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1) *CLCWeb Library Series* articles in comparative literature and culture & media and communication studies

Toward a Framework of Audience Studies in Comparative Cultural Studies

<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/audiencestudies>

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1) introduction 2) fields of audience studies 3) glossary of terms in audience studies 4) works cited of glossary & bibliography for work in audience studies 5) examples of applied research in audience studies

1) Introduction

1.1 Communication is culture / culture is communication / media are avenues and tools of communication and culture / audience is participation in communication and culture. The production, processing and dissemination, reception, and the study of culture and culture products are activities and processes that exist in all societies and cultures. Culture is understood here as a system of communicative action(s) with several sub-systems of such communicative actions including all types of communication in all media. Following the theoretical and applied framework of comparative cultural studies (see Tötösy de Zepetnek <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol1/iss3/2>) the production of culture in and of communicative action(s) consist of 1.1 The process of production, including the producer(s) and his/her/their product(s), that is, the "text" (here understood as any type of such production in any media); 1.2 The processing of the product, including its distribution and dissemination; 1.3 The audience and reception of the product(s); and 1.4 The post-processing of the product (e.g., the criticism and the study of the product and the system itself and in its parts).

1.2 Within the system and sub-systems of culture, audience refers to an individual's or group's viewing, hearing, reading, and/or listening of a culture product or products within communicative action(s): "An audience ... can be thought of as a number of people who are exposed to a particular text. They can be in the same place (as in a theater or at a football game) or widely scattered, in their homes, as in the case of audiences for radio programs and television programs" (Berger 157) and "*audience* [is understood as] overarching all the reception processes of message sending. Thus there is the audience for theatre, television, and cinema; there is the radio listener. There is the audience for a pop concert or at a public meeting. Communicators shape their messages to fit the perceived needs of their audience: they calculate the level of receptiveness, the degree of readiness to accept the message and the mode of delivery. Audience is readership too and the success in meeting audience/readership needs relies extensively on feedback. ... Sometimes there is an extra factor in the communicator-audience situation. This might be the *client*. An advertising agency, for example, is employed by a client (a company wishing to have its product advertised) to create a commercial whose audience is the television-watching public " (Watson and Hill 8-9).

1.3 A definition of Audience and Audience Studies proposed here is as follows: "Audience is defined as an individual's or a group of persons' cerebral and/or sensory and/or tactile intake/reception and/or perception of a culture product and/or products of communicative action(s). Culture is defined as a system of communicative action(s) with several sub-systems of such communicative actions including all types of communication in all media. Media is defined as the tools and venues of communication via which a culture product or products is/are assembled, processed,

disseminated, and consumed (e.g., printed matter, television, film, radio, theater, etc.). The field of scholarship including market-oriented research where audience is studied is commonly designated as Audience Studies, aimed at the observation and analysis of individuals and their behavior with regard to his/her or their intake of a particular culture product(s) presented in a medium or media. In this definition, areas of communicative action such as the readership of literature, radio audience, television viewership, music concert audience, theater audience/spectatorship, museum viewing, multimedia, the world wide web, etc., are all understood as constituting audience of communicative action(s) with/in/of media. Audience studies is about the what, when, where, who, why, and how of a culture product or products."

2) Fields of Audience Studies: although a comprehensive history of audience is yet to be written, an attempt is made here to present a working categorization of types of audience and fields in Audience Studies and Research.

2.1 ***Readers as Audience***: printed media (book, newspaper, magazine, etc.) Note: Theories and Methods in Readership Studies are often applied in other fields of Audience Studies. Also Reader-Response Studies (the study of "response" to a literary text or texts by its or their reader or readers).

2.2 ***Reception Studies***: the study of one or more readers' actualization of the text.

2.3 ***Auditory Audience***: radio, record, tape, CD, incl. music and other forms of material, etc. Also Auditory Studies (the study of larger groups of radio audience by survey sampling and analysis).

2.4 ***Auditory and Visual Audience of Performance***: theatre, musical, opera, concert, dance, etc. Also Audience Development Studies (opera: a combination of comprehensive strategies towards and including studies of relationships between audience, the art form, and the opera company).

2.5 ***Visual Audience***: museum, gallery, exhibition, photography, display, etc. Also Visitor Studies (the study of perspectives and aspects of visitors to the various types of museums and spaces of exhibition of cultural products).

2.6 ***Mixed Auditory and Visual Audience of Media***: television, film, video, music video, etc. Also Use and Gratifications Studies (the study of audience members' motivations for attending to mass media and its products).

2.7 ***New Media Audience***: the audience of new media such as the world wide web, DVD, CD-ROM, interactive television, and various other multimedia products and presentations. In New Media Audience Studies *NMAP: New Media Audience Participation* is a notion to be applied in the research and production of audience participatory activity and interaction with various and multiple forms of cultural expression (cultural, aesthetic, entertainment, pedagogical, etc.) in new media such as DVD, interactive television, and the world wide web including new media communication such as e-mail, etc. Also New Media Studies (the study of the world wide web, the internet, multimedia, new media technologies, social and professional networks online, etc., in all of its implications social, technological, cultural, audience, economic, etc.).

2.8 ***Mass Media Audience***: audiences of mass media where audience is understood primarily in a quantitative context and tied to newer media such as television, film, music on CD and television, etc. At the same time, also newspaper and magazine audience, book readership, etc., can be understood as audience of mass media. Also Culture Market Studies (the study of markets of cultural production incl. images of the audience, measurement of sales and various types of media audiences, star creation, etc.).

3) Glossary of Terms in Audience Studies

Acquiescence: the tendency of respondents to try to please an interviewer by answering "yes" whenever possible. Rotation can be used to overcome this problem.

Action Research: a multi-stage type of research, in which a problem is researched, changes are made, the problem is researched again, more changes are made, and so on until the problem is solved.

Actuality: the term used in the media to refer to footage/film/tape of events as they happen. Semioticians see actuality as a key device for anchoring the preferred reading on the supposed "facts" presented "as they happened."

ad hoc: a one-off survey done for a specific client (see omnibus and syndicated surveys).

Affinity Group: a type of focus group in which respondents already know one another.

AID: Automatic Interaction Detection: a statistical method for successively splitting a sample into groups of people with different probabilities of using an item. The result takes the form of a tree diagram.

Analysis: the stage of research that takes place after the fieldwork, the survey results are analysed so that conclusions can be drawn.

Anchorage: a term used by Barthes to describe the interaction of words and visual texts. A photograph, according to Barthes is polysemic (i.e., open to a range of possible meanings). Ordinarily text is added, perhaps in the form of a caption or an advertising slogan, to "anchor" the meaning, to lead the reader towards the preferred reading of the visual text. More broadly, anchorage of an image's meaning can occur not only through words, but through the juxtaposition of two images.

Audience Response Techniques: a group of methods identified for use mainly by broadcasters: not quite formal market research, not quite marketing, but something between the two. See also dialogue techniques.

Audience and Audience Studies: audience is defined as an individual's or a group of persons' cerebral and/or sensory and/or tactile intake/reception and/or perception of a culture product and/or products of communicative action(s). Culture is defined as a system of communicative action(s) with several sub-systems of such communicative actions including all types of communication in all media. Media is defined as the tools and venues of communication via which a culture product or products is/are assembled, processed, disseminated, and consumed (e.g., printed matter, television, film, radio, theater, etc.). The field of scholarship including market-oriented research where audience is studied is commonly designated as Audience Studies, aimed at the observation and analysis of individuals and their behavior with regard to his/her or their intake of a particular culture product(s) presented in a medium or media. In this definition, areas of communicative action such as the readership of literature, radio audience, television viewership, music concert audience, theater audience/spectatorship, museum viewing, multimedia, the world wide web, etc., are all understood as constituting audience of communicative action(s) with/in/of media. Audience studies is about the what, when, where, who, why, and how of a culture product or products.

Audience(s): what an audience is and what audience members are may seem fairly straightforward. Certainly, the huge amounts of money which are ploughed into commercial and other research into audiences' media usage and behaviour seems to suggest that media producers believe that we know what audiences are and how to measure them. However, when you look back over the history of the conceptualizations of audiences and research into them, it pretty soon becomes evident that "audience" has always been a rather woolly concept. In the popular imagination, media corporations and advertising agencies conduct intensive research into audiences. They identify the audience members' socio-economic class, lifestyles, motivation, disposable income, fantasies etc. and that knowledge enables them to "target" their audience precisely. The advertising industry is successful at persuading manufacturers and distributors to buy its services: its success in persuading consumers to buy particular products is much more open to question -- between 80 and 90 per cent of new products fail despite extensive advertising.

Audience Positioning (Interpellation / Appellation / Hailing): the process whereby ideology "hails" an individual as its subject; a "subject-position" is constructed for the audience member by the way in which the text interpellates him/her. Thus, for example, the discourse of free-market capitalism interpellates the subject as the rational, self-interested consumer of classical economics.

Audience Share: a radio or TV station's share is the percent of time people in that market spend with that station -- it is not a percentage of people. See also Market Share.

Average: the average of a set of numbers is derived by adding them up, then dividing this result by the number of numbers added. For example, the average of 3, 5, 8, and 12 is 7, because 3 + 5 + 8 + 12 = 28, there were 4 numbers, and 28 divided by 4 is 7. The average is also known as the mean. See also median and mode: other "measures of central tendency."

Bardic Television: a term introduced by Fiske and Hartley to emphasize the active and productive signifying work done by television. Rather than merely 'reflecting' society, television, similarly to the rôle played by Celtic bards, mediate between the rulers and patrons who pay them on the one hand

and society as a whole on the other. In this way, the bard (television), once its role is established, has an important function in dealing with social change and conflict. It determines what is within the bounds of common sense and what is outside it (see ideology).

Birthday rule: when a researcher contacts a household and says "I'd like to interview the person who last had a birthday" this is not an advertising gimmick, but a way of ensuring randomness -- it assumes that people's birthdays are spread evenly across the year.

Catharsis (or Cathartic Effect): the idea originated with Aristotle who believed that the experience of watching tragedy is cathartic, i.e. it purges the spectator of certain strong emotions. As a result mainly of experiments by Feshbach and Singer, this idea has been developed in media effects research. Watching aggressive media output, it is proposed, does not make viewers more aggressive; quite the contrary -- since the vicarious aggression experienced through the media purges the viewer of aggression, the result of watching violence is less aggression. The same argument is sometimes adduced in defence of pornography. Some researchers have taken the example of Japan, where there is far more violent sex in the media than in Europe, yet a much lower incidence of violent sex crime, to support the view that media experience can be cathartic.

CATI: Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing: doing surveys -- usually by phone -- directly from a computer screen, with no printed questionnaire. There is also CAPI (computer-aided personal interviewing), and the emerging generic term CAI.

Census: survey of a whole population.

Central Location: a type of survey where respondents are all interviewed at the central location instead of (e.g.) their homes. See intercept, hall testing.

Charrette: a workshop, often lasting several days, which involves a community in its urban planning process. Similar to a clinic or a search conference.

Children: in market research, children are defined by ESOMAR as people aged under 14. Their parents' permission is needed to interview them.

