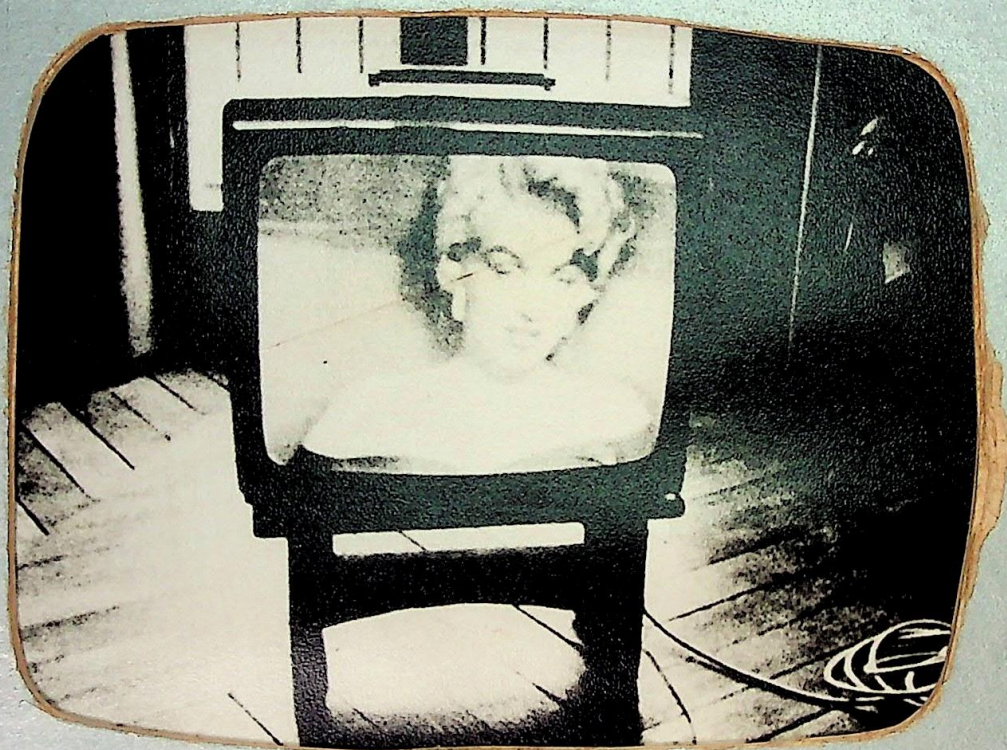


**TELEVISION  
V  
ART AND DESIGN  
EDUCATION**



**MARY LOHAN  
JUNE 1980**

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TELEVISION

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Influence of T.V. on Children

Relevance of T.V. to Art Education

How T.V. Works

Advertising & Content of T.V.

Conclusion

Chapter II

Time Spent Watching T.V.

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ART AND DESIGN

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Mary Lohan  
June 1980



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## INTRODUCTION

Early philosophers talked of the five primary senses - hearing - vision - smell - taste and touch, and concluded that the widest window to our world was that of vision. Aristotle began his 'Metaphysics' with this discussion of vision:

"All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses: for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action but even when we are not doing anything, we prefer seeing (one might say) to everything else. The reason is that this most of all the senses, makes us know and bring to light many differences between things." (Aristotle, in Metaphysics)

In this age the small screen of the television has become the widest window to our world. It has extended the faculty of vision. We are now able to see things as they happen at approximately the speed of light. An American president is assassinated and we, sitting in the comfort of our armchairs, see it as it happens, - Man walks on the moon as the world watches on its T.V. set.

We get visual information on different cultures, peoples and events. The field of knowledge in which the children of today live is very extensive compared to the pre-T.V. child. Along with this massive amount of information there exists, in the shape of the popular soap opera or 'real life detective' dramas, values presented in this sugar-coated fashion, easily digested, addictive and in the long term probably harmful to the critical abilities of our children. Our sense of vision has been extended, but has our visual



awareness increased?

As Aristotle says our vision 'makes us know and bring to light many differences between things.'

This assumes a standard of visual and critical awareness which certainly does not exist, if T.A.M. ratings are anything to go by. The sheer volume of visual material dressed up and presented to us and the range of choice which is available to us, makes it more difficult to be selective. The bringing to light the differences and the range of choice which is available to us, makes it more difficult to be selective. The bringing to light the differences between things or the state of being visually aware is harder to obtain.

The aim of this thesis is to examine how television can be used as an aid in art education in order to help students to become critically aware, perceptive and creative people.



## CHAPTER 1

### HOW IMPORTANT IS TELEVISION IN THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN WE TEACH?

The fact that children spend a significant amount of their leisure time watching T.V. should indicate to us the importance of T.V. in their lives. Large numbers of surveys exist to assess the exact number of hours per day that children spend watching T.V. The general consensus of opinion is that the majority of children spend two to three hours per day watching T.V. A minority of children spend a far greater amount of time in front of the box.

