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Charlotte Brunsdon, University of Warwick, Dept. of Film Studies

# The Feminist Paradigm in Historical Perspective

By Gertrude Joch Robinson

*Danish Summary:* Robinson beskæftiger sig i sin artikel med den historiske betydning af det feministiske perspektiv på socialvidenskaberne og på kommunikationsforskningen i særdeleshed. Hendes artikel beskæftiger sig med de herskende intellektuelle paradigmer i den sociologiske videnskab og hvilke implikationer de har haft på studiet af kvinders forhold og hvorledes disse paradigmer hænger sammen med og understøtter herskende politiske og ideologiske forhold i samfundet.

I artiklen gennemgår hun de vigtigste traditioner eller paradigmer, som har præget sociologiske undersøgelser af kvinder de sidste 25 år: Konservatismen, feminismen, marxismen og hertil føjer hun en fjerde tradition, som hun kalder "Det symbolske perspektiv".

Den konservative eller funktionalistiske tradition er repræsenteret ved bl.a. Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, som i fyrrerne undersøgte kvinders forbrugsadfærd og antog at kønnet var en irrelevant faktor i denne sammenhæng. Den funktionalistiske sociologi anser kønsdifferentieringen i samfundet for at være den "naturlige" basis for forskellige typer af sociale relationer. Svagheden ved denne tilgang er, som Robinson påpeger mange

og veldokumenterede gange, at man ikke interesserede sig for at kvinders medieforbrugsmønster er betydeligt forskelligt fra mænds.

Den feministiske tilgang har væsentligt bidraget til kritikken af de funktionalistiske opfattelser af kvinders sociale rolle, dels gennem konkrete analyser - her fremhæver Robinson Betty Friedans pionerarbejde "The Feminine Mystique", som påviser reklamens rolle i svækkelsen af kvinders ret til arbejde, som var blevet vundet i krigsårene, og dels mere teoretiske arbejder som Kate Millets "Sexual Politics", som identificerer patriarkatet som nøglen til den strukturelle tvang i kvinders liv. Den feministiske videnskab har væsentligt bidraget til at sætte fokus på det kulturelle system og ideologiens betydning som determinant for den kønsmæssige ulighed i samfundet.

Det problematiske i den feministiske videnskab er, fremhæver Robinson, at man bl.a. antager ideologiens primat uden at undersøge dens kilder og den ramme hvori den fungerer. Hun påpeger, at det ikke er lykkedes den feministiske tilgang at analysere de specifikke sammenhænge mellem kvinderollen i familien og i den offentlige sfære, og at der på arbejdsmarkedet og i det politiske system kan være forskellige værdisystemer, som blandes med traditionelle syn på kvinders rolle.

Den marxistiske tradition har haft indflydelse på amerikansk socialvidenskab i to omgange - dels den politiske økonomiapproach i 50-erne og 60-erne, bl.a. repræsenteret af H. Schillers analyser af sammenhængen mellem medieindhold og ejendomsforholdene i mediasystemet. Den mere humanistiske retning vandt indpas dels via Marcuse og hans forbindelse til tysk kritisk teori og dels via Birminghamskolens "Cultural Studies" i 70'erne.

Robinson fremhæver især to punkter, hvor den marxistiske tilgang har vist sig problematisk: dels at familien anskues ud fra dens produktionsmæssige relationer, mens andre sider af familiens rolle overses, bl.a. at den er rum for sprogtilegnelse, identi-

tetsopbygning osv. - og dels at patriarkatet anskues snævert i forhold til ejendomsrelationen og ikke som et ideologisk system.

Alle tre tilgange udelader nøglespørgsmål mht. forståelsen af menneskelig adfærd, specielt når det drejer sig om ideologiens væsen og om hvordan kulturel og økonomisk produktion er relateret til hinanden. Til dette, påpeger Robinson, er det nødvendigt at inddrage en symbolsk tilgang - for at forstå hvordan mening eller betydning skabes.

Den franske strukturalisme og andre europæiske "lån" har haft stor indflydelse på senere amerikansk sociologisk forskning - forståelsen af at signifikante symbolsystemer som sprog, kunst, myter og ritualer er centrale for den menneskelige evne til orientering, kommunikation og selvkontrol, med Max Webers ord: "Mennesket er et dyr ophængt i et spind af betydning som det selv har spundet - kulturen er dette spind".