Closure: 1) In Gestalt psychology the term refers to the way that we fill in gaps where there is missing information in a stimulus; 2) In the analysis of texts, the term refers to ideological closure, which means the strategies used in the text to lead the reader to make sense of the text according to a particular ideological framework. The idea of ideological closure is useful because it leads us to examine how a text has been constructed to lead to a particular reading and exclude other possible readings.

Cluster Analysis: a multivariate statistical technique often used in segmentation. Respondents are mathematically grouped into clusters, so that people in one cluster are as similar as possible to each other, and as different as possible from people in the other clusters.

Coding: entering the answer to survey questions into a computer in abbreviated form. For example, M for male, F for female.

Cognitive Dissonance: changing your opinion to suit the circumstances. E.g. a religious group expected the world to end on a certain day. When it didn't happen, they decided that their faith had saved the world.

Communication Research: an umbrella term for market research, social research, and audience research combined.

Communication: While the definitions of communication vary according to the theoretical frames of reference employed and the stress placed upon certain aspects of the total process, they all include five fundamental factors: An initiator, a recipient, a mode or vehicle, a message, and an effect. Simply expressed, the communication process begins when a message is conceived by a sender. It is then encoded (translated into a signal or sequence of signals) and transmitted via a particular medium or channel to a receiver who then decodes it and interprets the message, returning a signal in some way that the message has or has not been understood.

Comparative Communication and Media Studies: parallel to the notion of comparative cultural studies (see below), comparative communication and media studies aims at the study and research of the field of communication and media studies in an international and global context in both theory and practice.

Comparative Cultural Studies: a new field of study where the notion of "comparative" is merged with the field of cultural studies from the basic premises of the discipline of comparative literature

meaning that the study of culture and culture products -- including but not restricted to literature, communication, media, art, etc. -- is done in a global and international context with a plurality of methods and approaches, interdisciplinarity, and if and when required including team work. In comparative cultural studies it is the processes of communicative action(s) in culture and the "how" of these processes constitute the main objectives of research and study. However, comparative cultural studies does not exclude textual analysis proper or other established fields of study. In comparative cultural studies the framework of and methodologies available in the systemic and empirical study of culture are favoured.

Conjoint Analysis: a multivariate statistical technique which analyses preferences for various combinations of attributes: e.g., "Would you rather have a can of cold fizzy soft drink, a glass of claret, or a cup of coffee with cream?" Conjoint analysis (derived from considering jointly) would separate out preferences for hot vs cold drinks, alcoholic vs non-alcoholic, colour, and container. Related to choice modelling.

Consensus Group: a type of group discussion, similar to a focus group, in which participants try to form a consensus on an issue. In contrast to surveys, which seek differences between people, this technique seeks similarities.

Convenience Sample: using a sample of people who happen to be handy or easy to survey. May be OK in preliminary research, but not guaranteed to be representative of the population. See also Random and Purposive Samples.

Correlation: a type of relationship between two answers to two questions. For example, there is a correlation between people's height and their weight: other things being equal, taller people weigh more than shorter people. A negative correlation occurs when one thing gets smaller as another gets bigger. See also Similarity.

Consensus: the word means a generally shared agreement. The term is used in particular by Marxist critics of the media, who argue that the media operate to create a consensus in society (or at least an illusion of consensus) that the norms, laws and rules in our society are the only "right" ones, which any right-thinking member of our society must accept. Thus, for example, those who might operate outside the consensus, such as union "activists" or "terrorists" do not normally have their ideas and views presented by the media as if they are "reasonable." In order to strengthen the consensus the media periodically whip up moral panics against those deviants ("folk devils") who are deemed to lie outside the central cultural system, e.g., "welfare scroungers," "union activists," "travellers," etc.

Conspiracy Theory: with particular reference to the mass media, this view assumes that a small and powerful, and often hidden, élite are able to use the mass media to condition and persuade passive audiences into conforming to the powerful élite's wishes.

Construction of Reality: in communication and media studies, this idea emphasizes that there is no single "reality," rather a range of definitions of "reality." Reality as presented by the mass media is therefore not a picture or reflection of "reality," but, rather, a constructed interpretation of reality. In the view of "radical" critics of the media in particular, the mass media play a crucial role in "constructing reality" for the rest of us. In the view of many representatives of post-structuralism and post-modernism, just about every aspect of reality seems to be considered a social construction.

Content Analysis: the statistical analysis of a range of texts. The results are usually compared with a different set of results from the same range of texts -- e.g., what proportion of reports about men in the tabloid press represents men as victims and what proportion represents women as victims? -- or with some "objective" standard, such as official statistics -- e.g., what proportion of women in soaps is shown as housewives as against the proportion of women in the population who are housewives. The most serious problem with content analysis is the initial selection of categories. The second most serious problem is where to find your objective standard.

Copycat Effect: a concept also referred to as Contagion Effect or Imitation Effect -- the supposed power of the media to create an "epidemic" of behaviour based on that witnesses in the media.

Cultural Capital: a set of resources which have cultural value within a specific cultural field. Like economic capital (wealth, material assets), cultural capital can be distributed and exchanged. What constitutes cultural capital and how it is to be valued are determined within a society and by specific cultural fields.

Cultural Dopes: the view that the readers of media texts are the more or less willing dupes of the media producers. This view is now not widely accepted, since greater emphasis is placed by media researchers on the active meaning-producing work of readers. A more modern view of audiences is presented by Fiske: "A homogeneous, externally produced culture cannot be sold ready -- made to the masses: culture simply does not work like that. Nor do the people behave or live like the masses, an aggregation of alienated, one-dimensional persons whose only consciousness is false, whose only relationship to the system that enslaves them is one of unwitting (if not willing) dupes. Popular culture is made by the people, not produced by the culture industry. All the culture industries can do is produce a repertoire of texts or cultural resources for the various formations of the people to use or reject in the ongoing process of producing their popular culture."

Cultural Imperialism or Media Imperialism: the thesis that "Western" (especially US-American) cultural values are being forced on non-Western societies, to which they are spread most especially by the mass media. Herbert Schiller argues forcefully that the US-inspired spread of "free trade" and "free speech" since the Second World War has, in view of the imbalance of economic power, worked to the advantage of the US. He quotes a number of official sources which make it clear that the establishment of US economic, military and cultural hegemony was deliberate US policy, which would depend crucially on US dominance of global communications. Schiller argues that the (mostly US-based) transnational media and communications corporations which now span the globe have reached the point where they pose a distinct threat to the sovereignty of the weaker nation states. Clearly the US are dominant in the export of media products, as well as in the control of news agencies, and, even where the US originals are not purchased, the genres of US TV are closely copied. However, recent reception studies suggest that we cannot simply deduce the acceptance of American values from the prevalence of US media products.

Cultural Participation: an umbrella term to denote the activities of individuals and groups in their interaction(s) with cultural products and processes such as the reading of written texts, media offerings such as radio, televison, the listening to music, the use of the world wide web, etc., that is, interaction in some way with the sources, processes, and results of culture in its widest definition (e.g., see above the categories of audience research).

Cultural Trajectory(ies): the paths through a culture that a person or a group has taken and which can be understood as a map of that person's or group's cultural history. (Schirato and Yell)

Cumulative audience: The number of different people who tune into a radio or TV channel in a given time period -- often over a week. Same as reach. Abbreviated to cume.

Customer Satisfaction Measurement: a rapidly growing branch of market research: assessing the satisfaction level of an organization's customers. See also Mystery Shopping.

Data mining: a set of computer-based techniques for extracting meaning from huge databases.

Deliberative Poll: a method of obtaining informed polling data, developed by US political scientist James Fishkin. A group of randomly selected citizens meet, discuss an issue for some time, then vote on the issues. Not dissimilar from a search conference or citizen jury.

Delphi Method: a way of estimating future measures by asking a group of experts to make estimates, re-circulating the estimates back to the group, and repeating the process till the numbers converge.

Demographic: a type of survey question which asks for background data, such as age group, sex, occupation, religion, education level, and the like. The resulting measures are called demographics.

Dependent Variable: a statistical term for whatever measure you are trying to predict. See independent variable and regression.

Depth Interview: a type of qualitative research, which involves long, probing interviews without the use of a formal questionnaire. Sometimes called simply a depth: e.g., "As well as the survey we'll do 20 depths" (Doesn't that sound shallow?) Also known as in-depth interviews.

Descriptive Statistics: figures which summarize or describe a data set, without making any inferences: e.g. average, median, frequencies, Standard deviation.

Desk research: research done by summarizing published sources. Much the same as secondary research.

Deviance: deviance is a form of behavior which is considered to violate society's norms and therefore to be unacceptable. Many critics of the media would argue that the apparent consensus as

regards those norms is in part manufactured by the media by the process of labelling certain groups' or individuals' behaviour as deviant and then duly reacting to it with moral outrage on behalf of "ordinary, decent people." Thus the media serve to legitimate the dominant ideology, which in fact serves the interests of the powerful groups in society.

Deviance Amplification: the process whereby activity labelled as deviant is "amplified" by a broad reaction in society which is co-ordinated mainly by the mass media. The development is seen more or less as a spiral: the initial behaviour is labelled "deviant"; information is relayed from primary definers to the media and hence to the wider society; there is a negative social reaction; consequently, the deviant groups become isolated and react by resisting the consensus view and possibly becoming more actively deviant; the increased "deviance" leads to increased social control and at this point the whole spiral starts all over again.

Dialogue techniques: Similar to audience response techniques: a systematized way of improving and making use of customer feedback.

Diary: type of self-completion questionnaire, which a respondent fills in over a period, recording his or her activity.

Donkey vote: A term used in preferential elections to refer to people who number their voting preferences 1, 2, 3, etc. down the ballot form. Also applied to the tendency for survey respondents to prefer answers listed earlier (or later). Solved by rotation.

Economies of Pleasure: the relationship between time and energy consumers/readers/audiences expend in reading texts or audiencing cultural products as against the pleasure they gain from this. Different media (e.g., watching a film or listening to a CD compared to reading a book) provide different economies of pleasure.

Error types: because a survey doesn't include all members of a population, or include all possible questions, various types of error can occur.... Type I error (error of the first kind): Finding a result statistically significant when in fact it is not, i.e. when a survey wrongly finds something that doesn't exist in the population. Type II error: When a survey finds that a result is not significant, though in fact it is. Type III error: Getting the right answer to the wrong problem.

ESOMAR: the European Society for Market Research: the international body which effectively sets the standards for market research in most of the world.

Ethnography and Ethnographic Research: uses participant observation as a tool for gathering information and is a form of what is termed qualitative research in contrast to quantitative research which focuses on measurement and formal analysis. As participant observer, the researcher becomes actively immersed in the chosen setting in order to gain understanding through experiencing aspects of the life of an individual or group. Ethnographic research is the foundation of anthropology, which has been principally concerned with the descriptive recording and analysis of the group life of traditional, generally pre-literate, societies. Until the 1950s, anthropologists would often resist close involvement in community life and maintain quite formal and narrow relations with the host society in order to do better "objective science," but today, anthropologists generally seek active involvement as a source of understanding. Ethnographic research is also central to symbolic interactionism, phenomenological sociology, labeling theory and ethnomethodology, where the goal is to comprehend the subjective perspectives of individuals. Ethnographic research is linked to a reaction to positivism which distrusts subjectivity in research and attempts to treat human "subjects" as an object that can be scientifically investigated.

