetabled to run between Monday, 8th May and Wednesday, 14th June, 1972, under the directorship of John Kirk. It was described as IRAT Training Course No.1 - giving the impression that more courses were in the offing. An IRAT publications list, which came out around this time, offered a selection of notes and videotapes used in CATS Training Courses, and this service represents another aspect of the total training programme.

Since the appearance of CATS Video training manual, CATS has been concentrating on the strategical aspect brought up by the March 1972 seminar. In the Spring of 1973 it published the UK Video Index as Volume I No.2 of JCATS in an attempt to co-ordinate video work going on throughout the country and to facilitate access to hardware for community groups.

The Index describes itself as "a guide to the most active individuals and groups working with video in the U.K.". If this is meant to imply activity in the community then the description is only partly true. The Index includes information about Inter-Action and Intermedia in London, Bristol's Community Television Workshop and the Great George's Community Arts Project in Liverpool. But apart from a few independent groups such as these, with a distinct leaning towards community work,

the _Index_ lists mainly video resources attached to departments in
educational institutions.

In order to compile the _Index_ CATS distributed questionnaires among
likely video users. With each questionnaire there was enclosed an
example, filled in with CATS's own details. These details give us some
indication of IRAT's position in respect of video in community devel-
opment at the end the of period covered by our short history.

It is clear from the information given that by 1973 IRAT was no longer
interested in working at the level of the geographically-definable,
development priority area kind of community. Between 1969 and 1973
its attention shifted from the local community to the nation-wide
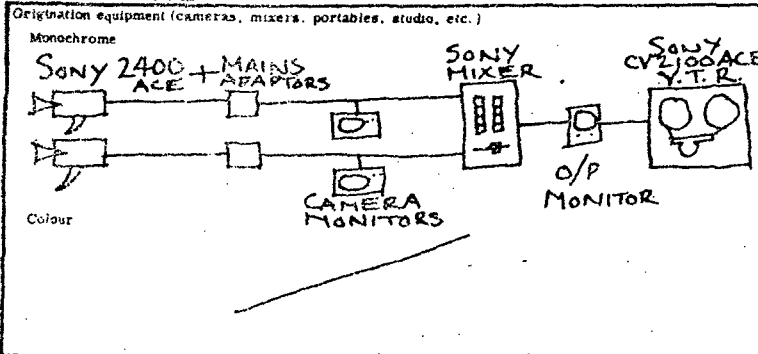community of videasts itself.

U K VIDEO INDEX

GROUP INFORMATION

Name of group/organisation
CENTRE FOR ADVANCED
TELEVISION STUDIES [C.A.T.S]

Person in charge/contact
CLIFF/HOPPY/STEVE/JOHN

Address
15, PRINCE OF WALES CRESCENT
LONDON N.W.1. 8.H.A.

Telephone [01] - 4-85· 9277

How long have you been working with video? 4 YEARS

What fields were you working in before?
TV/JOURNALISM/TEACHING/SOCIOLOGY/PROMOTI

How many people are involved in your group?

Please add any information about the structure of your group
NO CENTRAL STRUCTURE
EVERYONE INDIVIDUALLY RESPONSIBLE

Is your group open to having other people come in: e g to use your facilities/to learn about video
to work with you on production? (Please specify)
OCCASIONALLY BY ARRANGEMENT.

HARDWARE

Origination equipment (cameras, mixers, portables, studio, etc.)
Monochrome

SONY 2400 ACE + MAINS ADAPTORS
SONY MIXER
CAMERA MONITORS
O/P MONITOR
SONY CV 2100 ACE V.T.R.

Colour

Recording standards (VTR make, tape width, etc.)
Monochrome

SONY CV 2100 ACE   ½ INCH
625 LINE

Colour

Playback systems (portable playback, wired distribution systems, etc)

SONY 2100 ACE [625 LINE
SONY 2000   [405 LINE

BOTH ½ INCH TAPE

How do you plan to expand this facility in the future?
PORTAPAK
1 INCH EDITING DECK

COLOR CAMERA
1 INCH COLOR DECKS
COLOR SYNTHESISER
ETC.

SOFTWARE

Please describe the type of software you are making, and your approach to making it (current work)

WE'VE HALTED SOFTWARE ACTIVITY TO GET DISTRIBUTION
TOGETHER. WHEN THIS IS DONE WE'LL BE MAKING
MONOCHROME INFORMATION TAPES/FILMS, AND COLOR
ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS.

Set of U.S. and Canadian videotapes
on Community development

send s.a.e.

Have you a catalogue or list of software? YES

How is your software distributed, who gets to see it?

BY MAIL, OR BY EXCHANGE WITH TRAVELLING VIDEO USERS,
PLUS ALL SORTS OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED.

What projects do you have planned for the future?
JULY — OCTOBER 1972 — PUBLIC SERVICE FILM on housing FOR CAMDEN COUNCIL
OCT — DEC 72 — COLOR PRODUCTION, TRAVEL TAPES.
OTHER PROJECTS BEING NEGOTIATED.   PTO

PRINT

Details:
INCLUDES 69/V1 Community Television
72/V1 Video in Community Development
72/V3 Submission to Mnipostel on Cable TV including the Liverpool Papers
72/V4 Video Resource Skill Course

SERVICES

What services do you offer to video users & other interested groups ? Tick box.	Details:
Lecturing ✓	
Teaching ✓	
Seminars ✓	
Consultancy ✓	Access to American Canadian French Dutch Video library
Research ✓	
Mobile ✓	playback
Production ✓	
Hire ✓	of hardware
Libraries ✓	software & information library
Other	TRY US AND SEE!

DISTRIBUTION IDEAS

Please give your ideas on the setting up of better software distribution in this country and to other countries

1 CIRCULATE CATALOGUE INFORMATION VIA UK VIDEO INDEX & ANY OTHER MEANS

2 WORK OUT DISTRIBUTION STRUCTURE AS A SYSTEMATIC MODEL AND INVESTIGATE COORDINATION
    FINANCE
    PUBLICITY

3 PROGRAMME: SEE HOW THIS MODEL IS BEING USED, ETC.

Distribute

↓

VIDEO : ONLY PARTLY ESTABLISHED, REQUIRES STANDARDISATION/COMPATIBILITY CENTRES.

FILM : ALREADY ESTABLISHED REQUIRES TAPE-TO-FILM TRANSFER

How do you think this index can be useful to you ?

Please use this box for any other information you would like to communicate to the readers of this index.

1 We think that interchange of information of this kind between video users is an important step in the building up of software interchange → distribution is what must be got together.

2 we're also taking steps to create a permanent hardware resource available free or at cost to other video artists and workers.

3 Work circuit: A country-wide lecture/playback/production circuit using university, college & T.V. station facilities. Setting up situations where groups of people can work together on production to explore working methods and develop new concepts. Are you interested?

WELL, MAYBE.

THANKS

COMMUNITY VIDEO IN THE U.K., 1969-1973 : NKTV

3.1 Introduction

North Kensington Community Television began as the design project of

two fifth-year students - Bob Jardine and Mike Hickie - at the Archi-

tectural Association School of Architecture, London, in the Autumn of

1970. The original project brief, set by A.A. staff, was to design

something to improve a specified area in North Kensington.

Bob Jardine had worked on the joint TVX/Goldsmiths' College project in

Deptford earlier in the year, with Hoppy, John Kirk and Gordon Woodside,

and he saw in the A.A. fifth-year brief an opportunity to use this

experience by designing a community information system using portable

video equipment.

3.2 Feasibility study

A Feasibility Study was published on 3rd December 1970, in which the

idea was presented ostensibly in response to a report - Planning in a

Twilight Area - which appeared in June 1970. This report was by

several people associated with the A.A.'s School of Planning and Urban

Design. In particular the Feasibility Study referred to the following

paragraph in that report:

"The main priority (in the Golborne area of North Kensington)

is for establishing a mechanism which would allow and

encourage easier communication and expression of opinion

leading to community support for participation in local

affairs; particularly in relation to education, housing

and rehabilitation possibilities; and also the information

facility would aid local residents in their search for

increased job opportunities, as well as encouraging a

greater political and social awareness."

Accordingly, the Feasibility Study portrayed the main problem of the

people of North Kensington as one of communication (as opposed to

servicing):

"The degree of servicing which is possible in any one part

of the city is not determined by its location. In this

respect North Kensington, a poor area, is no worse off

than anywhere else in London. The problem is one of

information dissemmination: the more services there are

available, the more information you need; and the more

information there is, the more efficient the information

system needs to be. In a potentially controllable envir-

onment, information gives you the power to effect control." (1)

The following design criteria were proposed for a community informa-

tion system:

" i) The system must be economically viable, bearing in

mind the limited resources of the community.

---

(1) Taken from a synopsis of the Feasibility Study, January 1971.

ii) It must be capable of immediate implementation at

a technical level.

iii) User-participation should be employed to continuously

modify and recycle information.

iv) The system must permit a rapid recycling of information.

Once a week is not enough.

v) It must be capable of complementing and co-ordinating

existing information sources and media over the whole area."

The Study claimed that traditional methods of information dissemmina-

tion have proved inadequate at a local level and that the design

criteria specified could best be fulfilled by a community television

service. The strategy proposed for putting such a service into opera-

tion was divided into two stages. The first was:

"... to create a community video consciousness. Portable

videotape equipment will be used to investigate and record

various aspects of the community. The recordings will be

played back to the people immediately in the programme and

then to the public by setting up monitors on street corners,

in empty shop windows, TV rental shops, pubs, halls,

launderettes, etc. With each playback, the reactions and

comments of the people involved will be recorded and edit-

ed into the overall programme. During this period, partici-

pant groups and individuals will be able to learn how to

use the video equipment themselves. This stage will have

three main purposes:

i) To optimise community TV as a useful service, through

experimentation.

ii) To publicise the project within the community.

iii) To provide positive evidence of the relevance of community TV when applying for a licence to broadcast over the cable network." (Jardine and Hickie, November, 1970, p.6)

The second stage introduced the idea of cable-casting:

"The pilot broadcasting system will consist of a series of videotaped programmes about community groups, local activities and available services, alternating with talkback programmes - recorded at public meetings and in the streets - at which the flow of information is reversed, modifying the whole programme. This will enable the viewers to increasingly contribute towards and be involved in the programme making, resulting in a continuous re-cycling of information and response." (ibid. p.7)

Jardine and Hickie researched the matter of cable-casting thoroughly in November 1970 and they discovered that British Relay - the company operating in the North Kensington area - was using only three channels (two for BBC and one for ITV) out of the four carried by its cable. They also found that it was technically possible to feed programmes recorded on their ½" portable, 625 line video tape equipment into the area transmitter. This meant that, allowing for a reduction in picture quality compared with 2" broadcast quality recording equipment, it was technically possible to cable-cast locally originated programming to

domestic receivers. Unfortunately, they also discovered that, under the terms of the 1969 Post Office Act, broadcasting by any method into peoples' homes was illegal except by the BBC and ITA. This, of course, was prior to the 1972 Revision of that Act, when licences were granted to a limited number of experimental local stations.

Legalities aside, it was envisaged that within stage two an NKTV co-ordinating panel should be set up. This panel would liase between individuals or groups wishing to use the facility, and the video team. It would be responsible primarily for sharing out cable-time. In the beginning the panel would be made up of members of the video team, but in time it would include local people. It was considered that the video team should consist of half-a-dozen full-time staff at first and that the number should be reduced relative to an increase in voluntary part-time participation.

In the event NKTV was not granted a licence to cable-cast (it did not even get as far as applying for one), but the video team increased from the two original members to five: Gordon Woodside joined them on a part-time basis; so did Gwynne Basen - a Canadian girl who had been involved in this kind of work in her own country; and Lee Plotek - a student at the Slade School of Art, London University.

3.3 Operations: October to December, 1970

Between these months NKTV concentrated on producing its Feasibility Study in discussion with Post Office telecommunications engineers, TVX, and British Relay Ltd. On 28th November, using equipment belonging to

TVX, a documentary programme was made on ½" videotape outlining findings and proposals; this was the tape which was shown at the press preview of The Vision Roadshow at the ICA on 1st December.

Also in December a community TV seminar was held at IRAT at which "constructive suggestions for making the project happen and offers of help were sought from those who attended" (Jardine and Hickie, June, 1971, p.2). As a result of this seminar an article appeared in Friends magazine on 19th January 1971, to help publicise the project:

"NKTV would like to be a communication link between different groups in the area. As the programme develops, they would lend their equipment to whoever wanted to contribute - it could be a school film, or a film made by old people - and editing would be limited only by the time-factor.

At the moment, NKTV are using a camera and tape recorder belonging to TVX, but they will soon need their own. They've estimated on £10,000 for the first year to cover a team of five people plus accommodation and capital equipment. It's a very small sum compared with conventional cinema and TV. The Arts Council might come up with it; otherwise local advertising could pay."

In the event, no money was forthcoming from either the Arts Council (because the project was not 'arty' enough) or local advertising (because the project did not reach the second stage).

On 5th January 1971, IRAT donated a portapak and camera, a mains VTR

and an 11" monitor to NKTV. The equipment was several years old and
in need of frequent repair, but it enabled the team to begin operations
on a limited scale.

3.4 Operations: January to March 1971

NKTV kept a Diary of its activities from the beginning of the Feasibility
Study in October 1970 to the end of its first five months' operation, as
a community TV project, in June 1971. The Diary presents the period
from January to March as the first of two major periods of operation.
This period:

> "... was one of fairly intense activity, but with many of
> the projects being limited by the work load which (they)
> could undertake successfully with (their) equipment."
> (1971, p.15)

This period witnessed most of the work carried out actually in North
Kensington by NKTV - mainly because on 3rd April their portapak broke
down, and while it was being repaired, the circumstances of the team
changed. However, between January and the end of March, according to
the Diary, the team became involved in many activities ("community
welfare, politics and education, but these are loose descriptions
rather than defined frames of reference").

3.41 Golborne Neighbourhood Council Election

NKTV's involvement here amounted to little more than two meetings of
the video team - one of 14th January and the other on 19th January -

to clarify the issues and to draft a plan of campaign respectively.
At the first meeting it was established that Golborne was not adequately
represented in the borough council decision-making process and, as a
result, the Notting Hill Social Council had set up a working party to
organise elections for a neighbourhood council - to run concurrently
with the 1971 municipal elections.

"The role of the neighbourhood council would be to bring
pressure to bear on borough council decisions affecting the
residents of Golborne." (Diary p.3)

The Notting Hill Community Workshop had proposed something a little
more revolutionary and: "it was apparent that there was a conflict
of opinion between these two groups (the N.H.S.C. and the N.H.C.W.)
but whether this centred around means-to-ends or ends-in-themselves
was not yet clear". (ibid.)

There was a third faction to consider: Caroline Coon, a director of
Release had announced her intention to stand as a Labour candidate in
the municipal elections.

The video team decided that of these three alternative proposals, the
first and last were most clearly defined. They felt that the problem
was to present these alternatives to the community and to clarify the
implication of the proposals and the reasons behind them, both for the
protagonists and for the public.

At its second meeting the team agreed to make a series of tapes to form
the basis for a public discussion of issues between the N.H.S.C., the

N.H.C.W., Caroline Coon, representatives of the Borough Council, and local residents. It also planned to contact the protagonists to arrange interviews and to investigate possible sources of finance for the project.

For one reason or another the series of tapes was not produced and work on the election fizzled out. But a systematic plan of campaign was drafted:

"Tape 1 (a) interview with N.H.S.C.

(b) playback for comment and amendment

(c) show Tape 1 to N.H.C.W.

Tape 2 (a) interview with N.H.C.W.

(b) playback for comment and amendment

(c) show tape to N.H.S.C

Tape 3 (a) interview with C.C.

(b) playback for comment and amendment

Show Tapes 1, 2, 3 to representatives of borough council.

