Declaration

I, Patrick Gilligan, being a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy as awarded by Dublin City University, declare that while registered for the above degree I have not been a registered candidate for an award at another University.

Secondly, that none of the material contained in this thesis has been used in any other submission for any other award. Further, that the contents of this thesis are the sole work of the author except where acknowledgement has been made for assistance received.

Signed Patrick Gilligan Date 11-2-1993.

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BOX OF DELIGHTS. BRIDGE OF FEATHERS

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION DRAMA ON TELEFIS EIREANN/RTE

from

1962 to 1987

PATRICK GILLIGAN

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the general character of the children's television drama transmitted on Telefis Eireann/RTE from 1962 to 1987, reviews the programming context of the provision, and evaluates the drama transmitted to dramatic, developmental and cultural criteria.

The thesis identifies and analyses a representative selection of the home-originated and imported children's television drama in the schedules over the period under review. Details of the identified drama transmissions are provided in the Appendices. The Appendices also include details of home produced children's programmes and of relevant home-originated adult drama.

Chapter One outlines some dramatic criteria for classification and evaluation of the schedule content, constructs a developmental perspective of children as users of television drama, and examines the cultural contexts of Irish children as viewers.

The selected schedule provision, relevant formative factors, and the programming environment are examined in general terms in Chapter Two.

The selected provision is analysed in generic and thematic categories in Chapters Three, Four and Five. Chapter Three examines drama in the fantasy paradigm, which is predominantly animation drama; Chapter Four analyses the live action provision, discussing films originally made for cinema, drama particularly relevant to the actuality of children's lives, adventure drama, situation comedy and family-centred drama, and drama featuring animals. Chapter Five examines two categories characterised by heavy value-loading---drama based on literature and drama based on history; this chapter also discusses sources for research on thesis topics and gives a brief summary of developments in home produced television drama for children from 1987 to date.

Chapter Six sets out the conclusions and areas of further enquiry indicated by the study of the provision and the analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

My objectives in this thesis are to describe the general character of children's television drama transmitted on Telefis Eireann/RTE from 1962 to 1987, to review the programming context of this provision, and to evaluate the drama transmitted to dramatic, developmental and cultural criteria

The thesis identifies and analyses a representative, though comprehensive, selection of the home-originated and imported children's television drama transmitted over the period under review.

My introductory chapter outlines some dramatic criteria for classification and evaluation of the schedule content, a developmental perspective of children as users of television drama, and an examination of the cultural contexts of the viewing situation of Irish children. The selected schedule provision, formative factors, and the programming environment are examined in Chapter Two and the selected provision is analysed in generic and thematic categories in Chapters Three, Four and Five. Chapter Six sets out the conclusions and areas of further enquiry indicated by the study of the provision and the analysis.

Because schedule content was determined to a large extent by the general programming environment, I have dealt in some detail with the over-all programming background, evolving an historical perspective, an analysis of programme types and categories, of relevant corporate structures, policies and perceptions, statutory constraints, resource provision and audience contexts.

The most pragmatic strategy which presented itself for evaluation of the great mass of television drama in the representative lists materialising from the study was the division of this material into generic or thematic categories.

Animation drama was a major component. 'Real life' drama, adventure drama, fantasy drama, drama based on folklore, costume drama with historical themes, drama derived from literature, animal-centred drama, science fiction drama, musical

drama, drama with a pedagogic motivation, and films originally made for cinema were other categories into which the drama provision over the period under review resolved itself.

This categorisation provided opportunities for contrast and comparison of home produced and imported material within the category and for consideration of comparative aspects such as volume, scope, quality and ideological tendencies.

The term 'children' implies a developmental perspective; children process television texts in ways consistent with their over-all pattern of development. In the formulation of a developmental framework, my thesis draws mainly on Piagetan perspectives, amplified by concepts from semiotics.

My perception of children's television drama, evolving from the premises of semiotics and communications studies, is as communicated text, generated at source in an interweave of creative, technical, cultural, ideological, structural, political, pedagogic, statutory, religious and other contexts transmitted aggressively by the source formulators through an optionally-activated channel and received by a range of dispersed child audiences of varied processing and cultural competence.

The perception of drama as a complex of signs and sign-systems involving paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures, transformational and modality operations, clarifies the role of these elements in the dramatic experience, and also provides a readymade interface with semiotic perceptions of child development; the ability of children to process television content can be expressed in terms of the structures, transformations and modality competences available to them at various stages of their development.

I acknowledge my debt to the exposition of the child's relationship with television content in these terms by Bob Hodge and David Tripp in their excellent study, **Children and Television**, and to the writings of Martin Esslin for semiotic and other perspectives of drama.

I used cultural and intercultural studies as sources of criteria which would help to illustrate the cultural contexts of the provision, and in particular the various examinations of

television culture by John Fiske.

Home produced and imported children's television drama have important cultural dimensions. Imported television drama for children in the Telefis Eireann/RTE schedules is by definition a transcultural commodity. Reception of children's television drama in the Irish language will for many children be a transcultural activity. The Irish mass audience child viewer has a cultural identity of his own which differs from the source cultures of the imported provision, and from the culture implied by Irish language drama. The cultural implications emerge more clearly in the analysis of the actual content of the schedule provision.

The imported television drama for children in the Telefis Eireann/RTE schedules was the immediate competitive viewing context for home produced children's drama; it provided a basis for comparison and evaluation of home produced children's drama as mass audience provision; it indicated the nature of the general cultural impact of imported television on Irish children.

The imported children's television drama in the Telefis Eireann/RTE schedules may also be taken as broadly representative of the children's drama available to Irish children on foreign stations and on video.

The description and analysis of the provision should indicate the relative strengths of imported and home-produced drama in the schedules; the extent to which the drama provided in the schedules met, or failed to meet, the developmental needs of Irish children; the degree to which the cultural, physical and linguistic environments implicit in the drama provided corresponded to or differed from those of Irish children; the extent to which the television drama available provided relevant modelling for Irish children; the extent to which the children's drama provided contributed to the personal, cognitive and social development of Irish children and to the formation of an identity and mediated self-image.

The thesis should also indicate the extent to which the home-produced and imported drama provided corresponded to the viewing needs or preferences of Irish children and should identify some of the meanings and voices and areas of experience

excluded from the provision. Significant ideological systems and value systems were also implicit in the home-produced and imported provision.

Evaluation of Irish language and bilingual drama as communicated text, taking account of the fact that for the majority of Irish children the Irish language was at best a second language, should lead us to a more realistic assessment of the factors affecting tune-in probability and the reception environment for Irish language and bilingual drama for children.

The study should help to identify the structural, budgetary and other factors which determined the volume and character of home-produced television drama for children during the period under review, to identify the shortcomings of the provision and indicate some strategies which would make home-produced children's television drama more relevant to the developmental and cultural needs of young Irish viewers.

In such a broad sweep of investigation, the inadequacies of current research on television viewing in Ireland, on schedule content, on the viewing patterns and preferences of Irish children, and on the affective contexts of television viewing by Irish children are bound to emerge, suggesting several areas for further enquiry.

CHAPTER ONE

DRAMA, CHILDREN AND CULTURE.

Our area of enquiry, the children's drama provision on Telefis Eireann/RTE between 1962 and 1987, is of such vast detail that some form of distillation is essential. Conventional television studies find useful synthesis strategies in structuralist semiotics. The drama provision we propose to examine, could, from semiotic perspectives, be expressed in the crude formulaic framework of a basic communications model , which would perceive the schedule content as a body of text generated in a particular source complex, relayed by a specific transmission structure, and received, processed or perhaps ignored by a specific audience range.

The components of this structure can be restated as amalgams of meanings generated in specific communication systems or cultures, and received and processed in similar or different cultures. The spectrum, then, in which we site our evaluation framework is essentially a cultural matrix.

The material to be evaluated within this framework is children's television drama, which implies assumptions and raises questions about drama, about television drama, about children, about children as a special television drama audience.

DRAMA

The category of schedule content which we will examine is differentiated from other types of programming by its classification as drama, presenting us immediately with an immense matrix of intertextuality. Drama is antecedent to television and expresses itself in other media. Television subsumes drama created for other media such as stage and cinema,

and transmits it in its own idiom. Thus, a consideration of drama relayed by television involves perspectives of the underlying essence common to all drama forms.

The specific idiom of television is dictated by its technological determination, which is electronic. Electronic drama evolved from the application of technologies permitting duplication, replication and extended sensory perception of visual and auditory material to synchronic drama forms---drama where the audience had immediate experience of the performance. The significant changes in the text/audience relationship arising from electronic applications relate primarily to diachronic and diatopic developments in the viewing experience. Electronic drama also implies a random and unknown audience. **(c.f. Schramm : 1973)**

Current media and cultural studies will not prove automatically helpful in the analysis of television drama. The broad sweep of television studies tends to regard television output as homogenous. The perspective of a particular commentator may categorize television texts as narratives, as myth, as amalgams of meanings. Television output analysis will rarely engage with with the specific characteristics of the major schedule component, drama. Traditional drama studies are, on the whole, theatre-centred; critical studies of stage drama, radio drama, the film and television drama have evolved segmentally, the various categories generating and maintaining distinct areas of comment and analysis. **(Esslin : 1987 : Preface)**

The basic definition and delimitation we need is more likely to materialise in the work of writers who are conscious of the wider field of drama and who have a specific interest in the category of television output which can be described as drama. Starting close to home, as it were, we notice that Helena Sheehan sub-titles her account of Irish television drama as **'A Society and its Stories'**. Logically, this classification includes a sub-group, to which Dr. Sheehan adverts only occasionally : **'a society and its stories for children'**.

There is general consensus that drama is a story-

telling form. As such drama belongs to the narrative paradigm. Sheehan, defining the chief characteristic which marks off drama from other narrative forms, describes drama as 'the enactment of a narrative'. (Sheehan : 1987 : 28).

Martin Esslin describes drama as 'narrative made visible, a picture given the power to move in time' and, as a synthesis of the whole range of drama forms, as consisting of

> "mimetic action, in the sense of the re-enactment of 'real' or fictional events, involving the actions and interaction of human beings, real or simulated (e.g. puppets or cartoon characters) before an audience as though they were happening at that very moment." (Esslin : 1987 : 28)

Enaction implies representation of an event sequence for the benefit of an audience in continuous present time, through the agency of characters who simulate the action. Esslin's definition must take account of radio drama; we can infer from his comments on stage and screen drama that the simulated action will invariably be supported by a simulated location or set, and by other simulations and illusions such as costume, lighting effects and background sounds.

THE AUDIENCE

Central to the drama experience is the audience. The relationship between the performance and the audience is a complex involvement, generated by the dynamic outreach of drama itself, and the wide range of human needs which drama, in all its forms, can satisfy. The outreach of drama---its innate capacity to focus attention and generate emotional and psychosomatic reaction---has received little specific attention in contemporary studies, but Silverstone's concept of 'rhetoric' describing the persuasive powers of the television text is a useful platform for further exploration. (Silverstone : 1988 : 34/35). Modality studies in semiotic perspectives of child development, in particular the relation between 'modal fit' and emotional response noted by Hodge and Tripp, can also yield valuable insights into the outreach of drama. (Hodge and Tripp : 1986 : Chapter 4).

'Audience' in the television context may be an

inadequate term. John Fiske rejects the term in the singular in favour of 'audiences', which, though unsatisfactory, at least recognises the heterogeneity of the viewing public. (Fiske : 1987 : 17). As the drama provision which will be the subject of our review was directed at a specific audience, children, we may be obliged to accept the heterogeneity of the child audience as well.

THE RANGE OF DRAMA

The definition of drama as enacted narrative encompasses most forms of dramatic presentation--theatre plays, opera, ballet, mime, musical plays, variety sketches, radio plays, cinema films, drama created specifically for television, cartoon and puppet drama.

Television drama is enacted narrative presented through the medium of television. The television drama paradigm will include drama created specifically for television and drama from others sources, mainly stage and cinema, modified for presentation on television.

The compendium of television drama selected from the schedules operative in the period under review is essentially an anthology of enacted narrative directed at audiences which consisted of or included children. The audience range at which this provision was directed consisted of Irish children, presuming the perception that Irish children have special characteristics as a segment of the child audience.

All of the material to be considered will be in the narrative paradigm. The limitations implied by enaction in continuous present time will have classification implications for considerable blocks of material in the schedules where the presentation mode is narration rather than enaction. Examples would be stories related directly to the camera, voice-over stories with static graphics, and other storyform presentations with weak levels of enaction.

Schedule material which has characterisation and enaction, but which does not function to mediate a narrative, will also generate classification difficulties. Puppet

characters used for presentation purposes and characters with a purely demonstrative function in educational programming raise such problems.

THE CHILD VIEWER

Drama for children implies modifications in the transmitted drama text dictated by perceptions of the nature of the child audience, and, more specifically, of the child viewer. Essentially these are developmental perspectives. Children's television drama is television drama created to, or perceived to meet, developmental and formative criteria.

The term 'child' can be considered as an antonym, signifying 'not adult', 'not grown up', 'not mature'. The child, from this perspective, is in a continual state of growing up, of maturation, of movement towards adulthood. The child viewer is in the process of acquiring viewing, comprehension and processing competences. (Wartella : 1979).

Designation of a programme as a children's programme implies the presence of characteristics or modifications related to perceived viewing competence; the child viewer will not have the full range of comprehension skills and aural and visual grammars appropriate to adult viewing, nor the the full range of codes and grammars relevant to television drama. Linguistic, visual, aural, and plot modifications will normally be made in texts made specifically for children. The extent to which children will assimilate available text content has been examined by Ellen Wartella (1979), Aimee Dorr (1986), Hodge and Tripp (1986), Lesser (1974) and others.

The child viewer may not be in possession of the technical competence to activate the channel, nor have the discriminatory powers to select the programme in question. The child may not have a sufficiently wide experience of television drama conventions and formats to activate dramatic involvement with the text as drama, or the ability to articulate responses to the perceived content. The child cannot be presumed to have the wide range of experience necessary to evaluate correspondence of the text with reality effectively, nor can it

presumed that he or she will have the media and genre experience to distinguish between material with a non-realistic premise, such as fantasy, and actuality. The child will have difficulty with complex transformational processing.

The child viewer cannot be presumed to have the ability to organise the content of the text accessible to sensory perception into meaningful patterns and sequences---some age-groups will be deficient in narrative competence, nor to have the ability to extract subtexts (Wartella : 1979). The child viewer may not be able to cope with the wide range of entropies which are implicit in the reception context, and may not have the status necessary to control the viewing environment sufficiently to enable him or her to absorb the accessible content to a degree which makes its processing possible.

CHILDREN AND TELEVISION DRAMA

It could be argued that a general analysis of the nature of television drama is somewhat redundant when our topic is children's television drama. Television drama for children must, however, meet established dramatic criteria; it must be enacted narrative; the enacted narrative will be mediated by characters and unfold itself through the interaction of these characters in continuous present time.