Evaluation: the activity which assesses the success or otherwise of actions or policies, mostly for the public sector or in marketing.

Event Survey: a type of audience research, where people attending an event (concert, sports match, etc) are surveyed.

Face-to-face: a type of survey where respondents are interviewed in person - not on the phone, by mail. etc.

Facilitation: Helping a group of people come to conclusions, guided by a facilitator. In group discussions, his/her role is called moderator.

Factor Analysis: a multivariate statistical technique, which reduces a large number of questions in a topic area to a smaller number of basic factors.

Field: where the public are. An interviewer "in the field" is out interviewing people, which is known as Fieldwork.

Field: In a computer file, a field is a set of digits read as one number. For example the digits 310599 could be divided into fields thus: 3,1,0,5,9,9 or thus: 31, 05, 99.

Filter: to include in an analysis only a certain category of respondents. Notice that this is the opposite in meaning to "filter out," thus a table headed "filtered to age 35-plus" means that only respondents aged 35 and over are included.

FMCG: Fast-moving consumer goods: groceries and the like. The subject of much market research, but not a term used in audience research.

Focus Group: a common type of group discussion, in which a moderator encourages a small group of people (usually 8 to 10) to gradually focus on a topic.

Formative Research: done to help create or improve a process or product. Contrasts with summative.

Frequencies or frequency distribution: in a survey, a table showing what percentage of respondents gave each answer to a question.

Fusion: a method of combining results from two surveys, by matching each respondent in one survey with a similar person in the other, then treating the combined set of answers as if they were all given by that person. For example, a TV audience survey might be fused with a product-use survey to help decide which channels the product's users watch.

Future Search: a variant form of the search conference.

Gap Analysis: using survey data to identify a gap in a market: a niche not served by a current product or service. Often done using choice modelling or conjoint analysis. Sometimes more simply done by asking pairs of questions, often about some aspect of customer service: "How well does Company X do this? And how important is it to you?" The company then knows to put more effort into aspects of service that are important, but not well done, and less effort into the opposite.

Genre: genres are ways of making sense and categorizing of texts as particular types/kinds of texts. Genres are text types which structure meanings in certain ways through their association with a particular purpose and social and cultural context in form and/or content.

Grounded Theory: an approach to qualitative research where the researchers try to approach a problem with no preconceptions, and to build their theories solely from the data gathered.

Group discussion: a generic type of qualitative research in which a small group of people provide information by discussing a topic.

GRP: Gross Rating Point is a term used in buying time for TV ads. If an ad is shown twice, and seen by 10% of people the first time and 8% the second time, it achieves 18 GRPs.

Habitus: it can be understood as a "feel for the game" that is everyday life. More technically, habitus is a set of dispositions gained from our cultural history that stays with us across contexts.

Hall test: getting a group of people together, e.g. in a public hall, usually to see a product demonstration and to fill in questionnaires on the spot.

Hermeneutics: originally, hermeneutics was reserved for principles used in interpreting religious writings (e.g., the Bible), but since the nineteenth century the term has been used to refer to the theory of interpretation in general, that is, how to determine textual meaning. Modern hermeneutics -- which considers the interpretive methods leading to the perception, interpretation, and understanding of texts -- is grounded in the terminology and strategies of modern linguistics and philosophy. (Murfin and Ray)

Hindsight Bias: when presented with some research results, some say "I knew that all along." But they usually do not do so well when asked to guess the results beforehand.

Hits: in internet research, this measure of web page accesses has two different meanings. It can be either the number of files downloaded or the number of pages accessed. If one page has 20 image files attached, it could be 1 hit or 21. More often it is called 21 hits -- but one user has accessed only one page.

Household: a group of people who live in the same dwelling, and usually eat together. A household is usually the same as a family, but sometimes several families share one household.

Hypothesis: a statement or proposition capable of being tested. It must be stated in enough detail that its truth can be confirmed, e.g. by a survey. For example, "TV news is more interesting than

Baywatch" is not a hypothesis, but "Most Australians think that TV news is more interesting than Baywatch" is a hypothesis.

Ideology/Ideological Process(es): a practice whereby a particular group within a culture attempts to naturalise their own meanings and intentions and/or pass them off as universally accepted and as common sense.

Independent Variable: one of a set of measures which is used to predict a dependent variable. See regression.

Indicator: An indirect measure of a broad concept which cannot be measured directly, e.g., the visible wear in a museum carpet in front of an exhibit is an indicator of the exhibit's popularity. See also performance indicator, validity.

Industrial Research: market research on companies. The same as business to business research.

Instrument: a questionnaire, test, or any formal way of measuring human reactions or behaviour.

Intercept Interviewing: A type of research where respondents are intercepted by interviewers in a public place (often a shopping area) and asked to take part in a survey.

Intertextuality: any text depends on a host of prior conventions, codes, other texts. The term is sometimes used to refer to the unavoidable multiplicity of references in any text (see also infinite semiosis below); sometimes it is used to refer to deliberate references, quotations or pastiches. In the first of these senses, the intertext of *Independence Day* includes all other films featuring alien attack, the *Prince of Bel-Air*, Hollywood blockbusters foregrounding special effects etc. In the second sense, *The Untouchables* features a conscious quotation from the *Odessa Steps* sequence in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, Brian de Palma's *Dressed to Kill* features a series of conscious references to Hitchcock's *Psycho*, etc. The term hypertextuality is used to refer to example such as the latter two, as well as pastiches (e.g., *Gentlemen Wear Plaid*'s pastiche of film noir) and remakes.

Interview Guide: a list of topics to be covered in an interview. Similar to a questionnaire, but much less structured, and without multiple-response questions. Used in qualitative research, depth interviews, focus groups, etc.

Interview Log: record of attempts by an interviewer to contact and survey a respondent. Different researchers refer to this by many different names (e.g., Contact History Record, Call Sheet), but Interview log seems clearest, and is commonly used.

Knowledge Gap: the knowledge gap hypothesis states that as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease.

KPI: Key Performance Indicator. A proxy measure of the success of part of an organization, or a manager of that part. A type of indicator, with the difference that the future of the unit or person depends on achieving a satisfactory figure. See also performance indicator.

Leading Questions: questions which lead a respondent to give a particular answer. A classic example I saw in an ad was "Do you want Soviet-style conditions imposed on Australia?" The inevitable answer of No was interpreted as support for a particular policy.

LGA: Local Government Area: a town or rural area area administered by one authority, for which population figures and maps are usually available. See also Statistical Division.

Likert Scale: an answer scale, often with a range of 5 categories, e.g. Strongly agree / Mildly agree / Neutral / Mildly disagree, Strongly disagree.

Market: an area of interest for a commercial organization, usually corresponding with the area where a survey is done. See population. A market can also be restricted to a type of product or service, e.g. the musical-instrument market in Australia.

Market Research, marketing research (what is the difference?): Most people don't distinguish between these two terms, but a few consider one to be broader than the other. "Marketing research" seems to be used more by academics, "market research" by commercial researchers. If there is a difference, it is very subtle. See also audience research, social research, communication research.

Market Share: also called share. A firm's market share is the proportion of the market (usually in dollar terms) which it serves. See also audience share.

Mass Society Theory: the view that the mass media address a mass audience who are doped by the media. This view of the media audience (in the singular) as a passive, undifferentiated mass

informs the hypodermic needle model media effects, as well as some aspects of the concern with cultural effects.

Maximum Diversity sample: a type of purposive sample in which respondents are chosen to be as different as possible from one another. When sample sizes are small (less than about 30) maximum diversity samples can be preferable to random samples.

Mean: a more technical term for average.

Median: the middle value of a set of numbers, when they are sorted in ascending order. If you line five people in a row, the middle person in the middle has the median height. A median is usually a very similar number to an average, but is less misleading when a few extreme values distort the average.

Mesh block: the smallest census unit, known as a Collector's District in some countries.

Missing data: in a computer file for a survey, unanswered questions and those with answers like "Don't know" are declared to be missing, and are usually excluded when calculating percentages etc.

Mode: the commonest number in a group, or the commonest answer given to a question in a survey.

Moderator: the researcher who leads a focus group. See also facilitator.

Monitoring: continuous research which regularly monitors the change in some measure. Much the same as tracking.

MRS: Market Research Society (in Britain and New Zealand): the association of professional market researchers and ethical watchdog of the profession. In Australia the equivalent body is called the MRSA.

Multidimensional Scaling: a statistical technique for displaying differences between items, as if they were points on a map, or in a 3-dimensional space. The greater the distance, the more different the items are - in the opinions of people who rated them.

Multiple-answer and Multiple-response Questions: these terms often confuse people. A multiple-answer question is one which can have more than one answer, e.g., "Please tell me all the reasons why you did not re-subscribe." The opposite is a single-answer question, e.g. "Please tell me the main reason why you did not re-subscribe." A multiple-response question is one where a set of possible answers is offered to the respondent, who is asked to choose one or more of these, e.g., "Which age group are you in: 18 to 34, 35 to 54, or 55-plus?" The opposite of a multiple-response question is an open-ended question, e.g. "What is your age?"

Multivariate Statistics: a branch of statistics which measures changes in a number of items simultaneously. Some of the most common multivariate methods ares cluster analysis, conjoint analysis, factor analysis, multidimensional scaling.

Mystery Shopping: a systematic way of assessing customer satisfaction, by having research staff pretend to be potential customers, and noting how frontline staff respond to their demands. Sometimes called shadow shopping.

N: shorthand for sample size, or number of respondents, as in N=500.

Narrative: a way of structuring meanings in the form of a story. Narratives relate a sequence of events implying a temporal order and ofetn casual relations between events. Narratives work to structur cultural meanings in specific ways and can come to constitute culturally ratified stories about social experiences. (Schirato and Yell)

NESB: Non-English-speaking Background. A term describing people whose first language was not English. Sometimes called (jokingly) Nesbians. Used mostly in Australia.

Neural Network: a type of statistical computer program which classifies large and complex data sets by grouping cases together in a way similar to the human brain. Used in data mining.

New Media Audience: the audience of new media such as the world wide web, DVD, CD-ROM, interactive television, and various other multimedia products and presentations.

New Media Audience Participation (NMAP): a notion to be applied in the research and production of audience participatory activity and interaction with various and multiple forms of cultural expression (cultural, aesthetic, entertainment, pedagogical, etc.) in new media such as DVD, interactive television, and the world wide web including new media communications such as email, etc.

News Management: this term is normally used to describe the way that individuals or organizations attempt to control the flow of news to the media and to "set the agenda" for the media.

This might involve issuing a press release which is embargoed, holding press conferences times to make the lunch-time and early-evening news, or staging an event which is big enough or unusual enough to grab the media's attention.

Nominal Group: a type of group discussion in which participants work independently (on paper) at first, then present an idea at a time to each other.

Non-response Bias: if you try to survey 100 people, and 40 of them do not respond, those 40 could be different in some important way from the 60 who did respond. That is non-response bias -- a problem often ignored in survey research. Non-response bias can be estimated by comparing data on the current sample with other data (e.g. from a Census) on the same population.

Normal Distribution: when just about anything about people is measured -- their height, for example -- most people are close to the average. The further you go from the average, the fewer people have that measurement. This is sometimes called the bell curve, and a lot of statistical measures -- such as standard deviation, are based on the assumption of a normal distribution.