### DOES T.V. INFLUENCE CHILDREN?

Before we can answer this question we would have to examine the nature and content of the programs which are popular among children. However we can assume because of the repetative nature of television programs (constant repeats, serials etc.) that it would be impossible for T.V. not to have some effect on children. The influence of T.V. does not just exist for the time spent watching it. There is a definite overflow of the T.V. environment into the 'real' environment of these children. This alone can be heard if one listens to the conversations of children - defending characters - pondering outcomes of certain serials etc. It would appear that the more barren the 'real' environment of the child the more colourful and entertaining the T.V. world will appear to the child.

In the same way as the child reacts to his environment from his own practice and experience, he will also bring his own individual experience to bear when watching T.V. A certain amount of children will be more vulnerable to the affects of T.V. than others.

It is generally found for example that children with experience of aggressive behavior (either by or to them) are more influenced by violence as portrayed on T.V. than children who have not had that experience (Noble, 1968).

We could put it this way. A child with concrete experience of violence will see the violence on T.V. as being real (and will 'learn' from it). A child who has not had the experience of violence will view it as being unreal (will ignore it or treat it as entertainment).



## RELEVANCE TO ART EDUCATION

In Art Education the study of the environment plays a large part in the perceptual development of the child. The ability to examine the environment in an elemental way, and to express it in a personal and creative way is an aim which most teachers of art would like to see their students achieve.

In general however the environment of T.V. has been ignored by art education.

The media of T.V. is primarily audio-visual yet we have not come to grips with providing children with the basic tools necessary to perceive, judge and be discriminating in their view of T.V. To achieve this we must as teachers

- (1) Come to a better understanding of the media of T.V.
- (11) Understand the way in which the children we teach use the media.
- (111) Develop ways of teaching which will make children more visually aware and more constructively critical and discriminating in their use of the media.

These particular ideas will be elaborated on in Chapter 111 of this thesis. However there is one more important point I would like to mention here as I think it is worth emphasising.

The fact that this thesis deals with the media of television does not mean that I view the areas of art dealing with materials such as paint, craft materials, 3/D materials etc. as being unimportant.

In fact I see the experience of using these materials as being of primary importance. All the senses must be involved in a real learning experience - learning from the environment of T.V. can exclude the sensory experiences of touch and smell and taste - the T.V. can visually express these sensory experiences but the activity of becoming involved in expressing these experiences by using materials is necessary to the learning experience.

- (1) Children learn from concrete experience.
- (11) This experience involves their environment. Their environment embraces all aspects of their home, neighbourhood, school, social etc. and the environment of the media especially television.



(111) The real learning experience comes from the visualization of their experience in a personal and creative way through real, tactile and concrete materials.

For children to experience this they must come to understand their environments - T.V. is an important environment in the lives of children.

#### ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FOR THE PRODUCERS OF T.V.

An estimated two-thirds of television broadcasting hours on R.T.E. One and Two are imported.

The main reason for this is money. R.T.E. depend on television licenses and advertising revenue as its main source of income.

B.B.C. also depends on T.V. licenses for its income. The difference is in the populations of both countries: three million in the 26 counties of Ireland compared to fifty million in Britain.

B.B.C. have a decided advantage over R.T.E. and as a result are able to offer a more extensive and a higher quality service to their viewers.

This service includes more home-produced material (which helps revenue as these products can be sold to other T.V. stations) and also a second channel, B.B.C. 2 which tries to offer a higher quality program to the viewer. B.B.C. 2 offers a range of sometimes excellent T.V. viewing, films, documentaries, drama, music, news etc. unpolluted by the ten minute interruptions of advertisement bashing. In addition B.B.C. 2 offers the service of the Open University which is designed to encourage people who have missed the chance of third level education, to partake of educational courses - it also offers degrees to people who complete these courses and partake of the exams which accompany them. A very excellent service.

It costs R.T.E. £9000 to produce one hour of home produced T.V. compared to £800 for one hour if imported T.V. material. R.T.E.'s policy therefore is to save their money to produce what they consider to be good T.V. and to fill in the rest with imported T.V. material. It could be said therefore that it makes little difference as a lot of T.V. viewers in this country have a choice of B.B.C.1 & 2, U.T.V., R.T.E. 1 & 2.



One finding of John Quinn (producer in R.T.E. who carried out a nationwide survey on the viewing habits of children - see Chapter 11) was that children from single channel areas were heavier T.V. viewers than children from multi-channel areas. T.A.M. ratings also prove that home produced programs are consistantly high on the T.V. rating lists e.g. Late Late Show, Live Mike, Hall's Pictorial Weekly. etc.

This proves I think the extent to which people relate to basic elements in the shared cultural environment from which they come.