Drama provision for children is not confined to material specifically created for the child audience. Drama originally created for adult and general audiences, such as silent comedy and westerns, has been subsumed over the years into the children's programmes repertoire. Children are also part of the general or 'family' audience, and children, as various studies of their viewing preferences confirm, watch vast quantities of television drama which is specifically adult (Cullingford, 1984).

CONTROLS

In programming practice children are presumed to watch the whole schedule and perceptions of the effects of television output on children affect, and to a certain extent dictate,

total schedule content, generating controls and limitations on programming premised on the susceptibility of children to negative behavioural modelling of programme content, to distortion of moral values, to unacceptable ideological conditioning, to traumatic consequences from programme content.

Since control of what children may view on television is a major focus of legislation and other regulatory measures, assumptions about development, impressionability and malleability are highly political issues.

Perceptions of the susceptibility of children to negative behavioural modelling, to distortion of moral values, to unacceptable ideological conditioning, and to traumatic consequences deriving from the viewing situation have resulted in vast quantities of effects research and comment. This material in general views the child as highly impressionable and malleable, and in need of of legislative and other measures of protection. The predominant preoccupation of effects research and comment has been with violence on television. Marie Winn's **The Plug-In Drug**, 1977, is a representative expression of these attitudes.

Parallel with the effects research and comment there are powerful campaigns and lobbies which have the same perspective and which have had enough leverage to get their perceptions translated into legislation and into production and scheduling directives. A typical outcome of this type of pressure would be the Family Viewing convention.

Other campaigns and lobbies may also influence schedule and programme content to achieve specific ends. An example would a cultural lobby such as the Irish language movement, which would want to maximise programming in the Irish language.

Effects research and comment have concentrated on adult television provision which may be viewed by children; it has not concerned itself to any significant degree with programming designed specifically for children, nor does it generate a significant range of guidelines or insights which might be useful in the creation or evaluation of children's

programmes.

The broad perspective of effects research, though couched in a developmental framework, needs the impressionability and malleability of children as a premise and cannot readily concede negotiating competence to the child viewer.

In sharp contrast the 'uses and gratifications' perspective, as formulated by Katz et al, (1974), McQuail et al., (1972) and others, suggests that media function to provide for needs of diversion, personal relationships, personal and communal identity, survival information, information about the immediate and more removed world, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal and social integrative needs, values and behavioural norms, fantasy and escapism needs.

These could be summed up as enrichment potential and the anthology of television drama which will be the subject of our study may have the potential to gratify some or all of these needs. At the same time we cannot automatically discount the effects paradigm; the same anthology may be presumed, by simple binary logic, to have as much negative as positive potential.

A DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

The immediate problem is to devise a theoretical framework which will take simultaneous account of television drama and the child's interaction with the television drama text. One theoretical approach which incorporates criteria both for the analysis of television drama and criteria for for evaluation of children's interaction with the drama text is that of structuralist semiotics.

Martin Esslin, in The Field of Drama (Esslin, 1987), outlined a range of sign systems common to all forms of drama, evolving a perspective of drama as being totally representational. (Footnotes, Chapter One : 1) The sign systems suggested by Esslin indicate the paradigms from which the specific characteristics of a particular drama segment or performance will be selected. The paradigmatic structure is a fundamental concept in the semiotic approach. Paradigmatic

analysis is also used to map the axes conflict in drama through the identification of oppositional content in binary format. (Berger : 1982)

Esslin, as we have seen, characterises drama as 'mimetic action'. Mimesis---the ability to represent or imitate---is the primary human device for acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for survival. Language skills are mainly acquired through mimesis. The human becomes viable in society by imitation of parents, siblings and other members of the immediate community. The mimetic faculty is essential to drama. It is also essential to human survival. From the start the human is essentially a mimetic animal.

The primary mechanism through which characters materialise in drama is anthropomorphisation---human qualities and behaviour are ascribed both by source and receiver to image complexes to a degree which permits these complexes to function as agents. This perspective extends from characters created by actors in stage performances to animation characterisations. Anthropomorphic activity is a central feature of nurturing and educational environments. (Allen : 1979).

If the performance is to function as communication or have meaning, the specific representations selected must be arranged in signifying combinations or syntagms. The syntagmatic structure is a fundamental concept in semiotics.

These concepts can also be used in semiotic descriptions of child development. A child's discriminatory competence can be described in terms of the paradigms of optional meanings available to him and her, and a child's ability to combine and relate concepts can be described in terms of syntagmatic competence. The abilities to discriminate and form combinations and relations account for the major components of the child's competence to process a television text.

The major syntagmatic dimension of a television text will be the narrative. Narrative competence is also a fundamental aspect of child development.

NARRATIVE

As with 'audience', narrative in the singular is an unsatisfactory synonym for the syntagmatic structure of a television drama segment. The segment is essentially a narrative complex. The mega-narrative will be the plot. There will be selfcontained and interweaving subsidiary narratives. In addition to formal verbal narratives there will also be aural narratives such as background music and sound effects, and visual narratives generated by the settings, which will be processed simultaneously with the primary narratives. If the segment is an episode there will be outer narrative frameworks generated by series and serial formats, and outside these again there will narrative constraints and determinations imposed by genre. (Fiske : 1987)

Investigations into narrative explore the production of meanings by reference to text structures, using models generated by the work of Propp and Levi-Strauss in the areas of folklore and mythology, and the role of the reader in the production of meaning, developing the perspectives of Roland Barthes. Accounts reflect tension between perceptions of narrative as passive consumption, and as active negotiation. Examinations of narrative progression as movement from equilibrium to disequilibrium derive mainly from the models of Todorov.(Cook : 1976).

Roland Barthes suggests that narrative may be a basic way of making sense of our experience of reality. Narrative is a universal cultural process shared by all societies.

> "Narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society: it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative." (Barthes : 1973, 1977).

Narrative can thus be perceived as determining in large part the drift and evolution of our lives, and as a major organisational mechanism which mankind uses to order and make sense of human experience.

Because narrative is so pervasive in human society, sophistication in this fundamental sensemaking and communication system, in its linear and enacted variants, must be seen as a

developmental acquisition, and a source of cultural capital and cultural power. Children use narrative as an expressive medium from a very early age. Fiona Garvey (1990), in an article on the fictional experience of the child in Oideas, states :

> **"The cognitive development of the child is characterised by the tendency to think, learn and respond through narrative...."** (Garvey: 1990 : 63)

She quotes James Moffet, who said that children must , for a long time, **"make narrative do for all"**, as they do not have the ability to differentiate thought into **"specialized kinds of discourses such as narrative, generalisation and theory."** (Moffet : 1968 : 49)

TRANSFORMATIONS

The progression of narrative and enaction involves continuous change in the basic constituents of drama, the plot, the characters, the action, the dialogue, the simulated environment and signifying elements such as sound, costume and lighting. Semiotics describes these changes as transformations, and the ability of a viewer to process change in the text as transformational competence. Transformational ability is a central feature of child development.

REALITY

The viewing of drama involves continuous evaluation of text content in terms of its credibility or conformity to the reality of experience. Semiotics describes this process as the formation of modality judgements.

Modality judgements involve primarily a comparison of the received message with subjective experience. Modality processing presumes an accumulation of subjective experience which could be described as the receiver's version of the world, or the scheme of his or her reality. If the message is judged by the receiver to be part of this world, his or her cognitive, emotional and other faculties will process the message as if it were reality. The closer the modal fit, as Hodge and Tripp emphasise, between the message and the receiver's world, the more intense will be the emotional response. What is taken to

be real will affect learning and behaviour to the same degree as the relevant aspect of reality, and it will activate the same emotional reaction. The modality context has an obvious relevance to the processing of drama. (Hodge and Tripp (1986)).

Children will relate the phenomena presented to them to the experience that they have. The result may be erroneous from the adult's point of view, but children are in a continuous state of experiment and trial and error, and will continue to refine and revise their concepts of reality.

Factors which weaken modality lessen the intensity of the response. Transformations, for example, weaken modality. The reality a child viewer will impute to content will vary in quality and strength, depending on whether the child is viewing alone or in company. The closer the social involvement in the viewing situation the greater the modality gap that is tolerable. Viewing in a close family situation, for example, will reduce the reality of a horror film for the child viewer. (Himmelweit et al. : 1958)

The social processing of content will involve outer frames of the social context---friends, peer groups, school. These outer frames also contribute to the experience repertoire through which children judge the modality of text content.

CREDIBILITY

The experential base of drama generates a paradox. Although systematically fictional, the content of drama must be 'true'. The truth of drama differs from the truth of the factual narrative. Drama is true if the content conforms to experience. Truth equates with credibility. If the drama is fantasy or comedy then the action must be credible in terms of the operative schemata of the genre.

The formation of reality or modality judgements is a major feature both of the drama experience and of the semiotic perspectives of child development. Children construct interior models of reality which they revise continuously as they acquire experience.

Paradoxically, the dramatic experience involves a

simultaneous acceptance that the whole text is unreal, or fiction, and calls into play a convention whereby the viewer will process the text content as if real. This convention was described by Coleridge in the early nineteenth century as 'the willing suspension of disbelief', and by Hodge and Tripp as 'collapsing the main modality'. (Hodge and Tripp : 1986).

TELEVISION AND THE REAL WORLD

Researchers such as Smythe, (1953) de Fleur (1964) and Gerbner et al. (1980) have shown systematic differences between the world of television and the real world, reflected in over-representation and under-representation of specific demographic categories (Footnotes, Chapter One: 2). Gerbner, in **Aging With Television**, describes the phenomenon of under-representation as 'symbolic annihilation'. (Gerbner et al., 1980)

Martin Esslin considers television drama as a source of necessary information for living; information for living is even more important for the child viewer--its acquisition is the main drive of the child's personality and developmental momentum---and the most appropriate drama for children which will supply this need is drama that reflects the real world of the child. (Esslin : 1982)

The world of the child is systematically under-represented in adult programming. Children rarely feature in the paradigm action-narrative, and if they do it is as accessories rather than central characters. The home and school, or the social context of the child, is also under-represented.

Adult television, which will symbolically 'annihilate' children as children, to use Gerbner's phrase, is unlikely to provide them with a mirror image of themselves or of the world in which they live; it will not rehearse the roles they have to play, nor map out the relationships they must establish, nor provide them with the mediated experience of children of their own age-group, nor help to resolve or rationalise the conflicts and contradictions in their everyday lives.

Neither will adult drama take account of the state of their cognitive or emotional development, nor of their limited

empirical experience, nor of their semiotic ability to process its content.

There is another significant skew, that categorised by cultural transposition---when the programme originates in a different culture from that of the viewer---or more simply, when the child viewer is watching an imported programme.

FANTASY

Young children distinguish between fantasy and reality but they do not have the knowledge needed to distinguish with precision and subtlety when they watch adult television. As Hodge and Tripp point out, their response to adult television is typically skewed, and they have precise programme needs of their own which, I would argue, can only be met by special programming constructs which take account of their stage of development.

The modality judgements of very young children tend to be polarized, contradictory and unstable. Young children are likely to under-read modality cues, and respond with an intensity that seems inappropriate or disturbing to adults.

> "Paradoxically, it follows that children do in fact need a diet rich in explicit fantasy, in order to develop a confident and discriminating modality system." (Hodge and Tripp : 1986 : 130)

They also need, according to Hodge and Tripp, an understanding of the basic processes of media production. Knowledge of media operations and conventions is of immense help to the child in processing television texts, and in particular in the formation of confident modality judgements relevant to text content. This is an argument for media education in the primary school.

A RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

Processing of television drama texts involves complex syntagmatic and paradigmatic operations, intricate transformational processing and continuous evaluation of the content in terms of conformity to experience. The broad application of the Hodge and Tripp perspective, framed to illustrate the child's interaction with television texts in

general, to television drama provides illuminating insights into the processing of television drama by children.

Within the framework of structuralist semiotics Hodge and Tripp ask what paradigmatic structures, what syntagmatic structures, what transformations, and what modality judgements are available to children, and the stage of development at which these competences become available, and the level of paradigmatic, syntagmatic, transformational and modality judgement competence available to children at particular stages of development. (Hodge and Tripp (1986)).

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

These stages of development are mapped out by Hodge and Tripp (1986), Jaglom and Gardiner (1981), Allen (1979)and others, and correspond in broad outline to Piagetan developmental frameworks. (Piaget : 1966)

Up to the age of 2 is the 'sensorimotor' period, which incorporates a progression from synchronic to diachronic---the ability to cope with different time-sequences. Piaget (1962) relates mimesis to the sensorimotor process. Allen (1979) sites the origins of histrionic capacity in this developmental phase.

From the moment of birth the child makes distinctions, and thus develops paradigmatic structures. Children also develop syntagmatic structures from birth, i.e they make simple connections.

Transformational ability is particularly low in the early years. Distortion or a new perspective may make an otherwise familiar object unrecognisable. The infant will not normally be able to relate a representation to the original. Young children will not be able to process transformations such as those involved in disguise.

The modality competence of the very young child is poor, because of the essential limitation of the child's experential field, and his or her inability to make distinctions between real and unreal---in fact, the very young child does not possess a concept of unreality.

Before infants are in possession of verbal language

they acquire a range of other semiotic systems. Many of these relate to sounds. Verbal language apart, children have a high competence in sound codes from birth, gaining perhaps more knowledge of their world from aural than from visual sources in the first year of life. Thus they have a further disposition to decode the aural content of a television text when they select it for attention.

VISUAL COMPETENCE

Visual competence, on the other hand, is highly variable. The visual concerns and limitations of the infant may be gleaned from the observation of four-year-old children in art classes. Diarmuid Larkin has summarised the art growth characteristics of children at various stages of their development in Art Learning and Teaching (Larkin : 1981).

> Infants will give some direction to their scribbles---the infant's main preoccupation is naming his or her scribbles---infants will impute their own meanings to the images they create. Thus the infant's definition of what he or she perceives on the television screen will be highly subjective. Infant drawings reveal no understanding of object-space relationship. The infant attempting a drawing will only include the parts of the object that are meaningful to him or her. Colour has a deep emotional appeal, but the infant has no understanding of the relationship between colour and object. Movement is important---infant drawings will often express movement. There is little realistic connection between what the infant draws and what the infant says he or she draws. Art activity of infants reveals a very short attention span. Also, the time concept of the infant is now; infants cannot normally conceive a past or imagine the future.

What we get out of this outline is a deficient but developing visual grammar, which will limit and distort what the infant extracts from a television text. There is also important confirmation that the infant can cope with representations. This is a major development of infant transformational powers.

The next phase is the 'pre-operational' stage; from ages two to five. The distinguishing feature of this stage is the development of representational thinking, which enables the emergence of complex diachronic structures, since it allows a

representation to stand for the original structure which is no longer present. This is confirmed by Larkin's observation of infants in art classes.

The 'pre-operational' stage is the precondition for a development of modality, because it is now possible to produce a set of deliberately false representations such as lies, fantasies, and games. Children of this age-group can process dramatic material appropriate to their cognitive level effectively. Drama of this type would have to take account of the poor transformational ability and limited syntagmatic capacity of the child.