Tape 4 (a) interview with borough councillors

(b) playback for comment and amendment

Public playback of Tapes 1, 2, 3, 4 in hall. Protagonists and general public invited.

Tape 5 (a) record meeting

(b)   public playbacks of Tape 5 on street corners,

etc.

We also considered making a preliminary 'feeler' tape of
street interviews about the forthcoming elections, and
recording the reactions of people in the street to Tape 5."
(Diary pp.3-4)

3.42 Stop the Cuts Campaign

NKTV met the organisers of the Islington based Stop the Cuts campaign
at a Conference of Community Workshops in Rugely at the end of January.
Stop the Cuts was a national organisation, working through local
committees to publicise the petition against Social Service cuts
planned by the Conservative Government.   Following the Rugely Confer-
ence the campaign committee asked NKTV to tape a 'pantomime' about the
intended cuts, which was to be performed by the Camden Street Players
in Camden Market, and to record their street canvassing.   The tapes
were to be played at a public meeting on 9th March.

The Diary entry for 6th February points out that this was the first
project to be undertaken outside North Kensington and the team agreed
to it because "it would be useful to work with groups in other areas
occasionally, since the tapes might serve as useful models for
community action in North Kensington".

NKTV went ahead and did the recording for the campaign organisers and
played back the tapes for the committee on 26th February, when it was
decided that extra information should be recorded before the public

saw them. The committee agreed to plan the shooting of this extra

material and one of its members took part in an NKTV group meeting on

5th March to discuss the plan. The committee member turned out to be

a free-lance film producer/director with experience of broadcast tele-

vision and his approach somewhat contradicted that of the video team;

he had drawn up a plan of the street where recording was to take place,

and every shot was worked out in advance. He also had a 'script' and

had arranged for people to be ready on the day to 'act' their parts.

The Diary comments:

"This structured approach was ... alien to our usual, more

spontaneous method, but we felt we had nothing to lose by

giving it a try." (p.10)

The result was played back at a public meeting at Rhyll School, Kentish

Town on 9th March. It contained some sequences of the original tape

edited in, crudely but satisfactorily, by playing back and reshooting

from the monitor. The Diary entry for that date concludes:

"The use of video in public meetings seems quite successful.

Its effect does not lie so much in the information which it

displays, as in the attention in commands, and in the

communal effort which goes into it. Video requires a large

input for a relatively small information output. The

reverse is true of broadcast TV where the number of people

involved at the input stage is much less than the number of

people watching. Video can fuse community action, whereas

broadcast TV diffuses information, and in so doing, diffuses

the notion of community.

The tape itself was quite successful in terms of the way
in which it was conceived, i.e. as a comparatively 'tight'
structured documentary. It was probably more coherent
than anything else we had done at the time. The experience
of working with a professional director was valuable ..."

3.43 <u>Walmer Road Project</u>

For an account of this project see <u>Some Ideas about Video and
Community Television</u>, by Bob Jardine and Mike Hickie, reproduced in
the <u>Bentilee Project Diary</u> (f.2nd July 1972).

3.44 <u>Nottingwood House Project</u>

As above.

3.45 <u>Play Video Project</u>

This was conceived and set up during the **period January to March,**
although the fieldwork was carried out later. The project was concer-
ned with using portable video equipment in a school in North Paddington.
Jardine and Hickie met on 15th February to formulate their ideas, and
they decided that they "were not concerned with the use of TV as a
teacher-substitute or teacher-extension in the communication of
specific skills or bodies of knowledge, but as an instrument of
creative intervention in teacher-pupil relationships". (Diary pp.6-7)

<u>The Play Video</u> project had some kind of precedent in Gordon Woodside's
search for methods of applying video more creatively in schools

(mentioned in 2.7). But Woodside, it seems, did not make clear what he meant by 'more creatively'. The nearest he got to doing so was when he spoke of video's supposed catalytic properties, in his NECCTA article on Community Interests in Video Technology. However, the notion of catalysis in the social sciences is itself vague, and so the only really positive aspect of Woodside's work seems to have been his concern to bring about open access to video equipment. According to the NECCTA article Woodside intended to compile a catalogue of video resources available for educational purposes. This never materialised. Instead the idea was absorbed into IRAT's more ambitious plan in which education was only one of many related issues.

Woodside was not involved in the Play Video project. The intention behind this project was put forward in a grant application to the Arts Council of Great Britain, and the gist of this was entered in the Diary (24th February). The emphasis was on the play aspect of using video in the classroom since the researchers sought a situation which would allow spontaneous development as opposed to one which was limited by particular goals. The nearest they could find in the school curriculum was the drama class.

"It seems likely that childhood experiences, particularly

in the realm of imaginative play and make-belive, strongly

influence our ability to respond creatively to our environ-

ment in adult life. There are many similarities between

play and the creative process. Indeed, we may say that

play involves creativity just as creativity involves play.

Some aspects of play in children and creativity in adults

would appear to be common to both. The aim of this project

is to explore certain aspects of play and creativity ..."

(Diary p.9)

The Diary acknowledges that these aspects were not defined at the outset, and it continues:

"Working in co-operation with schools in the (North
Kensington) area as an extension of their drama work,
video tapes will be made of children acting out
improvised situations. The children and their teachers
will be shown how to use the video equipment and make
the tapes themselves.

The intention is to make the initial tapes within the
school environment and then to repeat the play in two
contrasting environments. Possible sites include
adventure playgrounds (relatively stimulus-packed)
and Wormwood Scrubs (relatively stimulus-free).

Playback of the tapes and discussion will take place,
where possible, at the place where they are recorded.
Instant playback is an important feature of videotape.
It makes possible self-communication or feedback. The
children will alternatively experience themselves as
the subjects of their actions, and as objects in their
environment. They will be able to watch themselves
performing, reacting, responding, and modify and improve
their role-creations (and possibly their self-creations,
too)." (Diary p.9)

It was also intended to show the tapes to the parents of the children involved, and other teachers, and it was hoped to arrange a public exhibition of the tapes.

After a couple of meetings with the headmaster and the drama staff at North Paddington School, and after several periods of observation during drama classes an outline plan was produced on 22nd March. It was designed to study:

> "a) The differences between the play produced by the children and the plot worked out by the teacher.
> b) The effect of seeing themselves on television on subsequent performances by the children.
> c) The effect of different environments on performances."
> (Diary p.12)

In respect of these areas of study, it was supposed that:

> "... in (a) the kids' version of the story will reflect their own pre-occupations or make-believe, and that the same will be true for the teachers. This comparison allows each to gain insight into the imaginative world of the other.
>
> One result of (b) — the effect of seeing themselves on TV — is that it makes possible a realisation of (c) — the effect of different environments on performances. One group of kids acted a play on the school stage. When they recorded the play two weeks later in the open space of the

school hall, the first thing they noticed was their

tendency to bunch together and ignore the size of their

new environment." (ibid.)

This observation was made during the period between the 19th and 27th

May when a series of recording/playback/discussion sessions were held

with three groups of children and their teachers.

When the Diary was published in June 1971, the project was still

underway. At this time, we are told, it was still too early to assess

(b) fully, and observation was directed towards the effects of 'tele-

vision' stereotypes on the children's performances (and hence their

possible effects on 'real-life' behaviour). However, a separate

report on the project was promised, to be compiled as "a three-point

perspective consisting of (the team's) own observations, together with

comments and criticisms by the teachers and the kids involved". (ibid.)

The report never materialised, but the project yielded a paper titled

An Exploration in the Use of Videotape Recording in Teacher-Pupil

Relationships. This was written by Bob Jardine in December 1971 -

some months after Play-Video had ground to a halt. It is reproduced

in full in the Bentilee Project Diary (f. 2nd July 1972).

3.5 Operations: March to June 1971

This period began, according to the NKTV Diary, following the coinci-

dence of two factors. Firstly, the equipment broke down and so the

team was unable to carry on work in North Kensington for a while.

Secondly, following a seminar at the London School of Economics, NKTV

was approached by the Greater London Council with a view to setting up community TV in Thamesmead. These negotiations led Jardine et al - before their equipment could be repaired - to the position where the possibility of working in Thamesmead seemed a likely proposition.

This is how the position developed: on 6th April NKTV members met representatives of the Strategy Branch of the G.L.C.'s Planning and Transportation Department to discuss the potential role of community TV in community development and also the possibility of financial support from the Council. The G.L.C. representatives expressed an interest in setting up a project in Thamesmead and it was decided that a seminar should be held at the G.L.C. on 7th May to discuss community TV.

Before the seminar the NKTV group met twice to talk things over. It looked as though the G.L.C. probably would not support them in their work in North Kensington, but it was possible that the Council might set them up in Thamesmead. They reasoned that if they were to survive as a community video team then it would be best to prepare for a move to Thamesmead.

At the second meeting, on 27th April, it was decided that they should use the structure proposed in the Feasibility Study for North Kensington to put before the G.L.C. as a plan for Thamesmead.

At the seminar on 7th May the group's suspicion that the G.L.C. would not finance the North Kensington project was confirmed. In fact, the discussion did not make clear how much backing the group could expect from the G.L.C. to set up a project in Thamesmead, either.

When the Diary closed at the beginning of June, the position was still unclear, although by then the video team had made contact with interested parties in Thamesmead and it had called a halt to all activities in North Kensington, apart from the Play-Video project.

In the event the plan to set up a community television service in Thamesmead did not come off, and the end of the Play-Video project in June saw the end of the team's collective efforts in the field. During that summer Gwynne Basen and Lee Plotek returned to Canada; Gordon Woodside transferred his interests to projects which did not necessarily involve video; Mike Hickie took up a post as lecturer in the Communications Unit at the Architectural Association; and Bob Jardine devoted some time to analysing what had been achieved by NKTV, before he took up a job with a firm of town-planners in London.

3.51 Postscript

In May 1972 Jardine and Hickie presented an audiotape and slide sequence at the Communications and Community Development conference at Liverpool University. The tape and slide show represented a totalisation of their work as NKTV and the script was published as a broadsheet under the title Some Ideas about Video and Community TV.

SECTION 4

COMMUNITY VIDEO IN THE U.K., 1969-1973 : ODDS & ENDS

4.1 Inter-Action

"Inter-Action is a charitable trust founded in 1968 by Ed Berman

to stimulate community involvement in the Arts, especially

through the use of drama and creative play, and to experiment

in the theatre/media and their social applications.

The work of Inter-Action is broadly divided into two categories:

theatre and community work. In addition to the professional

theatre companies housed at the Almost Free Theatre, Inter-

Action Productions embraces the work of the Dogg's Troupe,

street and children's performers, and the Bus Company on

the Fun Art Bus. Although some of the work is avant-garde,

the greater part is devoted to a social application of

theatre and the media.

All activities are administered by a co-operative of artists

whose time is shared between the Production Company and work

done in schools, youth clubs, mental hospitals, community

centres, playgrounds, remand homes, and the street. In

addition to the Production companies, Inter-Action's work

includes Infilms, a documentary and educational film group;

Community Media, using closed-circuit television, slides,

tapes and super 8mm. film; Inprint, a publishing company

for community work/arts and childrens books; Advisory Servic

specialists helping other grass-roots and charitable

organisations; Islington Bus Co., a double-decker bus

used as a mobile pre-school playgroup and welfare rights

information centre; and the Talacre Project, a local

play/youth community and education project on the three

acre Talacre Open Space in Kentish Town."

This extract from an information hand-out distributed at the Intercities

Conference at Manchester University in June 1973 (1).shows that video

work is one activity among many in the Inter-Action programme. It is

subsumed under the Trust's overall project which is concerned "to make

communication a meaningful experience and motivate it through fun" (2).

Inter-Action places its project in the context of education. Within

this context video becomes one of the "technological folk art forms"

(3) which are "universal and tolerable as a means of indirect teaching"

(4).

In an article which he wrote for New Scoiety, 9th March 1972, (the

article was called Community Television : A New Hope) Peter Lewis

portrayed Inter-Action's use of video simply as a method for gathering

crowds. In just the same way as the Dogg's Troupe acts as a kind of

Pied Piper - cavorting in the streets to attract children and lead

them to a likely spot for games sessions, the instant appeal or novelty

value of video can attract an audience and encourage participation:

(1) More Power to the People : organised by Shelter, Y.V.F.F.,
    and others.
(2) Win Calwell, February 1972, p.2.
(3) Ed Berman, in Robin Middleton, May 1972
(4) Rod Morrison, July 1973, p.475

"Ed Berman and Inter-Action in London have used film and
video in several of their projects, but so far more as
a means of group involvement than as a deliberate
component of community action." (op. cit. p.492)

However, in an article published in <u>Architectural Design</u> a month or so
later, Mr. Lewis said that while Inter-Action's concern may be wider
than video, he had done "less than justice ... to its experience in
the field". This experience he said:

"... dates from a Rediffusion Christmas programme which
Ed Berman produced in 1967 with a group of teenagers in
a Paddington Community Settlement. (It) brought home
to him both the therapeutic effect on a group working
with video and the need to compete for people's attention
in the medium they have come, for good or ill, to regard
as authoratative." (loc. cit. p.306)

Lewis's article gave nor more information on Inter-Action's specific
approach to the use of video in the community. It did, however, bring
up the <u>Community Media Van</u> which was then due to come into operation
in the Islington and Kensington areas during the summer of 1972. As
it happened, the <u>Media Van</u> did not appear until April, 1973, but Lewis's
point, made in the article, that it would bring locally originated
and alternative programming to those who could not afford the rental
on cable TV, was none-the-less valid.

The day-to-day operation of the <u>Media Van</u> is the responsibility of
Ed Berman's Associate Director, Audrey Bronstein. She is Canadian

and she has had experience of community television in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Under her direction the Media Van functions as a mobile component on the new Inter-Action Centre on the Talacre Road. This was designed by Cedric Price and represents a series of serviced enclosures, some static, some mobile. The idea is that the Centre "is not to be considered as a fixed focus, but as an integral part of a network of information and activities". (Middleton, May 1972)

4.11 Inter-Action's Community Media Van

The following appeared in New Society just before the Van came into operation. Inter-Action reprinted the article and circulated it as publicity for the project. (See over)

Arts in society

A media van

Justin Wintle

Inter-Action is officially known as a Community Arts Trust; it is also a cooperative community workers, teachers and artists. Based in Camden, the trust aims to provide the right conditions and materials for involving local communities, through the arts and the media in the needs of the neighbourhood. Next week it is putting a media van on the roads, to be used as an instrument to change the cycle of deprivation-inarticulateness-deprivation.

Ed Berman, Inter-Action's 32 year old director, believes that the media can be used to overcome a community situation that, at its best, is unhappy. The welfare state admits that people are entitled to benefits, but public bodies never go more than half way towards making them available. Funds, facts and information are there, but because they are not adequately advertised, people tend not to know about them. Although a lot is talked about middle class activists, their number of victories is small. Their work is carried out in middle class precincts—schools, settlements and church halls. Working class participation is subdued by the form and structure of boring meetings that get few tangible results.

The media van has been created to try to change this situation. It will visit market-places, housing estates, playgrounds and other community venues, it will function as the centre-piece of a well organised initiative in different neighbourhoods to bring issues and opportunities for community development to people where they will most notice it"; and it will he used to coordinate the activities of existing local action groups and help form others.

The van, designed by Pentagram and Inter-Action and funded by Rank Xerox, attractively combines equipment and resources—a creative social worker's dream. At the back and on the sides of the vehicle there are screens for the back-projection of films and panels for the presentation of videotapes. The roof has been reinforced to

take Inter-Action's street theatre company, the Dogg's Troupe, and there is a sound system to relay music. The van will entertain as well as inform, because entertainment is a cue for involvement. In addition, there is a radio telephone wired to the loudspeakers, and a roneo press for the quick production of local newsheets and circulation of information. And all this, of course, is backed up by a regular staff whose skills are social as well as technical.