Implikationerne af dette er bl.a. at stimulus - respons paradigmet vendes på hovedet. En anden konsekvens er en forståelse for at socialvidenskaberne principielt adskiller sig fra den eksperimentelle videnskab: der findes ingen "rå data", - det er en videnskab baseret på fortolkninger af andre menneskers fortolkninger, ikke på jagt efter love, men efter mening

Den symbolske tilgang er, siger Robinson, begyndt at udvide og nyorientere nogle af de centrale spørgsmål i den feministiske tilgang - af studiet af relationen mellem ideologi og kønsulighed, bl.a. udmøntet i analyser af kontrollen med den ideologiske produktion og i studier af indholdet af de ideologiske former. Disse analyser viser bl.a. at kvinder er stærkt underrepræsenteret i ideologiproducerende institutioner. Der findes praktisk taget ingen kvindelige medie-ejere og meget få i medieinstitutionernes ledelse (f.eks. 7% kvinder i det Canadiske CBC's ledelse) og kvinder er under 10%-grænsen i højere uddannelsesinstitutioner og i centraladministrationen.

Med hensyn til indholdet i de ideologiske former viser en lang række analyser, at skildringen af mænd og kvinder i medierne foregår i helt differentierede mønstre. Kvinder er med Gaye Tuchmans ord "symbolsk usynliggjorte" fra den offentlige dagsorden, stort set fraværende i den daglige nyhedsstrøm, som således synes at legitimere og retfærdiggøre det eksisterende mønster for kønsulighed. Tilsvarende er Robinsons egen undersøgelse af 30 års ugebladsdækning af kvinders arbejde (1946-76). Den viser at forskelle i jobmuligheder og løn forklares med kvinders rolle som mødre.

Disse billeder er vigtige i socialiseringen af kvinder og for kvinders opfattelse af deres eget livsperspektiv. Robinson fremhæver at maskeringen af kønsuligheden som kønsspecialisering er en vigtig forhindring for kvinders muligheder for at skabe en alternativ ideologi. Ligeledes fremhæver hun analyserne af "common sense"-begrebet og analyser af hverdagsbevidsthed, der er vigtige for forståelsen af hvordan objektive uligheder bortviskes og neutraliseres.

Forskellige medier benytter forskellige henvendelsesmodi og forskellige stilarter i argumentationen, men billedet af kvinder og kvinders liv er ikke derfor "set" på forskellige måder, de er del af en overgribende betydningsstruktur: f.eks. den journalistiske bearbejdning af forskellige "hændelser" til nyhedsværdige begivenheder. Den indebærer en kombination af definatoriske kriterier og produktions-praksis'er, som efterlader spor på de diskurser de skaber, og som henviser til og simplificerer det bagvedliggende symbolske univers.

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Since the late sixties the mass media research community in the United States has been rocked by a series of debates challenging numerous assumptions on which previous work in the fields had been based. The Journal of Communication acknowledged this "ferment" in the field in its 1983-issue, but gave no reasons

why communication studies became fractured just at this moment in time. Among the contending alternative approaches to media studies was the feminist perspective.

In order to understand why this proliferation of approaches occurred in the social sciences and humanities in the late sixties, an intellectual history of North American communication studies would have to be written. This would illuminate what Thomas Kuhn called the prevalent intellectual "paradigms" in the field and explain what alternatives were being offered by other researchers. Kuhn's paradigm theory asserts that science is a human activity like any other and that "doing science" involves groups of researchers who are guided by agreed-upon conceptual schemas. These schemas orient not only decisions as to what constitutes "evidence", but also the ways in which evidence will be collected (Kuhn 1962/70:24). To pinpoint ruptures and/or paradigm changes, a historiography would have to isolate the major groups of researchers involved in communication studies at a particular time; the institutions where their work was being done; as well as the frameworks which were orienting these investigations.

Such a historiography of communication studies, exploring the complex interplay between ideas and social structure does not presently exist. There are however beginnings which have linked the emergence of U.S. communication studies with the twin disciplines of sociology and psychology, which began their development at the turn of the century (Robinson 1986). A concise historiography would have to link these early developments with later research in the fields of linguistics, anthropology, philosophy and speech communication, because these too have contributed to the fragmentation of the field of communication studies (LITTLEJOHN, 1982:250-1). This paper will focus primarily on other sociological traditions, among them feminism, which have offered alternative paradigms for media studies.