Observation: a research technique in which no direct questions are asked, but people in a public place (e.g. shoppers and drivers) are watched and their behaviour recorded.

Omnibus: a type of survey (done regularly by most large market research companies) on which organizations can place a few specific questions. It is like a bus, on which a lot of people can travel at once.

Open-ended: a type of question (also known as an open question) where it is left up to the respondent to volunteer an answer.

Opinion Poll: a type of survey in which people's opinions are asked, specially in areas related to politics.

Panel: a group of respondents who are surveyed a number of times in a series.

Paradigm/Syntagm: Two terms from semiotics. A paradigm is a set of possible meanings which could be selected in a particular context. A Syntagm is the linking of sign together, their combination to form (a part of) a text.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): a qualitative method for involving communities (specially rural ones in developing countries) in their own futures. Not so much a single technique, as an approach to research. Now often called PLA: Participatory Learning and Action.

Penetration: The same as reach or cumulative audience: that is, the number of different people who use a service, buy a product, or see a program.

Peoplemeter: a meter attached to a TV set which records the viewing of individual people (usually when they press a button). Not to be confused with a setmeter.

Perceptual Mapping: a multivariatestatistical technique which uses survey data to produce "maps" of the perceived distances between products, attributes, etc. For example, in a study of cars, you'd expect the Rolls-Royce product to be close to the Quality attribute. Much the same as multidimensional scaling.

Percentage: a fraction expressed in hundredths. If 50% of people are male, then 50 out of every 100 people are male. But beware of surveys with small sample sizes. If 2 people were surveyed, and 1 was male, that is still 50%.

Performance Indicator: An indicator of the success of a government or corporate program. For example, a performance indicator for an anti-poverty aid program could be the number of people visiting medical clinics who are judged to be suffering from malnutrition.

Personal Interview: the type of interview where an interviewer questions a respondent face-to-face vs. telephone interviews and self-completion questionnaires.

Poll: usually the same as opinion poll, but sometimes loosely used to mean any type of informal survey.

Population: everyone (or thing) of a defined type, which could possibly be surveyed. Often the number of adults in a defined geographical area or market. Also known as Universe.

PRA = Participatory Rural Appraisal.

Probabilistic sample: a more general term for a random sample.

Probability: chance, expressed as a percentage or decimal. E.g. a 50-50 chance is a probability of 50%, or 0.50. Odds of 3 to 1 correspond to a probability of 25%.

Probing: A technique used by interviewers to get more information from respondents on particular questions. E.g. "Can you tell me more about that?" or "Is there any other reason you feel that way?"

Projection: estimating a station's total number of listeners, by multiplying a survey percentage by a population figure.

Projective Techniques: psychological techniques often used in focus groups, where participants are asked to make imaginative comparisons, e.g. "If this product was a film star, who would it be?" Often used to assess brand images.

Proposal: a research company's plan for a survey or research program, made in response to a client's brief or RFP.

Psychographics: similar to demographics, but divides the population into groups based on psychological characteristics rather than age group etc. For example, comparing the answers of men and women is a demographic approach, but comparing risk-takers with cautious people is psychographic.

Public Service Broadcasting: a term which is not easy to define. The essential notion here is that broadcasting's function is not simply to satisfy commercial interests by giving the public what they want in an attempt to maximize audience figures, but, rather, to inform, educate and entertain the public, the notion of "quality" being central. Examples are: that broadcasters are legally required to be impartial in their coverage of news and current affairs; that broadcasters must carry a certain proportion of educational programmes; that broadcasters must broadcast a certain proportion of current affairs during prime time -- and so on.

Purposive Sample: a type of non-random sample in which respondents are specifically sought out. For example, an industrial research project may use a purposive sample of organizations which are the largest buyers of a product, or a survey of poverty may be done only in the poorest localities in the area surveyed. Contrasts with random and convenience samples. A special type of purposive sample is the maximum diversity sample.

Push Polling: a type of pseudo-research whose intention is to change opinions (usually on voting) rather than measure them. For example "When did you first become aware that Candidate A used to be a communist?"

Qualitative Research: research in which questions are open-ended, and results are expressed in non-numerical terms. Contrasts with quantitative research. Often shortened to qual.

Quantitative Research: research in which questions are answered in terms of fixed categories or numbers, and results are expressed in numerical terms. Contrasts with qualitative research. Often shortened to quant.

Questionnaire: the set of questions in a survey. Do not confuse a questionnaire with a survey. To say "250 surveys were returned" displays ignorance; actually, "250 questionnaires were returned." See Instrument.

Quota Sampling: An alternative to random sampling, often used in street surveys. For example, if each sex makes up 50% of the population, 50% of interviews must be with men and 50% with women. A random sample will get 50% of each, on average, but a quota sample will get 50% every time. Nevertheless, other things being equal, a random sample is more accurate than a quota sample.

Random Selection: selection in a way that gives each member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Random Digit Dialing: using a random process to produce telephone numbers to be dialled. Often abbreviated as RDD.

Random Walk: in door-to-door surveys, a technique for gathering a random sample of households after starting at a particular point, e.g., turning left aft leaving the first house, walking anti-clockwise around the block and trying to interview somebody at every fourth house.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA): a simpler version of Participatory Rural Appraisal, with less participation by the population involved.

Rating: when a TV program has a rating of, say, 10, that means 10% of households watched that program. That means at least one person in those households, but typically (in Australia) a rating of 10 means that only about 6-7% of people watched the program.

Reach: an audience research term. The number (or percentage) of different people (or households) who see a TV commercial, hear a radio program (etc.) in a defined time period. For

example, if a radio station has a weekly reach of 15% of people, that means 15 people in every 100 in the population of the area heard that station at least once in a week. Reach is the same as cumulative audience, but less of a mouthful. 3-plus reach means the number of people who have seen/heard a message 3 or more times.

RDD = see Random Digit Dialing.

Reactivity: the way in which people's attitudes and behaviour can be influenced by having been surveyed. See acquiescence.

Readership: the number of readers of a newspaper, magazine, etc. Circulation is calculated by the number of copies sold, but readership can only be assessed by a survey.

Recall: when asking people to remember their behaviour in survey questions, two types of recall can be used: aided recall and unaided recall. Aided recall: "Did you watch channel 2 yesterday?" Unaided recall: "which TV channels did you watch yesterday?" Aided recall usually produces higher percentages for that activity.

Reception Analysis: research which focuses on the way that individuals make meanings for media messages (artistic products, news, etc.); it has some similarity with uses and gratifications research, but is much more likely to use an ethnographic approach involving in-depth interviews, participant observation etc. A great deal of recent work has focused on the way that audiences resist the constructions of reality preferred by the mass media and construct their own, often oppositional, meanings for media texts. Since much of this work is concerned with detailed investigation of the audience's reception of media messages, it is generally known as reception analysis. In reception analysis, audiences are seen as active producers of meaning, not consumers of media meanings. They decode media texts in ways which are related to their social and cultural circumstances and the ways that they individually experience those circumstances. The new emphasis on this approach has led to its being called the New Audience Research. Rather than using solely the questionnaire technique generally used in uses and gratifications research, reception researchers will normally also use qualitative methods on a smaller scale. For example, in-depth interviews and group interviews as a means of uncovering the meanings which small groups of readers generate for media texts, focusing on the audience's "situatedness" within a particular socio-historical context. Broadly speaking, reception analysis has developed from a combination of traditional qualitative research strategies in sociology with some of the ideas of reader response theory in literary criticism. The focus on interpretive communities means that the researchers in this vein examine issues far beyond the media text itself. Over the past few years, as reception analysis has come to reveal more of the fine detail of our reception of media messages, an ethnographic approach to audience studies has become steadily more popular, using interviews and participant observation.

Recoding: grouping survey answers together in a computer file, e.g., in a question on radio stations listened to, the commonest stations might be listed separately, and all stations rarely listened to could be recoded as "other."

Record: in a computer data file, one record is equivalent to one questionnaire, or one interview. In a word-processing file, a record is one line or paragraph on the screen.

Recruiter: an agency which recruits people, e.g., for focus group discussions. See Screener.

Regression: A statistical method which tries to predict a dependent variable (result) by combining a number of independent variables (measures). For example, regression analysis could predict your life expectancy by combining your grandparents' age at death, whether you smoke, whether you have high blood pressure, etc.

Reliability: a statistical term used in assessing an instrument, meaning consistency or predictability. E.g. a survey question has 100% reliability if the survey is repeated and each respondent gives the same answer both times. See validity.

Respondent: person who responds to questions in a survey; a person interviewed.

Response Rate: the number of questionnaires completed, as a percentage of the number of people who were approached in the survey. For example, if 100 people are asked to participate, and 70 questionnaires are completed, the response rate is 70%. Also known as Return rate.

RFP: request for proposal: a document set to research organizations by a company wanting research done. A formal equivalent of brief. The company's reply is its proposal.

Rotation: one way of overcoming the donkey vote, acquiescence, etc, in a questionnaire is to rotate questions and/or answers, so that they are not presented in the same order to each respondent.

RRA = Rapid Rural Appraisal.

Sample: part of a population: everyone (or thing) that actually was surveyed.

Sample Size: the number of questionnaires completed in a survey. Usually equals the number of people interviewed. Often shown in computer printouts as N=....

Sampling Error: the inaccuracy that arises because you interviewed one sample of the population rather than another equivalent sample. If the whole population is interviewed (see census), there can be no sampling error.

Scale: 1) a set of questions which are trying to measure different aspects of the same thing. E.g. an IQ test might have a scale of 20 questions, whose answers are combined into one figure; 2) there is also the more obvious meaning, as in "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the Prime Minister?"

Screener: a screening questionnaire, as used by recruiters to determine who is eligible to attend a group discussion. There are also screener questions, asked early in a questionnaire to weed out those not eligible to answer the remaining questions.

Search Conference: A qualitative research technique where a large group of people meets to thrash out an issue. Often used in community planning; a slight variant is known as Future Search.

Secondary Research: using previously published data instead of doing new research. Similar to desk research.

Self-completion: a questionnaire designed to be filled in by respondents. Thus a self-completion survey is a survey using this type of questionnaire. See also diary.

Segmentation: a marketing technique which involves grouping customers into segments, and treating each segment separately for marketing purposes. The segments are usually found from survey data, using a technique such as cluster analysis.

Selective perception: Seeing only what it suits you to see.

Semiotics/Semiology: the "science of signs" and/or the study of sign systems. Semiotics is used to refer to theoretical approaches to the production of meaning which argue that meaning is produced through and by the interrelation of signs within a socially produced system. (Schirato and Yell)

Setmeter: a meter attached to a radio or TV set which records which channels the set was tuned to, at which times. See peoplemeter.

Shadow shopping: same as mystery shopping.

Share: used in two slightly different ways. See audience share and market share.

Significance Testing: statistical methods for determining the probability that a result could be due to chance. For example, if you toss a coin 20 times and 12 of those times are heads, does that mean the coin is biased? A significance test would tell you there is a 13% chance of getting at least 12 heads.

Similarity: a numerical estimate of the difference between two people, groups of people, or concepts. Often used in perceptual mapping. Similar to correlation, but varies only between 0 and 1. A similarity of 0 means the two units had completely different responses; a similarity of 1 means they are exactly the same.