#### MAIN EXPORTER OF T.V. PROGRAMS

The United States is the main exporter of T.V. programs in the world. The system of producing T.V. programs in the U.S. is completely different than Ireland or Britain.

In the U.S. T.V. is FREE to the consumer - (no ominous sounds of hollow footsteps walking up to your front door looking for your T.V. licence there) but the big question is how free is FREE. When we examine the way in which programs are produced in the U.S. we see not very free at all.

In the U.S. there are hundreds of T.V. networks getting their revenue from sale of time to advertisers, some from local sponsors who deal directly with the station. On a national level most advertisers deal with the network through the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue in New York. The advertiser may buy time for plug announcements or he may sponsor particular programs, which may be created by the advertising agency itself. The advertiser frequently has the power to control the actual content of the programs. Because there is open competition among the many networks to catch the public's ear, the programs tend to be of a more sensational nature than those of the non-competative B.B.C. or R.T.E.

It would be fair to assume therefore that the programs which are made by these marketing corporations are not entirely untouched by the techniques of advertising. One would assume that the program would be made to reinforce the ad. and vice versa.

These programs constitute a considerable proportion of our imported T.V. material.



## PASTRY

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**24. 2000**

二、重工业以机械工业为重点

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## TECHNIQUES USED IN ADVERTISING

Television programs are designed to include advertising breaks at intervals of fifteen minutes. During the course of an evening's viewing the same ad could be repeated several times. Sometimes ads are repeated twice during the same commercial break. This act of repetition as a technique, aside from the style or design of the ad itself, is extremely persuasive. When the repetition is combined with other, more subtle techniques, used to exploit the fears, greeds and feelings of inadequacy that the majority of people are made to suffer from.

In more sophisticated advertising the lifestyles are sold including a product e.g. juxtaposing the use of a certain product with a successful career, beautiful family, flashy car etc.

The types of ads that could possibly upset children are often directly related to their favourite T.V. programs. The T.V. programs like the ever-popular cloying and poignant family series type (Little House on the Prairie, The Waltons) present a very unreal picture of the perfectly happy family. Mammoth problems arrive each week and are solved within the home, as long as Mom is in the home, baking the bread and wiping away the tears. The ads which reinforce this image usually picture Little Johnny coming in with grazed knee and being lovingly doctored with Brand X by Mum or Mum collecting Little Johnny from school having just cleaned the floor in record time with Brand Y or washed Little Johnny's mucky white shirt whiter than white with Brand Z. The sets for these ads are always immaculate and Little Johnny looking at all this from his own particular life may find his wanting.

The crime/detective type programs are usually reinforced by the daring macho type ads. Heros swing across alligator-infested swamps to produce the box of chocolates for the ever waiting female.

Popular music and adolescent culture is used to sell clothes to young people. The 'cool' image is portrayed in a very sophisticated way and again the cool, laid-back life-style juxtaposed with the willing female - the reward for buying the jeans, sunglasses etc.

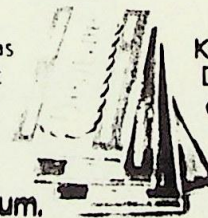
The fact is that these ads sell life-styles and reinforce stereotyped male and female roles.



"If you really love me Maximilian,  
you'll chew Dentyne."



Dentyne Chewing Gum has  
a refreshing, tingling flavour that  
keeps your breath fresh and  
your mouth clean.



Keep yourself kissable with  
Dentyne - in four delicious flavours:  
cinnamon, spearmint, peppermint,  
plus liquorice and menthol.

**Dentyne Chewing Gum.**

**Keeps you kissable when it counts.**



Advertising is a product of consumer society - the more products produced e.g. the more brands of washing powder, the more competitive advertising will become and the more sophisticated the techniques of persuading people to buy these products will become.

The experience of advertising therefore is yet another concrete experience which the child will go through during the course of his/her life. As educators we should equip the child with the means of understanding and coping with the specialised techniques used in advertising. When the child becomes critically aware of these advertisements then he/she may come to appreciate the artistic value which is present in some advertising and understand the moral values involved.