The Conservative/Functionalist View on Women and the Media  
(1950-70)

According to Eileen Saunders (1983:218) three different theoretical approaches have dominated the sociological study of women in the past twenty-five years. They are: conservatism, feminism, and Marxism. To these must be added a fourth, which might be called the "symbolic" perspective. While the earliest audience surveys in the thirties were of women's magazines and Lazarsfeld/Berelson/Gaudet (1944) investigated women's buying decisions, it was assumed that gender was irrelevant to audience analysis (Schroeder, 1986:1-8). This was in line with general social theory which Saunders (1983) characterizes as "conservative" with respect to the analysis of the social role of women. At the time it was argued that gender differentiation in society was a "natural" basis for different patterns of social relations and that these differences grew out of biological, psychological and social causes. The biological and psychological versions of conservative theories posited genetic and hormonal differences, or in the case of Freudian psychology, penis envy, as a natural basis for sex inequality in society. Supposedly such penis envy in the female child persisted into adulthood, where it emerged as feelings of inferiority, passivity and an unhealthy "super-ego" (Quinn, 1977). The sociological variant of conservatism shifted the explanation of gender differences from natural to social imperatives and argued that these differences contributed to the maintenance of social stability. Parsons, for instance, attempted to understand the position and role of women in industrial society in terms of their relationship to the institution of the family (Parsons, 1954).

Although detailed accounts of the conservative approach's conception of women and the media are still lacking, the shortcomings of this paradigm are generally well documented. They include the fact that the sociological variant overlooks the relationships between women's family and labor force roles and how these have affected women's perceived right to work. Functionalist theories also tended to ignore the fact that forms

of inequality are different for blue- and white collar women, that women's media use patterns differ significantly from those of men, and that family structure is not egalitarian on all levels of society (Saunders, 1983:223-24).

#### Feminist Approaches (1960's onwards)

Feminist approaches in the United States emerged in the early seventies, as a critique of the conservative academic analyses of women's role in society. They sprang from the writings of second wave feminists organizing around the National Association of Women (NOW) or more activist groups connected with the Civil Rights movement (Robinson, 1978). Important names here are Betty Friedan (1964) one of the cofounders of NOW, who identified the role of advertising in weakening women's right to work gained during the war years. Others are Kate Millett (1969) who identified "patriarchy" as a key structural constraint on women's lives. From this base she and later followers analyzed the hierarchical system of power in which males possess greater economic and social privilege than females. This differential power is in turn reflected in different sex roles. For feminist scholarship gender inequality is thus located in the relationships between males and females. And these relationships are shown to be manifested in the cultural system which defines women as inferior to men. Appropriate sex role definitions, it is found, maintain unequal economic and social rewards for men and for women. Feminist approaches thus argue that ideology has replaced biology as the major determinant of inequality and the explanatory thrust of these theories is on ideological factors and their impact on social structure.

Feminist theories have concentrated on two large areas of inquiry: the role of the family and the role of social institutions in providing women with different socialization and work experiences. The family is generally viewed as the mechanism through which patriarchal ideology is initially learned and transmitted. Millett (1969) argues that this is achieved largely through the creation of a "physic structure" for women which



is very different from that for men. Social institutions according to feminism, are the sites in which these physical structures are translated into practices which exclude women from equal opportunity with men (Tuchman, 1978). The unity of this approach lies in the demonstration that physical states have institutional consequences. It shows how an ideology of women as different in temperament, skill and attitude is translated into social practices which exclude women from entry into certain types of professions, and how it denies them adequate advancement, remuneration and other rewards.

Even this approach, however, has several inherent problems. It tends to assume that patriarchy is an universal system of power and thus tends to ignore how it manifests itself in other societies and how it changes over time. Initially it also overlooked that not all men benefit equally from this power structure (Mitchell, 1971). Feminist approaches have furthermore tended to mask the status differentials within each gender, and tended to assume the primacy of ideology, rather than exploring its sources and ramifications. The belief that women are not as valuable workers as men may have nothing to do with patriarchy. It may instead be the result of structural conditions in capitalism, where cheap labor pools are required to bridge seasonal economic fluctuations. Many feminist approaches also fail to analyze the specific ideological links between the female role in the family and in the public sphere. The labor market and politics may have different value systems which intersect with traditional views on women's roles.