Problems become clearer once they are seen visually. For this reason Inter-Action is extending its film library. Through its subsidiary, In-Films, writers and directors have been commissioned to produce a number of films and tapes on a variety of subjects that will be useful to community groups and in-

the environment game

formative to the public. Topics range from local issues that are common to any city environment, such as "Kids versus Cars" (the authorities are obliged to provide ten times more space for parking than for play), to subjects that only concern a few neighbourhoods, such as how to build social amenities under motorway arches.

To help relate this library material to the places where the van goes, special pre-researched videotapes will be prepared with the assistance of local groups. Thus the film about putting community laundries, playgroups, workshops and advice services beneath a motorway can easily be adapted to suit a neighbourhood that has railway arches. The video system will also be available for a spontaneous feedback within whatever situation the van creates through its presence. People will be shown how to use portable video units, and then be invited to make their own on-the-spot teleprogrammes; just as they will be encouraged to use the printing facilities to produce their own broadsheets and community newspapers. In the same spirit of participation, anyone will be able to pick up the radio telephone and dial their councillor or local MP for a conversation that will be overheard by everyone. Those on the receiving end will be warned, but once on the line there will be no letting them off.

On most journeys, the arrival of the media van will have been planned well in advance, again with the cooperation of local groups. One purpose is to show these groups how

best to present local issues by letting them experiment with the equipment. It is hoped that they will then be encouraged to find similar equipment in their own areas—at the local polytechnic, for example. One of the by-products of the van that Inter-Action already wishes to stimulate might well be an increased awareness that community access to cable television could be a most vital use of the new cable licences in Great Britain. It is also hoped that some lessons in cooperation between groups will be learned, even to the extent of involving bodies not traditionally associated with community improvement, like local trades union branches.

The media van, then, is a mobile shopfront. To an organisation that puts a high premium on fieldwork, mobility means access and accessibility. Last year Inter-Action ran another of Ed Berman's projects, the Fun Art Bus—a converted double decker carrying a cinema, a theatre, graphics and closed circuit television. The bus provided an all-in entertainment that was popular because of what was contained in its programmes, and also because it happened as part of an everyday circumstance in an everyday place: a bus travelling down the local high street. The van is a follow-on form of this. It will arrive where it is needed and switch on. People will find it seemingly by accident.

Ed Berman calls this experiment an alarm clock to awaken communities out of a deep sleep of incommunication. He is quite clear in his mind about the origins of this silence. His analysis is starkly mechanical: people communicate face to face, not vertically. "By building upwards," he says, looking at highrise estates, "we are building an incommunications system, modern towers of Babel." Nor are high rise flats alone in suffering a communications blight. The most effective means of galvanising a community to protect itself and control change in its own interests is through the use of languages that everybody understands—languages that in an urban society are to be found in films, the press and television. But the professionalism of the media, Ed Berman suggests, is geared to telling people, not asking them —"Making them passive receivers, not active participants in their own communities." Too many of the films, television programmes and newspapers that most people encounter are products for national, or at the best, regional consumption. Their elitist attributes— smart accents, smart vocabularies and status —inhibit people from using the same media in situations where a glossy finish is less important.

The media van is a promising package. It will be used both as a sensitive probing device and, through involving people in a practical demonstration of media communication, as a resource to stimulate community relations. In a society that conceals its virtues, those who don't know or who can't affirm their rights have no rights. Knowledge and expression can be encouraged, but not imposed. The concept of self-help has wide currency as an idea. The media van by providing palatable expertise at a local level should animate it as a practice.
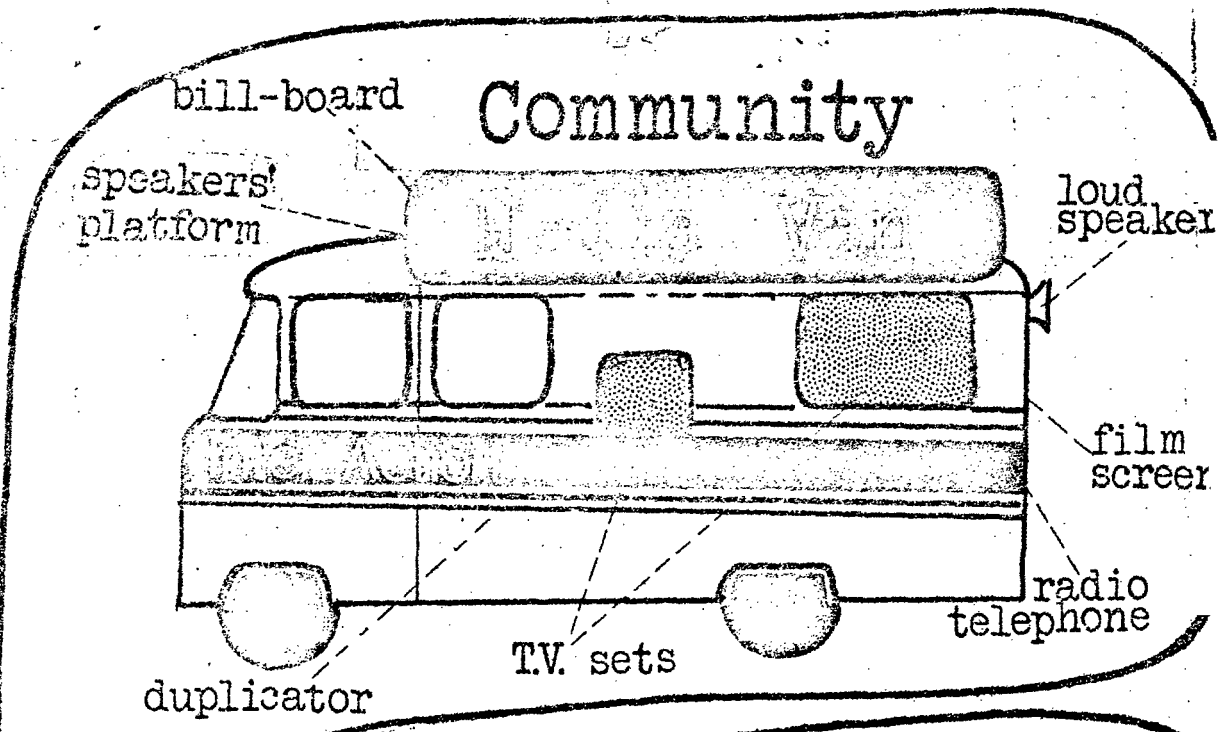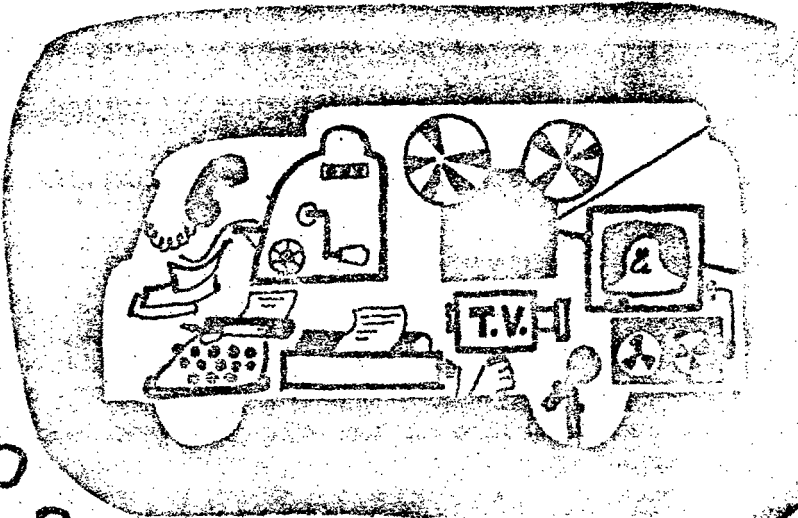
4.2 Audrey Bronstein and CPC

Because of her experience of Canadian community television, Audrey Bronstein was commissioned in January 1972 to undertake a feasibility study for the Community Project Centre in Cwmbran New Town, Gwent.

At the time CPC was still closely associated with a Young Volunteer Force project which was set up in Cwmbran in 1969. Although it had established itself as an independent community work agency in July 1971, it was not until April 1973 that CPC severed all links with YVF, when the agency became an independent company and registered charity.

In a 1973 report (5) CPC presented itself as:

> "... a permanent community work and social research agency with the task of identifying more precisely the human and social needs which exist in Cwmbran New Town, and in con-junction with community groups and institutions, in particular education, social services, industry and local government, devising appropriate methods to meet such needs."

In the feasibility study - Community Television in Cwmbran - which was published in June 1972, Audrey says that CPC saw in community tele-vision and opportunity to provide local people with "new and greater

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(5) An eight page report summarising a review of CPC's work between September 1972 and April 1973. Available from CPC.

opportunities of becoming involved in the activities of their town".
(op. cit. p.1) The Centre also saw a chance to fulfill one of its
explicit aims: "to stimulate a greater awareness and control by the
community over development and events which determine its future".
(ibid.)

Audrey's own approach to community TV was inevitably oriented more
towards the idea than towards real ends, although the notions she put
forward in her study were tempered to some extent by real issues
related to Cwmbran. For example, her recommendation that CPC should
not submit an application at first for a government licence to transmit
locally produced programmes over the cable system:

"At the beginning of the feasibility study, it was thought

that the study might be used as the basis of an appli-

cation to the Government for a licence to (cablecast) in

Cwmbran. As the study progressed, this particular approach

did not seem to be the one best suited to initiating a

community television project in Cwmbran." (ibid. p.9)

One reason for such a recommendation was that, while local represen-
tatives of the major cable company operating in the area were inter-
ested in the idea, for economic reasons the company at a national level
was not.

Another reason was that under the conditions laid out in the 1972
Government memorandum on cable-casting locally originated programming,
it would have been necessary to provide the Ministry with programme
schedules at regular intervals and sufficiently in advance to allow

time for any necessary consultation about programmes without undue

urgency. According to Audrey's study this would not allow for the

project to develop as the needs of the community might dictate:

"If community television were to be of use to the people

of Cwmbran in meeting their needs, it should be structured

from the outset, so that the residents of the community

could play a large part in determining its initial and

ongoing form." (ibid. p.10)

Audrey's faith in the general feasibility of community television

projects rested on the assumption that such systems necessarily incor-

porate the element of feedback. In the introduction to her study she

spoke of the existing communications facilities in Cwmbran (facilities

such as the mass media, regional radio and TV, the national press,

local and community papers, leaflets, etc.) and made the point that

none of these one-to-many systems allowed for feedback from the

recipients of information whether that information was of general

interest or of particular interest to the people of Cwmbran. In other

words, they did not allow for "one of the elements essential in break-

ing down barriers of apathy and isolation". (ibid. p.4)

According to Audrey, communication is complete only when it takes the

form of dialogue, and so the element of feedback is necessary in any

system to complete the process. The complete process has intrinsic

value for the community since it is this two-way dialogue comprised of

information and response that allows people to exchange and share

information:

"If this process is conducted in a creative manner, on

a long term basis, the ability of any individual or

group to identify issues of concern to them and develop

ways of coping with these issues is greatly expanded."

(ibid)

While Audrey thought that the element of feedback must eventually be
built into the mass media (indeed, 'phone-in programmes are already on
the increase both on radio and on TV - local and national) if they are
"to become in any way more relevant to the general public" (ibid.),
she was less concerned with building feedback into existing communica-
tions facilities in Cwmbran than with setting up a new community TV
service which by nature would already incorporate feedback. She saw
this service as necessarily "a communications resource accessible to
all and allowing for, almost ensuring, a two-way dialogue". (ibid. p.5)

Another assumption Audrey made about community television was that not
only would it allow access by the public but also it would be controlled
by the public. In this way no technological mystique would evolve to
alienate and isolate. This she related to the specific needs of
Cwmbran by pointing out that while the New Town was well provided for
with regard to physical community facilities (i.e. buildings etc.) it
was also essential to pay attention to the social, human needs of
individuals and organisations:

"It is not the case that the simple provision of new

buildings and facilities will eradicate the initial

feelings of isolation and lonliness that many people

feel upon moving into a New Town. In fact, these exper-

iences often seem to be perpetuated as more and more

new residents move in." (ibid. p.4)

She maintained that the extent to which people come together, whether

to deal with problems collectively or just to get to know each other,

is in large part determined by the kind of communication facilities

available. The existing, centralised systems resist community partic-

ipation. A community television service, however, would encourage it.

4.21 Community Television and Community Video

Audrey Bronstein's report made an important contribution to U.K.

literature by making a distinction between community television and

community video. As we have already suggested (1.1), the two labels

relate more or less to the two methods of distributing locally origi-

nated material: cable-casting and 'street-corner' public viewing.

Prior to Audrey's report, however, U.K. literature had referred to all

instances where local residents were involved in the making of progr-

ammes for local distribution, by any means, simply as community tele-

vision.

Audrey considered that even when the public is allowed access to and

control over cable-casting facilities (as it is in Canada), community

video which utilises public viewing sites is more successful as a

community action tool:

"The kind of dialogue created by using video within the

community setting is, by definition, at a much more

personal level than that which develops as a result of

'piping' programmes into the homes of individual cable subscribers. When programmes are shown by setting up television sets in community locations that naturally attract a large number of people, the equipment and even the programme becomes not an end in itself but rather the means to achieving another end related to that particular group." (ibid. p.7)

"By taking the equipment into community locations like pubs, shopping centres, schools, etc., those viewing the programmes will have an opportunity to respond immediately to what they see. The viewer would be able to talk to those members of the group who were operating the equipment and showing the programme and could even learn to use the equipment if he wanted. This is a very different process from the viewer remaining isolated in his home, watching a community programme but with no immediate opportunity to respond to it in a constructive way. Not only is the viewer isolated, but those who participate in the production of the programme are unable to get immediate feedback from their audiences who usually remain unknown." (ibid. p.9)

It was Audrey's opinion, then, that CPC should begin by acquiring a complete videotape recording unit with playback facilities which would allow the Centre to operate a community video service. Her recommendation claimed some support from the fact that, during the one month study period, "almost every organisation or individual contacted was able to suggest several ways that they would like to get involved with

(such a) project". (ibid. p.11)

Some of the ideas put forward by local people were product oriented and might equally well have been suited to cable distribution. For example, one local secondary school put forward "several positive suggestions", which included the making of information tapes by pupils visiting industrial sites, and the making of information tapes about school activities. Similarly, institutions such as hospitals suggested that they could "use video programmes to communicate to the public the work being done", (ibid. p.12). It was also suggested that video could be used to develop the Arts in Cwmbran - "to develop the potential of video as a new art form" (ibid.).

But besides these, there were many suggestions which implied that local people understood Audrey's point that community video represents a system which facilitates dialogue, and that dialogue in itself is valuable in developing human, social situations. One such suggestion was that:

"The local authority and development corporation could

use video to present information about any new plans

or projects concerning the development of Cwmbran. If

programmes containing this kind of information were shown

throughout the community, people could then be given the

opportunity to respond to these ideas through video. The

responses could serve, in themselves, as feedback to the

local officials or could serve merely as the first step

in an on-going dialogue between the authorities and the

residents." (ibid. pp.12-13)

4.22 Video Exhibition

Audrey's recommendation that CPC should set up its own community video service was credited further support by the "enthusiastic response given to the idea by the local people who attended a public exhibition of video equipment and software, put on in the Town Centre by Audrey and CPC on 20th May 1972. The staging of the exhibition accorded with one of the terms of reference for the feasibility study which was "to make available to the residents of Cwmbran information on the concept of community television and what it could offer to the Town" (ibid p.1). It was felt that the concept of community television might be better understood if people had a chance to use the equipment for themselves. The display was arranged in a prominent position and plenty of hardware was provided so that everyone — casual shoppers and interested parties alike — had an opportunity to handle it. Representatives from various firms were present to demonstrate their own makes of hardware and to answer questions. The Akai representative had made a demonstration tape with members of Cwmbran's United Tenants Association a week earlier, and this not only encouraged others to consider the possibility of using video, but it also publicised the U.T.A. Members of IRAT's TV department and NKTV also assisted at the display. They demonstrated how to operate equipment and helped local people to produce short recordings. They talked informally about their own projects in London, and Bob Jardine and Mike Hickie presented their tape and slide show: Some Ideas about Video and Community TV.