By the age of five the child in the art class will be able to identify colours, understand and identify textures, identify repetition and rhythm, understand similarities and differences in shape, organise and arrange shapes, understand dark and light, identify the part of the whole, understand pattern and balance, be able identify regular and irregular patterns, understand dominant and subordinate shapes and express movement and feeling. (Larkin : 1981).

By the age of five the child would seem to be in possession of the aural and visual grammars essential for engaging meaningfully with the television programme as an audio-visual text. The child is likely, however, to have difficulty with the text content unless the material has been designed with young children's limitations in mind.

Children possess the basic skills necessary to process some text content from a very early age---paradigmatic and syntagmatic skills, modality competence, and transformational ability, but at very weak operational levels. Intensive observation by Wartella (1979), Hodge and Tripp (1986), Himmelweit et al. (1958) and others confirm development-related comprehension gaps in the processing of television texts by children.

The disposition to process the dramatic text is also strengthened by the innate developmental strategy of the infant, which is mimetic; mimesis is the primary constituent of dramatic representation. When the child consciously seeks out the

dramatic text on television mimesis will be a highly developed element of his or her skills repertoire. (Allen : 1979)

The child is also using narrative forms as the main mode of verbal expression from a very early age. We have already quoted Moffet's view in our discussion on narrative, that the young child, for a considerable period, must "make narrative do for all". (Moffet, 1968)

SESAME STREET

Pre-programme research for Sesame Street, (outlined in Lesser, 1974) confirms the developmental pattern sketched above for preschool children, and adds some new perceptions. The Sesame Street research team found that the younger child has a shorter attention-span, but will focus quite intently for this span, and will assimilate an image or short series of related images accurately, and be able to recall this intake clearly. This corresponds to the infant's syntagmatic competence. In any event the infant's power to relate a part to the whole is still elementary.

The younger child, according to the Sesame Street research, will have have great difficulty with television narratives, because assimilation of even the simplest television narrative will be a complex syntagmatic operation. Again, the younger child will have difficulty in assembling the whole plot from its disparate parts. (Wartella : 1979)

The young child will respond to colours and may imitate movement and sounds. A young child will take what he or she views as actuality, and will react negatively against horror content and violence.

The main formative acquisition by children, which may stay with them for the rest of their lives, is that the television set is a source of recreation and pleasure. This does not prevent them from viewing television content with the utmost seriousness.

As children approach four they can cope fairly effectively with a programme or programme segment dealing with one topic within their range of experience---such as a feature

about an animal. They will believe everything they extract from the content. They will also be able to follow and anticipate the more direct forms of advertisements. Repetition is important to young children, and they may establish an anticipatory relationship with a recurring character, such as a puppet. The preschool child is also engaged in intense cognitive activity.

LATER STAGES

The third stage of development is the 'concrete-operational' stage and it begins around the age of five. During this stage the child acquires a range of intellectual capacities that are in effect advanced transformational operations. This stage continues until about the age of twelve, and during this period the child's transformational capacity develops rapidly. Accelerated transformational capacity and increased facility with more complicated syntagms allow the child to process more sophisticated television texts. Cullingford's studies in viewing preferences confirm the increasing media precocity of this age-band. By eleven, to quote Allen (1979), the child is literate, numerate, orate, and capable of intellectualising and articulating experience.

The fourth stage, 'formal operational' is marked by more powerful and more complex transformational operations, and abstract and hypothetical and logical thought, and, according to Hodge and Tripp, is not achieved by all normal persons. The 'formal operational' stage coincides with adolescence and culminates in adulthood. Children in the 'formal operational' stage of development are likely to have high media sophistication and a critical attitude to the material that they view. (Hodge and Tripp, 1986).

CHILDREN'S VIEWING PREFERENCES

Children's viewing preferences relate systematically to their pattern of development. The first category of programmes that children choose deliberately seems to be cartoons. Children are attracted by the frenetic action of the cartoon, which coincides with their preoccupation with movement;

it also parallels their efforts to acquire a distinction for themselves between fantasy and reality.

The pre-programme research for Sesame Street outlined programme features which will attract and hold the preschool child's attention.

> "No production or writing technique ever works effectively if the characters shown are not appealing to children or do not include a variety of distinctive and reliable personalities." (Lesser : 1974 : 125)

In addition to the adult and child characters, the series featured a wide range of very successful puppet characters.

> "According to our research, beyond responding to puppets and other animated figures, children preferred to watch and listen to other children than to adults." (Lesser : 1974 : 127)

This may be an argument for child-centred children's television drama.

> "Televised children are most effective when they display distinctive and reliable personalities." (Lesser : 1974 : 128)

This is borne out by the success of drama series such as Grange Hill.

> "Watching adults or listening to them talk..... is much less appealing to children than watching or listening to other children." (Lesser : 1974 : 128)

One adult character, The Man from the Alphabet, had to be dropped from Sesame Street because he talked too much. This ties in with Cullingford's conclusion that children prefer action to talk.

> "Children direct their attention to visual action on television , ignoring whatever is not functionally related to that action. " (Lesser : 1974 : 113)

Forms of inaction which children will almost always ignore, according to the Sesame Street research, is the the stationary monologue, the stationary dialogue, the verbal gag and reading on television. One form of action that appeals to children is slapstick.

Having captured attention there is the problem of retaining it. Surprise is one successful method of retaining attention.

> "Children will direct their attention at what surprises them, to an image or event that violates their established expectations about the order of their world........" (Lesser : 1974 : 109)

Incongruity, in this context, is a source of surprise.

Surprise or incongruity must operate without a total transformation of the familiar or the expected.

Children like repetition within the programme, and repetition of the programme itself, and may imitate repeated material.

The adoption of the 'Muppets' as an attention-holding device derives from research which shows that fantasy is acceptable and is indeed a rewarding experience for young children.

On television , based on the experience of the series, fantasy should be presented in dramatic form. The research for the programme indicated that reading stories, as opposed to dramatising them, does not hold the attention of young children.

By the age of eight, according to Cullingford (1984), media and genre familiarity have been built up to the extent that children can anticipate images and content formulae; they know what is to be expected. Children of this age have acquired considerable media and drama sophistication; they can differentiate fact from fiction, and recognise star characters and actors and predict action sequences and narrative movements. Cartoon comedy is now superseded by situation comedy.

As we have seen, the definition of fantasy is now applied to all forms of television content; all programme content is unreal. This age-group has a growing disbelief in advertisements, which are mainly dramatic, but this disbelief in the message is matched by a growing pleasure in the advertisement text and presentation.

Perceptions of a boring programme for the eight to twelve age-group normally relate to the fact that assimilation is dependent on effort, according to Cullingford (1984); their expectations are effortless entertainment.

Consistent with cognitive development and needs, children from eight to twelve are now watching the full range

family-type and adult programmes, preferring these to programmes directed specifically at their age-group. Interest in adult programmes may be be sparked off by cognitive need.

The acute cognitive needs of children can propel them into direct confrontation with parents and other vested interest groups which do not want them to have access to certain areas of information. To quote one area of contention, the interest of adolescents in explicit sexual content of videos may primarily be a cognitive need.

> "Children reflect a taste which has not changed to any significant degree over the last thirty years. In 1951 Smythe and Campbell demonstrated how much time was taken up with some form of drama, from thrillers to medical shows and comedies....In the three years from 1951 to 1953 Smythe discovered that drama of one kind or another formed accounted for virtually three-quarters of the programmes....Gerbner et al. (1969) underline the popularity of drama and light comedy...." (Cullingford, 1984).

The most popular drama type with children is the action series---the thriller genre. This preference is a significant constant with children from the age of six. The features of the action thriller which attract children are the predominance of action over dialogue, the star status of leading actors, the formulated nature of situation and plot and the general predictability of the over-all content, which reassures them that there will no shock to their perceptions of reality, and that the heroes will always survive. Series which combine a great deal of action without changes in characters offer a blend of familiarity and safe excitement that children soon grow to like.

Girls consistently demonstrate a liking for adult situation comedy, especially those concerned with domestic life. Children will watch drama programmes they profess to dislike, such as soap operas. Cullingford makes the point that children may enjoy disliking television programmes. Children's programming seems to have little attraction for them over the age of seven, if we accept Cullingford's research.

The crucial questions to be answered are whether adult television answers the needs of children and to what extent, and whether this preference is an indication that the provision of specific programming for children is a redundant exercise.

The Himmelweit Nuffield report of the 1950s found that children watch the whole range of programmes on offer, if they are free agents. Children prefer drama programmes. Children seem to reject what they recognise as children's programming. Children prefer adult drama. Some comments from the Nuffield Report (Himmelweit et al., 1958):

> "They like suspense for the sake of the relief that follows. There is a narrow margin between pleasurable suspense and intolerable fear. The children themselves made a distinction between exciting and frightening programmes, enjoying the former but not the latter."

> "Children were disturbed by situations with which they could identify themselves; this is a more important factor than the actual amount of violence shown."

Cullingford accepts that drama and comedy---comedy is usually drama---dominate children's viewing preferences. Children will also watch, by preference, sports and music programmes.

They may be attracted to physically violent programme content because these are action programmes, because the villains are easily identifiable, and because this material, making minimal intellectual demands, may be perceived by them as entertainment.

Children normally, Cullingford found, exclude news and documentaries from their viewing options, and if they do resort to non-drama programmes it will be normally be magazine programmes or sport or games shows. The viewing patterns of Irish children, on the basis of available research, indicate an interest in news and news comment, in music programmes, and in children's drama. (Cullingford, 1984)

On the premises of these developmental patterns it can be argued that some forms of television are more suited to different age-groups than others; furthermore, suitable television texts can be constructed which would correspond more

accurately to the particular developmental stage of the child than would others.

This perspective leads to the identification of several disparate child audiences, each with particular needs of its own. Children's programming practice normally takes account of these different child audiences in schedule compilation and programme provision.

CHILDREN AS VIEWERS OF ADULT DRAMA

If the content of adult television drama presents a comprehensive, reliable world view, then children who watch adult drama are that much more likely to construct a view of the world that is reasonably accurate and dependable. Adult television drama, however, does not present a reliable world view, even for adults. The conclusion of content analysis research, such as that carried out by Gerbner, indicates a seriously-skewed perception of reality in adult drama provision. Adult drama does not and perhaps cannot, provide a realistic view of the world for children. (Footnotes : Chapter 1 : 2)

It seems evident that children's programming must compete with adult programming for children's attention, and that children's programmes lose out in this competition because of relatively poor quality and inadequate resourcing.

INADEQUACIES OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Apart from production quality, Hodge and Tripp also imply that children's programming under-rates children's ability to process texts of great complexity, and under-provides for relevant complexity; children at a certain stage of development need challenges appropriate to that stage. In summary, as well as being of poor quality, many children's programmes are not a stimulating experience for young viewers.

> "When asked to cite their favourite programmes, either on a particular day of the week or overall, they show and almost unanimous indifference to children's programmes." (Cullingford (1984) : 3)

> "Children's television is notoriously given the smallest budgets and the least attention, and economic reasons are too often justified by reductive assumptions about children's semiotic abilities. It seems better to give them good programmes made for adults than cheap, insubstantial programmes whose main claim to be tailored to children's needs appears to be the fact that adults would not watch them." (Hodge and Tripp (1987) : 214)

> "Why isn't there more children's programming? Why isn't there better children's programming?.....The answers to these questions are, I think, largely economic." (Lesser : 1974 : xiii)

Children's programmes which have been given budgets comparable to adult television, and where high production standards have been achieved, do attract large audiences. Examples would be Sesame Street, which is essentially a dramatic programme; the BBC school drama series, Grange Hill and adaptations of popular literature such as Enid Blyton's The Famous Five, The Hardy Boys and others.

CHILDREN'S DRAMA AS COMMUNICATED TEXT

Structuralist semiotics would perceive the drama provision we propose to review as communicated text. Modification of communication models such as those produced by Denis McQuail (McQuail and Windhall, 1981) enable us to map the formulation, transmission and reception of this provision in general terms.

The signifying source of television drama is a dramatic text on video tape or film. This text is a complex encoded image, with two main categories of imagery, aural and visual. The text incorporates production grammars, production codes, production ideologies and discourses. The text is an enacted narrative, which is transmittable and repeatable. As a narrative it relates a story in terms of characterisation and mimetic action, and provides an imaged context for the mimetic action. The enacted narrative also incorporates ideological discourses originating in the enaction.

The text is the product of a complex production

collaboration involving the writer, director, producer, the members of the cast, the designer, the camera operative, the sound engineer, lighting operatives, the editorial personnel, the floor manager, additional technical staff and production management personnel. The production personnel, individually and collectively, influence the text positively, negatively and neutrally at all stages of production. In addition to personal bias and conviction, each associated craft incorporates its own codes and grammars, which inevitably filter into the finished text. Physical constants such as the recording medium (film or video), sets, locations, costumes, props, technical equipment also affect the text content.

Impinging on the script and the production is a whole range of perceptions which will ultimately result in the genre classification of the text. Media-related campaigns and pressure-group activities such as those related to violence on television may also create attitudes which ultimately influence the text content.

External to the script and the production process is the primary origination factor of the text, the over-all management context. Management is the site of the decision to create the text. Management policy in relation to specific subject portrayal will decide the general features of the ultimate available content. This policy will be shaped by premises relating to public service commitment, by whether the station draws its revenue from advertising, or licences, or both; by the priority of drama in the over-all schedules, the priority of popular series/serial drama with the drama spectrum, the competitive context of the station, and other management related factors. Management remotely or directly commissions the script, and remotely or directly designates the production team, and allots the resources which ultimately dictate the broad features of the text content. Management is also the 'gate-keeper'---the primary site of controls such as content censorship. Management will be reflexively influenced in its priorities and decisions by audience research. Managerial factors such as the allocation of the approved budget, and the

advertising context, also influence text content. The insertion of advertising breaks, for instance, can change the continuity of the text.

The channel by which the encoded image or text becomes accessible to the receiver is the available content as it materialises via a television set. The complex image which becomes available implies a series of technologies, primarily a potential to relay visual images, sound, and colour. The assimilation of the content as relayed by the television set is dependent on a range of technological and other grammars and codes. The technological context is electronic reception and decoding. These operations may feature a wide variety of potential technical and environmental entropies at all stages. The relay process involves a technological re-integration of the text at the point of reception. This reintegration is activated by the potential receiver's option---the decision to switch on the set. Related to the activation of this option are the expectations of the viewer in regard to the text. These expectations may derive from pre-publicity, from knowledge of genre or programming patterns, or from hearsay.

The targeted receiver is, normally, a dispersed audience of individuals receiving the programme at the same time, but VCR usage incorporates record and replay strategies which confer diachronic viewing discretion on the receiver. (Footnotes: Chapter One : 3)

The culmination of the communication process of televised text is the complex encoding of perceived textual content and possible articulated responses to such encoding.