#### Marxist Approaches (1960'ies onward)

Marxist approaches to media studies, though present in the thirties in the hermeneutic guise of Theodor Adorno's work on Lazarsfeld's Princeton Radio Project, virtually disappeared in the post world war II era. Some accounts of the demise of Marxism now exist (Jay, 1973). Much less is known however about the interlinkages between these manifestations of Marxist scholarship and the reemergence of the more classically oriented "political

economy" approaches in the fifties and sixties. Important names here are C. Wright Mills (1956), Dallas Smythe (1967) and Herbert Schiller (1969), all of whom analyzed the impact of media ownership on content. Since the seventies there has also been a revival of Marxist humanist approaches, possibly under the influence of Marcuse's work in California and cross-fertilization with British "cultural studies" as practiced by the Birmingham school (Hall, 1974/1980).

Marxist approaches focus on the relationship between the social organization of production and the ideologies which protect the class interests of those who control these production processes. For Marxist scholars, these relations exploit the female as worker in the laborforce and as a form of property in the family context (Eichler, 1975). They argue that women's powerlessness in the family is determined by factors in capitalist society which are external to the family situation. Marxism thus directs attention to the historical link between the variability in female statuses and changes in the form of production. Its conception of the household and domestic labor (production for use performed by the wife), involves a recognition of the alienating nature of such work, especially when the wife is additionally engaged in wage labor (dual role syndrome, Benston, 1969).

Though Marxist and feminist approaches have added a great deal to our understanding of the status of women in modern society, this paradigm too has its limitations. These pertain to the Marxist assumption that increased female entry into the labor force, will automatically bring about an objective equalization of gender statuses. Clearly, this is not the case. The rapid increase of women workers during the past twenty years, has had little appreciable effect on the "double ghetto" phenomenon (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1978). Women workers continue to be segregated both by occupation, as well as by gender. Another limitation in this approach is the fact that Marxist scholarship views the family primarily as a set of productive relations, when in fact it is much more than that. It is the site where

language is learned and an initial sense of identity is acquired. In the same vein, "patriarchy" is defined in terms of property, relations alone, where it is also an ideological system. The relationship between the two cannot be assumed to be symmetrical.

This very general review and the critiques of the three approaches to the study of women, indicate that in spite of their important contributions they still leave out key issues in human behavior. These concern the nature of ideology as symbolic production, and its role in the human enterprise. Most feminist and Marxist approaches are silent on the ways in which ideology links the female role in the family with that in public life and how exactly economic and cultural production are related. Though there are certainly interlinkages, it is questionable to argue that these are somehow isomorphic. To illuminate these kinds of issues a symbolic approach to human behavior is needed, which elucidates how meaning is created and signification is achieved in both the private and the public spheres of existence.

#### The Symbolic Approaches (1960'ies onward)

Other recent paradigms challenging the behavioral and functionalist approaches, are grounded in semiotic, rhetorical, and phenomenological perspectives. All of these focus on processes of meaning creation and view language as a specific type of code. Anthony Giddens notes that Saussurian linguistics revolutionized Anglo-Saxon social theory by making a variety of very important discoveries, which were later explored by structuralism. Among these are the distinction between language and speech, the arbitrary nature of the sign, the tripartite signification process and the fact that language codes are based on "absent" knowledges (1979/83, 9-48). As mentioned elsewhere, this tradition entered Great Britain through French structuralism and film theory and the United States via "cultural studies" (Robinson & Straw, 1984). U.S. phenomenological scholarship in contrast, goes back to Schutz, who left Germany to work at the New School in New York where he died in 1960. These and

other trans-Atlantic borrowings and transfers must be given careful consideration in future historiographies of communication studies, because some of the European borrowings were melded with indigenous US theories, which go back to the turn of the century. Among these are the Chicago School's symbolic interactionism and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, both of which have had a strong impact on recent North American news studies.

Symbolic approaches assume that human beings are not finished products of biological evolution, but symbolizing, conceptualizing, meaning seeking animals, whose wish to "make sense" out of experience is as pressing and determining, as the more familiar biological needs. Evolutionary evidence suggests that culture rather than being added on to the finished human animal, is a central ingredient in the production of the animal itself. Especially important in this evolution, is the increasing reliance upon systems of significant symbols (language, art, myth, ritual) for orientation, communication and self-control. In Max Weber's words "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance which he himself has spun. Culture is these webs" (Geertz, 1973:5).