As a result of this association between NKTV and CPC, Joe Miller — Director of CPC — and Mike Hickie got together and eventually produced a research proposal (in March 1973) for setting up a community video

project in Cwmbran.

4,3 Community Video in Cwmbran

In this research proposal CPC presented itself as an independent
community work agency which existed "to develop a greater knowledge,
through emperimental community projects, of the needs which exist in
Cwmbran and of better ways in which such needs could be met" (Miller
and Hickie, 1973, par.3). One such need it said, was for better
communication resources at a community level:

> "A basic problem in community development is the creation
> of channels, mechanisms and methods of communication
> within and between community groups and between community
> groups and statutory institutions. The resources available
> to communities for communications of this kind are limited."
> (ibid. Summary)

Echoing Audrey Bronstein's feasibility study, CPC related this problem
to Cwmbran in particular, saying that this problem is exacerbated in
the new town where structures for communication need to be established,
and it shared Audrey's disapproval of the existing communications
facilities which did not incorporate the element of feedback:

> "Those which are, such as local newspapers and official
> handouts, often result from commercial or political interests,
> and are certainly controlled by such interests. Limitations
> of resources is probably the major reason why community
> organisation could not establish comparable communications

structures and therefore rely on sources which re-
interpret and often misinterpret the information
presented.

      •   •   •

There seems to be a tendency for institutions, originally
designed to represent people and provide services for
people, to become unresponsive and therefore act in such
a way as to alienate the people they serve. This process
is reinforced because the essential elements of communication
– information and response – are incomplete since no allow-
ance is made for an effective element of response to
institutional policies. However, two-way communication
is essential for problem solving in society." (ibid. pars.4-5)

The proposal put forward community video as a potential resource which
could significantly improve the situation. It fully accepted Audrey's
distinction between community video (which it described as a process
whereby tapes can be made by community groups as an aid to projects
they are engaged in and distributed in community gathering points) and
community TV (which it defined as the production of programmes about
the local community which are distributed into every home linked up to
the local cable relay station). It accepted that the future of a
project in Cwmbran lay with community video but it predicted that if an
experiment was established it would examine eventually the possibility
of using cable.

While Audrey's feasibility study had claimed that a lot of people in
Cwmbran would be interested in using video equipment, CPC was concerned
that no research had been conducted over a period of time in any

community, either in Britain or abroad, which had established and
clarified the uses of videotape recording and playback in community
development. This does not mean that CPC ignored the experience of
Challenge for Change, IRAT and NKTV. Indeed, the proposal included
information on the NFBC's work since 1966, it mentioned TVX, and it
quoted hefty chunks of NKTV's: Some Ideas about Video and Community
TV. But it saw this experience as the product of small-scale projects
which were not adequate for providing the information required by
permanent agencies like CPC:

> "Because of limitations of finance, equipment availability,
> organisational problems and, in the case of National Film
> Board of Canada, statutory limitations upon the commit-
> ment to one single project, the main problem which faces
> any of the groups incolved in community video is inade-
> quate knowledge of the uses of video. No one group has
> worked over any period of time within a locality and built
> up relations with the community which would enable docu-
> mentation of experience to take place which could suggest
> patterns of usage." (ibid. par.38)

Nevertheless, CPC accepted the three spheres of operation specified in
NKTV's Some Ideas etc. paper, namely: interpersonal, intergroup, and
community-wide; and the agency proposed to work with video within these
general areas and with the following objectives:

> "a) To examine and clarify in what ways video recording
> and playback can foster or impede the growth of individuals
> and groups within a community.

b) To examine and clarify in what ways video equipment can foster or impede communication amongst groups and between groups and institutions. And to discover for what purposes, if any, video recording and playback is most suited in inter-group communication.

c) To examine and clarify in the light of the two factors above, when and how video recording and playback should be employed as a resource in community development; and to examine the future use of cable television by the community.

d) To promote a knowledge of community video, how it works, what it can do, amongst individuals, groups and institutions in Cwmbran.

e) To determine the extent and nature of management necessary to allow a video group to operate effectively over all spheres of operation in Cwmbran (6), and to establish such a management structure before the end of the research period.

f) To promote a more precise understanding of video recording and playback and its use within community development, by publishing findings to as wide an audience as possible; thus making the results of the Cwmbran experiment available

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(6) CPC felt it was important that members of a community who operate video should gain their appreciation of its role within the community through experience in the interpersonal and intergroup spheres before attempting community-wide cable-casting. This would give them the understanding necessary to organise a programme at that level.

as a basis for the development of work in a wide variety

of settings and for many purposes outside the scope of

this particular project.

(ibid. par.53)

The method proposed was to instruct members of local groups and

institutions on how to operate the equipment at their disposal, after

first asking the groups and institutions to clarify their on-going

projects and to say how they thought video might help. As the projects

continued (with the use of video) the researchers would be on hand to

help and advise. Content and target would be left completely up to

the client groups; the researchers would only collect and document

information, which they would discuss with the client groups:

"The major area for analysis will be the extent to which

video assisted in achieving overall objectives and to

clarify in what ways it promoted and impeded the achieve-

ment of overall objectives." (ibid. par.55)

Any patterns which might emerge would be tested in time, and any new

ideas for using video would be followed up. As the project progressed,

those uses which would benefit from community wide cable-casting could

be isolated, and their associated problems could be examined and

tested with the co-operation of the local cable relay company.

Finally, the results of the project would be published to show other

potential users of video in community development in what ways the

incorporation of community video into their activities would be

valuable. The published results would also form the basis for recom-

mendations to local and central government.

4.31 Postscript

When the proposal was published in March 1973, a community association, a tenants association, a local authority, a school and a hospital had already agreed to take part in the experiment which was planned to take place over a period of two years.

Cwmbran was presented as an ideal base for a community video experiment. As a new and growing town it has, "on the one hand special kinds of communications problems, but on the other a willingness to experiment with new ideas" (ibid. par.63a). Audrey Bronstein's feasibility study had detected widespread support from the general public and CPC had already established strong links at all levels in the community.

However, after several months of apparently sympathetic noises from one grant-giving body in particular, CPC's Community Video in Cwmbran research proposal was finally rejected.

PROCESS, PRAXIS AND PROJECT : A TOTALISATION

"Praxis refers to events that are the deeds of doers or

groups of doers, or to the intended outcome of such deeds.

It refers to the acts of an agent. Process refers to

events or a pattern of events of which no doer or agent

is the author. Thus, praxis expresses the intentions of

a person or group of persons, while process does not."

                                   Aaron Esterson (1970, p.2n.)

5.1 Introduction

We now have two differing descriptions of the phenomenon: community

video. The first represents its horizontal complexity or its ideal

form. The second plots its vertical complexity in the work of those

professing to be community videasts.

The ideal description may be seen as the collective project of community

videasts. It assumes a growing frustration among media consumers at

never being able to respond to the information they are fed. It portrays

community video as a process operated by self-organising groups of local

residents, encouraged by a caring, committed social worker with

technical skills. According to this description product is incidental;

the nature of the product is determined by the process. This is

considered to be a radically new approach to media production since 'the

people' collectively control the process at every stage. In this way

they are not alienated from their product as they would be if by chanc

they were given the opportunity to participate in the making of broad-
cast programming. For TV constituted as a mass medium is controlled
by a powerful few who filter and distort the contributions of the people
through their professional forms.

This ideal is rudely contradicted by our second description of community
video in the U.K.; that is as it is apprehended in the actual work of
real men. This description portrays community video as a collection
of stunted attempts at fieldwork which have invariably been abandoned
before 'the people' have really become involved. Indeed, no evidence
has been produced to confirm that public interest in video is likely to
continue when the novelty wears off. This means that community video
has been, up to now, just as much the domain of the middle-class
professional as is broadcasting. But in this case the professional
is a drop-out, a student, or some kind of academic with a sort of
unsubstantiated faith in the inherent remedial properties of the video
process, similar to that of the Christian's faith in the Second Coming.
He preaches a lot about it, and he prepares well for it, but it has yet
to materialise. In the meantime, preparation includes systematising
access to hardware and exchange and distribution of software. It also
includes the training of new disciples.

In Section 5 we will begin to resolve this contradiction in terms of
a double dialectic:

(i) The dialectic between the ideal form of community video and real
    anterior conditions (i.e. the contradiction between the collective
    project of community videasts and its objectification under
    particular socio-material conditions).

(ii) The dialectic between the ideal as collective project and the individual projects of videasts (i.e. the objectification and alteration of individual projects mediated by the ideal).

5.2 Finance

One of the major factors conditioning the objectification of community TV is finance. Ideally the cost of a particular project should be born by the community. The committed resource person should convince the community that his project is good and then the community should be prepared to support it.

So far in this country the ideal has not been properly realised. IRAT has been supported by the Arts Council of Great Britain and by the Home Office Community Development Project, and NKTV was supported by local authority students grants and by the Architectural Association until the project workers graduated. CPC is an independent community work agency supported by the local community, but in its attempt to set up a community video service it applied to outside grant-giving bodies.

U.K. videasts, then, have sought financial support from external bodies, and this as we shall see has been instrumental in the way that community video has materialised.

It will be appreciated that community video in the U.K. exists more so in what has been said and written about it than in actual practice. This verbal material forms the major part of its objectification. Proposals written with the aim of attracting finance have formed an essential part of this verbal material and, to this extent, the object-

ification of community video may be seen as the resolution of a contradiction between the ideal project of the videast and the project of the grant-giving bodies.

The Biddles (1965) tell us that the community development process is a search - the outcome of which cannot be predicted with certainty:

> "The community developer is an initiator of a process that he
>
> cannot expect to control. He hopes that the outcomes will
>
> yield social improvement and simultaneously produce beneficial
>
> changes in the lives of people. Even if he does not set up a
>
> disciplined research procedure, he operates in a spirit of
>
> research, for he is expediting a process that is seeking
>
> but that is never sure of the outcome." (loc. cit. p.257)

As a method of community development, community video is process as opposed to product oriented. Of course, community video work necessarily results in the production of something whether it be software, an improvement in the living conditions of the community involved, or whatever, but these products are not specifiable in anything more than very general terms at the outset.

Grant-giving bodies, however, like to be told exactly what they can expect for their money before they will agree to finance projects. They expect, and of course they should get, value for money, but this means more often than not that researchers must be able in their grant applications to promise a valuable artistic or scientific product.

This is the basic contradiction then between the project of the videast

and that of the grant-giving bodies. The videast seeks money to
initiate, ideally, a process which he feels will result in beneficial
yet unspecifiable changes taking place in the community. The monied
bodies, on the other hand, seek a product specifiable at the outset.

It is significant in this context that IRAT has been the most successful
of the groups we have discussed in securing financial support. It is
significant because, out of the several groups, IRAT has demonstrated
the most formal approach. In its 1969 proposal it devised a community
TV system ranging from local stations to a national network; its
experimental work following that proposal was concerned with 'alternative'
programme-making (the Roadshow); and its work for the Home Office CDP
set out with the intention of producing a report on the situation in
Canada and North America, and an Index of video users in the U.K.

Other projects, which have set out with less product oriented objectives,
such as to provide an information service to enable residents to make
better use of available facilities or to introduce the element of feed-
back into communications at a community level, have not found support.

It is difficult to decide whether IRAT has been successful because of
its formal approach, or whether it has adopted a formal approach in
order to be successful, but it is the case that grant-giving bodies have
shown themselves willing to support work with a formal bias. As a
result, formalism has tended to creep into the presentation of the work
of groups other than IRAT in their grant applications.

But whereas IRAT's formalism has been aimed at the production of objects
having intrinsic value and hence has found support in organisations

concerned with the Arts, the formalism of the other groups has been an
attempt to objectify a process whose value may be gauged only in terms
of something else which is yet to happen as a consequence of that
process. Support for this kind of work must be sought elsewhere (NKTV
was turned down by the Arts Council because its project was not 'arty'
enough), and approaches have been made to bodies oriented towards the
social sciences.

There is a great deal of controversy over the validity of some social
scientific methodology - as to whether it may be correctly called
'scientific' . Consequently, the need to formalise the video process
in terms 'scientific' enough to convince the grant-giving bodies has led,
so far, to the objectification of the ideal project in spurious natural
scientific terms. The videast has framed his intentions in a quasi-
behaviourist perspective, giving the impression that there is a 'thing'
called the community video process which has certain intrinsic proper-
ties and which has certain universal and measurable effects on social
situations. Consequently, he has presented his project as an intention
to slip this 'thing' into a nicely simmering development priority area,
to observe the reaction, and to assess the result. As an added attrac-
tion for the grant-giving bodies he has promised that if the pill works
then it may be crystallised and administered to other ailing districts
to make them better too.

5.3 Project Locality

Another factor conditioning the objectification of community video in
this country has been the choice of project location.

The ideal view is that the community videast chooses a locality because he cares for the resident community and wants to help it solve its problems. In other words, the videast is aware of, and he takes into account the particular nature of the resident community before he moves in, whereas the cable companies descend arbitrarily on an area to set up their local programming services, and the broadcasting system distributes its product indiscriminately to anyone with a receiver within range of a transmitter.

Let us consider the particular choices of project location by TVX, NKTV and CPC, and compare the relations between these groups and their locations with the ideal.

5.31 TVX's Choice

In its 1969 proposal TVX told us that:

> "In the context of community development priority is
> recognised of certain problem areas, particularly of those
> in the centre of cities. Notting Hill is perhaps the most
> notorious of those areas, and the problems it faces render
> it a highly suitable locality for initiating a project such
> as this." (Hopkins et al, 1972, p.54)

The proposal went on to list the chief reasons for the particular suitability of the area:

> "... its ease of topographical definition; its centrality;
> its population (in terms of size and nature the population

is one of the most varied and cosmopolitan existing anywhere

in the United Kingdom); its unique offer of a microcosm of

pressing urban problems; the number of existing public and

voluntary organisations already operating in the area; the

relatively high proportion of aware, educated and creative

young people; the proven willingness of a large proportion

of the community to co-operate on some scale with projects

of this nature; the history of the area and the publicity

long given it in the national press, making it a natural

focal point for community projects and yielding widely-

publicised models to create confidence in tackling other

problem areas; the absence of a real forum for the immediate

presentation of thinking and feeling amongst the different

groups and sections of the population; the long and intimate

knowledge of the area possessed by some of the project workers."

(ibid. pp.54-55)

These criteria may be divided into four categories. The first category

contains only one, and that is the intimate knowledge of the Notting

Hill area possessed by the project workers. It must be remembered that

Notting Hill was the birthplace and the home of the Underground. There

is little doubt that TVX did have a personal interest in developing the

area.

Of course, the cynic might suggest (with some justification) that this

fact alone could account for TVX's choice of that locality, for the

Underground had a new toy (1) and it chose not necessarily the best

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(1) As Wilfred De'Ath put it, September 1970.

place, but the first place in which to play with it.

The second category also contains only one of the criteria. It is the one which suggested that Notting Hill needed a forum for an immediate exchange of views between sectors of the community. This was the only criterion which actually suggested that community TV could do something for the chosen community.

The third category contains several of the criteria which implied that Notting Hill was a good choice of locality because community TV could survive there. These included the number of public and voluntary organisations working in the area, the high proportion of active, intellectual young people, and the general willingness to co-operate. These criteria implied that the object of the excercise was to make community TV work by means of that community, whereas ideally the object was to make the Notting Hill community work by means of community TV.