Single-source: combining different kinds of question in one survey, e.g. TV audience and product use. The opposite of fusion.

Smoothing: using statistical techniques to smooth out irregular graphs; usually plotting some measure over a period of time, and producing a smoother graph by averaging the current 3 (or more) figures.

SPSS: statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The most widely used software for survey analysis.

Social Research: uses the same techniques as market research, but focuses less on business and more on public issues. See also Audience Research.

Standard Deviation: a statistical measure of variation within a sample. Just as the average measures the expected middle position of a group of numbers, the standard deviation is a way of

expressing how different the numbers are from the average. The standard deviation is (roughly) the amount by which the average person's score differs from the average of all scores.

Stratification: a stratified sample is one divided into a number of smaller samples. For example, in a survey covering a city, a stratified sample would divide the city into a number of smaller areas or strata (of known population) and sample a specific number of households in each stratum.

Sugging: selling Under the Guise of research: when somebody rings you up pretending to do a survey, but in fact trying to sell you something. Market research companies hate sugging, and will never be associated with it.

Summative: research used to assess or summarize the value of a completed activity or product. Summative research is similar to evaluation. Contrasts with formative.

Survey: a whole exercise of measuring public opinion. Do not confuse a survey with a questionnaire: some people say "The interviewer did 50 surveys" when they mean 50 interviews (for one survey). As a verb, "to survey" is used much more loosely, and often means the same as "to interview."

Syndicated Research: research originated by a research company, with data sold to anybody who is interested - unlike an ad hoc survey, which is a one-off survey for an individual client.

Systemic and Empirical Study of Culture (Contextual): recent school of thought and methodology concerned with the study of culture (literature, audiences, media, communication, etc.) as a social and communicative system of (inter)actions. The main question is what happens to products of culture and how: It is produced, published, distributed, read, censored, imitated, etc. The empirical study of culture originates as a reaction to, and an attempt at, solving the problematics of hermeneutics. The approach and methodology(ies) are based upon the theory of constructivism (radical, cognitive, etc.), based on the thesis that the subject largely construes its empirical world itself. The logical consequence of all this is the separation of interpretation and the strictly scientific study of literature based on radical constructivism. The system of culture and actions wthin is observed from the outside -- not experienced -- and roughly characterized as depending on two conventions (hypotheses) that are tested continually. These conventions are the aesthetic convention (as opposed to the convention of facts in the daily language of reference) and the polyvalence convention (as opposed to the monovalency in the daily empirical world). Thus, the object of study of the systemic and empirical study of culture is not only the text in itself, but roles of action within the system(s) of culture, namely, the production, distribution, reception, and the processing of culture products. The methods used are primarily taken from the social sciences, systems theory, reception theory, cognitive science, psychology, etc. In general, the steps to be taken in systemic and empirical research are the formation of a hypothesis, putting it into practice, testing, and evaluation.

Tabulation: presenting survey results in the form of tables of numbers. See cross-tab.

Target Audience: the type of people aimed at by a broadcaster, publisher, or advertiser. E.g. an ad for retirement villages might have a target audience of people aged 65 and over who live in their own homes.

TARPs: Target Audience Rating Points. A term used in audience research for assessing the audience to commercials. If a TV commercial is shown twice, and is watched by 10% of the target audience the first time and 20% the second time, it has a total of 30 TARPs.

Tracking: a series of repeated surveys in which the same questions are asked, so that a measure can be tracked over time. Often used in measuring the reach of advertising. See monitoring.

Triage: a military concept applied to marketing. Divide the population into three groups: those who will never use the product or service in question, those who will always use it, and the rest. Focus on the rest, because the behaviour of the other two groups can't be changed.

Triangulation: taking a variety of different research approaches to an issue, as if you're seeing it from different angles. Although different methods come up with different results, the results should be similar enough that they might be plotted on a graph as a small triangle. Somewhere inside that triangle is the real truth.

Two-step Flow: a term used to describe the observation that media messages flow from the media to opinion leaders to the rest of the audience. The important point is that their research demonstrated that media effects are mediated by the pattern of our social contacts. They concluded that the media have limited effects.

Universe see Population.

Uses and Gratifications: an offshoot of audience research that developed in the 1980s. Instead of studying the content, or what media to do audiences, the Uses and Gratifications people study how people use programs. For example, when children watch sitcoms without laughing, maybe they're learning how (they think) adults behave. Five main types of uses and gratifications have been defined: for information, aesthetic feelings, personal needs, social needs, and escapism. See also Reception Theory.

Uses and Gratifications Approaches: Emphasis on the active use made of media by audience members to seek gratification of a variety of needs. The standard adage is that, where effects research asks "what do the media do to audiences?" the uses and gratifications approach asks "what do audiences do with the media?" Audiences are said to use the media to gratify needs. The needs most commonly identified are: surveillance (i.e., monitoring what's going on in the world), personal relationships, personal identity and diversion (i.e., entertainment and escapism).

Validation see Verification.

Validity: the extent to which an instrument is measuring what it's supposed to be measuring. For example, counting growth rings is a valid measure of a tree's age. If no measure is fully valid, indicators can be used. See also Reliability.

Value: a computer term for an answer to a question. On a questionnaire, a question has an answer; but in a computer record, a variable has a value.

Variable: computer talk for a question which can have one answer. A question which allows multiple answers will have one variable for each possible answer.

Verification: a quality control method used in fieldwork: reinterviewing a percentage of respondents (usually 10%) to check that the original interview had in fact taken place, and had recorded their answers accurately.

Visioning: a horrible word, but widely used. It should be envisioning.

Volunteer Bias: error arising from a low response rate, due to the fact that some types of people (usually young and educated) are much keener than others to take part in surveys.

Weighting: Giving some questionnaires more "votes" than others when tabulating survey results. Usually happens when one type of respondent is over-represented in the sample, but not in the population. For example, if in a survey the response rate among men was half that among women, the men's questionnaires could be given a weight of 2 (i.e., counted twice) to produce a balanced result.

4) Works Cited of Glossary of Terms & Bibliography for Work in Audience Studies in Comparative Cultural Studies (see also Geert Vandermeersche, Joachim Vlieghe, and Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek. "Bibliography of Publications in Media and (Inter)mediality Studies." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 13.3 (2011): <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/26>).

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4) Examples of Applied Research in Audience Studies

4.1 Urban English-Canadian and Ethnic-Canadian Readership

With regard to print media and its readership, I present here an example of audience research: a comparison of English-Canadian and Ethnic-Canadian readership. The situation of literary reading as audience is understood here as cultural participation. The study of ethnic minority readership is of value because it reveals some of the processes and the situation of cultural participation as a dialogue between majority and minority culture. A priori, the study of ethnic minority audience offers insight into a specific situation of audience of the arts. Here, I take the example and situation of ethnic minority readership in Canada, where in the last few years some limited attention has been paid to the question of cultural participation of Canadian ethnic minority groups. At the same time, while more focus is accorded to the existence of ethnic minority writing and its criticism in Canadian literature, little attention has been paid to the situation of cultural participation -- including the reading of literature and the cultural media in general -- of this population. The lack of both audience research and research into the situation of cultural participation with regards to both the general Canadian population and to that of ethnic minority groups, is a serious knowledge gap in Canadian scholarship not the least because of the missed opportunity to demonstrate the social relevance of the study of literature and other media of communication.

The following presentation of data and analysis are based on a survey conducted in Edmonton in late 1994 and early 1995. A questionnaire was mailed out twice, in two different formats in the bilingual Hungarian-English cultural magazine *Toborzó*, published by the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society. In number 14.3 (1994) a loose-leaf, two-page questionnaire was inserted and in number 15.1 (1995) the questionnaire was printed in the magazine, pp. 21-22. There was no follow-up strategy implemented to either gain more completed questionnaires or to complete questionnaires only partially completed. The magazine was mailed to 300 households in Edmonton. In both instances the questionnaire was presented in Hungarian. The result was 15 completed questionnaires in total from the two mail-outs. The completed questionnaires revealed data as follows.

In the demographic profile, the data revealed that the respondents, all Edmonton residents, had the following professions: mechanical engineer (1), high school student (1), clerical (2), retired (5), architect (1), stay-home (1), technician (1), dental technologist (1). Two respondents did not indicate a profession or occupation. Of the respondents there were 8 women and 7 men. Incomes were indicated under Can$ 10,000/year in 3 instances, all others between 30,000 and 40,000/year. The educational levels were as follows: 4 respondents had elementary schooling only, 2 respondents had high school education, 5 respondents had technical college education, and 4 respondents had university education. As per numbers of individuals living in each household, an average of 2.5 family members were reported. To the question about how much money was spent on books by the respondents (soft or hardcover), the data revealed that the average amount of money spent per month on books was $ 21.00. 8 respondents indicated that they usually purchase soft cover books and 11 reported that they prefer to buy hardcover books while several respondents indicated that they buy both hardcover and soft cover books. Respondents were also asked about time spent on reading per week and an average of 8 hours/week was reported by the respondents. As to the question of whether

the respondents re-read an already read text, the responses indicated that 4 respondents never re-read a text, while 11 re-read a text more than once. 14 respondents revealed that they would read more if they had more time while one male respondent indicated that he would not read more often. As to the reasons indicated for reading, the following categories were included on the questionnaire and the respondents were asked to indicate several categories if applicable: entertainment (12); knowledge accumulation (7); loves to read (12); necessity (education) (1), there was one student among the respondents, all others had completed their education; loves to speak about books with friends and/or family (3). Types of communication about books indicated: with family members (11), friends (14), colleagues at work (1), neighbors (none), in letters (4). A question about various genres of texts read, as in Question 1: "What type of texts did you read in the last six months and how many in each category?" revealed the following genres: short fiction, novel, children's/juvenile literature, travel literature, religious texts, autobiographical, historical novel, contemporary literature other than Hungarian, contemporary Hungarian literature, poetry, romance, science fiction, popular magazines, classical Hungarian prose, emigré Hungarian literature, emigré Hungarian poetry, classical non-Hungarian literature, scientific magazine, scientific literature, and detective/crime fiction. In Hungarian, the respondents indicated in total 65 magazines read (an average of 4.3), in English 86 (an average of 6). Novel reading indicated in Hungarian 14, in English 12; the historical novel in Hungarian 11, in English 7; scientific journal reading in Hungarian 10, in English 27; children's literature in Hungarian 6, in English 14; scientific literature in Hungarian 6, in English 7; contemporary Hungarian fiction 4; emigré Hungarian fiction 1; emigré Hungarian poetry 3; poetry in Hungarian 7, in English 2; juvenile literature in Hungarian 6, in English 14. Literature read in other languages than Hungarian and English was indicated in two instances: Russian (novel 5, popular magazines 10, scientific journals 10, and scientific literature 10) and German (novel 2).