The implication of this view for social and communication theory are immense, because the theory turns the stimulus-response paradigm on its head. It asserts that humans are born into a culture, and that it is the culture which supplies the various symbol systems which convey meaning in given social situations. Consequently, these symbol systems are not "gauzy mental forms" and "private", but public inscriptions of a communal sensibility, which those who wish to understand human behavior need to study (Geertz, 1973:3-6).

Clifford Geertz, a cultural anthropologist, demonstrates that the study of human symbolizing behavior is not like an experimental science, namely an analysis of raw data, but that it is based on interpretations of other people's interpretations. It is not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive hermeneutic search for meaning. Gilbert Ryle (1949) the

British philosopher explains this endeavor in the following example. Consider, Ryle says, two girls rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes, while standing in a group during school recess. In one, this contraction is an involuntary twitch, in the other, a conspiratorial signal to her friend. The two movements, as movements, are identical. From an I-am-a-camera "phenomenalistic" observation of them alone, it would be impossible to tell which was twitch and which was wink, or indeed whether both or either was twitch or wink.

Yet, the difference, however unphotographable, is vast, as anyone unfortunate enough to have had the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating in a quite precise and special way: (1) deliberately; (2) to someone in particular; (3) to impart a particular message; (4) according to a socially established code and (5) without cognisance of the rest of the company. Ryle points out, the winker has not done two things, contracted eyelids and winked, where the twitcher had done only one. Contracting one's eyelids on purpose when there exists a public code in which so doing counts as a conspiratorial signal, is winking. Ryle sums it up: "there we have a speck of behavior, a fleck of culture, and...voila, a gesture" (Ryle, 1949:59).

The illustration makes two things clear: first, that the notion of an adequate method for analyzing human behavior has to be changed, and two, that the notion of available data needs revising. An adequate method for the analysis of human communicative behavior must provide what Ryle calls a "thick" rather than a "thin" description. Such a method would cover more than what we see (twitches and winks). It should offer a description of what the twitches and winks "mean" to the different people involved in the communicative situation. "Thick" description then is the construction of a hierarchy of meaningful structures. Like an ethnography it accounts for how twitches, winks, and parodies are produced, perceived and interpreted in a particular setting.

In addition it turns out that the data available for the analysis of human intercourse are not raw data. In finished communication, as in anthropological writing, the data are really the observer's own construction of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to. The mere act of living entails symbol creation and meaning attachment. As sociologists and communicators we therefore have to pay attention to the furniture in our minds as much as to the furniture in our parlors.

#### New Areas of Inquiry on Women and the Media

The symbolic approach, according to Helen Baehr (1981), has begun to extend and redirect some of the central questions in feminist research, concerning the relationship between ideology and sex-inequality. Two foci of this work are discernible with respect to women and the media: (1) studies analyzing the control of ideological production and (2) studies concerned with the content of ideological forms.

Studies of the control of ideological production have shown that women are significantly under-represented in institutions where ideology is produced. In Canada and most European countries there are now studies documenting that women are virtually absent from the rank of media owners (Clement, 1977). Canadian studies also show that women do not figure in secondary education and the top positions of the federal civil service, where they are well below the 10% mark (Smith, 1975). A 1975 study of women in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation shows that they hold less than 7% of top management jobs (CBC, 1975) and another demonstrates that they are virtually absent from the managerial level of daily newspapers (Robinson, 1975). Similar diagnoses were also arrived at for Canada's National Film Board, which is world-renowned for its documentary tradition (Nash et.al., 1978).

A wide variety of studies of media content in all countries have additionally shown that the media disseminate consistently

different patterns of images about men and women. These systematic differences have been documented for occupational features, behavioral patterns, personality traits and marital and parental statuses. It is time to collate and compare these studies across cultures in order to determine whether these patterns of images about women show variations.

Tuchman sums up the lack of female portrayals in North American media content, by stating that women are symbolically "annihilated" from the public agenda (Tuchman, 1978,15). Women are also rarely covered in daily news shows and if so, only from four traditional viewpoints: as appendages of important males, as entertainers, for their home making skills, or as first women in a male dominated professional field (Robinson, 1978). Media contents, all of this research shows, tend to legitimate and justify the prevalent patterns of sex-inequality. They portray gender differences as "natural" and thus make objective differences in the treatment of the sexes, subjectively plausible. My own study (Robinson, 1983) of thirty years of magazine coverage of women's work (1946-1976) documents that differences in job access and in pay were explained by women's roles as "mothers" who need not earn as much as their husbands.