The fourth category contains the remainder of the criteria, which seem to have been included as useful data for comparative studies. Their inclusion gave the list a quasi-objective flavour which would have appealed to grant-giving bodies. This category included the inevitable promise of universally applicable methods for tackling other problem areas.

The two criteria out of the ten which came closest to expressing the ideal were relegated to the end of the list, giving the impression that TVX chose Notting Hill primarily as a locality in which a community TV experiment might survive and yield scientific information. In other words, while the local resident was being offered control over

programme production as an alternative to being used by the professional
TV producer, he was still going to be used, but in this case by the
researcher seeking a different kind of product, i.e. scientific inform-
ation, models for future work, etc.

5.32 NKTV's Choice

This choice, as we have already noted, was made not by the project team
but by its supervisors at the Architectural Association. Doubtless
North Kensington was chosen because it was a development priority area,
but the point remains that Bob and Mike had no particular feelings at
first for the area or for the needs of its residents.

The particular need in North Kensington for a community information
service was also identified by people outside the project team, i.e. a
group working in the A.A.'s School of Planning and Urban Design. But,
in effect, NKTV's reference to this need in its Feasibility Study may
be seen as little more than a rationalisation, in terms of the project
brief, of the teams desire (aroused by TVX at Goldsmiths' earlier in
the year) to set up its own community TV service.

NKTV did not expound the particular suitability of its chosen project
locality, as did TVX. The project was tacitly accepted by the team as
an impersonal design project at first. But as team members became more
involved in the work they also came to accept a responsibility towards
the North Kensington community. Hence they felt the need to justify
operations outside the area to the extent of trying to present them as
in some way relevant to the original project.

For example, the NKTV Diary says that the team took on work in Camden for the Stop The Cuts campaign committee on the understanding that experience gained there would be useful in North Kensington.

Again, when the possibility arose that the G.L.C. might support a project in Thamesmead, the Diary attempted to rationalise the move as in some way beneficial to North Kensington. The team had very little choice, really. It was a matter of moving to Thamesmead or breaking up. But the Diary qualified the decision to move by saying that if the team established community TV in Thamesmead, "this pilot project might enable other groups to establish themselves in other areas and so spread the operations of community TV" (Jardine and Hickie, June 1971, p.14). The implication was clearly that the team would be helping North Kensington indirectly.

In the event the move did not come off; the G.L.C. was not really interested. But had the team set up a project in Thamesmead, it would again have been a case of the project location choosing the project workers instead of the reverse.

5.33 CPC's Choice

In the case of CPC's proposed community video project in Cwmbran we have a relation between project workers and project location which fell somewhere between those presented by the choices of TVX and NKTV. One member of the team - Joe Miller - was already resident in Cwmbran and, had the project materialised beyond the production of the proposal, it would have represented an extension of his on-going work there. On the other hand, Mike Hickie - the second member of the proposing team - and

Audrey Bronstein who worked on the feasibility study were outsiders, as Bob and Mike had been in North Kensington.

From Joe's point of view, he was already committed to the locality and he was interested in what video could do for his community. From the point of view of Audrey and Mike, they knew what video could do ideally for communities. Inasmuch as Audrey and Mike were invited to work in Cŵmbran by comparative insiders, this was the first time in this country that a community had actually invited in a team of videasts. Cŵmbran discovered them rather than the reverse, but it was still up to them to 'sell' video to that community and to possible financial backers.

5.34 Resolution

It seems that a personal involvement with the project locality has not been a necessary condition for its choice by U.K. videasts. Indeed, in the case of NKTV there was no foreknowledge at all of the area. The same was true for two-thirds of the team behind the Cŵmbran study and proposal.

This has tended to confirm the autonomy of community video, i.e. to confirm its integrity - its 'thingness'. For instead of it being seen as an extension of the work of real people in their particular situations, it has been treated as something in itself, which should be accepted and lived out (acted out) by an equally reified community.

Feasibility studies have been carried out by outsiders whose intention has been to adapt these two things - community and community TV - one to another. Surprisingly, this reification was most pronounced in

TVX's proposal where the team was most personally involved with the chosen community. It was less pronounced in CPC's 1973 proposal where the influence of a comparative insider was brought to bear.

The CPC project is significant insofar as it modified the ideal. It was the community, or rather an element of that community, which 'called in' the videasts. This contradicted the ideal which portrays a situation where the caring videast 'goes in' to a community to see if he can help out. By the time CATS's UK Video Index came out, this modification had more or less replaced the 'committed videast' notion as the ideal. CATS, for example, were hiring themselves and their facilities out at £50 per day according to the Index. This development was the ultimate confirmation of the autonomy of the video process.

Starting as we did in Section 1 with a technology and its received ideal uses, there is a danger of our forgetting that in this country community TV sprang from a technological event, i.e. the development of cheap, easy to operate video recording equipment. It must be pointed out that this was not the case in Canada where experiments with video in community development were a natural development of earlier work with film. In the U.K. however, the first community TV proposal came about after minimal experience in the field and with very little information of comparative work done elsewhere. It closely followed the appearance on the open market of portable video equipment - at the earliest moment that it must have been possible to lay hands on second-hand hardware. With such little information available on the community response to, and need for, video, the initial attraction must have lain in video itself. With such little fieldwork experience the initial plans and proposals were inevitably the result of juggling with possible

combinations of hardware and sequences of recording and playback.

Such an approach was inevitable until the inrush of Canadian and North American literature brought with it in 1972 a more balanced perspective. The first U.K. proposal to be put forward after this inrush was CPC's, which was a realistic attempt to relate the notion of community video to the particular character of the chosen community. Community video was beginning to move from the the exclusive domain of the videast who tended to confirm its integrity, to the domain of the community worker who wanted to know what all the fuss was about.

But before this, when the videast was left to himself, he had to use devious means to overcome his lack of real knowledge of community work. First of all he organised the notion of community into neat systems to make it more compatible with the video systems he devised, (e.g. Social Matrix and Interface). Then he contended that there was a growing frustration at community level because the element of feedback was missing from the centralised mass media systems. Using this lever, he transferred his own attraction to video and his own envy of the broad- casters onto community members, making out that 'the people' would eagerly take the opportunity to use video as a means of taking control of the means of programme production. This was the broad cultural context in which he placed his project.

In this context the choice of project locality was neither here nor there. Localities needed to be shown only as particular manifestations of the national deprivation, so that community TV could be put forward as a remedial measure - modest in its immediate aim, but potentially a remedy for the national problem.

But individual localities have particular characteristics which must be taken into account if the object is to sell its members community TV. These characteristics must be allowed for in arguments for local services and to this extent local characteristics have conditioned the way that short-term projects have been presented. For example, Notting Hill and North Kensington are very different localities from Cŵmbran. Their problems are predominately material - a major factor in their being designated as a development priority area (which in turn was considered by TVX and NKTV to be a good springboard for getting the long-term community TV project off the ground). Cŵmbran on the other hand is comparatively well-off materially. Hence, Audrey had to change the tactic to sell CPC's project. She chose the inevitable social paucity common in new towns until the collectivity of strangers develops into a community, and she presented community video as a fast-acting remedy for this.

It is interesting to note that while Notting Hill and North Kensington are not so very far removed, neither on the map nor in character, TVX and NKTV isolated different basic problems for community TV to remedy, and consequently produced different plans of action (i.e. they object-ified the ideal in different ways). TVX's diagnosis of Notting Hill's problem was quite simply a localisation of what it saw as the national problem, i.e. the deprivation of public control over the media. NKTV's sights, on the other hand, were set lower and it concentrated more on local issues. This indicates a difference in immediate intention which is accountable to the individual, long-term projects of the two groups, which will be discussed in subsection 5.4. Before we move onto this area however there is one, final point to be made on the question of project location.

While individual, <u>small</u> projects have presented community video as a
remedy for different problems related more or less to specific project
localities, the different proposals have had in common the explicit
intention to remedy faulty or poor communications. TVX was interested
in providing a forum for an immediate exchange of views in the
community; NKTV was concerned to provide a communications service to
enable community members to make better use of existing facilities;
and Audrey Bronstein's study presented better communication as a means
to help the community come together.

Communication has for some time been a convenient scapegoat for most
social problems. However, if we listen to Sartre, communication must
inevitably be inefficient. He speaks of <u>primary alienation</u> (1960,
p.279 £) by which he means that human intentions cannot be transmitted
from person to person without the mediation of matter. There is
necessarily a contradiction between an intention and its objectification
in matter (e.g. words, gestures, images, etc.). There is a further
contradiction between the objectified intention and the receiver's
interpretation or experience. In other words, the communication
process, even at its simplest, witnesses some degree of <u>alteration</u> when
an intention-for-the-communicator becomes something other-for-the-
receiver (2).

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(2) Laing et al. schematise this process in terms of the experience and
    behaviour of two interacting persons, in their book <u>Interpersonal
    Perception</u> (1966).
    It is interesting to note that in a behaviourist perspective certain
    learning theorists, namely Osgood, Miller, Tolman and Skinner have
    moved away from an almost exclusive concern with objective,
    observable behaviour to include internal psychological events, or
    intervening variables, as stimuli governing or conditioning
    behaviour. See Kepner and Brien (1970) for further details.

Given that communication is, even at its very simplest inefficient,
then it is not difficult, if the motive is to 'sell' a medium, to trace
most social problems to bad communication. Community TV proposals are
written to sell the medium, partly to the chosen community and partly
to possible financial supporters. In order for a locality to be
described as suitable for such a project it must be shown first of all
to have social problems. These may then be traced to poor communication
facilities, and community TV or video may be presented as the remedy.

Inasmuch as this method was used by NKTV and two-thirds of the CPC
proposing team, the choice of location was in the first instance just
as arbitrary as the choice of location for the cable experiments.

5.4 Projects

Sartre says that the most rudimentary behaviour must be determined both
in relation to the real and present factors which condition it and in
relation to a certain object, still to come, which it is trying to
bring into being. This is what he calls the project.

The collective project expressed in TVX's 1969 proposal, NKTV's 1970
Feasibility Study, and CPC's 1973 proposal was, obviously, to set up a
community TV/video service, but the conditioning factors differed in
each case, producing some variation in approach. We have already dis-
cussed some of these real and present conditioning factors. Now we
will concern ourselves with the individual long-term projects of the
groups and discuss how these have also contradicted the ideal to a
greater or lesser extent.

5.41 IRAT's Project

Because IRAT's work has been developing over four years we have a good opportunity to glimpse the project steering the group's approach, for we may see the 1969 proposal not only in the light of IRAT's constitution but also in the light of subsequent small projects, each of which represents a different aspect or manifestation of the governing project.

In the Introduction to the present work we made the point that the 1969 proposal was contradictory. The point was based on the fact that the proposal claimed to represent a step towards decentralising the mass media whereas, in the perspective of community development, it was simply proposing an alternative, non-centralised system. A further contradiction has subsequently been discovered and that is that while the 1969 proposal professed to be a community development project it was oriented more towards systems design based on very little experience actually in the community.

If IRAT's main concern had been community development then the argument for decentralising mass media would have been superfluous. All IRAT had to do was to demonstrate the feasibility of its scheme in particular relation to the chosen community - both socially and technically. In fact, the proposal convincingly demonstrated the technical feasibility of local origination and public viewing, but as it has already been noted, it could present only flimsy evidence to support its claim that a local TV service would be welcomed and patronised by the community.

Three years after the proposal was published, Hoppy himself was critical.

The proposal was accompanied in CATS's 1972 report - <u>Video in Community Development</u> - by an introduction which admitted that "methods of actually approaching the community have not been clarified" (op. cit. p.49). Yet no more experimental approaches were made at a community level, The <u>Vision</u> was interested only in avant-garde broadcasting, and CATS has been content to mediate the fieldwork experience of other groups for anyone who might be interested in working actually in a community.

These facts suggest that IRAT's association with the world of community development did not come about out of any love for work at grass-roots level. One possibility is that the association arose more out of IRAT's need to present its project in a respectable light. When the Underground brought forth IRAT, it had in a way wised-up to the fact that it was dependent on the Establishment it had hitherto rejected. IRAT rationalised and institutionalised the Underground ethos in a way that the Establishment could understand, and its inception marked the beginning of a reciprocal, as opposed to a mutually exclusive, relation between them. Subsequently, IRAT has presented its works in the context of community development and has received considerable support from the Home Office CDP.

If this analysis bears any truth then the 1969 <u>Community Television</u> proposal was written in two perspectives: it was written firstly from the point of view of one concerned with creating an alternative to the existing system, and secondly from the point of view of one who needs the support of the existing powers in order to achieve the first aim.

It is significant that when he introduced the proposal in the 1972

report, Hoppy maintained that the arguments for decentralising the medium of television were still model arguments for the U.K. Someone once said that a myth ceases to be a myth when people stop believing it. The same may be said of the project. Hoppy's continued faith in what we have shown to be a contradictory argument, and his continued inability to register the contradictions, betray the extent of his committment. He was still too 'close' to the idea to detach himself from it. He was still living it out as his project.

On the one hand then the 1969 proposal was typical of the Underground inasmuch as it was essentially concerned with knocking the Establishment and with setting up alternatives. On the other hand however the proposal was untypical of the Underground inasmuch as it couched its intentions in terms acceptable to the Establishment, and it claimed acceptable motives.

If TVX was not basically concerned with knocking the Establishment and setting up alternatives, then why should it use up word space in an attack on broadcasting when the proposal was supposed to be extolling the value of community video as a community development service? TVX saw its argument as a matter of placing the proposal in a broad cultural context, but in effect it concentrated on its relation to the mass media and ignored its relation to other work more relevant to operations at a community level.

Our hypothesis is then that TVX's project - manifested in the 1969 proposal - was to set up an alternative television system to the established broadcasting system, and we may test this hypothesis against successive small projects carried out by CATS.

The recommendations for further research put forward by CATS in its 1972 report, although of indirect value to those working in the field, were concerned mainly with standardising hardware, cataloguing hardware resources, funding, training, distribution, and co-ordination. In other words, the concern was with systematisation as opposed to work in the community.

The UK Video Index was an overt attempt at systems building, and the fact that it included information about work going on in educational institutions - work which was not necessarily in sympathy with the IRAT ideology - suggests that, in its eagerness to create a nationwide alternative to the BBC and the ITV networks, CATS padded out the Index indiscriminately to give the impression that the national community of videasts was more advanced than it really was. The suggestion that these educational institutions might have been included simply as resource centres is a doubtful one. For the information given in the Index itself showed that the majority of the institutions included did not make its hardware freely available to the local community.

5.42 NKTV's Project

NKTV's work, in certain crucial respects, took an opposite course to that of IRAT. TVX members were familiar with their original project locality, but their sights were raised above the Notting Hill community to the national community (and even to the international community) of videasts. The NKTV team, on the other hand, began with an unfamiliar project locality and commenced to dig itself in and to concentrate on microcosmic issues.

The short-term project from the point of view of Bob and Mike was to conduct a piece of fieldwork and to present the results of that fieldwork in such a way as to pass it off as a valid design project for final year students at architecture school. Hence the Feasibility Study yielded a design for a piece of kinetic architecture - manifested in complicated flow-diagrams and charts.

The abstracted terms used to represent the community in the Feasibility Study diagrams soon proved to be inadequate. Design entered into contradiction with reality and lost. Unlike IRAT however, NKTV did not retreat behind their drawing boards to create more abstracted patterns. The team became involved in local issues and learned from them. By the time NKTV closed down, fieldwork was concentrated on one school in North Paddington and research was concerned with a small but essential aspect of video work with small groups.