The encoding will relate primarily to visual and aural imagery; there will also be cognitive acquisitions, narrative and dramatic gratifications, abstractive and aesthetic processing, and a range of subliminal responses which are probably unidentifiable. There may also be behaviouristic encoding, evaluation of the text in terms of experience, and ideological encoding. The articulated response to such encoding

may be cognitive, behaviouristic, ideological, or abstractive. The encoding of the perceived content is contingent on a complex decoding of the available content--the text as realised via the television set.

The decoding process may be summed up in broad terms as the the reconstruction of the source text by the receiver. This reconstruction is a creative activity, resulting in a new construct in the mind of the viewer. The decoding process involves intense modality processing. In addition there will be innate televisual and cinematic content which will augment media familiarity. There will be concrete informational content with cognitional potential. Furthermore, there will be content which may activate abstraction.

The degree of processing to which the available content will be subjected is dependant on a range of receptivity factors. Some of these are personal: the sex factor; the age factor; the developmental stage of the viewer---physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, imaginative; the viewer's audio/visual competence; his or her transformational competence; his or her empirical range (modality processing); paradigmatic and syntagmatic competence (linguistic development and narrative sophistication). There are also receptivity factors of social origin : viewing in a family context; viewing with siblings; viewing with members of a peer-group; viewing with strangers; viewing alone.

The degree of receptivity may be affected by power-play factors in the viewing environment. The viewing atmosphere may be tense or relaxed. The viewer may be alone, or in company. The domestic viewing situation implies interference and distraction. Technically, reception may be affected by many entropies.

The switch-off factor may be contingent on the range of alternative programmes available---the judgement that more gratifications could be obtained from another programme being transmitted simultaneously, or available activities other than viewing.

The decision to view, and the competence to receive

the available content is dependant on the viewer possessing the range of decoding grammars necessary to extract meanings from the text. These are visual grammars, aural grammars, linguistic, narrative, dramatic and televisual grammars and others, all possibly merging in a general meta-grammar applicable to television.

THE CULTURAL MATRIX

The specific detail of characteristics of the source, channel and reception paradigms will be decided to a large extent by the siting of source, channel and receiver. Any number of matrices may be devised in which the components of a communication process can be sited---political, technological, class-based. The most relevant location for such a matrix in our context is the cultural spectrum. The television drama which we examine will have been sourced in the same culture in which it was received, or in a different culture. Imported television drama will have been sourced in a different culture, and the viewing of imported television drama will be a transcultural experience. Minority language provision, or other forms of specialised programming, may also be transcultural viewing experiences within the national entity.

DEFINING CULTURE

The term 'culture' has lexical and colloquial associations with growth, with refinement, with civilisation, with education, with the characteristics of groups. The common semantic elements of these uses are a distinctive growth process, and the product of such a process, both product and process relating to a specific group, the relationship expressing itself in terms of identity.

O'Sullivan et al. (1989), give a tentative definition of culture in the communication context as the institutionally or informally organized social production and reproduction of sense, meaning and consciousness. The product of a social sense-making process is consensus. The content of this consensus is an amalgam of socially-accepted meanings. Some of this

consensus will be institutionalised. The cultural consensus will also include informally organised content---paradigms of optional meanings. In terms of consciousness and identity the informally organised content may be equally or even more significant than the institutionalised content.

An institutionally organised consensus has dominant status. This dominant consensus will itself become the object of the communal sense-making process, so that the content of the consensus is subject to continuous revision. The dominant or hegemonic consensus will generate by reaction negotiated and oppositional meanings, which may be significant enough to constitute subcultures or minority cultures within the same community. The struggle for hegemony is also a cultural constituent, and an aspect of the culture in which it is taking place.

CULTURE AS THE PRIMARY DEVELOPMENTAL ENVIRONMENT

Culture is the primary source of our signification and interpretation systems, the systems on which our cognitive structures are based, which give us our reality constructs and our subjective value systems, and which shape our internal mental processes and create our world view.

The consciousness element of cultural content is the source of group and individual identity, the product of which is an image of self and of community.

The cultural features of a community collectively provide a developmental environment which is perceived to ensure the survival of the social entity itself and of the individuals who comprise it.

Ultimately, our culture is the unique set of attitudes and responses we have evolved over time as a means of survival in the environment in which we find ourselves. We retain them because we have survived with them in the past and because we feel confident that we will survive with them in the future. Our distinctive Irish culture can be seen as the unique set of attitudes and responses we have evolved empirically as a means of survival in our unique environment.

Although it is a vehicle for sentiment, culture is basically pragmatic---it modifies and adapts itself continually, absorbing new survival strategies as these become necessary, and ruthlessly discarding redundant elements; frequently, however, a culture will retain a sentimental and nostalgic attachment to the discarded elements which it may exploit in other areas such as cultural bonding.

Because it is a survival environment, culture will often seem to negate its own aspirations. Emigration would seem to be a negation of indigenous culture, but community survival at a given time may require emigration, and culture will absorb and make its own the emigration rationale.

In our context, viewing imported or foreign television material might seem to be an anti-cultural practice. If such viewing is perceived to enhance survival in the contemporary world, then the indigenous culture will renegotiate its perspective of this practice, and accord it positive values. The indigenous culture will adopt relevant texts and incorporate then into its own sense-making process.

If imported television programmes are more popular than home-produced programmes, it may be that they are seen as more relevant to the actuality context of the viewers than the home-produced material. John Fiske remarks in Television Culture :

> "Thus, in the sphere of a 'national' culture, it may be that Miami Vice is more "Australian" than a mini-series which sets out to document and celebrate a specific movement in Australian history..." (Fiske : 1987 : 323).

THE IRISH CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Irish culture, on the basis of our primary definition is the process of creating, reproducing and transmitting a distinctive, historically derived consensus of expression and interpretation operative for Irish people, and the accessible product of this process, which includes identity and tradition.

Irish culture manifests itself in the Hiberno-English idiom---the English language as used in Ireland, in the Irish

language, in unique systems of gesture, facial expression and other ranges of nonverbal communication, in unique lifeways, skills, and technologies, in artefacts, in corpuses of communal philosophies, in religious practice and attitudes, in compendiums of mediated experience such as literature, drama, folk music, and art; and in unlimited behavioural paradigms.

This consensus is incorporated in institutions such as government, legislation, political, religious and educational structures, and in institutions designed specifically to reproduce and perpetuate features of this consensus such as Irish music and games unique to Ireland.

Irish culture thus institutionalised has authoritative, official and quasi-official status. Other elements of the national consensus may be equally authoritative symbolically, but have informal rather than formal status---- emblems such as the pint of Guinness, or weather-talk, or turf-cutting.

The accessible and transmissible detail of this consensus is determined by population factors, ethnic factors, history, our island environment and location, our unique natural resources, the climate of Ireland, our geographical situation in relation to other nations, and other local and specific factors. The determining specifics aggregate to an Irish cultural identity which marks off Ireland from other nations, and which enables Irish people to perceive other nations as different, and themselves as unique.

As a communal survival system our culture features many contradictions, accommodations and 'betrayals'; it has absorbed colonial status, emigration, theocracy, political violence, economic structures based on serfdom, apartheid (in relation to itinerants) , political partition, and mass media colonisation, as survival strategies from time to time, devising rationalisations for these strategies which incorporate them uncontroversially, or with containable controversy, into the national consensus.

Our dominant culture has also ruthlessly discarded systems which do not serve the interests of communal survival at

a particular moment or in a particular context; mixed farming was one such such system---the Gaeltacht culture was another.

Central to the cultural matrix is the perception of the indigenous culture as the primary developmental environment. There is the wider cultural spectrum mapped out by usage of the English language to which Ireland belongs and from which Ireland draws its media products. The relationship of Ireland to the English language cultural spectrum raises questions about cultural transmission and intercultural communication. The interplay of dominant and subordinate cultures permeates the whole spectrum. Irish television schedule content, and consequently the children's drama provision, is inextricably enmeshed in the global English language media spectrum.

The Irish child viewer will also be affected by the interaction of dominant and minority cultures within the indigenous community. Viewing an Irish language programme, for instance, will be a transcultural activity for most Irish children.

Cultural studies offer no clear guidelines as to the limits we must place on a definition of Irish society. The term encompasses the Irish people in both political entities on the island, and Irish people who have emigrated. We have, however, a specific area of reference in this thesis---the area served by RTE, which coincides with the sovereign territory known as Ireland. Irish culture, in the national and international communications matrix, is the institutionally and informally organised production and reproduction of sense, meaning and consciousness by the people in the 26-county Irish Free State. Many would agree that this state is a closed and discrete society, with unique cultural norms which contrast with Six-County culture and with other cultures.

Irish culture so defined features a distinctive system of signification and interpretation, the Hiberno-English language. This system is historically derived, and is a merging of and evolution from two main streams of content; a pre-colonial Celtic/Gaelic tradition and a colonial Anglo-Saxon tradition. Hiberno-English, while possessing distinctive

features, also incorporates the functional core of a global technological language, English, facilitating intercultural exchange with English-language based cultures to a high degree.

The Celtic/Gaelic component, while not perceived as a linguistic imperative, incorporates a variety of value systems and identity markers, many of which have been institutionalised.

A main value system reflected in the culture, and institutionalised in a variety of ways, is that derivative of the Roman Catholic religion.

Demographic factors which shape the Irish cultural consensus are family size factors, community distortion derivative of emigration and urbanisation, and a relatively small population. Urbanised Irish people would still be comparatively close to their rural backgrounds. Xenophobic attitudes to immigration leave us with a physically and ethnically homogenous stock.

Relevant environmental features might be an island situation, a predominantly rural environment, climate factors, and a scenic environment. Environmental factors such as climate also contribute to and to a large extent determine physiognomy and dress. The man-made environment, evolving over thousands of years, has a character unique to the island. Some of this environment possesses a high symbolic charge. Informal cultural markers which might be listed are folk music and Gaelic games. Creative expression---music, literature, and art, also has distinctive features.

Economic factors determine work patterns, if there is work; unemployment also manifests itself in terms of cultural variables. Agriculture, though no longer the primary source of employment, nevertheless has a substantial presence in work patterns. Industrial employment, deriving substantially from multinational concerns, has patterns unique to Irish society.

Ireland too has a dominant culture and subordinate cultures; and the dominant culture manipulates the creation of consensus to maintain and perpetuate the hegemony of specific elements in society---political elites, church interests, a massive civil service and other state and semi-state

apparatuses, financial interests and property-owning classes, a vast education fabric. Subordinate cultures in Ireland must struggle for representation and survival as they do in other countries. The national television service is an important site for such struggle.

As a post-colonial culture whose primary system of expression and interpretation is anchored in a global language, English, Ireland, through cultural interaction with countries using this major language, is uniquely susceptible to influence if not domination by external cultures rooted in the extensive English-language spectrum. The indigenous culture in Ireland must continuously assert itself against these influences by aggressive self-development, or absorb and reproduce them in its own interest, or simply succumb to them.

The spectrum of cultural interplay between dominant cultures, subordinate cultures and external cultures is also part of the cultural climate, and part of the cultural environment in which Irish people must live. The cultural totality is the developmental environment into which our children are born, and in which they must develop to adulthood. One must assume that this developmental environment, whatever its shortcomings and contradictions, is the best environment available to Irish children for cognitive, intellectual, moral and character development because Irish culture gives them the sense-making competences through which they construct their own version of reality, through which they survive in their own community, and on which they will draw as their main survival strategy if they emigrate to a different cultural area.

The range of cultural expression we have sketched above also indicates the broad content, texture and features of the television drama which, given production structures, facilities and resources, might materialise in the indigenous cultural milieu.

TRANSCULTURAL VIEWING

Goran Hedebro, writing about mass communication and social change in developing nations, noted that new television

services in Third World countries were forced at an early stage to schedule a high proportion of imported programming :

> "....the cultural values spread through these channels were very often opposite to the development aims of the majority of the people. The Western/American culture was given a lot of time and space, while the indigenous cultural expressions of the country were given very limited coverage. The creation of nation-ness, so stressed by development theorists, benefited little from any of the media, particularly television, which instead promoted the values of Western industrialised societies...." (Hedebro: 1982)

This particular analysis demonstrates that there is major concern about the effects of imported television programming on the receiver country. There is also the clear implication that imported programming represents a cultural invasion---that the culture incorporated in the imported text is different to the indigenous culture. (Footnotes : Chapter One: 4)

Clearly importation and subsequent transmission of television programming is a well established scheduling strategy; the assumption must be that this material is widely viewed, and that it offers substantial gratifications to individual viewers, despite the fact that it originates in a culture different from their own. (Footnotes : Chapter One : 5)

We must conclude that the viewer of imported material is in sufficient possession of the signification system of the text to obtain these gratifications. This equates with possession of the codes of the text's source culture. Nevertheless, there is clearly concern about the effects of mass importation of television texts, and this concern expresses itself in the effects paradigm of the cultural discourse.

The macro perspective of effects research embodies two main concerns, the impact of imported programming on indigenous cultures, and the inevitability of ideological conditioning through sustained viewing of imported material. Implicit in these views are suggestions of manipulative content in imported programming, and suggestions of content conveying a distorted version of reality. There is also an implicit perception in the

macro perspective that the individual viewer is vulnerable to such effects.

The micro perspective would perceive the viewing of imported programming more in terms of cultural enrichment than of cultural deprivation, because of the cognitive dimension and because meanings are products of the reception process rather than the production process. (Yaple and Korzenny : 1989)

The major, and most controversial, segment of the effects paradigm is that of behaviouristic effects---that television viewing results in specific behaviouristic outcomes. Many commentators would rule out behaviouristic effects. John Fiske writes in Television Culture :

> "Television and its programmes do not have an "effect" on people. Viewers and television interact.....Television does not "cause" identifiable effects in individuals; it does, however, work ideologically to promote and prefer certain meanings of the world, to circulate some meanings rather than others, and to serve some social interests better than others....." (Fiske : 1987 : 19)

Imported television material, by the same logic, is unlikely to have behavioural effects as such. It does, however, have measurable effects in other areas, and scheduling strategies based on extensive use of imported television material have measurable consequences for the viewer.

SOME CONSEQUENCES

An obvious consequence of television text importation on a major scale is displacement of programming which would give representation to indigenous culture. Reliance on imported material to fill half the schedule also determines, for better or for worse, the general characteristics of the schedule content. The imported material shapes audience expectations in relation to home-produced material. Similar expectations may evolve in the station's decision-making sector. Aggressive international marketing of programming creates a marked homogeneity of core schedule content across several channels. This homogeneity is also reflected in advertisements (Footnotes : Chapter One : 6)

Assuming that television has a role to play in the socially organised production of sense, meaning and consciousness, we cannot automatically say that imported television programming is excluded as a force in cultural formation. It can have a negative or a positive role, or make negative and positive contributions to the cultural process. Indigenous cultures accommodate and absorb oppositional forces, incorporating them into a new consensus dictated by survival needs at a particular time. Viewing imported television will in time become a feature of the culture it invades and colonises.