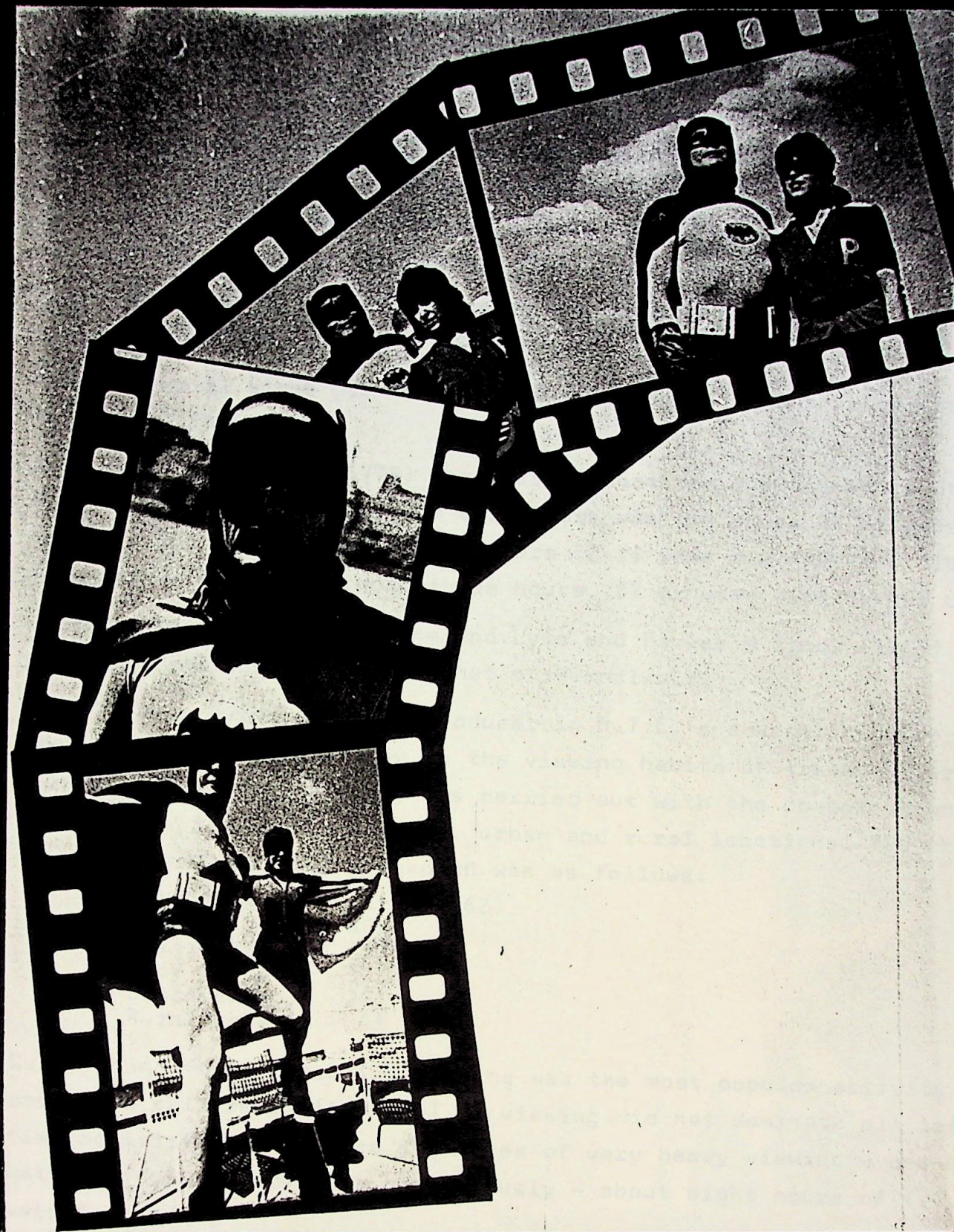
#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion I would say that television and advertising are important visual environments in the life of children. In Chapter 11 I will be looking more closely at the likes and dislikes of children re TV.

I think it is significant for art education to explore every environment in which we live, learning how to come to terms with these environments of life and to be able to express them in a creative way can only help the mental growth of the child.

Ways of exploring the environment of television in a practical way will form the basis of Chapter 11 of this thesis.







## CHAPTER 11

Since the inception of television surveys have been carried out to find the recurring patterns and preferences of children. Himmelweit et al (1958) found that children (10-11 years) viewed T.V. for an average of just under two hours a day.

The higher the child's intelligence the less he viewed. Boys viewed a little more than girls.

Age and social class differences had only slight influence on the amount of viewing.

In Britain Greenberg (1978) established that the average level of T.V. viewing in the age range 5-19 years was two hours 25 minutes per day. The most avid T.V. fans were 12-14 year old working class boys and girls who averaged three hours, 22 minutes viewing per day.

In the United States, Schramm and Lyle and Parker's study (1961) revealed findings similar to that of Himmelweit.

In 1976 John Quinn, a radio producer in R.T.E.'s education department conducted a national survey on the viewing habits of Irish children aged 11-12 years. The study was carried out with the co-operation of teachers in 31 schools in city, urban and rural locations. 720 children were surveyed, the breakdown was as follows:

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| Boys (358)     | Girls (362) |
| Single channel | 309         |
| Multi-channel  | 411         |
| City schools   | 367         |
| Urban schools  | 261         |
| Rural schools  | 91          |

Quinn found that television viewing was the most popular activity among the children. Although T.V. viewing did not dominate all leisure time activities there were instances of very heavy viewing - one child watched fourteen programs continuously - about eight hours of T.V. watching.