There was still a strong formal element in the work inasmuch as schemes for recording and playback were formulated beforehand and presented as experiments to render particular information. But on location these schemes were used as a starting point and not as a rigid control. Situations were allowed to develop spontaneously. In fact, the Play Video small project was probably the closest thing to the ideal video process at group level that this country has seen; that is, outside the onanistic rituals of self-conscious, video-conscious, process-conscious groups of videasts of the kind sent-up by Frank Zappa's video/film 200 Motels (3). It witnessed a group of people monitoring its own

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(3) The film presents Zappa monitoring himself, monitoring the Mothers of Invention on tour. The result - galloping paranoia.

progress and collectively deciding on the next step. This differs from industrial training programmes, microteaching programmes, and psycho-therapeutic programmes using video, where an individual monitors and criticises his 'performance' to improve a skill or to effect a remedy.

The movement from systems designing to a preference for actually working with groups in the community indicates something of the joint project of all five NKTV team members. The hypothesis or totalisation here is that the five had in common not only an interest in the use of video in community development but, more importantly, an interest in actually participating in work at the community level. This is to say that, comparatively, NKTV was a means to community work for its members, mediated by the notion of video in community development, whereas TVX was a means towards alternative television systems-building for IRAT, mediated by the notion of video in community development.

NKTV broke up during the <u>Play Video</u> project and so it is not possible to test our totalisation against subsequent joint work. However, it is possible to test it after a fashion against subsequent work carried out by individual members.

We must leave Gwynne and Lee out of the discussion, since they returned to Canada and there is no information on their activities except that Gwynne began working for the NFB in Montreal.

5.421 <u>Mike Hickie</u>

Mike took up a post in the A.A.'s Communication Unit which involved him

in work not necessarily to do with community development. For example, the Unit arranged a conference called <u>Cable Now</u> at the ICA in April 1973. The object of the conference was to discuss the findings of the Television Advisory Committee to the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications (Cockburn Committee), published just before Christmas 1972. The main finding of the Committee was that a national cable television network was not a viable proposition before 1985. The <u>Cable Now</u> conference was called to publicly dispute this finding. It was felt that the technical people and civil servants who made up the Committee had been too influenced in their thinking by professional broadcasting and had ignored the essential social implications of public access. It was felt that a number of possibilities were realisable immediately; for example, community television, information services, commerce and other public services. Such use of cable would prevent the appearance of small, local, professional broadcasting companies.

The <u>Cable Now</u> conference and associated matters at the A.A. did not involve Mike in work at a community level but while he was working there he also became involved with CPC's proposed community video project in Cŵmbran. This association began in May 1972 and, had the proposal found a source of finance, Mike was prepared to give up his job at the A.A. and move to Cŵmbran. This would have meant exchanging a position which involved him in broad, national issues such as <u>Cable Now</u>, for one involving work with a community development agency operating at a community level.

The community video proposal which he helped to prepare played down ideological comparisons between small-scale video projects and the mass media; it fully accepted that community video was a more effective

community development tool in the initial stages of a project than was cable-casting; and it rejected previous short-term video projects as inadequate for providing the kind of information required by the long-term community developer.

These points plus Mike's willingness to move to Cwmbran indicate that our totalisation is valid in respect of at least one of the NKTV team. His project was oriented towards settling down to long-term community work at a local level.

5.422 Gordon Woodside

Gordon Woodside's work, from the time that he arrived in this country from Canada, demonstrated a steady progression from the arm's length approach preferred by IRAT to the personal contact approach of the social worker. When he first became involved with TVX as a founder member in 1969, his attitude seemed typical of the Underground inasmuch as he was committed to the idea of finding alternatives to established institutional forms, without really understanding what it was he was trying to replace and what it was he was replacing it by.

He was particularly concerned with education, as we have said, but his use of the term (in his article "Community Interests in Video Technology", May 1970) was poorly defined. So was his use of the term video. Sometimes he used it to refer simply to the hardware and sometimes he used it to refer to the hardware and its received uses (i.e. process). He also failed to differentiate clearly enough between the video process and other forms of television. Consequently, his approach to the use of 'video' in 'education' was confused and confusing. At base

it was typical of IRAT's general approach; that is, it saw schools and colleges as little more than hardware resource centres and it saw access to hardware as an end in itself.

In his article in the NECCTA Bulletin No.5 Gordon portrayed the teacher as something between a technical demonstrator and a liberator:

> "As teachers and educators, one of the new roles you might
> adopt within the present context could be to gain access
> to equipment available in your college or a nearby school;
> or borrow from local organisations or industry, or the
> nearest branch office of the Sony Corporation, and introduce
> it (free it) into your own classroom, and eventually into
> local community groups."

The suggestion that the introduction of 'video' into the classroom is an act of liberation smacked of subversion. Gordon cast the 'video' teacher/liberator as one who frees not only video hardware from behind locked cupboard doors, but also the mind of the layman from the mystique attached to television in all its forms. Accordingly his article refers several times to the use of 'video' in the classroom or in the community as demystification.

Since Marx and Feuerbach, use of the term mystification has implied a sinister intent on the part of those already in control or in possession of the means of production. Gordon's call for demystification betrayed a double perspective insofar as 'television' was supposed to shed its mystique as a result of public access to 'video', and also, the handing over of video hardware by the teacher to the pupil was

supposed to do away with the dictatorial, one-way, teacher → pupil/
producer ──→ consumer, learning situation, and replace it with a free,
self-organising learning situation.

Gordon's article introduced the work of the NFBC's <u>Challenge for Change</u>
team to a general U.K. readership, and the way that he represented this
work indicated something of his own orientation to video at that time.

Later, information on <u>Challenge for Change</u> became available in this
country in the form of <u>Newsletters</u> written by the actual project workers,
and we can compare these with Gordon's account.

The <u>Newsletters</u> represent a step by step account written with an
honesty that might be expected of social workers who feel a responsi-
bility for the people with whom and for whom they are working.

For example, in Newsletter No.7 (Winter 1971-72), Dorothy Todd Henaut
described what happened when the Privy Council of Canada asked the NFB
to make a film that would help the population to understand poverty.
(This was in 1966 when the <u>War on Poverty</u> hit the headlines.) A family
was chosen by film-maker Tanya Ballantyne to represent poverty and a
film crew moved in to document its everyday circumstances. Eventually
the film was edited and televised and it had a disasterous effect on
the life of the family. According to Dorothy Henaut:

> "Mother, father and children were teased, even mocked by their
> neighbours; the experience marked the whole family with
> bitterness."

This disaster stood at the very beginning of <u>Challenge for Change</u>'s experiments with media in community development. As a result of it, methods of film-making and viewing were revised.

What should have happened, according to project worker George Stoney (again in <u>Newsletter</u> No.7), was that:

"The film should have been screened for the family in their apartment, with just a few of the crew around. All the response would be sympathetic and understanding. Then, with the family itself doing the inviting and deciding who should come, it could have been screened at the church or any group where the family had connections and where people could start from a friendly base to see that the family was doing something, was involved in something important... All this could be done before the film was actually finished; then, if they wanted changes you could make them. I don't think you would have had to change a single frame; but you would have made it possible for the message to get out without embarrassing or hurting the family if only you had given them a chance to be involved through pre-screenings."

<u>Challenge for Change</u> has been equally critical of its successes. Take the Fogo Island project described once again in Newsletter No.7. Of this project, Dorothy Henaut admitted that:

"One thing we cannot say is: the films did it. Some inspired leadership and hardwork on the part of many islanders are factors which still stand out. Certainly film does not

loom large in the people's memories as they look back

proudly over the acomplishments."

Without doubt, Challenge for Change has more experience than any other

group in the use of film and video actually at a community level. Its

approach has been in the perspective of community studies and the

results of its work have always been evaluated in terms of actual

changes in the lives of real people. Gordon Woodside's NECCTA article

however, gave the impression that the purpose of the work was primarily

to make films and tapes, and that work with the community meant helping

the people to become amateur film and tape producers:

"Many projects were initiated to demystify film media in

small Canadian communities and in poor areas of urban

centres. The programmes sought to bring people together

in common social problems by getting them 'turned on' to

the media and to make their own film about their community

and its problems while personnel from the NFB remained in

the background as technical advisors. However, film is a

bulky and lengthy process and it was discovered that much

better results were achieved with video because it is

simpler and more immediate."

The implication in Gordon's account was that community-made films and

tapes are necessarily effective in community development. This mis-

represented the work of Challenge for Change whose approach has always

been open-minded and empirical.

Gordon's article leaves us in no doubt that in 1970 he, in common with

his colleagues at TVX, viewed the arrival of portable video as the 'Second Coming' - the answer to all social ills. But there were also signs in the article that he was not going to be preoccupied with the hardware for very long. For example, he included a quote from H. K. Levenhak's Colour TV Could Mean Community TV, which claimed that "video equipment does not create action or ideas, these depend on the people who use it". He also criticised the I.L.E.A.'s schools cable network on the grounds that "such a technically well-designed CCTV system is crucially handicapped" by the lack of fresh ideas and student participation in programme-making.

Gordon was instrumental in getting the NKTV project off the ground, and when TVX retired completely from the fieldwork scene in December 1970 he joined the NKTV team on a part-time basis. This of course allowed him to continue working at a community level, at least until NKTV faded away in 1972. The move to NKTV is not in itself conclusive evidence that Gordon's project was essentially community as opposed to video oriented. But his next move - after NKTV - suggests a bias towards the human rather than the technical. He disassociated himself almost completely from video and joined a group of active young Christians.

5.423 Bob Jardine

Bob spent a few months after NKTV closed down reviewing an analysing what had been achieved. By October 1971 he had prepared a paper called Community Television and Creative Community Development, and by the following December he had completed another - An Exploration in the Use of Videotape Recording in Teacher-Pupil Relationships - which was subsequently published in Visual Education (March, 1972).

In both papers Bob tried to nail down and clarify some of the terms
hitherto used so loosely by videasts as to be practically meaningless.
In particular he was concerned with creativity and education.

The 'creative' use of video was pioneered in the mid- and late-1960's
by people, such as Tony Gibson, working in the context of formal educ-
ation. In this context it has come to be accepted that programme-
making, which involves researching and organising information, is an
educational experience in itself.

The community videast adopted the notion that 'video is educational',
and proceeded to confuse education in the formal sense (i.e. as a
relation between the learner and the object of his study), with educ-
ation as it is understood in the context of community development (i.e.
as a relation between persons and between groups).

Bob's paper - An Exploration - was to some extent an attempt to resolve
the confusion and to formulate concepts of creativity and education in
a realistic relation with the 'video process'. Bob explained that video
in the classroom usually means the recording of broadcast ETV programmes
for convenient playback, the making of programmes by pupils under the
supervision of a teacher, or training by means of micro-teaching. This
however was not his view of the 'creative' use of video.

The Play Video project was similar in some respects to micro-teaching,
but:

"...videotape recording was used as a medium for encouraging dia-
logue between pupils and teachers as well as an observational aid.

"(The video team's) main concern was to explore ways of

optimising relationships between teachers and pupils so

that they might approach each other, and hence life in

general, creatively."

He went on:

"Creative is used here in its broadest sense to describe

the process by which an individual comes to realise his

or her own potential for personal development through

relations with other people and the world at large (c.f.

Maslow's term: self-actualising creativeness)." (4)

Bob made fuller reference to Maslow's notion in his unpublished October

paper:

"Maslow makes a distinction between what he calls special

talent creativeness and self-actualising creativeness,

that is, creativeness which springs more directly from

the personality and which reveals itself in everyday life,

'a fundamental characteristic, inherent in human nature, a

potentiality given to all or most human beings as birth,

which most often is lost or buried or inhibited as a person

gets encultured'."

Also in that paper he referred to Anderson (5) who makes a similar

(4) Maslow, A.H., "Creativity in Self-Actualising People", in Anderson
    (ed.), Creativity and its Cultivation, Harper and Row, 1959.
(5) Anderson, H.H., Creativity as Personality Development. (ibid.)

distinction:

> "There is another kind of creativity, which we may call
> psychological or social invention, whose product is not
> an object as such. This is creativity not with objects
> but with persons; creativity in human relations."

Bob felt that the two types of creativeness distinguished by Maslow and
Anderson are not mutually exclusive. In the October paper he said that:

> "The full realisation of a person's creative potential may
> involve innovative changes in his relationships with his
> physical surroundings as well as in the interpersonal sphere."

In An Exploration he made the point that the conventional uses of video
in the classroom concentrate on the self ⟷ object relationship,
whether it be the relationship between the pupil and his object of
study, or the relationship between the trainee teacher and the class/
object in microteaching.

He felt that such an approach to the use of video ignores the necessar-
ily dialectical nature of human relations. It ignores video's possible
function as a two-way communication system and hence reduces its poten-
tial for facilitating personal creativeness or self-realisation.

> "Education is a function of the teacher-pupil relationship.
> If education is to contribute significantly to the realisation
> of cognitive and emotive potential in pupils and teachers,
> that is to say, if it is to be creative, then the conditions

must exist for dialogue between teachers and pupils.
Video playback in conventional microteaching gives the
teacher a new perspective on his own actions and the
behaviour of the pupils in his class. It does not allow
these perspectives to be checked dialectically against
the pupils' perspectives of their own and the teacher's
actions."

Bob outlined a method by which video could be used in the classroom "to
release experimental blocks and facilitate two-way communication" in
teacher-pupil relationships. He used the Play Video project as evidence
to support the view that video could be used in this way - to provide
"a means of creative intervention". He referred in particular to
incidences during the project where discussions involving teachers and
pupils moved off the subject of the lesson on to lesson itself.

The purpose of An Exploration was not to present evidence in support of
an hypothesis, or to publish knowledge about video in education, gained
as a result of the Play Video project. Its purpose was to suggest a
method - devised in the light of experience gained during the fieldwork
- for optimising the possibility of creative interrelations between
'teacher' and 'taught'.

An Exploration is reproduced in full, in the Bentilee community video
Project Diary (f.2nd July 1972) which represents Volume Two of the pre-
sent work, so there is no need to describe Bob's method here. Suffice it
to say that the principles on which it was based were borrowed from the
Interpersonal Perception method devised by R.D. Laing et al. (1966)

The October and December papers were written in what might be described as a 'slack' period for Bob - as far as community TV/video is concerned. This period continued well into 1972; during the first couple of months of that year he wrote the 'script' for the audiotape and slide show - Some Ideas about Video and Community TV - which he and Mike presented at the Communications conference in Liverpool in May, 1972. He also helped out at the Cŵmbran video display in the same month. Both of these occasions represented a revision of work already done.

An Exploration had looked forward to extensive tests in the field, using the proposed method. Quite early in 1972 Bob applied successfully to the Sociology Department at Keele for supervision to continue fieldwork. In the following October he began an action-research project in Bentilee - a large housing estate in Stoke-on-Trent.

His return to field work tends to confirm that for a third NKTV member the fundamental choice in his involvement with video in community was to work actually at a community level.

5.5 Postscript

The ideal description of community TV put forward in Part Two, Section 1, may give the impression that the collective project of the individuals and groups we have considered has been clear and well defined. This not the case, and the ideal description should be seen as a collection of notions which have momentarily conditioned the work of those people and groups.

We have totalised IRAT's individual project as a movement towards the

creation (for its own sake) of an alternative TV system to broadcasting.
By contrast we have totalised NKTV's project as a movement towards
work in the community for its members. These two movements represent
the inevitable dualism that one discovers in media studies of all kinds:
IRAT represents the formalist approach (in this case the approach which
concentrates on the technological and the abstract); and NKTV represents
the empirical approach (in this case the approach which concentrates on
particular social problems at a community level).

During the period 1969-1972, the two projects were influenced (or
mediated), momentarily, by the collection of notions we have put togeth-
her under the name of community TV/video. Or to look at it another way,
the momentary coincidence of the two projects, conditioned by socio-
material circumstances, has yielded a collection of commonly-held
notions which we have isolated and put together under the name of
community TV/video.