Absorption of the preferred reading of the primary encoders hinges on the viewer being in possession to some degree of the encoders' systems. Viewers may acquire these codes by default from habitual viewing of imported material, if they have not acquired negotiating systems from their own culture, or if these systems are weak.

REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY CULTURES

Many nations have subsidiary cultures focussing on minority language groups, and national television services must evolve responses to the claims of these minority cultures for representation. If the minority culture is seen as a mark of national identity, the claims for representation may be enshrined as a statutory requirement in broadcasting legislation.

The minority group may have sufficient political leverage to win a separate service broadcasting in the minority language. A national broadcasting organisation which is also responsible for radio may relegate minority language programmes to radio. The cultural lobby, however, will in many cases be strong enough to win some representation on television.

Whatever schedule structure emerges, the nature of the provision and switch-on probability are determined by the general factors governing television provision and by the general communication factors applicable to viewing; the text must offer 'uses and gratifications'.

The programming framework is designed to cater for the

majority audience; costings and revenue-earning criteria are constructed on the same considerations; minority language programming is marginalised to the special provision category, and will probably be regarded as a public service commitment. Thus it will be a cheap product. The minority language audience will rarely have commercial significance; it will not attract advertising, and if it does this advertising will be in the majority language, negating some of the impact of the minority language text.

The majority audience not in possession of minority language codes can only relate to the visual content of the programming. Some will view the material to acquire the language, but in general the motivation to watch minority language programming is extremely weak, and the tune-in probability factor is quite low.

In communication terms, the minority language will for the most part constitute 'noise'; it does not have signifying actuality. 'Noise' can be reduced by various signification strategies such as subtitles, or prioritising communication in the text; these, in relation to the potential size of the audience, are costly measures, and there is an economic disincentive towards their employment.

One 'noise' reduction option is the bilingual approach. Bilingualism is a complex strategy. It involves high redundancy---reiteration of the same material in both languages---and is likely to be regarded as tokenism by proponents of the minority culture. It also tends to reinforce the domination of the majority language, which remains the primary signifier. At the same time, enlightened bilingual programming can widen the access of the majority to minority culture content, and can be effective pedagogically.

Minority language provision, in the context of television, is a complex and problematic issue.

CHILDREN AND IMPORTED PROGRAMMING

The child, culturally defined, is a person who, systematically, is not in possession of the full signification

and interpretation system of his or her own culture; the child's development towards adulthood is a progression towards the full acquisition of these systems.

As a consequence, children are in a weaker position than adults when it comes to negotiating meanings from imported television material in terms of their own culture, or setting up oppositional stances. Children are proportionately more likely, in the absence of strong systems in their own culture, to absorb by default the structures and signification systems of the culture generating the texts they view.

The viewing of imported television texts can be a rewarding experience for children, resulting in a wide range of gratifications, cognitive acquisitions, enhanced processing skills, cultural enrichment, and, in common with domestically produced texts, can make a significant contribution to children's development. Ultimately, however, what is at stake is the reliability of the world view children acquire from imported television texts.

Children systematically have less experience on which to draw than adults have to enable them to form judgements on the correspondence between the real world and the world as shown on television. The distortion of reality in adult television material evident to researchers such as Gerbner is likely to be assimilated by children to a greater degree than by adults. For the same reason children are more susceptible than adults to ideological conditioning.

There may be some representation of children and the child's world in general audience texts such as situation comedies, but as a general rule the child and the child's world are grossly under-represented on imported adult television, or to a large degree, to adopt Gerbner's phrase, 'symbolically annihilated'.

In the Irish context, imported material will normally make up more than fifty per cent of schedule content on RTE1 and a much higher proportion of programming on Network 2. In addition, the average Irish child will have access to a wide range of imported children's programming via foreign stations.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

In the Footnotes to Chapter One (7) we include a table outlining this this availability to a child in an urban area in Ireland on Thursday, November 3rd, 1988, to choose a day at random.

On this particular day, the total available home produced programming, including continuity, in the children's schedules amounted to 1 hour 35 minutes. The imported children's programming available on RTE 2 amounted to 2 hours 25 minutes. RTE 1 did not transmit any children's programmes on that day. The imported children's programming available on foreign channels, excluding satellite channels, amounted to 6 hours 10 minutes. If we include educational programming and availability on satellite channels the imported children's programming available on foreign channels amounted to 32 hours 30 minutes.

The implications of this data are that home produced children's programming is in a competitive situation vis-a-vis imported programming. The probability is also indicated that children who stay with RTE 2 for the duration of the Children's Programmes time-slot will view more imported programming than home-produced material. It is also clear that children watching the home channel have a range imported alternatives on foreign channels if they do not wish to view the home-produced material.

The imported material which children view has been created for child audiences in the source country. As such this material may be presumed to conform to the source perception of children's needs. The material is in the idiom of the source country, reflects its social system and environment, its ideologies and values, and in general may be presumed to present a self-image to the child of the source culture, providing role, linguistic, and other modelling, and contributing in a positive way to the source child's development.

As an imported commodity, the child in the receiver culture can relate to the universal content of this material. This will be quite substantial; children's lives have much in common in most countries. If the child is in possession of the core language of the text his or her access to the text content

will be considerably enhanced. Substantial categories of material for children such as cartoons and other animations dispense with verbal language or use it on a very limited scale.

To the extent that television viewing is a developmental activity, the imported television text targeting children can be effective as a developmental agent and will usually be rich in potential meanings for the appropriate child viewer. Viewing imported children's material can be a rewarding experience for children of a different culture, resulting in a wide range of gratifications, cognitive acquisitions , enhanced processing skills and cultural and intercultural enrichment. At the same time, there will be problematic transformational, ideological and cognitive contexts.

POTENTIAL OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

The role of children's programming is to mirror the child's own experience of life and reality. All children's programmes have this potential.

The interaction is more intense where there is a correspondence between the child's environment and the screen environment. This is generally achieved in home produced programming.

The interaction is more intense where there is a correspondence between the child's idiom, phonetics, and linguistic range and the screen idiom, phonetics and linguistic range. This correspondence is more likely in home produced programming.

As with adults, the interaction is more intense with dramatic material, because dramatic material has potentially unlimited semiotic impact, and includes vast ranges of emotive expression and simulated activity essentially excluded from purely informational types of programming.

Children will watch the full range of dramatic output, but children's drama is more likely to cater for the specific needs of the child as a child.

Children's drama, incorporating the experience, environment, idiom, and traditions which children can recognise

as their own, is likely to have a higher degree of modality than material which lacks these characteristics. Normally the type of material which maximises modality, or realism, for the child is home-produced real life drama. This type of drama strengthens the sense of identity of the child. As we noted when we discussed **Sesame Street**, child-centred drama, drama featuring children, is likely to have a stronger modality for child viewers than children's drama with a predominantly adult cast.

If children's drama on Irish television transmits values, a sense of identity, of environment, of community and so on, these values, in the almost complete absence of home-produced children's drama, originate elsewhere (mainly in England, America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand).

Thus the consequence of policy or the lack of it in regard to the provision of home-produced children's drama has been a) to deprive the Irish child of an important televisual source of identity and b) to supplant this with a significant volume of well-produced highly effective imported drama with a strong formative influence.

One consequence may be a weakened sense of identity.

Intolerance may be another consequence---drama can break down barriers between communities---e.g. the settled community and itinerants, communities divided by religion and tradition, the employed and the unemployed---by establishing that there are other legitimate points of view.

Indigenous children's drama is an important source for children of information for survival in their own community---this role of drama is more important for children than for adults.

Indigenous children's drama can provide useful linguistic modelling---our young people remain significantly incoherent, possibly through lack of televisual models in their own idiom. The INTO report indicated severe language development problems in primary schools. (**Footnotes to Chapter Two : 15**)

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Children absorb the ideologies and messages of the

imported material. Cumulatively, this leads to favourable impressions of the communities originating the imported material--which may relate to emigration patterns. These impressions are absorbed from fantasy as well as from real life drama.

The television texts which constitute imported children's television may be presumed to provide the optimum developmental media context for the children of the source culture, because they reflect the cultural and physical environment, lifeways, experience, traditions, linguistic and emotive environments of source children, and the value systems of their own society. Because the texts are products of the same signification system as that of the receiver, the source child needs to resort to fewer transformational operations to process the content.

Imported children's television material will not normally reflect the receiving children's cultural environment, or their physical environment, or the adults or children in their lives, or their cultural lifestyle or experience, or their traditions.

Imported children's television will not normally reflect the receiving child's idiom or phonetics, or vocabulary, and will not provide the receiving child with useful linguistic modelling.

Imported children's television will not reflect the emotive expression of receiving children's culture, and will not provide them with role modelling relevant to their own culture. Emotive expression modelling is normally available from drama.

Imported children's television material will not provide receiving children with a value system applicable to their own society.

Imported children's television will do little if anything to strengthen the personal aspects of cultural identity of the receiving child, assuming that that elements which contribute to a self-image come from one's own culture.

Imported television will not introduce receiving children to cultural subgroups in their own society, nor develop

any sense of tolerance in them towards these minorities.

Imported children's television, in so far as it does not reflect the receiving children's cultural or physical environment, or their lifeway or experience or traditions, or their linguistic or emotive environment, or the value systems of their own society, will not provide the optimum developmental media context for them. This optimum developmental context would be provided by children's television material of acceptable quality originating in their own culture.

Domestic production, is , as we have seen, inhibited by imported scheduling strategies. Overall import patterns are often reflected, if not exceeded, in children's programming provision. Imported children's programmes as market commodities are of excellent quality and variety; they exist in great supply; they are cheap to acquire, and, because the child audience is volatile and ever-changing, they will endure a high repeat ratio. The long-running series format predominates, facilitating long-term schedule planning. They constitute an easily-acquired and tempting alternative to domestic production for children.

An imported programming strategy curtails available schedule time for presentation of home-produced material for children just as it does for adult programming. If imported programming for children accounts for 55% of the children's schedules, then domestic programming is constricted to 45% of schedule time.

This restricted allocation must cater for the different child audiences determined by age, for a wide range of types of programme---informational, crafts, activity, variety, magazine programmes, entertainment---and may incorporate extended continuity, as it does in Ireland. It may also have to cater for public service programming perceived relevant to children.

There is, however, no guarantee that reduced imports would result in increased home produced programming for children. Stations offer the opposite argument; reduced imported material means less advertising revenue; we use the advertising

revenue, they say, to maintain and increase domestic production.

Imported children's programmes create their own market and expectations; poorly resourced home produced programming may not be able to compete. The difference in quality may also create attitudes in the decision-making environment---good imported programming may be regarded as a better use of schedule time than poorly-resourced domestic programming. In consequence, home produced programming may be confined to safe, inexpensive options.

Imported children's programming frequently features production styles associated with entertainment---attention-grabbing techniques, quick cuts, noise, colour, flashing lights--and it may be difficult to persuade children to watch material other than in this format. The entertainment features of imported programming create expectations for entertainment in all programming; viewing home produced material may present the prospect of effort, challenge, or the necessity to make a response to the content, or accept responsibility; imported programming makes few if any demands on the viewer.

Receiving children may have greater affinity with the source cultures of imported television programmes that they have with some minority cultures in their own community. (Fiske: 1987/91). If there is a minority language they may not be in possession of that language's codes to a sufficient degree to process minority language television texts, and in any event they will rarely achieve the same trouble-free relationship with such material that they have established for themselves with the imported television text. For some children there may be insuperable cultural and transformational barriers between themselves and the minority language text.

To summarise, imported programming can and does function as a developmental media environment for children. Receiving children can negotiate meaningful constructs from such material in terms of their own culture, if their own culture has given them the structures to process and evaluate imported television texts. Otherwise they will acquire the structures of the text source.

The negotiating base that they need is a mediated image of themselves and of their environment. This should come from home-produced children's television material, but there is less possibility that such a mediated self-image will emerge when a scheduling policy based predominantly on import strategies is the norm.

Children will also be faced with intercultural communication difficulties within their own communities. In our context the problematic schedule component for the average Irish child viewer will be Irish language or bilingual programming.

LOOKING BACK

This chapter has given us some classification criteria for examining the drama provision for children on Telefis Eireann/RTE in the period under review. The primary qualification for a drama text is that it be enacted narrative; that the story be presented through characterisation in the continuous present tense. The operative definition of television drama is drama materialising on a television screen. The provision will include live action drama in a variety of presentation formats, and animation drama; it will include drama made originally for stage and cinema. The provision will include material created specifically for child audiences but the selection will range much further; children's television drama intersects with family and general audience provision, with specialised programming such as educational television, and also subsumes drama originally created for adult audiences.

Cumulatively, we can view the provision as communicated text, and the dramatic experience as the processing of complexes of signs and sign systems involving paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures, transformational and modality operations, concepts which which relate readily to semiotic perceptions of child development.

We have shown that children's programming frequently loses out to adult programming, normally adult drama, in children's viewing preferences, with implications for the version of reality children absorb from adult television, which

systematically 'annihilates' the world of the child. We examined the accentuated skewed version of reality arising from the transformational operations implicit in cross-cultural viewing---- the normal viewing situation of the Irish child.

The chapter implicitly evolves a model for the type of children's television drama which, one might argue, would best correspond to the needs and preferences of Irish children. Ideally the children's television drama in the schedule selection we propose to review would have been created to developmental criteria, taking account of the narrative, transformational and modality competences of the child viewer. It would have presumed the existence of different child audiences and have been child-centred. The drama provided would have reflected the preferences of Irish children both in content and in treatment. It would have been action-driven. It would have had a high level of resourcing and high production values. It would have been generated in the Irish cultural milieu and would have explored topics and situations of immediate relevance to Irish children in the visual and aural idioms of their own culture.

The extent to which the drama provision for children corresponded to this implied model will emerge in our consideration of the schedule provision. Essentially, provision meeting these criteria would be well-resourced home produced children's television drama. The major component in the provision, however, was imported drama, and the cultural and communication contexts we have outlined will remain relevant areas of consideration throughout our general survey of the schedule provision in Chapter Two, and throughout our analysis and evaluation of the schedule content in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

The drama provision for children, imported and home produced, is enmeshed in the general programming provision for children, and it's volume, quality, and characteristics determined in large part by the general programming environment. We will evolve an historical perspective of this programming environment in Telefis Eireann/RTE in Chapter Two, and indicate

how it shaped the nature and characteristics of the drama provision for children in the years under review.

We will survey the general home produced programming provision for children, including drama, in some detail, and give a brief overview of the imported children's drama provision. The role of the Drama Department, the repository of drama production culture in Telefis Eireann/RTE, in children's drama and drama featuring children will be of some interest to us. We will conclude with profiles, based on the sparse data available, of Irish pre-teen and teenage audiences.

CHAPTER TWO

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES ON TELEFIS EIREANN/RTE, 1962---1987.

Telefis Eireann began transmissions on New Year's Eve, 1961. Whatever the aspirations of the dignitaries at the launching ceremony, or their conviction that Telefis Eireann would be a unique mirror of Irish life and character, the service had been shaped inexorably by the realities of the broader media spectrum in which it materialised.