This taken-for-granted world of sex role portrayal has important implications for the socialization of individual women and for their life goals. If women's objective inequality is masked as mere gender specialization, females are denied access to the very instruments by which an alternative ideology can be constructed. The formative impact of ideology is evident in Connelly & Christiansen-Ruffman's (1977) finding that the overwhelming majority of Canadian women believe that there is social equality between men and women, and that women receive as good a break as men. Similar findings for the professional aspirations of women who postpone career preparation because they expect to become married, is also beginning to appear (Grewe-Partsch/Robinson, 1980).

The symbolic approaches also helped to open up completely new areas of inquiry in the past decade, all of which address the question of how meaning is constructed in particular situations and how participants in turn "make sense" out of their surroundings. Symbolic interactionists like Ervin Goffman (1979) and ethno-methodologists like Garfinkel, have developed notions like "frame" and "script" and employed the metaphor of drama to analyze public behavior. What is emerging from this work is an understanding of the different ways in which women's and men's behaviors are framed and scripted and consequently also differently interpreted. One of the most fascinating aspects revealed by this work are the ways in which "common sense" notions are used to neutralize and eradicate objective inequalities.

Another new area of inquiry has focused on language, and the ways in which it constitutes and contextualizes human behavior and understanding. Here Miller/Swift (1976), Lakoff (1975) and others have begun to analyze how sexist nomenclature and grammar serve to reinforce patriarchal social arrangements. From this kind of work we have also gained a better understanding of the ways in which different languages frame gender differences. The syntactical and semantic structures of different languages, let alone their pragmatic use by men and women, need more investigation and comparison. Here the structure of English, with its "neuter" nouns (like "humanity" and "human nature") and pronouns like "he", encompassing both genders, is particularly pernicious in erasing important gender differences and devaluing the feminine form.

A third and very promising direction of research has focused on the differing value systems which underlie the private and public behaviors of women and men. Carol Gilligan's (1982) In a Different Voice, for the first time provides empirical evidence of the systematic and close relationships between women's socialization and differences in value systems. Gilligan demonstrates how women develop an ethic of "equity" which relies on differences in "need", while men develop an ethic based on "fairness"



criteria legalistically defined. As a result of these differences, women tend to value relationships and their maintenance over time more highly than opportunities for self-enhancement, and act differently in personal relations. In a similar vein there are also attempts to study pornography by focusing on the value systems which link private and public behaviors. These explore how victimage is constructed and propagated in the consciousness industry and how these definitions affect the public and private lives of both women and men. Tolerances for wife and child beating, like those for violent program content, are certainly determined by publicly accepted value structures which differ from country to country.

By adding the symbolic perspectives to feminist and Marxist paradigms contemporary communication scholars have made strides in deciphering the complex interrelationships between social structure and meaning creation. They have become alerted to the fact that all human behavior is constructed in a "web of meanings" which constitute the context for action. These webs are furthermore culturally "given" and are therefore public and pre-existing. Symbolic perspectives also show that webs of meanings utilize a variety of codes: visual, verbal and auditory, whose signifying properties are complexly interlinked. Portrayals of women and women's lives in different media are therefore not separate ways of "seeing", but part of one overarching signifying structure. This signifying structure, according to Barthes (1973) works on three levels, the denotative, connotative and mythical.

The multi-layered system is bounded by what Berger and Luckmann (1966) call "common sense" ideation, which is rooted in everyday knowledge. This is the reason why cultural significations are so difficult to change. Within the signifying structure different media, are found to utilize different "modes of address" as well as different "argumentation styles". The ways in which the news is presented in the newspaper and on television, are two cases in point (Hartley, 1981). These studies clarify that the journalistic reworking of "happenings"

into newsworthy events, involves both a combination of definitional criteria and production practices, which leave traces on the discourses which they create (Robinson, 1985). Overall, these journalistic practices like all "recountings" are shown to simplify and categorize what Walter Lippmann (1922) calls "this buzzing symbolic universe" in our heads.

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Gertrude Joch Robinson, Graduate Program in Communications,  
McGill University, Montreal, Canada