No significant difference was found between T.V. viewing and socio-economic class.

In the conclusion of his survey John Quinn writes:

"To know what children view, as the present study tells, may be useful, but it may be more useful still to examine how children use what they view."







I investigated through a questionnaire the viewing habits of sixty adolescents ranging in age from 14-15 years.

The students came from two different schools, both schools situated in the inner city, one a vocational school for boys and girls, the other a girl's convent secondary school.

The sample included:

20 BOYS FROM THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL (V.S.)

20 GIRLS FROM THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL (V.S.)

20 GIRLS FROM THE CONVENT SCHOOL

Altogether the students came from six different class units. As far as was possible students did not communicate with each other during the survey.

Although both schools are situated in the inner city they serve two different catchment areas.

The students who attend the vocational school almost exclusively live in the surrounding area. The school takes all children regardless of intelligence or ability. There is no selection process.

The convent school draws students from outlying suburbs and there is a selection process. This process is in the form of an entrance examination, and as there is a 'waiting list' of students wanting to enter this school they obviously have the choice of 'high ability' children from which to choose.

This survey does not pretend to be scientific but merely to serve as a very small insight into the opinions of a varied group of adolescents.

#### AVERAGE TIME SPENT WATCHING T.V.

It is very difficult to assess accurately the amount of time one spends watching T.V. Some children have a fantastically inflated idea of time, or tend to exaggerate or minimise for their own reasons.

#### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Girls 3½ hours daily

Boys 4 hours daily

#### CONVENT SCHOOL

Girls 2 hours daily



### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Nearly all the boys and girls were adamant about the time they spent watching T.V.. A minority were avid T.V. watchers, claiming to watch from when they came home from school to when it closed down for the night. It is probable that the T.V. could have been on for that length of time but doubtful if it was being watched constantly. However one must take into account the living accommodation of these children (usually restrictive) and the size of the family (usually large) and realise whether they were watching the T.V. or not it would be difficult to remove oneself from the sound and vision of the set.

### CONVENT SCHOOL

In this school the girls were more uncertain about time spent watching T.V. It was clearly apparent that some parental control was involved, especially when home-work was mentioned. The minority of heavy T.V. watchers were not apparent among the convent school girls, perhaps an indication of parental control.

In the conclusion of his survey John Quinn talks of R.T.E. being on the threshold of major expansion of the broadcasting system, thought should be given he points out to programming for children in the areas of variety of choice, quality, teaching and on-going research into childrens needs, interests and satisfactions.

1980 - we now have R.T.E.2, both radio and television. Has anything been done to cater for the special needs of children and how have they responded?

With this in mind I would like to examine the childrens' response to three Irish T.V. productions aimed specifically at adolescents.

YOUNGLINE

LETS GO

S.B.B.

YOUNGLINE is a production which incorporates a variety of items that might interest teenagers. It is a magazine type program - short snippets of information, music, fun and games. It also invites a response from its audience.



VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

- BOYS - 35% thought good or very good  
 - 40% thought bad or very bad

- GIRLS - 35% thought good or very good  
 - 15% thought bad or very bad

CONVENT SCHOOL

- GIRLS - 65% thought good or very good  
 - 15% thought bad or very bad

This program appeared to have more to offer the convent school girls than the girls and boys of the vocational school. The probable reason for this is that the program relies heavily on the personalities of the presenters. The convent school girls would identify more with these presenters than the vocational school children.

LETS GO - again an R.T.E. production, this time dealing with a variety of sporting activities. I must say here that I was amazed in the process of this survey at the amount of interest the girls and boys from both schools had in sport. Almost all children had at least one sport as a hobby.

Vocational school boys and girls mentioned football, table-tennis, swimming, running and boxing.

The girls from the convent school were widely enthusiastic about sport and mentioned gym, tennis, badminton, volleyball, swimming, football and a great interest in ballet. These girls enjoy a wider variety of sport due to the better amenity areas of the suburbs from which they come.

VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

- BOYS - 50% thought good or very good  
 - 0% thought bad or very bad  
 GIRLS - 40% thought good or very good  
 - 5% thought bad or very bad

CONVENT SCHOOL

- GIRLS - 55% thought good or very good  
 - 5% thought bad or very bad







S.B.B. in a shui - again an Irish production, designed for adolescents presented 'as Gaeilge' but in a trendy fashion, and featuring pop groups and music not exclusively Irish.

#### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

BOYS - 0% thought good or very good  
 - 90% thought bad or very bad  
 GIRLS - 0% thought good or very good  
 - 85% thought bad or very bad

#### CONVENT SCHOOL

GIRLS - 30% thought good or very good  
 - 50% thought bad or very bad

A totally negative response from the girls and boys from the vocational school.

#### TYPES OF PROGRAMES PREFERRED

The programmes that appealed mostly to the boys were of the comedy (Benny Hill type) and crime/detective type. They seemed to like the fast, snappy type of humour and gun slinging type of action.