The subjects were also asked to indicate their opinion about characteristics which in their opinion describe classical and modern literature. Classical literature was described by the respondents including the following categories (more than one category could be indicated by the respondent). Classical literature: relaxing (9), easy to read (6), serious (8), morally acceptable (3), requires the reader's full attention (4), entertaining (5). With regards to modern literature the following categories were indicated: interesting (8), relaxing (5), unusual (5), requires the reader's full attention (5), entertaining (6). The question regarding book inventory in the respondents' households, including patterns of the books' origins of acquisition, resulted in some interesting data. However, first it should be noted that the assumption that household book holdings may be skewed owing to the possibility of book inheritance -- that is, books on the shelf but not read -- does not, in general, apply either to English-Canadian or to Hungarian-Canadian households. In the case of English-Canadian households it does not apply owing to the general North American (USA and Canada) situation that books are not passed down. In the case of Hungarian-Canadian households the assumption is impossible as Hungarian Canadians are a priori refugees and/or immigrants. The following genres were listed in the questionnaire and the respondents indicated in total the following numbers of books in their households: Classical non-Hungarian prose: 793 = an average of 53 books per household; juvenile literature: 111 = an average of 7.4 books; science fiction 50 = an average of 3 books; lexica: 103 = an average of 7; detective/crime novels: 155, indicated by 3 respondents = an average of 10 volumes; classical Hungarian prose: 735 = an average of 49 books; travel literature: 148 = an average of 10 volumes; biographies: 243 = an average of 16 books; poetry: 289 = an average of 19 volumes; romance (Harlequin, Hungarian and non-Hungarian combined): none; contemporary Hungarian prose: 240 = an average of 16 volumes; historical novels: 319 = an average of 21 volumes; religious literature: 59 = an average of 4 volumes. One respondent added a category to the list, "books on art": 25.

The following categories of the origins of the reading material were identified. 10 respondents reported book purchase in book stores (Canadian and Hungarian-Canadian [Toronto or Montréal]): 3 respondents reported purchase in used book stores (Canadian); 10 respondents reported the import of books from Hungary; 9 respondents reported that the books they read is in his/her own library; 9 respondents reported that they received books they read as a gift; 4 respondents reported that they borrow from libraries; and 3 respondents reported that they borrow books from friends; 6 respondents indicated that they borrow books from Canadian English-language public libraries, on the average

once or twice per month; 9 indicated that they do not borrow; and 3 respondents indicated that they borrow books from the Hungarian-language library of the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society, on the average once or twice per month while 12 indicated that they do not borrow from this library. Further, a question was included with regard to indicators of related cultural participation. Regarding the question of television viewing per week, the responses indicated 0 hour/week (1 respondent) minimum and 42 hours/week (1 respondent) maximum. The average weekly viewing time of the 15 respondents was 10.5 hours/week television viewing. Regarding the question of frequenting cinema per week, the responses indicated 0 times/week (8 respondents), 1 times/week (3 respondents), and 1-2 times/week (4 respondents), thus cinema viewing averaging to 0.6 times/week. Regarding the question of frequenting theater per year, the responses indicated an average of theater going 1.7 times per year. Regarding the question of video rental, the responses indicated an average of 1.2 times per week of video viewing.

As the above data suggest, the level of education of the respondents is mid-range. Thus, the relatively high level of time spent reading, the types of texts read, and the inventory of books in the households surveyed is of some significance. Generally speaking, these results suggest a high level of cultural participation of the Hungarian-Canadian population of Edmonton. This is all the more interesting as the Hungarian-Canadian population of the city (and of the province of Alberta in general) is historically of a more working class to mid-level educated composition while larger urban centres such as Toronto, Montréal, and Vancouver attracted the larger numbers of the higher-level educated Hungarians during and after the two waves of Hungarian immigration to Canada: the period after the Second World War and the period after the 1956 Revolution. Further, the fact that the Hungarian-Canadian population of Edmonton belongs to the established and older immigrant groups explains the high level of bilingual reading, Hungarian and English, encompassing all text types. The data showing what types of texts are being read indicate an overwhelming dominance of the reading of popular magazines, followed by the reading of novels. The statistical dominance of the reading of popular magazines in both Hungarian and in English is of some relevance as the large amount of reading Hungarian popular magazines indicates the purchase and importation of such from abroad, most likely directly from Hungary. With regards to prose in general, the data indicate an even distribution among various genres including the novel (historical and other) and travel and adventure literature. Of some significance is the reading of translated English-language texts into Hungarian and similarly, it is relevant that some same text types are read both in Hungarian and in English. Unfortunately, there were no data indicating whether the respondents read texts translated from Hungarian into English.

The data about reasons for reading -- a most important area for gauging cultural participation -- resulted in some interesting findings. As presented above, love of reading and interest in entertainment dominate as reasons for reading, followed in a distance by interest in knowledge accumulation. The parallel data of entertainment and love of reading most likely explains the high level of non-classical reading material read. In the case of the English-Canadian survey data, the response was similar in the sense that "the pleasure factor in reading appears to be more important than the knowledge factor" but this to an insignificant level (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 223). Thus my suggestion, based on the data, that "it appears that the knowledge factor for reading is roughly equal to the pleasure factor" (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 223). Consequently, the Hungarian-Canadian data yielded a different result with reference to the factors of pleasure and knowledge accumulation which suggests that further research would be necessary.

In the case of Hungarian-Canadian subjects here, the level of communication about books -- with family, friends, and in letters -- is relatively high. This is not only significant for the reason of communication about the reading material per se but also because it is an indication of transfer of cultural material and thus suggests a relatively high level of cultural participation in an extended context. With regard to the respondents' perception of classical and modern literature, a comparison of these categories suggests that classical literature is perceived more relaxing than modern literature and that it engages the reader's full attention less than that of modern literature. However, the characteristic of entertainment was slightly higher rated for modern literature than for classical. These data suggest that "relaxation" is not perceived analogously to "entertainment" by the respondents. Of some significance is the finding that the respondents read a moderate amount of emigré literature,

prose and poetry. This finding is significant in the context of an existing or at least potential readership of Canadian ethnic minority writing. With reference to the reading of texts written by English-Canadian authors of fiction, only two such authors, Mordecai Richler and Newman, were listed. These data diverge from my findings in the English-Canadian survey where the data revealed a high level of the reading of works by English-Canadian authors. Interestingly, the data indicate a lack of classical literature read and a dominance of the reading of contemporary popular literature. As mentioned above, this aspect is explained by the respondents by their reasons of reading: a very high level of focus on entertainment. This aspect of reading is consistent with the findings in my survey (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 220). Also consistent with the data of English-Canadian readers is that the re-reading of literature is frequent (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 224).

The data about money spent on books support, here in its economic dimension, my preliminary suggestion that cultural participation is fairly high in the case of this particular ethnic minority group. The data indicating preferences for soft or hard cover books are, when compared with the data of the English-Canadian survey interesting in the sense that in the case of English-Canadian readers "the size of the book and the cost were not factors that influenced one's decision to read" (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 221). Data of book inventories per household, here in their socio-cultural aspects, are noteworthy: the number of juvenile literature preserved in the households, based on the over forty-years of average age of the respondents, indicates a high level of a retention of either their own books of youth and/or a retention of juvenile literature of their children still in their households. A comparison of the average inventory of books per household of the respondents with those of my previous English-Canadian survey reveals that the numbers are comparable (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 223). However in a few instances there are differences. For example, in the category of poetry the Hungarian-Canadian respondents own an average of 19 volumes while the English-Canadian households own an average of 5 volumes; English-Canadian households own an average of 14 volumes of religious texts while Hungarian-Canadian households own an average of 4 volumes. The latter discrepancy may be explained by the strong appeal of religion to the English-Canadian population of Edmonton and Alberta. Another category, that of romance, shows that English-Canadian households own an average of 10 volumes while Hungarian-Canadian households of the survey own none while books of science fiction are owned by English-Canadian households in the average of 85 while Hungarian-Canadian households in the present survey own an average of only 3. The latter difference may be explained by the older average age of the Hungarian-Canadian respondents as compared with that of the English-Canadian respondents and/or by cultural identity parameters such as an orientation by the Hungarian-Canadian respondents more toward reading texts re-enforcing aspects of belonging and knowledge and/or the availability of science fiction texts in Hungarian. While the genre of science fiction is a dominant text type in English, in Hungary only after the political changes in 1989 have such texts become available on a large scale, mostly in translation from English.

Data about the sources of acquisition of books suggests a high level of purchase in bookstores and the import of books from abroad and this again implies cultural participation on the economic level, an indication of some importance. Another aspect of cultural participation, affecting its economic base, is the low level of library book borrowing. Obviously, readers prefer to own, although the English-Canadian data differs somewhat: while the highest percentage there too is of books purchased in a bookstore, the next highest score is of books borrowed from the public library (Tötösy de Zepetnek and Kreisel 221). The reason for this difference may be the obvious limit imposed on Hungarian-Canadian readers to borrow Hungarian-language books from Canadian public libraries. The reason why Hungarian Canadians in Edmonton do not borrow more books from the library of the Edmonton Hungarian Cultural Society may be the limited number and the limited amount of certain genres in that library, as well as the distance of the library from the readers' residences. With regard to cultural participation in domains other than reading, the data indicates a dominance of television viewing over reading but not significantly: an average of 10.5 hours/week of television viewing versus 8 hours/week of reading. Other cultural activities such as video and cinema viewing and theater were markedly less prominent than television and reading.

Apart from the above presented and discussed data, the most important finding of the survey is that Hungarian Canadians manifest a high level of cultural participation in general and in the reading of literature in particular. This finding is all the more important when we take into consideration the

general assumption that immigrants manifest, in general, low levels of literary reading and cultural participation (see, e.g., Metcalf). In contrast, my data support the recent findings of Elrud Ibsch and Rita Ghesquiere about the levels and mechanisms of literary reading of immigrants in the Netherlands. As cultural parameters with regard to both mainstream and the immigrant population in Canada and the Netherlands are comparable, my data about reading and cultural participation and those of Ibsch and Ghesquiere can be meaningfully compared. Thus, as it turns out, the three sets of data involving Canada and The Netherlands suggest that the mainstream perception of ethnic minority groups as culturally less active is to be revised while at the same time more research would be needed.

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4.2 The Reading of Erotic Texts and Authorial Intent

My interest here is with regard to the reading of erotic literature by men compared with women. For the purposes of my study here, I define the genre I am dealing with into erotic, sexual, and pornographic literary text types; however, I realize that these designations are often used interchangeably. My definition is designated based on an increasing level of explicitness in description and word choices in literature in particular and in culture in general. In other words, an erotic literary text is defined as a text that has the least amount of explicit words and descriptions while a pornographic literary text the most of such. Obviously, the reader's imagination, ways of reading, and his/her basic disposition toward such texts is widely different and -- taking the point of reference to the difficulty to gauge limits of community standards and even legal definitions -- a "simple" erotic text may be much more "dangerous" and "subversive" than a most explicit pornographic literary text. Interestingly, research about gender differentiation in reading and readership is rare. This is the case whether the question of gender differentiation is directed at the author or the reader of the text and it is only with the emergence of feminist criticism that scholars have begun to explore aspects of the question of whether there is a "female" or "male" text and whether women read literature differently from men and if so, why. Renate von Heydebrand and Simone Winko state that "Models of the reading process and less often such with regard to value do exist. However, traditional reading research neglected the study of the influence of gender differentiation on reading so that more often than not we are forced to rely on hypotheses rather than on results" (1995, 208-09). Since the publication of Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart's volume of articles, *Gender and Reading* in 1986 to the above quote from Heydebrand's and Winko's article in 1995 to the present there is very little available on the topic either in European or in North American scholarship. In addition and in a larger context, Terence R. Wright, for instance, argues in his article, "Reader-Response under Review: Art, Game, or Science?," convincingly that Reader-Response Criticism has been too long too subjective.