MEDIA USAGE IN IRELAND

One way of evaluating the general position of Ireland in relation to media usage in the early 1960s is to apply Lowenstein's (1976) three-stage perspective of media growth---the elite stage, the popular stage, and the final stage. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 1)

The elite stage, according to Lowenstein, is characterised by general illiteracy and poverty. The media that do exist concentrate in urban areas and appeal to an urban elite of opinion leaders.

Ireland was certainly long past the elite stage at the beginning of the 1960s. The Irish Banking Review, June, 1959, listing the advantages Ireland enjoyed for accelerated economic development, stated that we had a highly-developed infrastructure, that 'the Irish people are generally admitted to be intelligent above the average.....education is compulsory and universal....illiteracy is unknown.....'....Professor J.J. Lee, who quotes this extract in Ireland 1912--1985, (Lee : 1989 : 349) is rightly sceptical about the rosy scenario presented in the interests of making expansionist policies acceptable, but we can accept that there was widespread literacy. Illiteracy and acute poverty tended to be drained off by emigration.

The 'highly-developed infrastructure' included substantial print media provision and a successful radio service.

In many ways the country was in Lowenstein's "popular" stage, having broken through the barriers of poverty and illiteracy. To some extent the available home-produced media appealed to the heterogeneous "mass" Irish audience, but it would hardly be accurate to describe the content of the domestic media as geared to the lowest common denominator. The domestic audience was affluent enough to be worth reaching, and print and radio attracted advertising.

Ireland's post-colonial inheritance included a world language, English, facilitating access, widely availed of, to British print media, to British radio, and, in the late 1950s, to British television, which was available on the east coast to the increasing number of television receiver owners.

Ireland met to some degree at least three of Lowenstein's requirements for the attainment of the final stage of media development: an educated population with varied needs and tastes, affluence sufficient to purchase media products and receivers and to merit the attention of advertisers, and leisure time to use the available media. It would be reasonably true to say that media provision ranged from the lowest common denominator to specialised and minority interest provision.

The fourth requirement was not met---a population base of between ten and fifteen million, which, Lowenstein suggests, is the minimum necessary to support the production of minority interest and specialised media.

In general terms Ireland in the early 1960s would meet, but only just, Lowenstein's specifications for a small modern or modernizing country in which the factors of higher education, affluence and leisure time were present, but in which the factor of minimum population size was absent. Ireland, too, could be said to have followed the process outlined in Lowenstein's speculative framework ; Ireland reached the specialised stage by "borrowing" specialised media from a larger country, England, whose core language we used. However, the borrowing also extended to popular media, and to the media products of other countries using the same core language, in particular the USA.

The high level of media borrowing, and the relatively small domestic market, had an inhibiting affect on domestic media production and on the expression of minority cultures. The Gaeltacht communities, to mention one example, found little more than token representation on the available media.

Despite national aspirations and the new expansionist thrust of economic policy under Lemass, Ireland was in many respects a developing, if not an underdeveloped country, with many of the characteristics of third world countries, at the beginning of the 1960s. The problems and contexts of setting up a television service were little different to those of third-world countries a decade later.

> "Many countries did not have television systems in the 1960s. Countries that invested in television, and many did, soon discovered how expensive a medium it was, if that was not already evident before.....But as soon as a television network had been set up and transmission started, there was pressure for more programming from those who had bought receiving sets....(Hedebro : 1982)

This was also the Irish experience.

"In 1972/73, out of a total coverage of about 2,400 hours on RTE television, nearly 1,400 hours were filled with imported material at less than one-third the cost of 1,050 hours of home-produced material." (Broadcasting Committee Report, 1974 : 16.11.)

Home produced television programming in 1972/1973, according to this section of the Report, cost £3,584 per hour as compared with £900 per hour for imported programming. Hedebro continues :

> "Caught in such a situation, the broadcasting authorities in developing countries started importing foreign material...Katz (1973) and Katz and Wedell (1977) describe this dilemma and estimate that one segment of an an American TV series of one hour would cost $250 to $400. Often, this is the sort of material that people owning television sets say they want to watch. American films shown at local movie theatres had already paved the way....." (Hedebro : 1982)

Expectations in Ireland were also largely determined by the American cinema, and by the programming already available to influential viewers on the East coast on ITV and BBC

services.

In this context, the Irish pattern is demonstrated by the following table, covering nineteen of the twentyfive years of the period under review, 1962 to 1981, and taken mainly from the 1974 Dáil Broadcasting Committee Report and Telefis Eireann and RTE annual reports.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME MIX---TELEVISION---HOME PRODUCED/IMPORTED

Year Ended 31st March	Total TV Hours	Home Originated	Imported
1962			
1963	2,200	45%	55%
1964	2,222	47%	53%
1965	2,346	54%	46%
1966	2,297	52%	58%
1967	2,170	52.7%	47.3%
1968	2,202	51.8%	48.2%
1969	2,288	50.8%	49.2%
1970	2,210	45.6%	54.4%
1971	2,360	44.5%	55.5%
1972	2,420	43%	57%
1973	2,435	43.7%	56.3%
1974	2,578	44.1%	59.9%
1975	2,995	45.7%	54.3%
1976	3,196	41.0%	59.0%
1977	3,196	40.8%	59.2%
1978	3,322	41.3%	58.7%
1979	3,647	42.8%	57.2%
*1980	5,818	32%	68.0%
*1981	5,000	38.0%	62.0%

* The figures include provision for RTE 2.

This table shows that the imbalance between imported and home-produced schedule content is more pronounced than that quoted for third-world countries. This imbalance has become significantly aggravated over the years, particularly with the advent of the second channel, RTE 2, indicated by the figures for 1980 and 1981.

The Stokes Kennedy Crowley Report, presented in 1985, estimated the home-produced component for the three previous years as averaging at 29%, indicating that the imported component of schedule content in 1982/1983, 1983/1984 and 1984/1985 averaged at 71%.

EMERGING PROFILE OF NEW TELEVISION SERVICE

The general pattern and character of existing media provision in Ireland at the beginning of the 1960s signalled some probable characteristics of the forthcoming television service. It would support and promote the dominant culture, which operated in the establishment interest. A major part of the programming would be in the English language. A high proportion of this programming would be imported. The technological, managerial and ideological discourses which produced the new service would come from main-stream English language sources. The available models for financing and programming would be the British services already available as an act of God on the East coast. The new service would inevitably carry advertising, in line with other media. At the same time the precedent of licence revenue already existed in the radio service; this was also the method of financing the BBC. Minority cultural groups were strong and vociferous; they would see the new service as a means of strengthening and advancing their interest areas; the schedule content of the new service would reflect an ideological battleground.

A high proportion of imported programming seemed inevitable because of the cost of producing station-originated programming. The indications were that this component would be in the region of 50% of schedule content. If the criteria for running the service were merely commercial then the proportion of imported programming would be higher, but the instinct of the dominant elites to find representation on the programming, in the guise of current affairs and news features, genuine public service provision and representation of forceful minorities, made it inevitable in most countries that some home production would always exist, and local pressures seemed to be able to force this representation up to fifty per cent, against the thrust of purely commercial logic.

The acquisition of imported programming would follow language patterns; sustained programme supply was available from English language sources, and from French, German and Japanese sources, but cost factors would be perceived to preclude voice-

over or subtitling operations on a large scale. The programming would be acquired with relative ease and relatively cheaply from English language sources, and in this provision America, with the largest stocks of available programming and highly developed production and marketing structures, would dominate.

Media products are also commercial commodities, and the market forces of demand, supply and promotion operated. Television organisations who know that they can attract advertising, but who do not have the resources to fill their schedules with audience-generating home-produced programming, will inevitably look for imported material. The uni-directional flow, as Hedebro suggested above, is also fuelled by audience demand; audiences will want 'presold' material, such as films, which has developed high profiles on other services and media.

CULTURAL GENESIS

The legislation setting up the new television service had a clear cultural emphasis. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 2) Financial structures inevitably have cultural contexts. The requirement to be self-supporting evolved into a revenue structure involving licence fees and advertising, which in turn resulted in a commercial and public service programming mix.

The requirement to be self-supporting gave added credibility to imported programming strategies. In programming practice a highly-paradoxical equation emerged. Maximising home production meant restricting transmission hours, contracting advertising revenue and leaving less money available for home produced programmes. The station frequently made the point that advertising revenue--and consequently the imported programming base---was essential for new home produced programming.

The cultural area which the station aspired to serve was the whole island of Ireland. There was a special commitment to representation of the cultural variables which distinguished this area, and a specific commitment to Irish language programming. The legislation, however, did not specify whether these commitments were to be met via the radio service or the television service.

The elaboration by the RTE Authority retained the commitment to Irish language programming. The station also specified a commitment to a subculture---young people---and to an intercultural role---primarily in relation to EC countries. The most tangible representation of this role in our context was the presence of EBU-generated programming in the children's schedules.

Public service broadcasting was always an elastic concept. Ideally public service broadcasting would be specialised programming not justifiable by economic criteria, which would require specific subsidisation from station funds. From the political point of view public service broadcasting was news and feature coverage and analysis of events and topics in which the Government had a role. RTE has consistently projected itself as a public service organisation to justify its monopoly of broadcasting. **(Footnotes : Chapter Two : 3)**

The output for the first decade would be in black and white, and these shades in a media map of Ireland would mark off 'the single-channel area' from the East coast which had multi-channel availability. 'Single-channel' became a pejorative term denoting remoteness and media deprivation. In the next decade there would be highly-politicised campaigns for 'programme choice' which would lead to the establishment of a second channel and improved relay services.

CORPORATE EVOLUTION

Certain immutable contexts determined the emerging corporate structure. Transmission and production technology created and sustained a powerful technological and technical monolith within the organisation. Engineering personnel did not vanish once the station had been set up; the black and white service created in 1961 was almost obsolete at the time it was put in place; there would be the adaptation of the service for colour and in time the creation of a second service; there would be parallel developments in radio. A technical cadre needs an administrative corps; the relay of imported programming, the sale of advertising space, presentation and continuity and

personnel management also needed administrative structures, entrenching two massive structural 'non-creative' establishments before a single home-produced programme reached the screens.

The mystique of technology proved unassailable; the relevantly silent but highly-politicised technical division usually got its way. The main conflict over the period under review was between the creative personnel who needed resources and facilities to make their programmes, permanently insecure because they were aware that cheap bought-in material could easily be acquired to substitute for home programming, and the ambitious administrative nucleus who knew that the way to the top was the cost management ladder, which in effect meant curtailment of creative aspirations. These tensions reached the awareness of the 1974 Broadcasting Committee, whose bias towards management was obvious in their recommendations on drama (Section 16.18) that "a certain measure of understanding on a human level is necessary when dealing with artists and actors."

PROGRAMMING STRUCTURES

Administration and Engineering absorbed two thirds of the budget. Television Programmes, the division responsible for schedule content and output, was only one department in a seven-part horizontal tier. Within Television Programmes, Features, Drama, Sport, Acquisitions, and other sections including Children's Programmes, fought acrimoniously for their slice of the Television Programmes allocation. As licence revenue was finite, with heavy collection costs and a high rate of evasion, development capital could only come from increased advertising revenue. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 4)

The programming framework of the Children's Programmes Department was a condensed version of the Television Programmes Division : the Department had to produce a minuscule spectrum of general programming----drama, information programmes, variety programmes, sport, arts and crafts. These programming segments within the Children's Programmes Department could only assert themselves in a competitive context against each other. Children's drama had no formal status---it was just another

programming segment. One might say with some accuracy that Children's Drama, in organisational terms, was and has remained nameless, faceless and voiceless. Programmes materialised which happened to be drama. There was no specific policy for children's drama as such.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

The commitment of the Authority to children's programmes in general, and to home produced children's programmes in particular, was evident from the early appointment of a Head of Children's Programmes, and the allocation of schedule time to this programming category. The transmission year ending 31st March, 1963, would see roughly 253 hours (11.9% of total output) of children's programming transmitted, of which approximately 112 hours would be home-produced. Over the first decade the home originated component would shrink considerably, and the imported element increase progressively, with occasional variations, but the total schedule time allocation would remain fairly static. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 5)

PRODUCTION CULTURES

Ireland, in 1961, did not have a television production culture---a tradition which would generate programming. The vacuum resulting from the absence of a television production culture meant that schedule content in the early years was shaped by perceptions originating in existing media. Helena Sheehan demonstrates the influence of theatre on Drama Department output. She also refers to the perception of television as 'radio with pictures'. Irish radio had a profound influence in the shaping of children's programming. Structurally, radio was a sister service to television, operating under the same Authority.

Children's programmes on radio, under the direction of Séamus Kavanagh, had been very successful in audience and critical terms. His assistant, Maeve Conway, became Head of Children's Programmes in the new television service. The flagship programme in the children's schedules, **The School**

Around the Corner, had originally been a radio series. **Murphy agus a Chairde**, the first long-running puppet feature, had also been a radio programme and its scriptwriter, Pádhraig O Néill, a producer in Kavanagh's Department. Seán Mac Réamoinn, who presented the information programme, **At Home and Abroad**, was well known as a collector and presenter of folk music on radio. Many of the actors who participated in children's programmes on television had already established themselves on radio. Music and variety programmes were strongly influenced by existing formats on radio.

Kavanagh's infectious and informed enthusiasm for children's programming, although he never worked for television, inspired an imaginative and creative approach to this production area; programmes would be made whatever the restrictions on resourcing.

THE LAUNCH YEAR

In the first year programmes were broadcast, with occasional variations, from 5.00 p.m. to 11. 00 p.m.. Children's programmes opened up the evening's transmission and usually occupied the 5.00--6.00 p.m. slot. The programmes available to Irish children in the week beginning on Saturday, January 5th, 1962, the second week of the station's operation, included a seasonal literary-based contribution, two folktales, three Western-type programmes from America, five general information programmes, two animation programmes, an imported adaptation of a children's classic, an episode of a home-produced bi-lingual serial, a children's variety programme, an art and crafts programme and a sports-centred information programme. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 6)

Emerging perceptions of children's needs were general information, activity-related information centred on crafts and sport, dramatic and narrative material based on literature, entertainment in the action genre, and dramatic and narrative material derivative of what was perceived as the indigenous cultural heritage.

A rough analysis of the schedule content over the year

gives us categories of drama, information, stories, variety, sport, art and crafts. There was no professional condescension towards the child audience. Presenters were for the most part talented personalities, well-known in other fields. Producers like James Plunkett, Gerald Victory and Christopher Fitzsimon had a wide range of interests and achievements outside television.

There was the perception that television content for children should be entertaining as well as informative. Seán Mac Réamoinn, Eamonn Kelly, Séamas Ennis, Paddy Crosbie and Bláithín Ni Chnáimhin were primarily warm and humorous in their delivery. The School Around the Corner in particular was humour-driven. Ventriloquist Seoirse ó Baoill and his puppets Beairtle and Gearóidin were the mainstay of **Children's Corner** and other variants of this programme. All of these presenters and performers, and many others who participated in children's programmes, were competent and enthusiastic Irish speakers. Considerable media skills in the Irish language had been developed in radio over the previous decade.