The girls on the other hand seemed to enjoy the serial type programs (Little House on the Prairie type).

An amazing 70% of the girls from the Vocational school quoted Dallas as being their favourite program and 60% of the same girls named J.R. as being their favourite T.V. personality.

The girls from the Convent school had more diverse tastes although Dallas and Mork and Mindy were liked by the largest group of girls.

40% of the convent school girls named J.R. as being their least favourite character. 5% named him as being a favourite.

A point to remember about the children's amazing addiction to Dallas is that the program is on very late on a Monday night, and yet almost all the children interviewed from both schools had seen it.

One wonders how these children can go to school refreshed and ready to study on Tuesday morning.

Another interesting reaction to a program - a B.B.C. production for children called 'Take Hart'. This is a program dealing with techniques of making pictures. There is the added interest of an animated plasticine figure playing a part in the series. The program is usually



based on a theme e.g. water, demolition etc. and the presenter, Tony Hart, demonstrates techniques of expressing these ideas through various media. An art educator would have some doubts about the stereotyped nature of the work which is presented as finished pieces of art work to children. The response to the program was as follows:

#### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

- BOYS - 65% thought good or very good  
 - 15% thought bad or very bad
- GIRLS - 60% thought good or very good  
 - 15% thought bad or very bad

#### CONVENT SCHOOL

- GIRLS - 75% thought good or very good  
 15% thought bad or very bad

The stereotyped nature of the art produced on the program and the easy and slick methods of getting 'real' effects obviously appeals strongly to children of this age group.

Listening to these children talking about T.V. to each other it occurred to me that they really did 'live' television when they were looking at it. In the questionnaire I posed the question 'What would you do if your T.V. was broken?' The response was as follows:

#### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

- BOYS - 20% listen to the radio  
 - 20% go out  
 - 25% said they would fix it  
 - 15% go to their granny's etc.
- GIRLS - 25% expressed an emotion i.e. 'I would go mad' or 'crack up'  
 - 20% said they would go to their 'aunt's, granny's or friend's house and watch it there  
 - 10% would read  
 - 10% listen to the radio  
 - 10% would go out

#### CONVENT SCHOOL

- GIRLS - 40% said they would read  
 - 20% said they would listen to records

The rest said they would either study or play games.



I think the answers to this question clearly show the difference in thinking between the children of both schools.

The girls from the Convent School seemed to have more confidence in their own resources. They could rely on a variety of things to do and enjoy.

The response from the boys and girls from the Vocational School indicate

- (1) That a strong community or family feeling exists in the area
- (11) That they displayed more ingenuity and initiative in circumventing the question
- (111) That they did not appear to have the same inner resources to draw from.

It is interesting to note that nobody from the convent school mentioned radio as an entertainment while several children from the Vocational school did.

I decided then to find out exactly what kind of reading habits the children had. The reading materials I investigated were books, teenage magazines, comics and newspapers.

#### CONVENT SCHOOL

A wide range of books were mentioned - favourites being Enid Blyton, Nancy Drew, Noel Streatfield, Sherlock Holmes.

90% of the girls read some of these books on a regular basis.

45% read teenage magazines and mentioned Jackie, Fab 208, My Guy

50% read comics and mentioned Tina, Mandy, Buntty.

#### VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Girls - 20% said they read books - detectives

- 50% read teenage magazines - My Guy

- 55% read comics - Beano, Dandy

- 25% read 'The Herald'

Boys - 5% read books

- 5% read teenage magazines

- 60% read comics - Shoot, Wizard, Beano, Dandy

- 40% read 'Herald' or 'Sun'



The Convent School girls show a very healthy interest in reading which will develop as their education continues. All of these girls will continue in second level education and a large amount of them will continue on into third level education. The attitudes and opinions which they hold now will change and develop according to their personalities and influences which will occur in their lives. The chances are they will become more discriminating and questioning in their views on life and in the way they watch T.V.

The Vocational School boys and girls on the other hand will leave school probably when they have completed their Group Cert or before. Less than one percent of children from Vocational Schools in Dublin went on to third level education last year. The likelihood is that none of these children will reach that level of education. The habits which they have formed now in reading material and T.V. watching will not greatly change as they develop. The influences which they will encounter throughout their lives will probably not change greatly from their present influences.

Television will be an important influence in their lives in that it, apart from their experience of meeting new people and life in general, will be their primary education. Through T.V. they will gain information, be entertained and possibly in the future have the chance for further study.

The fact that T.V. will undoubtedly play this important role in these children's lives indicates to me the importance of helping children to use and understand the medium in a more productive and a more critical manner.



## CHAPTER 111

In his book 'How Children Fail' John Holt, talking about why children fail in school says that they "fail to develop more than a tiny part of the tremendous capacity for learning and understanding and creating with which they were born".