Even at the moment of coincidence, the commonly-held notions <u>as they
have been articulated</u> have been intended somewhat differently by the
different groups, so that while IRAT and NKTV may well have 'spoken the
same language' at that particular moment in history, IRAT's work was
tending towards the community <u>TV</u> aspect (i.e. towards <u>local</u> programming)
while NKTV's work was tending towards that of community <u>video</u> (i.e.
towards community action using video).

The latter part of 1972 saw the end of that moment of coincidence.
Between 1969 and the summer of 1972 the collective project was object-
ified in predominately formalist terms and work. Even Bob Jardine's
method which he began to formulate in <u>An Exploration</u> represented just

another side of the formalist coin; but in this case the emphasis was on systematising human interrelations as opposed to hardware. In the latter part of 1972, however, the Bentilee community video project set out to contradict formalism.

When Bob and I approached the Bentilee community we were careful to point out that we were not 'videofreaks'; we had no axe to grind; we had no system that we wanted to put into practice (i.e. we were not intent upon making local residents live out our fantasies); and we had no hypotheses to test. We were determined to hold all preconceptions 'in brackets', including both those of the collective ideal and those of our own (e.g. Bob's method), and to allow the community to evolve its own methods for using videotape equipment made freely available by the Sociology Department at Keele. We were content to observe, help where required, and to explicate what happened for our own use (i.e. to develop theories) and for communal use (i.e. as a means of feedback).

CPC's proposal which appeared several months later also indicated an intention to bracket preconceptions backed by inadequate fieldwork, and to take an empirical approach.

Both the Bentilee project and CPC's proposal were concerned with community video. Neither was interested in premature systems building. 1972-1973, then, saw a movement against formalism. The moment of coincidence was over. Community TV/video entered an antithetical phase where the contradiction between community TV and community video was at its most pronounced.

The Bentilee community video Project Diary which follows is a detailed,

though partial account of one manifestation (objectification) of this
movement. It is partial inasmuch as it was intended at the outset that
the Diary should be simply an interim report on the project, represen-
ting the researchers' perspective. This report was to have been fed
back to the community personnel and groups who participated, to encou-
rage an exchange of views and to produce a more complete view of the
situation. In the event, this did not come about since the project
came to a premature end due to lack of financial support.

Although the Project Diary was not used for the purpose it was intended,
it has some value in itself. It is information which enters immediately
into contradiction with the literature belonging to the previous,
formalist moment. By seeing it in this way, we may set out to resolve
the contradiction and bring about new syntheses.

A P P E N D I X   'A'

1.   Pages from <u>CATS Video : Training Manual</u>, for comparison with:-

2.   Pages from the Shibaden SV707 and FP707 videotape recording
      equipment operating manual,

      and

3.   Pages from the Phillips Top Twin Washing Machine operating
      manual.

View

Do:

TO EXAMINE THE VIDEOTAPE RECORDER:

1 Remove the cover of the head drum assembly
2 Open the battery compartment

Electrical and mechanical components that may be affected by routine
breakdown during usage are described in the following section which
describes their function.

READ AND COMPLETE THIS SECTION

It is the form of a programmed text.
From the diagrammes and the machine in front of you, you can find the
necessary information.
Fill your answer in the blank sapce.
The correct answer is given underlined in the   of the question.
When you have completed this, move to the next section where you will
be asked to deduce points where breakdown might occur.

1 THE PORTABLE CAMERA & VIDEOTAPE RECORDER

videohead
see detail below   vidicon tube

lens

tape

spool

amplifier

power supply
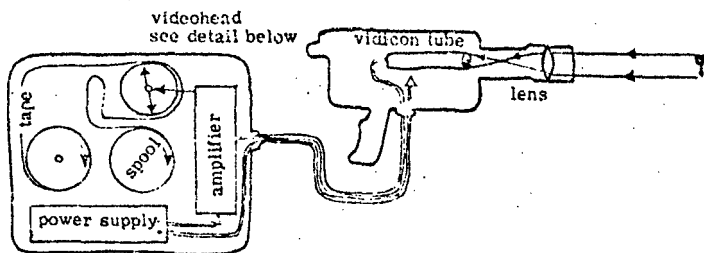
The following program traces the flow of picture information through this system.

1 Visual information collected by the VTR system enters via the _____ .

2 The lens is a device for collecting _____ .

3 Light enters the lens and is focussed on the face of a vidicon. The vidicon translates _____ into electrical impulses.

4 These _____ are very small/large and therefore need amplifying in an amplifier.

5 The device used for changing a small flow of electricity into a large flow is called an _____ .

6 The increased flow from the amplifier is fed into the videotape recorder. It is called a VTR because it _____ the impulses from a camera onto _____ .

7 The electric impulses are changed into magnetic impulses which are recorded onto the tape. Videotape has a metallic coating that can be _____ .

8 Common devices which use electricity to magnetise objects are called electro _____ .

9 In a VTR, tape is magnetised by passing it near a head. A _____ is an electromagnet.

10 In a videotape recorder a _____ is passed near a _____ so that the electrical impulses, translated into _____ _____ , can be recorded and stored.

(14)

6 OPERATIONAL CHECK-LIST
key: * illustrated on next sheet.

Most failures are due to failure of electrical or magnetic power to move to the next stage of the system.

Using this check list, you will deal with these possible failures _before_ you use the VTR. (For Sony mainly).

Try to relate each check to the function of each machine part it deals with. (See Section 1).

NB! →Do you understand why you are checking?
Do these steps before removing portapak from premises.

Step & Time	Item	Description	Check done	OK
A: 10 hours before use	1	Check batteries for cracks		
	2	Check that charger and battery contacts are clean--if not, scrape them.		
	3	Check red positive poles on batteries align with red positive marker on charger.		
	4*	Place 2 batteries under charger.		
	5	Plug charger in to mains.		
	6	Switch on mains.		
	7	Switch on charger.		
	8*	Check meter to see if batteries are charged.		
B: 30 mins before use		The machine must be cleaned before every use. Deposits of magnetic oxide from tape surface to machine surfaces are the main causes of wear, and poor electronic information transfer.		
	1	Use cotton buds or tape head cleaning tool. If buds, pack down wool firmly by twisting action.		
	2	Soak lightly with surgical spirit or carbon tetrachloride.		
	3*	Head should be moved around(very gently as heads are fragile) to an accessible position with a matchstick or other nonmetallic object.		
	4	With a match in one hand block the movement of the head.		
	5	With a cleaning tool in the other, very gently stroke the head LONGITUDINALLY towards the blocking tool. DO NOT stroke TRANSVERSELY as you may snap a head (cost £30)		
	6	Check that no fur has caught in the tiny air gap in the head.		
	7*	Check head cleanliness by the state of the cleaning tool and surface of the head. Metallic oxide deposits should be removed from head to cleaning tool.		
	8*	Clean tape guide posts.		
	9*	Clean tape paths.		
	10*	Clean audio/sync and erase heads.		

C: 20 mins
before use

1* Fit batteries to portapak. Check that red marks on batteries fit red marks on portapak case.

2* Check meter on portapak by switching to STANDBY position. Needle should read in BLACK. If RED, batteries aren't charged. Remove batteries and replace.

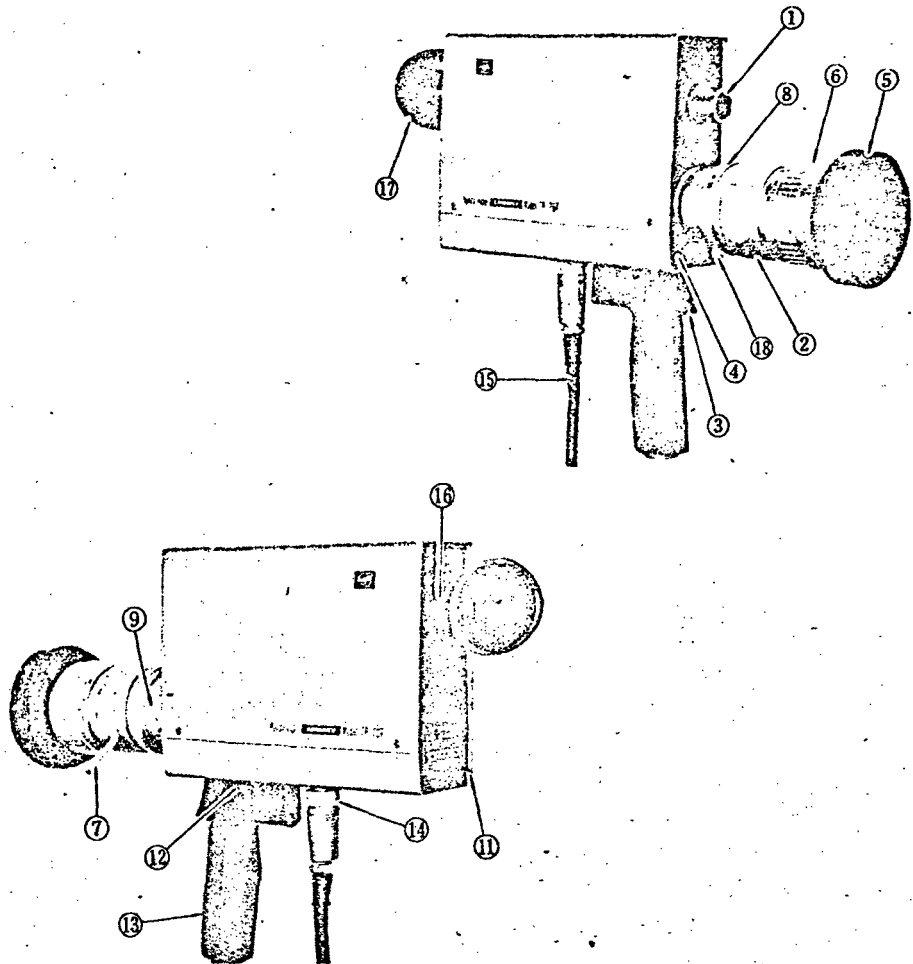3* Check that videoheads rotate when in STANDBY.

4   Switch off portapak.

SV-707 VIDEO TAPERECORDER
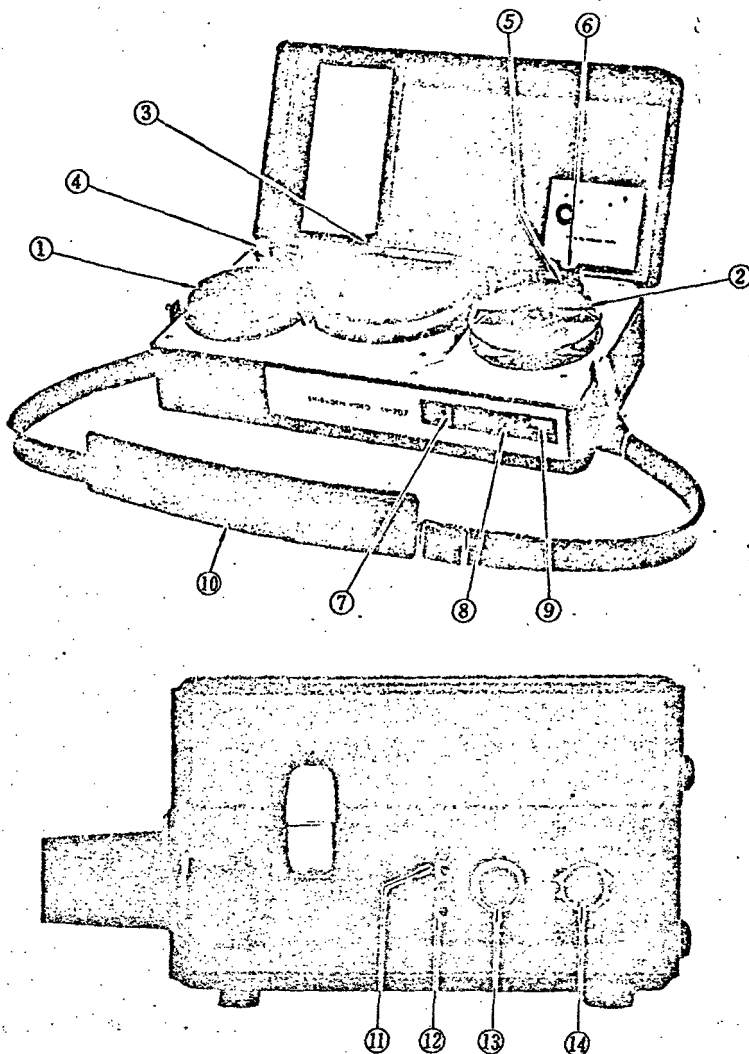
①	Supply Reel	⑧	Record Push-button
②	Take-up Reel	⑨	Battery Meter
③	Cylinder	⑩	Shoulder Strap
④	Tension Roller	⑪	Earphone Jack
⑤	Capstan	⑫	Microphone Jack
⑥	Pinch Roller	⑬	Camera Cable Connector
⑦	Standby Lever	⑭	Power Connector

3

FP-707 TV CAMERA

①	Microphone	⑩	Lens Mount
②	Zoon Lens	⑪	Shoulder Strap Fixture
③	Record Button (A)	⑫	Pistol Grip Screw
④	Record Button (B)	⑬	Pistol Grip
⑤	Lens Hood	⑭	Camera Cable Connector
⑥	Focus Ring	⑮	Camera Cable
⑦	Zoom Operation Rod	⑯	Magnifying Glass
⑧	Iris Ring	⑰	Viewfinder Hood
⑨	Lens Mount Ring	⑱	Shoulder Strap Fixture

4

OPERATION

1) Set the STANDBY lever ⑦ of the SV-707 to the STOP position.

2) Insert a pair of batteries into the battery pack located at the bottom of the SV-707, as illustrated on the inside of the lid of the battery pack.

   Note:

   a) The wrong polarity insertion of batteries into the pack may cause their breakage.

   b) A cloth ribbon attached to the battery pack is for easy pull-out of the batteries.
   When inserting the batteries, be sure to lay them on the ribbon, leaving one end of the ribbon protruding outside.

3) Set the STANDBY lever ⑦ to the STANDBY position and check the battery voltage, while viewing the indicator (BATT ⑨).

   Note:

   a) When the indicator pointer is positioned in the red zone, charge the batteries since they are not charged enough to operate both the SV-707 and FP-707.

   b) When the pointer is positioned in the green zone, battery charging is not required since the batteries are charged enough.

   c) When the pointer is positioned on the black line at the center of the green zone, it indicates that the batteries are charged with the reference voltage of 12V.

4) Place the supply reel and take-up reel upon their respective reel holder.
   When placing the reel, be sure to set three guide pins of the holder in each receptacle hole of the reel to bring the reel into close contact with the reel holder.

5) Thread a video tape, according to the illustration on the inside of the top cover.

6) Mount the zoom lens ② and the pistol grip ⑬ on the FP-707, as illustrated in its external view.

7) Connect between the camera cable connector ⑭ at the bottom of the FP-707 and the camera cable connector ⑬ on the side panel of the SV-707 by means of the camera cable ⑮ attached to the FP-707.