THE IRISH LANGUAGE DIMENSION

Section 17 of the Act of 1960 imposed linguistic and cultural obligations on the Authority; the annual statistics would have to demonstrate that an acceptable proportion of programming was in the Irish language. The temptation to divert the requirements of Section 17 of the Act of 1960 into the relatively non-commercial, and relatively non-controversial area of children's programming, with a view to reducing the impact of these constraints in general audience programming, was there from the start.

The Authority was extremely nervous about the use of Irish language programming, which they perceived to induce switch-off, thus alarming the advertisers; this nervousness is indicated by the comments of Earnán de Blaghd, an Authority member in 1962, and Liam O Murchú, Head of Irish and Children's Programmes in 1976. (**Footnotes : Chapter Two : 7**)

What emerged in the children's programming area was a

bilingual approach, with a mild and inoffensive presence of Irish in as many home-produced programmes as possible. The strongest representation of Irish in the launch year was in **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**. Irish would also surface, often to a significant extent, in **Tales of Wonder, At Home and Abroad, Let's Draw, Sport and You, The School Around the Corner** and **Children's Corner**.

The significance of this bilingual aspect was that children's programming, and children's drama, was circumscribed from the start by linguistic expectations, deriving from statutory and other sources, by the politics of language, and to some degree by antagonism to the Irish language; bilingualism was a compromise.

Very little if any study has been carried out on the assimilation by Irish children of television programming in the Irish language, or of bilingual television programming featuring Irish and English. Irish language studies have in the main been philological; no significant attention have ever been given to Irish as a mass communications medium.

The surveys that have been carried out on Irish usage indicate that perhaps 3% of Irish homes could process Irish language material without major transformational problems. **(Footnotes : Chapter Two : 8)**

It is clear from Edith Cusack's article in the RTV Guide **(Appendix A : 1962)** that what materialised as **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** was originally conceived as an English language serial; it was Michael Barry, the Controller of Programmes, who decided that the serial would have a **'language situation'**. Over the years, proposals for children's programming which had Irish language dialogue, or which were bilingual, and which could be made within the budgetary limits of the Children's Department, had a good chance of acceptance because they increased the statutory Irish language component.

This strategy determined to a significant degree the character of home-produced television programming for children, including drama provision, for the duration of the first decade of transmission, and, with occasional exceptions, down to the

present day. Statutory requirements and Irish language pressure groups dictated a substantial Irish language input, regardless of whether the child viewer was able to process the Irish language material.

The bilingual approach did not meet with universal acceptance from the Irish language enthusiasts. There were suggestions, for instance, that **Murphy agus a Chairde** was a linguistic Trojan horse which familiarised unilingual Gaeltacht children with English **(Appendix A : 1964)**. It could be argued that this was a reasonable reaction. Bilingualism as mediated by television had no actuality counterpart in Irish society.

HOME PRODUCED PROGRAMMES

The first year of home-produced children's programming was reasonably successful. **The School Around the Corner** had broken out of the confines of the children's schedules and had created a massive general audience. Other programmes, in particular **Let's Draw**, were well received. **Let's Draw** responded to children's needs and conformed to developmental criteria. The Department had delivered a 26-part serial, and had initiated a long-running 'cartoon' feature, Daithi Lacha. The magazine and variety programmes, including **The School Around The Corner**, had established Telefis Eireann as being accessible to Irish children. These programmes also provided Irish children with an image of themselves, though this image was generally limited to formal role-playing and rarely extended to full emotive expression.

A surprising omission from the schedules, in view of the acrimonious public debate about the moral effects of television which preceded the launching of the television service, was any form of religious programming for children **(Appendix D : 1962)**. Religious programming consisted mainly of relayed church services and late-night homily slots and revealed little awareness among the planners, an inter-church advisory committee, of the existence of children as an audience category.

The Broadcasting Committee of 1974 saw the culture of Ireland as properly including religious beliefs and traditions,

the two spoken languages used in Ireland, work and recreation styles, community functions, festivities and commemorations, folklore, drama, literature, games, dancing, singing, music and story-telling. (14.1) Accepting this perception, station-originated children's programming was substantially culture-driven, with some major qualifications. Representation of religious beliefs and traditions in children's programmes was almost non-existent. The representation of rural Ireland, in particular the fundamental agricultural spectrum, was particularly weak.

The relatively strong drama input in the launch year was largely determined by the statutory necessity to have a 'language situation' in the schedule. The story provision was a cultural input. Irish music, song and dance dominated the variety and music programmes.

Story and variety programming, including the immensely successful **The School Around the Corner**, were modifications of programme formats which had worked well on radio.

STORY PROGRAMMES

Story programmes had a strong presence in the schedules over the total period under review. Frequently the story presentation had a graphic back-up. Occasionally there were elements of animation. Most series featured some Irish language stories. New stories were used from time to time, but much of the material in both languages derived from folklore and mythology.

VARIETY AND MAGAZINE PROGRAMMES

Variety programmes such as **Children's Corner**, **Tir na nOg**, **Don Aos Og**, and **An Ceoltóir Sidhe**, were outreach programmes. The were showcases for young performing talent, with a strong cultural texture. They created the actuality, and very often, when resourcing restricted participation to the Dublin area, the illusion of access.

The variety programmes grew, gradually, into the magazine and activity programmes which became the core feature

of station-originated children's programming in the 1970s and the 1980s, losing some of their culture-determined texture in the process. **Motley**, in 1969, was the first of these magazine programmes. It was followed by **Allio** in 1972. **Youngline** (1975) was the prototype for a sequence of successful magazine/activity programmes including **Let's Go** (1978) and **Our Times** (1978) , **Anything Goes** (1980), evolving to the present-day **Jo-Maxi**. The remote model for these programmes was the BBC's **Blue Peter**. There were occasional short-term variations such as **Breakaway** (1982) **Box Camera** (1986) and **Off Yer Brush** (1986). The Saturday morning magazine programmes underwent many transformations, bifurcating eventually into separate programmes for younger and older children.

These magazine programmes usually featured young energetic presenters who not only mediated the programme content to their audiences but actively participated in programme activities . The programmes were outreach programmes as far as resources permitted, and, while primarily Dublin-focussed, had a strong on-the-road programming element.

In his article for the Irish Broadcasting Review, Spring, 1983, Con Bushe referred to a real dilemma for "programme policy makers in RTE". To develop new programmes they must "cannibalize" good programmes already in existence. The example he quoted was the 1983 problem-centred programme, **New Moves**. The Young People's Department wanted to cater for viewers in the late teens and early twenties. This could only be done by suspending the transmission of **Youngline** and transferring the team and the **Youngline** resources to the new programme. In this comment Con Bushe adverts to what was in fact an established perception in the organisation; the budget for children's programming was immutable; new initiatives would be at the expense of existing programmes, and over-reach in quality-related expenditure would have to be corrected within the current year or during the following year.

Like **Youngline**, when resources were available, the **Anything Goes** team made special feature programmes. One such by-product, repeated separately a number of times, was **The Brandon**

Adventure, an outing by the team to Mount Brandon in Kerry. The programmes encouraged video skills, and occasionally hosted amateur video drama efforts.

Unlike the earlier variety programmes, the magazine/activity programmes had very little Irish-language input. **Púirini** (1986) was an Irish language magazine produced by an independent production company. Currently (Autumn, 1992), a new Irish language outreach magazine programme in the **Anything Goes/Scratch Saturday** model is being devised by Brian Mac Lochlainn.

All of the programmes in the magazine category made television more accessible as a medium for young people, bringing television crews and personnel to schools, youth clubs and other venues of youth activity, and giving young Irish people considerable media experience and confidence.

Variety programming could prove quite versatile, stretching to quiz show formats such as Paddy Crosbie's **Tug-o'-Words** and Chris Curran's **Mark Time**. **Quiz Around the Clock**, **Eureka**, **Colleges in Question** and **Caoga** were variations on the quiz theme. Top Club, a programme for youth clubs featuring a quiz, achieved a top TAM rating in January, 1986.

INFORMATION PROGRAMMING

Another form of programming considered important in the early years was information programming in English and in Irish. **At Home and Abroad** and **Muir agus Tir** were the main vehicles for general information in the early 1960s. There were other variants from time to time. The general information programmes used considerable imported footage. The schedules also featured frequent home produced documentaries in or adjacent to children's viewing time. These could range quite far in topic and location, some having third-world themes. There was regular coverage of events of specific interest to young people, such as **The Young Scientist of the Year Exhibition** and the IDA **Student Enterprise Awards** and a number of science-related series such as **Zero**, which was modelled on **Tomorrow's World**.

In January, 1986, **Newsline**, a weekly 17 minute news

programme for children and young people was launched. Newsline and the sports programmes were the only significant contributions from other programme departments to the children's schedules in the period under review.

A weekly sports programme featured in the schedules for a decade or so. Occasional programmes covered specifically Irish games like hurling, handball and curragh racing and particular aspects of sport such as sport for the disabled. There was regular reportage of the **National Community Games**, and of **Scor na nOg**, which was a promotional series of GAA games for young players.

The information paradigm, from 1964, included strong nature programmes appealing to general audiences, usually sited adjacent to the children's programmes band. These were launched by Eamonn de Buitléir with **Mise agus Mo Mhadra**, and, in partnership with Gerret Van Geldern, with **Amuigh Faoi'n Spéir**. Eamonn de Buitléir and Gerret Van Geldern, in partnership or independently, contributed protracted nature series with such titles as **An Saol Beo, To the Waters and the Wild, Island Wild Life, Ireland, World of Wild Life, Tar Amach Faoin Aer**, and **Where Do You Think We Are?**, a geography quiz. The programmes were usually independent productions, financed by RTE, and featured substantial Irish language input.

There were several environment and wild-life related documentaries over the years. Programmes about Dublin Zoo featured consistently in the schedules over the whole period under review and invariably proved popular, Terry Murphy's series, **Animal Trail**, topping the TAM ratings in January, 1976. This programme was made with the sponsorship of HB Ice Cream in 1987, signalling a new departure in programme resourcing.

There were occasional programmes in the Health and Safety categories. Road and play safety featured in a number of programmes. 1982 was the **Year of the Disabled** and to mark the designation there were two special programmes, **Let Me Win**, which concentrated on sport for the disabled, and **It's The Same World**, an information programme for handicapped children and those involved in their care. The **Access Community Television** series

presented a programme giving the views of handicapped people on their situation was presented in 1986. **Give Us The Chance** was a programme about mental handicap. **Dart** (1984) was a film which highlighted the dangers of playing near city railway lines, of particular relevance to Dublin where children played along railway embankments and threw stones at passing trains. **The Rubella Problem** was a much-needed Health Information programme stressing the importance of adolescent girls being inoculated against Rubella.

Young People's Programmes in the 1980s acknowledged the growing awareness of young viewers of the new video technology with programmes such as **Viewfinder, Roll VT** and **Fast Forward**. This awareness was gaining pace as home video sets and video cassette cameras became more easily available. There was evidence of a growing interest in home-made video production. The production groups often materialised from media studies classes in schools. Home-made videos, some them amateur drama, frequently featured in the magazine programmes.

ART AND CRAFTS

Art and craft activity established itself as a central schedule component with **Let's Draw** in the launch year and has retained its place in the schedules up to the present. As the magazine programmes developed they tended to subsume the art and craft component. There were occasional variations in the format. **Art is What?**, a gallery-based art history programme was presented by James White in the 1960s. **Painting for Pleasure** was a tutorial art programme conducted by John Fitzmaurice Mills. In the 1980s Don Conroy presented regular nature-centred and religion-centred art programmes.

THE EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION

In 1965 we become aware of the EBU dimension. The EBU was an association formed by the broadcasting authorities of the EEC, the main motivation of which was to resist the Americanisation of European television schedules. The EBU had a strong commitment to children's programming. The basic formula

was that member states would contribute a segment or segments to a particular project, and relay the whole series on the home screens. Verbal localisation of individual programmes was deliberately weak to facilitate international accessibility.

In 1965 the EBU series presented in the schedules was an international youth interest magazine. There was an EBU documentary series, **Europe at Work and Play.** (1968). **Ditto** (1970) was one of the first fully-animated Irish-made colour cartoons. It was made by RTE, as a contribution to an EBU Children's Group competition. **Buachaill ar an Oileán** (1970), an EBU programme in Irish scripted by Breandán Ó hEithir, was a documentary on the every-day life of a boy on the Aran Islands. **Páisti ar Fud an Domhain** (1971) was an EBU documentary series presented by Seoirse Ó Baoill. **Such Sweet Compulsion** (1985) was a contribution to an EBU music programme for young musicians. RTE made two contributions to EBU drama series for young people, **Kevin's World** (1984), and **Stowaway** (1985). Currently (1992), RTE is contributing a number of units to a major EBU animation project.

MUSIC PROGRAMMING

The presentation of rock music, in young people's programming, originated in Irish language shows, specifically **Imeall** (1970), with Seán Bán Breathnach, followed by **SBB Ina Shui** (1978), with the same presenter. **SBB Ina Shui** frequently made the published TAM ratings. **Top of the Pops** was relayed on the new RTE2 service from 1978. In 1979 there was a a new popular music programme in the early evening, **It's Only Rock And Roll**, and occasional concert broadcasts of groups such as the **Boomtown Rats**.

From the mid-1980s the video cassette began to dominate popular music presentation on television. Many of the popular music videos were promotional material, expensively and artistically produced and designed to achieve maximum impact within a three-minute span. The videos were often highly dramatic in character, relaying substantial visual and aural narratives and could with some accuracy be described as

contemporary mini-operas. Most were imports. The programmes were directed at children and young adults.

The most popular video programme was Vincent Hanley's **MT. USA**, which featured occasionally in the top TAM ratings. The material was invariably American. Other video relay programmes were **Space Station Videos**, presented by Bryan Murray, **Visual Eyes**, a programme presented by Dave Fanning, and **Video File**, in which popular performers were interviewed by Dave Fanning, Marty Whelan and others. Other video-focussed programmes were **Video Time**, **Hotline Video Show**, **Finding Fax Future** and **Chartspot**.

Megamix was a live popular music programme transmitted incongruously from a Gothic church hall which was part of the Christ Church complex,

The schedules in the 1980s also took account of the fact that many young viewers were interested in more serious types of music. **Such Sweet Compulsion** featured young musicians. There was also a concert programme, **Musicians of the Future**, and **Piano Plus**, a series of piano selections played by international concert pianist John O'Connor. **Tune In** was an excellent musicology programme in which Finnuala McSharry introduced and demonstrated a wide range of musical instruments. In 1964 there had been a very successful musicology series by Brian Boydell, **Music in the Making**.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

New perceptions of the television needs of children were impinging on Telefis Eireann in 1964. These were mainly perceptions of educational needs. The Children's Programmes' Department would eventually have to concern itself with formal schools broadcasting and preschool programmes. **Telefis Scoile** was launched in the Spring of 1965, relaying curriculum-related material directly to schools and providing a back-up and feedback service. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 9)

Section 18.3 of the Broadcasting Review Committee Report, 1974, comments that broadcasting organisations generally regard their main function in the field of education as the provision of programmes which are generally or indirectly

educative, and consider that the broadcasting of specifically educational programmes is a secondary one, demanding the cooperation of other agencies.