- (1) I want to look at some broad educational aims with the intention of looking at the environment of T.V. as a method of achieving these aims in a broad based art curriculum.
- (11) Examine what is meant by visual awareness. Examine the components necessary in order 'to read' a visual message - with a view to the practical use of such information in the class-room.

The two most important factors which must be included in any hierarchy of educational aims are (1) exploration (11) discovery through concrete experience.

Although I see audio-visual aids and in particular television as playing an important role in future art teaching in schools, this does not mean that I would denigrate in any way the use of more traditional materials - paint, paper, clay etc. In fact I would strongly recommend them as being necessary in the visualisation and creating of the "discovery of the new experience".

### EDUCATIONAL AIMS

Individuality - emotional development

Visual awareness - materials

INDIVIDUALITY - to foster the ability to express oneself in a personal way. Everybody brings his own perception and experience to bear when watching T.V. The most mediocre of stereotyped soap-operas, with stylized characters and inevitable endings, can lead to disagreements



**A Midas bath  
puts you back on top**

When the day gets you down  
slip into a reviving Midas foam bath.  
There's nothing so refreshing  
as that tangy Midas fragrance. And  
afterwards you're like a new woman.  
You're back where you belong:  
right on top.





and arguments as to "what really happened", or who was "right" or "wrong". A recent survey published in the Daily Telegraph shows that 80% of people watching the same program will misunderstand it in some way. The survey seemed to infer that the "masses" were so stupid that they were unable to see what the producers wanted, and had designed the program for them. I would rather think that the so-called "masses" have an individual way of seeing and understanding.

In a practical way this individual way of seeing can be encouraged in the art class.

- (1) Discussion of various programs.
  - (a) What a program was trying to achieve.
  - (b) Examining the characters, are there any similarities to real people?
  - (c) Moral values implicit in programs. Exploring these.

Finally visualising in a personal way aspects of interest to the individual.

- (a) a personality
- (b) a situation
- (c) an action
- (d) an emotion

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT - to develop a balanced personality capable of constructively criticising situations in an objective way. During the course of a "half-hour" T.V. program a situation can begin with an emotionally charged and mammoth problem - proceed tearfully through the trauma of solving the problem and end joyfully with the problem solved and everything rosy in the garden... until next week. Practical ideas to help the emotional development of a child - through the medium of T.V. (i.e. using the T.V. as the medium)

- (1) Making comparisons between the T.V. program as described above and a real life situation. Imagining real life situations and the problem solving solutions that could be used in a realistic way - looking at relationships, how people interact with each other.





There's no mistaking  
his forever De Beers

The excitement lasts as long as the diamonds!

A range of diamond ball eternity rings is available from about £100 at branches of **James Walker**  
For more details call in at any branch or write to James Walker, 245 Streatham High Road, London SW16.







- (11) Examining advertising.  
 Is it honest?  
 What kind of appeal does it make?  
 Does it have overtones and undertones that stimulate notions that the product can't possibly fulfill?  
 Is it designed to lead you to an understanding, or to block off understanding by some lie?  
 Does it have an economic interest?  
 Does it suggest that some people are better than others?  
 Make a game of finding out as many implications present in an ad. as possible.

- (111) Ask children to make their own T.V. series based on a few stereotyped ones. Imagining their own characters, situations and happenings.

- (1V) Ask children to make their own ad. given a product - a market (who they want to sell their product to). Visualising situations that would make this product more acceptable and attractive to certain people.  
 Putting children in the situation of creating illusions to fool other people into accepting a certain product, can help them to understand the tricks used to dupe themselves. In this way they become emotionally more resilient and capable of assessing the world or environment of advertising and T.V.

VISUAL AWARENESS - To encourage children to be more visually aware of their environment. By the term environment I include all the physical and mental environments of which they have experience. To become more aware of one's environment it is necessary to look at it from every possible angle and in this way the 'discovery' element which is so important in real learning can become meaningful.

Using the environment of the T.V. to become more visually aware:

- (1) It is necessary to become more familiar with the elements of art - line - shape - form - texture - colour before one can become visually literate. To do this in the form of lessons dealing with each element can be meaningless for some child-







ren (especially adolescents). To use a familiar medium in order to explain the same thing can be more productive and real to the child.

- (11) Lesson in tone - many art teachers will have experienced the difficulty in trying to point out different tonal colours to some children, who genuinely can not see what the teacher is talking about. The same child will have experience manipulating the T.V. screen when it is too light or too dark. A useful lesson could be made from examining exactly what happens to a picture on the screen from its lightest to its darkest hue.

A child's visual awareness will develop when something which interests him is involved. Recently I had a personal experience which convinced me of this beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In school during break I watched a group of boys whom I teach playing poker. These boys had very poor reading and writing abilities and problems with numbers. Watching them carefully I noticed when their hands were dealt they picked them up and spread them slowly (cool, impassive Bogart style). What amazed me was that they instantly 'read' the hand, made an instant decision and discarded the 'dirt' immediately.