Note:

When operating the SV-707 and FP-707 on regular house current instead of the batteries, use the SAP-12 AC adaptor (optionally provided).
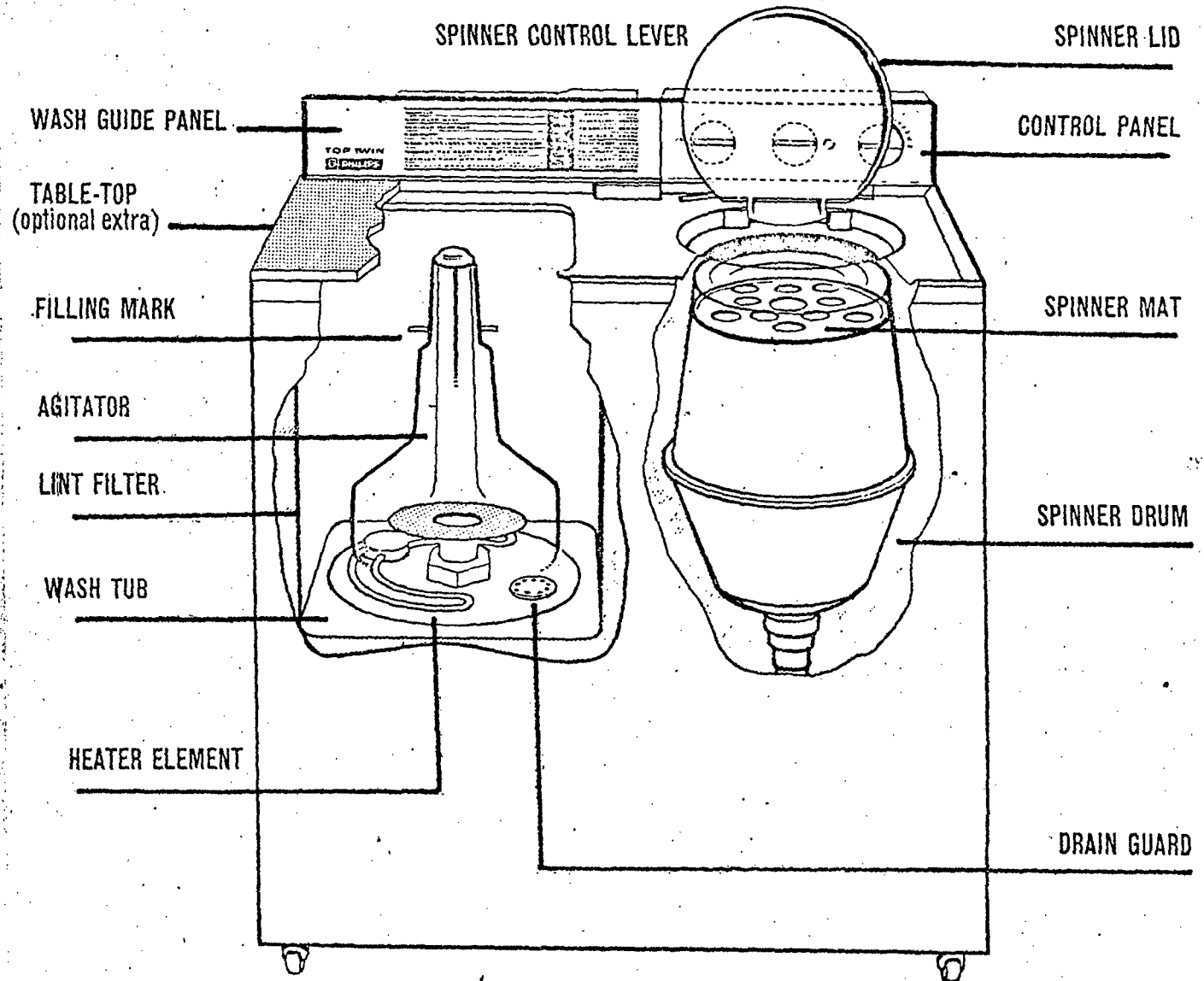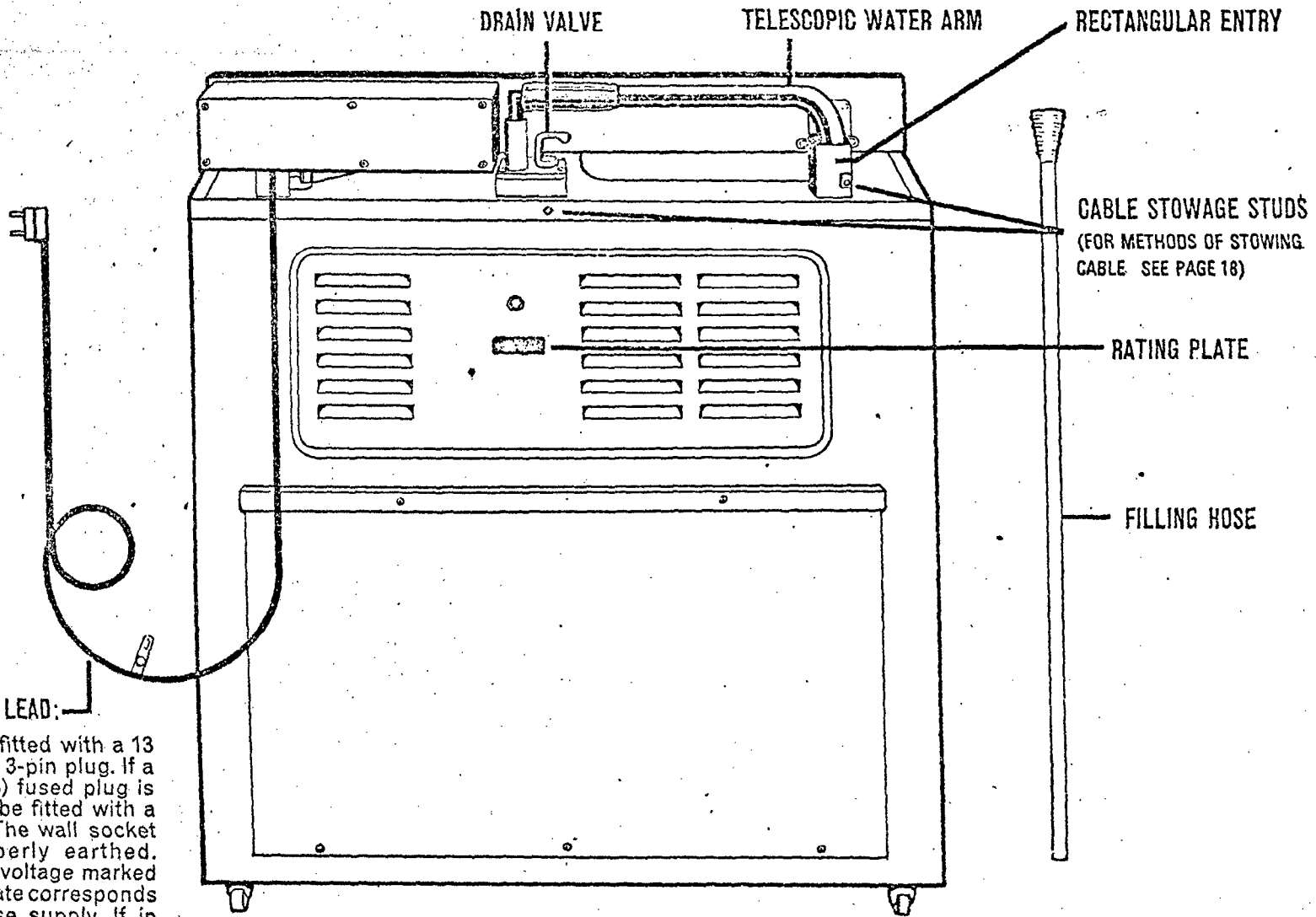
2. Operation

1) Set the STANDBY lever ⑦ of the SV-707 to the STANDBY position so as to provide the power to both the SV-707 and FP-707.
The picture will appear on the viewfinder within 20 to 30 seconds.

2) Bring the picture into focus by rotating the focus ring ⑥ of the FP-707 while viewing through the view-finder. (The magnifying glass ⑯ of the FP-707 is for focusing the picture on the face of the CRT in the viewfinder.)

3) Depress the record pushbutton ③ on the pistol grip ⑬ while viewing the picture on the viewfinder. However, when using the FP-707 mounted to a tripod (optionally provided) by means of removing the pistol grip, depress the record pushbutton ④ on the front panel of the FP-707, or the RECORD pushbutton ⑧ of the SV-707.

4) For the application where the FP-707 is necessary to be located close to the object, apart from the SV-707, use an extension camera cable of 16.5 ft. (optionally provided) instead of 4.9 ft. supplied.

Note:

a) Prior to the operation, make sure the picture on the viewfinder has become stable.
If the picture does not come to be stable for long, turn the STANDBY lever ⑦ of the SV-707 back to the STOP and then to the STANDBY again.

b) Either the record pushbutton ③ or ④ of the FP-707, or the record pushbutton ⑧ of the SV-707 is useful to put the system into recording mode, however the record pushbutton ③ or ④ is normally used for in-termittent recordings.
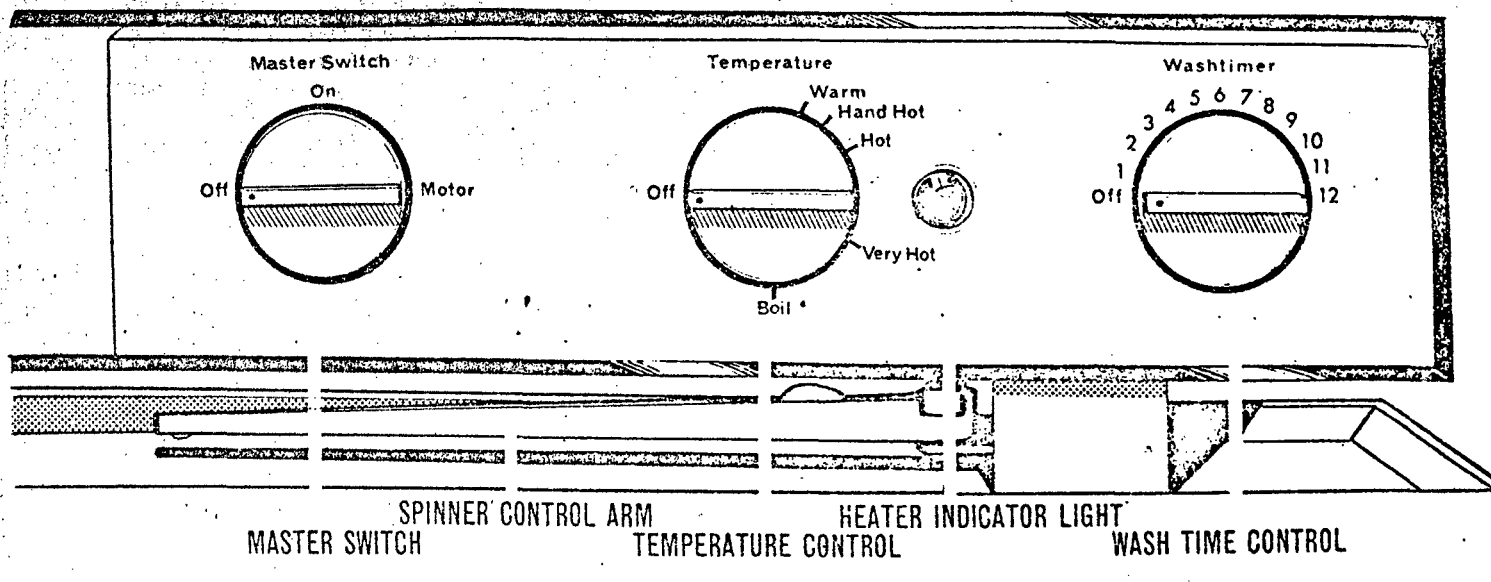
etc. etc.

MAIN PARTS OF THE TOP TWIN

SPINNER CONTROL LEVER

SPINNER LID

WASH GUIDE PANEL

CONTROL PANEL

TABLE-TOP (optional extra)

FILLING MARK

SPINNER MAT

AGITATOR

LINT FILTER

WASH TUB

SPINNER DRUM

HEATER ELEMENT

DRAIN GUARD

- 3a -

DRAIN VALVE   TELESCOPIC WATER ARM   — RECTANGULAR ENTRY

CABLE STOWAGE STUDS
(FOR METHODS OF STOWING
CABLE SEE PAGE 18)

— RATING PLATE

— FILLING HOSE

FLEXIBLE MAINS LEAD:—

this should be fitted with a 13
Amp or 15 Amp 3-pin plug. If a
13 Amp (BS1363) fused plug is
used it should be fitted with a
13 Amp fuse. The wall socket
must be properly earthed.
Check that the voltage marked
on the rating plate corresponds
with your house supply. If in
any doubt call in a qualified
electrician.

Master Switch — On — Off — Motor

Temperature — Warm — Hand Hot — Hot — Off — Very Hot — Boil

Washtimer — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 — Off

MASTER SWITCH SPINNER CONTROL ARM TEMPERATURE CONTROL HEATER INDICATOR LIGHT WASH TIME CONTROL

Before you start your first wash get to know your Top Twin by doing a 'dry' wash. Operate the controls as follows:

Move the machine into position and remove the wash tub lid. Turn all the controls to the OFF positions as in the illustration above and ensure that the spinner and wash tub are empty.

Dry your hands. Uncoil the mains lead and connect the machine to a suitable power point.

Raise the telescopic water arm and note that it can be swivelled and the pipe extended to reach all sides of the machine. Do not attempt to rotate the rubber part of the arm. Return the arm to the position shown in the illustration on page 5, with its end fitting into the rectangular hole behind the wash guide panel. Any water now discharged through the arm will be returned to the wash tub–this is known as the suds saving position.

Find the drain valve situated under the telescopic water arm. Lift and turn the valve so that it is pointing backwards away from the machine. In this position water is emptied through the telescopic water arm from both the wash tub and spin drum. Turn and lower the drain valve. In this position which is the one illustrated on page 5, only water from the spin drum is emptied. Leave the valve in this position.

With the master switch in the OFF position, as illustrated, all controls are 'dead'. The machine can be stopped at any time when washing, heating, rinsing or spinning, by turning this control to the OFF position.

Turn the master switch to ON but leave the temperature control in the OFF position. If by mistake the temperature control is turned on when there is no water in the tub then the heater element will get very hot and an automatic cut-out will operate. If this happens turn the temperature control to OFF and let the element cool naturally.

Turn the master switch to MOTOR. The motor and pumps will start to run but the agitator and spinner remain still.

Turn the wash time control to 12 minutes then back to say, 5 minutes. This starts the agitator working. Always use this method of setting the timer. The control ticks gradually back to the OFF position, switching off the agitator automatically after the time you have selected. The control can be turned back to OFF any time you wish to stop the agitator.

Swing the spinner control arm forward over the spinner lid. This automatically starts the spinner. At the same time it prevents children opening the lid while the spinner is running. The spinner will continue to run as long as the arm is in the forward position.

Swing the spinner control arm back to the stowed position. This action switches off the spinner motor and an automatic brake quickly brings it to rest. When the spinner has stopped open the lid by pressing down on the ribbed section at the back of the lid. This method of opening has been chosen as an additional safety measure.

Now you know how the controls work, note the following points about the heater:

Before using the heater always make sure there is water in the tub, then turn the temperature control to the setting recommended in the wash guide on page 8 for the fabric you are washing.

The heater can be used when the master switch is in either the ON or MOTOR position. This means you can heat the water without the motor and pumps running, or while washing and spin drying, all at the same time.

The heater indicator light glows when the heater is working and goes out when the water in the tub reaches the temperature you have selected. You may sometimes fill the tub with hot water and find that the heater indicator light does not glow. In such cases the water may be too hot and can be cooled by adding cold water. However make sure the correct water level is not exceeded.

The heater will boil the water if required, but the indicator light will stay on. The time taken to boil the water will depend upon a variety of factors — quantity of water, amount of clothes, starting temperature, electricity supply voltage, etc. — and may be as long as $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours under adverse conditions. The quickest results are obtained if the wash tub lid is left on and the water is not agitated. With modern washing powder very hot water is sufficient and boiling is seldom necessary.

For lower temperature settings (warm, hand hot, hot) more even temperatures are obtained if the water is occasionally agitated for a short time by selecting the MOTOR position on the master switch and turning the wash time control. After agitation the master switch can be returned to the ON position so that the motor and pumps are not running unnecessarily.

etc. etc.

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"Faith in the search dawns
only at the end."

Kafka : <u>The Trial</u>