Despite the contention that in fiction an author cannot be pigeon-holed into holding a singular male or female voice, I am interested in the question with regard to the "feminine" or "female" text I found formulated by a number of feminist critics and theoreticians. For instance, in Elizabeth Grosz's *Space, Time, and Perversion* (1995), the noted Australian feminist asks: "By what criteria can we say that a text is ... feminine?" (10). Alternatively, if Peter Dixon and Marisa Bortolussi's contention that

"readers construct a mental representation of the narrator's [author's] knowledge, perspective, and goals" (405) is accurate, their suggestion may be extended to the problematics of what readers may do with regard to gender and gender-specific narration. While it is impossible to tie imagination and its narrative expressions to gender fully because of the large number of variables such as authorial intent, authorial predisposition, thematics, context, the readers' perception and reading of the text, etc., and thus all narration is built on the base of imagination and the all overriding nature of fiction. At the same time, it is meaningful to study the narrative constructions of worlds based on specificities of gender. Consequently, a pertinent question may be to ask how a text is read by a male or a female reader with regard to these specificities. In particular, how are gender specificities constructed by the author? Thus, my objective here is -- based on a limited amount of empirical data provided by a readership survey -- to analyze authorial "appropriation" of the voice of woman. Further, if the readers do not know the gender of the author, would they be able to induce, from the text, the gender of the author? The results of my analysis should be able to offer at least some preliminary clues about the problematics of such voice "appropriation" in the context of the above introduced gender differentiation in literature.

For North American (USA and Canada) feminist critics and scholars of literature, the arguments about the existence, effects, function, and the impact of erotic, sexual, and pornographic literature have always been heated ever since Susanne Kappeler's seminal *The Pornography of Representation* (1986). More recently, the surprising merger of political expediency of the American fundamentalist right with that of anti-pornography feminists has created heated debates within and outside of the academe (see McLaughlin). At the same time, women's literary erotica and pornography appears to increase and this becomes evident when publishers such as Quality Paperback in the US and Canada lists several volumes of *Herotica* -- a series of erotic, sexual, and pornographic short stories written by women -- and sells them across the continent. With regard to the censorship of sexual and pornographic literature, France represents a particularly interesting and convoluted situation while the negative approach toward this genre of writing in Europe elsewhere or in North America is well known. Here, I will use the situation in France as an example. Although censorship of sexual and pornographic literature has been strong in France -- at least until the 1970s -- this has changed since the mass publishing of the works of the unexpurgated Marquis de Sade and such by now well-known texts as Pauline Réage's *Histoire d'O*, Emmanuelle Arsan's Emmanuelle volumes, Jean de Berg's *L'Image*, George Bataille's *Les Larmes d'eros*, or the short novel of Alina Reyes, *Le Boucher* (Seuil, 1988; in English translation *The Butcher* [Methuen, 1991]). But there is an interesting distinction between the French perception of sexual and pornographic texts and that of the Anglo-Saxon and German perception. The editor and publisher of many of the above mentioned pornographic and sexual novels, the now septagarian Jean-Jacques Pauvert, discusses the situation of erotic literature in France as compared with the rest of Europe and North America as follows: " In France, a rather idiosyncratic country as far as the erotic is concerned, we have always considered the erotic an integral part of literature itself ... Do you realize that in the United States, you could not have read the complete works of Zola or Colette until the end of the 1960s? They were always expurgated. ... Here is another example. In the Anthologie des lectures érotiques, one finds Ausone, a Gallo-Roman author of the sixth century, a very Christian poet, who wrote a text on marriage entitled "Cento Nuptialis." At the end there is a scene that takes place in the bedroom, where, obviously, the husband and wife make love. Ausone describes this lovemaking in a rather precise fashion; one could say one which was erotic or obscene. When compiling the anthology, I was looking for this text, and I found one version, published jointly in 1988 by Oxford University Press and Harvard University Press. And the bedroom scene was not translated. They had left it in Latin! It's bewildering, but that's America. In France, we have been translating that scene for centuries" (Pauvert, qtd. in Hohmann 4). As an extension, I might add to Pauvert's observations that it always amazed me the cultural cum Puritan environment of North America where words such as "fuck" or scenes with nudity are censored out of films while at the same time any amount and type of violence is permitted. Obviously, this situation and practice locates sexual and pornographic literature on the marginal owing to prevalent social and religious discourse, established legal practices, community standards, etc. And we all know about the legal tribulations of Henry Miller's or D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. However, while censorship and the history of these books is a related and important issue -- and hardly explored in literary

scholarship at that -- for me the matter here lies not in the ethics or the history of publishing of pornographic literature but rather in the follow-up of the fact that this type of literature has always been written and read and this continues to be the case. Indeed, as Albert Mordell argued already in 1919 in his book, *The Erotic Motive in Literature* -- the first application of Freud's psychoanalysis to literature -- "no doubt the critic who examines literary masterpieces to find sexual symbols is not a popular one; but that does not alter the fact that the sexual meaning is there" (123). Consequently, if this is the case with "regular" literature and the study of literature, the study of texts where sexual meaning is explicit should be equally meaningful.

In the last few years, there has been, albeit still in limited numbers, but nevertheless an increasing volume of studies and attention given to the "female" text as I mentioned above. This attention extended to sexual and pornographic literature as well, albeit, again, only sporadically (see, for example, Sheiner). However, while sexual and pornographic literature is being written, published, and, in some instances, studied in certain ways, for me, instead, the importance of the matter is that it is being read and increasingly so (see Benedict; Holmes; Kultur; Pauvert qtd. in Hohmann). From this I extrapolate that we ought to pay attention to the process, the how of this reading in its varied and manifold aspects. Following the previously mentioned feminist suggestions, my interest has, in addition, a systemic direction that is both political and is with regard to the process of fiction. In North American literary scholarship but also elsewhere there is an on-going discussion about the notion of "appropriation." Here, this is with reference to the representation of the female voice by the male writer and the voice of ethnicity and minority. Some feminist scholars and writers of colour contend that a white male fiction writer ought not to write fiction in which he appropriates the voice of a woman or that of a representative of an ethnic minority group. Scholars who promote this notion are more often than not ridiculed by the academic establishment. For me, while the notion poses some difficulties, it is understandable and I agree with Joanna Russ who suggests with reference to voice of women and literature that "one of the things that handicaps women writers in our -- and every other -- culture is that there are so very few stories in which women can figure as protagonists. Our literature is not about women. It is not about women and men equally. It is by and about men" (4). Russ's implication is of course that there is a historically established situation in literature that at large men write and men write about women and create women in their fiction. And this is no small impact: "By choosing to read, we open ourselves to the writer's control" (Weinstein 156). Having said this and agreeing with the notion that the "voice" of the author is of significance, I do not intend to elaborate here on the validity or the problematics of appropriation and I cannot even begin to tackle the problematics of the issue. Instead, in the context of the above postulated parameters of reasoning for the study of reading processes with regard to gender differentiation and its consequent implications of readers' perceptions, I am interested in the question of whether readers are able to gauge the gender of an author. This objective, I contend, opens up a large number of implications ranging from the question of appropriation to authorial power, the construction of meaning, etc.

We are all aware of the problematics of erotic, sexual, and pornographic literature in their multi-dimensionality as to their objectifying the female and femininity, their political, as well as literary implications, etc. For my question, I thought that sexual and pornographic texts will be the most appropriate because most of such texts are with reference to the woman as the object. In addition, for my questionnaire I selected three excerpts where it is a woman who "speaks," whether the text was written by a male or a female author. By asking the readers to attempt to determine the gender of the authors I hoped to get a sense of whether at least for certain types of texts the gender of the author may or may not be determined. The results will give us limited, but in my opinion nevertheless valuable data with regard to the above suggested problem of "appropriation" and the pertinent problem of the construction of fiction.

With regard to pornographic and/or sexual literature, Michael Rowe's 1995 volume, *Writing Below the Belt: Conversations with Erotic Authors*, contains statements by well-known authors of pornographic/sexual literature who either confirm that they are able to write their texts because they are, for instance gay and male (e.g., John Preston) or they confirm that they are able to write stories of pornographic nature because all they use is imagination (e.g., Caro Soles alias Kyle Stone). Thus, in the more immediate domain of pornographic literature, the opinions are split: some sexual and pornographic texts are written because the author is of a specific sexual persuasion and this is

expressed in his/her text while some sexual and pornographic texts were written purely out of the imaginary, regardless of the author's gender or sexual interests. And here, then, comes the objective of my study: What may the readers' responses be to such texts when they are unaware of the author's gender and/or sexual interests?

For my selected analysis, I reproduce here the Questionnaire mailed out: "The objective of this questionnaire is to gauge whether readers of either gender 1) do have a sense of male or female authorship and structure of a text explicitly sexual and pornographic and 2) whether male and female readers are able to determine such text as to its male or female authorship. For the research project, three passages were chosen, all three written by male and female authors. The texts are from literary texts, written in various languages and translated into English for this questionnaire. All three excerpts speak in the original with a woman's voice. In the following, please read the texts and respond to them in detail: which text would have been written by a man or by a woman and why in your opinion? Please indicate in your response whether you are male or female, your education level, and whether you are a native English speaker or not; if not, your nationality":

Text A) "He finally took his clothes off, kicked his shoes off, and told me to stand up and that I must take that goddam pantyhose off. I too took my shoes off now and quickly rolled down the offensive stockings although I put them on especially for him, they were of a nice smoky colour, and now I should be glad that he did not rip them off. I wanted to crouch down in front of him, I had only the blouse left on me, it had a décoltage that my tits spilled almost out of them. But he was uninterested in this daring pose and I suddenly felt lost. He then said that he wants me to stand in front of him, so I did, my Venus just in front of his face, week in my knees. He embraced my hips, took my asscheeks into his hands and burrowed into my groin. I felt his tongue inside me, he was slurping, his tongue was in my cunt and for minutes I lost time, I don't know what he was doing, and felt his finger, too, in my cunt, with another one caressing my anus, and I returned to time and place when I heard his voice telling me that one does not have the chance to lick such a nice and clean cunt everyday. Then he took my clitoris into his mouth and all presence left me, if he hadn't been holding me I would have crumpled to the floor. The next I remembered I was on the bed, he was bending my legs backward, licking me, digging his tongue into my cunt, sucking my juices out, then sucking on my anus, licking it and I realized that I was making noises, babbling and sighing with short shrieks. I never experienced such pleasure. Then something burning hot and enormous began and swept through me."