(I enjoy playing poker myself but when I get my hand I have to reorganise it before I can 'see' what I have.)

These children could see 'runs' and 'flushes' and the possibilities of some without any reorganising of their cards - they did not have to 'see' the sequence of numbers one after the other before they understood what they had (as I would have to do). Also, the decisions they made constantly paid off e.g. they would throw away the cards hoping for a run and invariably seemed to make it!

Another amusing aspect of the game was the fact that I specifically refused to let them play for money - at the same time although money did not pass hands they were adding, subtracting, raising etc. in their heads - these children who were maths 'failures' . A very complex job in which I was completely at sea.

This really proves to me that motivation involving personal



interests is paramount in the learning process.

MATERIALS - encouraging children to become aware of the nature of materials, the method of handling them, and ways in which they can be used as a means of personal expression.

When children are motivated, aware and when they have gone through the process of discovering something which is important for them to express, they should not be frustrated by not being able to cope with the proper handling of materials. From the beginning it is important for children to handle materials and by practise to become more proficient in their use. During the frustrating period of adolescents it is painful to see a child trying to express himself and being unable to do so, primarily in my opinion, because throughout his first level education he has not been taught how to use or experience the materials necessary for expression.

The tragedy is that we have an adolescent with growing adult ideas yet seeing what he produces as being childlike and babyish.

During this period it would be helpful to get these children involved in using other materials as well as traditional ones, e.g. cameras, making slides, films, animation and using the traditional materials as back-up work. The point here being that the emphasis would be taken off the traditionally produced fine art work as being "works of art".

This material in the form of working notes as it were, would I believe develop eventually into something more worthwhile than the work which strives to be "fine art" for its own sake.



### WHAT IS VISUAL LITERACY?

This is very hard to define but I think it is worthwhile to examine a tentative definition which was one result of the First National Conference on Visual Literacy in 1969.

"Visual literacy refers to a group of vision competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, and symbols natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication."

These "vision competencies" have been described by John Debes, a proponent of the above definition. I think they are worthwhile enumerating and looking at with their relevance to the art curriculum in mind.

A HIERARCHY OF VISUAL SKILLS include being able to:

1. Distinguish light from dark.
2. Recognize differences in brightness.
3. Recognize differences and similarities in shape.
4. Recognize differences and similarities in size.
5. Distinguish hues from grays.
6. Recognize differences and similarities in hue.
7. Recognise differences and similarities in saturation.



8. Perceive distance, height and depth.
9. Recognize differences and similarities in distance, height and depth.
10. Perceive movement.
11. Recognize differences and similarities in rates of movement.
12. Recognize a whole shade even when partially occluded.
13. "Read" simple body language and make simple body language utterances.
14. Recognize groups of objects normally seen together.
15. "Read" a spatial arrangement of objects commonly seen together.
16. Group objects related by process commonly seen together.
17. Group objects related by process though not necessarily seen together.
18. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged in chronological order and related by process.
19. Compose an utterance as above.
20. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged in an idealized order to represent elements of a process or a genotype.
21. Compose an utterance as above.
22. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged in cogent order.
23. Compose an utterance as above.
24. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged in "original" and yet significant order.
25. Compose an utterance as above.
26. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged in order so as to communicate an intended idea about a process.



27. Compose an utterance as above.
  28. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged to transmit a fictional narrative.
  29. Compose an utterance as above.
  30. "Read" a sequence of objects or language arranged to create a desired emotional reaction.
  31. Compose an utterance as above.
  32. "Read" a sequence of objects or body language arranged to express, so that others may understand it, a personal expression.
  33. Compose an utterance as above.
- (From John L. Debes "The Loom of Visual Literacy")

Underneath the American intellectual jargon of this Hierarchy of Visual Skills lie some very interesting starting points and the follow up I think is very interesting. The seeming culmination of being visually aware according to Debes is being able to express yourself so that others can understand you and to become physically involved in creating something that is personally important.



## CONCLUSION

Educating the children of today for life as it exists today is a complex task. In our industrialized technological society, life has become more ecomplex. This fact should not make us retreat into the past but rather embrace the exciting possibilities of the future.

ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION must play an important role in helping children to discover, to learn and to create.

Art and Design Education must be dynamic, it must be flexible enough to cope with change and yet have the insight and sensitivity necessary to understand and learn from the past.

Television is an important media in our society - it has extended our vision - but we must teach children to be critically aware of the increased information with which they have to cope. The only way this can be done is to explore television from different perspectives and to use this new insight in a creative way. Television will not disappear - it will become more sophisticated as our society develops. It is now time to open our eyes and really see it.



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