Text B) "I am amazed I got through tonight. I just got home from work, believe it or not! I was working on the business paper. I got stuck at one section and it took me hours to work through it. I finally gave up trying to finish it tonight. I plan to stay home tomorrow to get to the end of the fucker. Sensual diversion: now that it is night time and I have a scotch beside me (and a cigarette) I can attempt some visualizations (not that the business reading was inspiring!). I can picture your beautifully defined chest and shoulders and running my fingers across your chest, up to shoulders, down the side to your stomach, tickling the curls lightly -- gooseflesh -- nuzzling my face against your neck, stroking chest with breasts lightly so the nipples just dance, feet climbing the inside leg, fingers continuing in the groin tickling resident hairs, now for the tongue lightly moistening soft flesh down and across and down to the sensitive stomach, farther down to meet the prick -- tip -- tongue gently caressing, teeth lightly teasing. Then beginning to suck tip, then teeth again, fingers fondling balls in rhythm with teeth, sucking harder now the tip, moving down slowly to gather more prick with mouth oh so slowly with alternating tongue and teeth, sucking tip more greedily mixing saliva with secretions, tasting, smelling, erotic sensations building in both bodies, moving faster now aiding with hands at base, moving deeper into cavity, back of throat closing on tip, lips nibbling on balls, sucking and swallowing -- wait -- hair in mouth, pause to remove (a touch of reality, why not?). Back to steady rhythm on beautiful stiff prick, body writhing, moaning with pleasure, ecstasy mounting, sucking harder, faster, alternating teeth and tongue, pleasure unbearable, complete abandonment -- volcanic eruption."

Text C) "What I enjoyed was to see how they were by themselves. That I could be the observer there, and to see how they played with their dick and how it was formed, the shape of it, and when it became hard, and also the way they held their hand -- it turned me on. Everybody jerks their dick differently. And when they abandon themselves into it, when they allow themselves to abandon

themselves, this is very exciting. And to see them come that way. This guy, he was in his sixties and he'd never jerked off, he said, in front of a woman. And he was sort of holding his hand this way, well, to see that particularity of it and, as I say, to see when they got so hot they can't stop themselves in spite of being shy, that's very exciting. That's what I like best -- watching them lose control. Checking him in bed, I saw his erection. I was certain he would not act on it without my taking first initiative, so quickly I undressed. I could not get aroused even if I had strong, tender feelings towards him. Seeing his hard cock, smaller than yours, and with a foreskin, which when the skin is pulled down is much redder than yours ... thinking about the way we had just fucked ... well, longing for your big, hard dick, it was almost painful. How could I abandon myself to this man who loves me? When he penetrated me, lying on top of me, he was moaning louder than I ever recollect. It was almost as if he was crying. Since it never takes him long to come, the whole thing was over soon."

The bibliographical sources of the selected text excerpts are as follows: Text A is by a male author, László Kemenes Géfin, from his *Fehérlófia nyolcasa. Hardcore szerelem cirkusz* (The Eight Circles of the White Stag: Hardcore Circus of Love), Montréal: arkánum, 1995, pages 62-63 (my translation); Text B is by a woman author, Anonymous (Edmonton, Alberta), unpublished excerpt from 1995; and Text C is by a male author, Philip Roth, from his *Sabbath's Theater*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995, pages 35-36. In the following, I will present selected textual and statistical features drawn from the completed questionnaires, followed by a brief and selected analysis. In order to illustrate the ways and manner in which the respondents analyzed the pornographic/sexual passages, here I am presenting two responses, one by a female and one by a male respondent:

"Gender: Female, Canadian, non-native speaker of English, PhD student. In my opinion, of the three excerpts A) was most likely authored by a man, while B) and C) were authored by women. Excerpt A) While the description aims at presenting the sexual excitement from a woman's perspective, it is altogether too mechanical to be convincing. Discourse-wise, it reminds me of some older pieces of pornographic literature produced by male authors, e.g., *Fanny Hill* or *The Story of O*. The whole description seems to focus too much on the expertise of the male who is practically subjugating the woman in the course of the sexual act. The choice of lexemes: 'tits,' 'Venus,' 'asscheeks,' 'cunt' (twice), does not suggest a female voice. The description, 'he was slurping' underscores my perception. The first sentence in the passage is meant to be free indirect discourse, i.e., the woman representing the man's words within her own discourse. Yet, in the subsequent sentences, the discourse continues to possess the same artificial quality. My impression is that of a man trying hard to please sexually, yet unable to do so -- hence his attempt to compensate with the vulgar graphics, yet totally unerotic inventory of 'how to' techniques. In this context, the sentence, 'I never experienced such pleasure' sounds hollow and unconvincing. When one compares the climactic finale of Excerpt B) or the ironic, yet totally believable ending of Excerpt C), one is left with the conviction that the first excerpt is far from being the real thing. Excerpt B) No doubt written by a woman. The whole passage is a vision, a fantasy. Obviously, the narrator or protagonist is not directly interested in her performance as a lover. Rather, she emerges as such through the physical response from her absent lover. The act of fellatio is described by someone who has obviously experienced doing it, rather than by someone to whom it was done. While this paragraph is probably as dynamic as the previous one -- it consists almost entirely of verbs and derivatives of motion -- it also manages to present the beauty of the act itself. The male body is enjoyed in the sexual act. Interestingly, and in contrast, the oral sex in Excerpt A) seems to focus only on the performer and it is as if he is actually describing what he is doing while in Excerpt B) the woman appears really experiencing pleasure. In Excerpt B) the whole act is presented as an uninterrupted segment of mounting pleasure. Lexically, the passage is reminiscent of erotic women's romances, yet there is a high degree of realism rather than schematism. Excerpt C) The problem with the authorship in the third passage arises in my opinion from some kind of discrepancy between form and content. In other words, the whole situation described suggests a female author. Yet, some of the vocabulary used is more likely of a man. My choice for a woman author is dictated by the fact that most probably the use of what I consider male descriptions and lexemes are an intentional rendition of free indirect discourse: as if the man is talking. Unlike passage A), the is an obvious shift when the woman is describing the subsequent sexual act. The description is sardonic or even sarcastic. The remarks about the 'foreskin' and the

'redness' of the penis, which, depending on the woman's emotional involvement, is differentiated into 'cock' -- small, red, pathetic -- and 'dick' -- big, hard, painful. The closing sentence, suggesting both disgust and relief in a typically detached, yet insulting manner is perhaps the strongest indicator for me of a female authorship."

"Gender: Male, German, have a PhD and am not a native English speaker. I am thirty years old. Excerpt A: Hard to say whether it was written by a man or a woman. In any case, it is quite disgusting. Not a particularly sexy passage, to be honest. So that leaves us with two possibilities: the text was either written by a male misogynist (impersonating an imagined female 'pleasure' that hardly seems credible C the act depicted is boring, rough, mechanical, completely un-erotic, if not to say brutal) or by a female/feminist chauvinist who tries to 'expose' the aggressiveness of the 'male' voice and 'male' sexuality (when taken up, mirror-like, in a 'hysterical strategy,' as the story goes, by a female subject). Since there are more male chauvinists than female counterchauvinists, I would say the passage was written by a man. The writing is, in any case, awful. Sounds like one of those Mickey Spillane-like pulps from the 50s. The sentence 'I never experienced such pleasure' is either meant as a cruel joke or the author indeed has no respect or feel whatsoever for human sexuality, be it male or female. Excerpt B: Again, hard to tell. I rather like this passage, though. Unlike excerpt A it is very sexy. Very alluring. The emphasis on stream of consciousness (?) and flow (of liquids and thought?) seems to suggest that the author is aware of some of the more 'intellectual' stereotypes about female sexuality (whereas the author of A is playing to the masses) -- which, of course, doesn't tell us anything about the author's gender. But then again, there seems to be a genuine love of male genitalia, a lust for sex with a man that would point to a woman?author who is decidedly and enthusiastically heterosexual. Which is a nice thought. It might also have been written by a (probably very sympathetic) man, a true lover of women (if that's not too trite a cliché), who imagines his ideal woman-voice. But I think I like it better the other way round. Yes, let's say, this one was written by a woman. Excerpt C: Definitely a man. And not a bad author either. It's a tricky passage. It's not so much the emphasis on voyeurism (a feature usually associated with men) than the -- how shall I say? -- 'taxonomical' character of the (female) voyeurist's gaze that would suggest a male author. Comparing sizes, colors, speed -- pure locker-room talk. Unlike in passage B, the focus is not on privacy (on two individuals, 'you' and 'I'), but on a whole set of 'different' lovers, about whom 'you' and 'I' converse. 'Checking' people in bed and telling the results to one's lover (in order to get one's kicks not out of the act, but out of its telling), all this shows the male origin of this female voice. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that this is the author's very intention: that the speaker of this passage is actually presented as some imaginary or dreamed?of female companion or Doppelgänger of a male protagonist. So, I'd say, it's a male author, portraying his (his character's?) markedly male vision of his female mirror image."

The overall statistical results of the Questionnaire resulted in the following analysis. 1) From 65 mailed-out questionnaires 34 respondents mailed back their responses. Out of the 34 respondents, I received 14 male responses and 20 female responses. The demographic profile was that all respondents were college or university educated and approximately 80% of the respondents being of training and with degrees in the Humanities. As far as possible cultural differentiation which may have affected the responses, 27 responses were from Canada (with 5 non-native English speakers) and 7 responses came from Germany. Although cultural differences may affect reader response, I do not believe that in this case this would be of significance because of the similarity of educational levels and most in the humanities. The age range of the respondents was between the early 20s to the mid-30s, with under five respondents of above 40 years of age; 2) The statistics of responses assessing the passages right on the passage being written by female or male authors, the results were as follows. From the male respondents 64.3% gauged the authorship of passage A correctly, from the female respondents 55%; From the male respondents 50% gauged passage B correctly, from the female respondents 60% gauged passage B correctly; From the male respondents 35.7% gauged passage C correctly, and from the female respondents 60% gauged passage C correctly. In total male and female responses passage A was gauged 58.8% correctly, passage B was 55.9%, and passage C was gauged 50% correctly. In total, the passages were correctly assessed by 25% of the female respondents and 21.4% of the male respondents.

A preliminary analysis of the responses is as follows. Female respondents gauged the texts correctly to a higher degree. The most significant result of the questionnaire at this point C and so to my utter consternation C is the result that questions my initial hypothesis, namely that imagination and fiction cannot be appropriated": It appears that the selected male authors did not successfully "appropriate" the female voice and thus their fiction and perhaps fiction then as a whole, may be gender specific. That is, at least in the case of a specific text-type, that of erotic and pornographic literature. Obviously, further research is necessary to follow the findings of the empirical evidence provided by the survey. Because of the specificity of the text type, it may also be of importance to gauge the authors' position as the source of the texts. In other words, while -- as I pointed out above -- some authors of pornographic and sexual texts claim to work from imagination alone, it appears to me that a majority of them are of the position of one of the most prominent contemporary authors of sexual and pornographic literature, Marco Vassi: "fact, fiction, who knows? It happens and you write it down. And then you write it down and it happens" (82). If this may indeed be the case, it may also be the case that -- in very general terms and here disregarding "slippages" created by the factor of imagination and inbetween situations when a man is more woman or the other way around -- men write men and women write women, as the results of the survey suggest.

Note: A longer version of the above text appeared as Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek. "Literature and Cultural Participation." *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*. By Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998. 43-78. and as Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Reading Pornographic Literature: The Author and Gender Appropriation." *The Systemic and Empirical Approach to Literature and Culture as Theory and Application*. Ed. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Irene Sywenky. Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, University of Alberta and Siegen: Institute for Empirical Literature and Media Research, Siegen University, 1997. 515-25.

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