The 1974 Broadcasting Report and the 1982 Educational Broadcasting Report illustrate the fractious and time-consuming nature of this 'co-operation' with other agencies. Educational broadcasting happened because the Department of Education, very reluctantly, provided the funding.

In 1965 mathematics were of particular importance in view of the introduction of a new mathematics curriculum. The **Telefis Scoile** contribution in this area won an international award for educational programmes.

The strain of **Telefis Scoile**, essentially a Government input, quickly became apparent. It would be necessary to set up a separate department to provide educational broadcasts. This section would also administer educational broadcasts on radio and the brief would be extended to the provision of adult educational material on radio and television.

The structural reorganisation which followed from the appointment of Maeve Conway as Head of Educational Programmes on Radio and Television was a further inhibiting development for children's programming. Children's programmes and Irish language programmes were amalgamated in a new department in the charge of Liam Ó Murchú, who became Head of Irish and Young People's Programmes.

Irish language programmes were a statutory requirement; children's programmes were not. It was inevitable the the Irish language segment of this double brief would attract the greater part of the Department Head's attention. Liam Ó Murchú did not see his brief as a mere executive; he had an impulsion to present and script programmes as well; these activities also took up much of his attention. Children's programmes would at best be third in his list of priorities.

This is not to say that he would not have strong opinions about children's programmes, or that he would neglect this particular responsibility. The range of acquired programmes for children expanded in range and variety during his tenure of

office and many new home produced programmes materialised. The reconstruction of the Department in this particular way implied the removal of children's programmes to a more remote backwater. Facile solutions to children's schedule compilation problems, such as the placement of long-running imported serials, would prove an irresistible temptation.

Telefis Scoile lasted until the late 1970s when the Government withdrew funding. The service occasionally hosted curriculum-related drama in Irish and English.

In the administrative year ending on March 31st, 1971 there were 203 hours of children's programming, but the home-produced quota was the lowest on record, at 17 hours. **Telefis Scoile**, in the same year, recorded an output of 151 hours of home-produced programming for schools. It must be pointed out, however, that this figure included an inordinately high repeat factor. The Report of the 1974 Broadcasting Review Committee (18.4) recorded that **"the amount of new programmes broadcast is very limited, usually about 30 lessons per year."** The **Telefis Scoile** schedules also included 60 hours of imported material.

Triopal Treapal (1968) was an important new initiative in children's programming. It was a pre-school play and activity programme. There was a new preschool programme, **Bábaró**, in 1973 which had a team of four presenters, Hilary Lynch, David Byrne, Pat Kenny and Breffini Doyle. This team would form the basis eventually of the **Bosco** (1979) presentation team.

The year 1979 saw the launch of the pilot editions of Bosco, which would be a successful out-reach preschool series fronted by a small box puppet created by Eugene Lambert. The programme mix would be stories, games, songs and elementary crafts. The programme would generate a number of spin-off enterprises. Bosco was directed at children under the age of six. Cutbacks in 1981 led to the cancellation of the morning transmission, the cancellation generating, according to Con Bushe (1983), a storm of protest. He estimated the potential stay-at-home preschool audience at half-a-million.

Dilin O Deamhas (1983), a follow-up to **Triopal Treapal** and **Bábaró**, had a regular puppet story feature, **Muintir na**

Móna. This preschool programme was totally in Irish, providing for children attending all-Irish schools, Gaeltacht children and children in Irish-speaking families. There were occasional parallel offerings to this audience, such as **Tábhacht an tSúgartha**, an information programme for parents and directors of Irish-language preschool playgroups, which, like Irish-language primary schools, were proliferating in the 1980s, and **Ar Scoil** (1987), about Gaeltacht Schools.

The imported provision reflected the preschool perspective. In addition to formal preschool series such as Sesame Street, The Electric Company, and Kaboodle there were was a strong representation of animation material, mainly puppet programmes, directed at preschool children.

A Future in Mind was a career guidance programme for young people which went out at 7.25 p.m. Other career-related educational programmes were Jobsus (1984) and Nothing To It (1987).

In 1964 a major Irish language tuition series, **Labhair Gaeilge Linn**, was launched, followed by **Buntús** in 1968, and, after a long interval, in 1981 by **Anois is Aris**. These series regularly included playlets, sketches and short scenes designed to illustrate specific language situations. They were general audience material, but were of interest to schoolgoing viewers.

Irish was also used as an occasional presentation medium in story and variety programmes. All Irish language programming, whether for children or adults, could be said to have had an educational motivation. The intent of the Section 17 requirement was that a supportive environment for learners and speakers of Irish be provided in the new medium. This missing component, as we have pointed out, was a relevant communications perspective which would take account of the assimilation factors of Irish language and bilingual material.

DISCUSSION PROGRAMMES

Discussion programming for young people began with **Teen Talk** in 1964. This programme frequently featured in the top TAM ratings. Later variants, **If It's On Your Mind, Say It!** and

13,14,15 and other formats did not achieve the same level of success. In the 1980s Young People's Programmes repsonded to the new emphasis on youth culture with programmes of an abrasive texture, **New Moves**, **TV Gaga**, and **Borderline**, which tackled hitherto taboo topics in a forceful colloquial idiom.

Talk It Over (1986), presented by Ciana Campbell, and **Facts of Life** (1987), with Carolyn Fisher, were more intimate discussion programmes which examined topics of concern to young people.

The discussion programmes and the music programmes confirm the station perception, articulated by Con Bushe (1983), that home produced programming should cater for young people in the upper age brackets who were entering employment and deal with facets of young people's lives other than school.

For very young viewers in the early 1980s there was **Pat's Hat**, **Pat's Chat** and **Pat's Pals**, where poet Pat Ingoldsby talked to his young friends.

YOUNG TALENT

Throughout the period under review, there was ample evidence in and around the children's schedules that young people in Ireland had many interests besides television, and a comprehensive range of skills and accomplishments that television generally failed to to exploit in original programming. This evidence was in reportage of Fleadh Ceoil events, of the youth festival **Slógadh**, of the **Oireachtas** and **Feis Ceoil** concerts, of the finals of **An Fhéile Scoldrámaiochta**. Many of the competitions and events included drama and peripheral stage arts. These festivals, involving thousands of young people annually, were continuing proof of the existence of a reservoir of young performing talent throughout the country. A dynamic youth centred television drama policy could have exploited this resource.

FROM BLACK AND WHITE TO COLOUR

In round figures the station output over the first decade was about 23,000 hours, of which roughly 10,000 hours was

home-produced material, averaging at one thousand hours a year. This figure include home-produced children's programmes which averaged about 75 hours a year. The bulk of the children's material comprised stories in Irish and English, crafts, activities, puppet drama, cartoons, and presentation of talent.

It was, for the most part, a black-and-white decade; colour reception would become universal in the course of the seventies.

By 1972 85% of Irish homes had a television set. There were about 25,000 colour television sets in the country. The Department of Education, in a submission to the Broadcasting Review Committee, estimated that 60% of postprimary schools had television sets in 1972/73. The 23,000 hours of transmission constituted a powerful cultural input into Irish experience, but we must also remember that over half the population had access to BBC and ITV output by the early 1970s.

The main preoccupation of RTE during 1971 was the introduction of colour transmission. This would be a gradual process. Black-and-white programmes would continue to be produced for some time. Colour transmission in the early years of the decade ran at about 25% of programme output. Most of this output was imported films. **(Footnotes : Chapter Two : 10)**

Aggressive product promotion spurred the demand for colour sets, alarming the government, who were aware of the potential impact of mass-purchase of these sets on the balance of payments. The demand in the early 1970s for 'programme choice', in practice a demand for country-wide access to foreign stations, was strong enough to have political implications. RTE successfully promoted the impression that the national interest, cultural and moral, was best served by RTE control of any emerging relay arrangement, and thus acquired a second channel, RTE2, and the cable distribution system. RTE2 did not carry a specific children's programme band in the period under review, although children's programmes, and programmes of interest to young people, were scheduled from time to time. **(Footnotes : Chapter Two : 11)**

Colour transmission, and the second channel, would

create accelerated demand for imported animation material, films and serial drama, driving the home produced component of the schedules down to 30% and lower towards the end of the period under review.

<u>SURVIVAL</u>

The primary drive of RTE at the beginning of the second decade of Irish television was to survive as an institution, and that survival depended on accommodating internal and external pressures. Within the organisation, the administrative and technical sections absorbed most of the resources; the programme makers, within the programming division, lost out in schedule representation to the programme acquisition segment. There were also external pressures; the Government and other vested interests were nervous about the power and influence of television and wanted it either subservient to their own perspectives or neutralised. The ferocity of the external pressures was well illustrated in the course of 1972 by the sacking of the entire RTE Authority over reportage of Northern Ireland issues.

The intense government pressure on RTE in the early 1970s did not prove entirely negative for the growth of the organisation as a corporate body. The government were eventually satisfied that RTE could be controlled, and that this control could extend to any subsidiary operations of RTE more effectively than to independent programme producers or distributors. This perspective reinforced RTE's monopoly of broadcasting operations within the state. RTE carefully fostered the perception that control by RTE of new broadcasting operations would safeguard cultural and national values, and that control of such activities by RTE equated with control by the Irish people.

The 1970s saw a rapid expansion of the technical base of RTE and of broadcasting activity, manifested by Radio Na Gaeltachta, RTE Relays, a profitable cable television venture, the development of a third radio channel, Radio Two, which began transmissions in 1979 and the development of the second

television channel, RTE2.

NEW STRUCTURES

There was a structural change in 1979 which affected children's programmes. Liam O Murchú retired, and the Department of Irish and Young People's Programmes was reorganised. The new Department title was Young People's Programmes, and the Head was Con Bushe. He was concerned about providing a comprehensive span of programming for all age-groups, from preschool programming to discussion, information, and music programmes for young people in the upper age brackets who were entering employment. In the reorganisation consequent on the new structure, Irish languages programmes lost out; there would not be a specific department for Irish programmes; instead, Irish language programming would be contributed by each of the existing departments.

In 1986 there was a major innovation in the presentation of children's programmes. Dempsey's Den was an umbrella presentation format, inspired by similar developments on other stations. Ian Dempsey, 25 years of age, a disc jockey on Radio Two, introduced the children's programmes collectively and individually and had one or two specific items of his own such as **Happy Birthday** and **Video Time**.

The format was a powerful bonding factor for the child audience; they related to the presenter, wrote to him, sent him in drawings, phoned in, sang songs for him over the phone and stayed around to watch the programmes he introduced. He had occasional personalities in the studio with him, and invited children on phone-link to talk to these personalities.

Presentation and continuity assumed programme status in their own right. An incidental benefit for the child viewer was increased media sophistication; the presentation gave him considerable information about the programme, and the presenter's chatter also transmitted information about the workings of RTE.

Later, with the addition of puppets **Zig and Zag**, the continuity material became the main motivation for watching the programmes. The continuity format also facilitated the

promotion of spin-off programme products such as the Anything Goes annual or the Bosco puppet. In addition, the seemingly-innocuous "We'll take a break now!" precipitated a barrage of child-related advertising, mainly in the confectionery and soft drinks categories.

Con Bushe had this to say about home-produced children's programmes and advertising in his 1983 article in the Irish Broadcasting Review:

> Children and young people's programmes cannot be regarded by RTE as programmes that do not generate income. The popularity of programmes like Youngline, SBB Ina Shui and Bosco are is reflected in the TAM ratings and these programmes have their share of commercials. An analysis of the commercials shown indicates that the young audience (and their parents) are perceived as "markets" and advertising time is sold accordingly. The clutter of ads is particularly noticeable before Christmas and their insertion around programmes like Bosco and Wanderly Wagon show clearly that our behaviour towards our children is not always consistent with the ideals we cherish for them.

The year 1986 saw the appointment of Joe O'Donnell as Acting Head of Children and Young People's Programmes, and a resultant expansion in the range, at least, of home produced material. This expansion was achieved within the existing resource constraints.

RESOURCES

Con Bushe in his Irish Broadcasting review article (1983) mentioned that the Young People's Programmes Department had about seven per cent of television production resources. The DPC allocation, he stated, was roughly £250,000. With these resources the Department produced about 230 hours of station-originated material annually, averaging at a DPC allocation of around £1,000 per hour of transmitted home produced material. The actual production cost, including station overheads, would be four times the DPC allocation, or £4,000 an hour. The SKC review team were particularly pleased with the productivity factor of children's programming. In 1991 the total cost of home produced children's programming, including station overheads,

was estimated at £9,500 per hour. Home produced drama, by the same criteria, was costing £80,000 in 1991.

The 1986 home production schedule illustrated the inherent difficulty of programming for young people on a severely restricted budget. These difficulties manifested themselves on two planes, the problem of catering for as many of the distinct segments of the young people's audience as possible, and the problem of providing a varied spread of programming across the schedule. A third problem plane was the provision of Irish language programmes.

The 1986 schedule revealed some provision of home produced programming for every identifiable audience segment from preschool children to young adults. The spread of home produced programming achieved in the schedule was also impressive. Categories of home produced programming for young people in the 1986 schedules included preschool material in Irish and in English, a substantial provision of drama in Irish and in English, several magazine programmes, several music programmes, discussion programmes, nature programmes, a religious programme, a media programme, a young people's news bulletin, information programmes, an access programme for the handicapped, a craft programme, and a story programme.

THE DRAMA DEPARTMENT

We follow the general evolution of the Drama Department in **Appendix D**. The Drama Department was responsible for the production of home produced television drama. As such it was the repository of perceptions of what indigenous television drama should be, and of associated production criteria and practice within the station.

The output of the Drama Department, and relevant production and reception contexts, is described in generous detail in Helena Sheehan's Irish Television Drama.

The Drama Department was not the only source of station-originated drama. Drama also evolved in children's programming, in the Variety Department, through the Access community projects, and from independent productions in

association with RTE. The most relevant and popular drama during 1972 and subsequent years was provided at negligible cost by the **Ballymagash** team in the satirical review programme, **Hall's Pictorial Weekly**.

The product of the Drama Department over the years under review was exclusively live action drama. The Department did not concern itself with any form of animation drama. The output could be divided into a number of categories: televised theatre plays, television plays, television serial drama. It was mostly in video-tape format, but in the later years there were frequent excursions into film.

The production culture from which the Drama Department evolved was that of theatre. The personnel of the Department, and contracted writers and actors, came mostly from theatre, and the output in the first decade consisted for the most part of theatre plays modified for television transmission. Parallel with this tradition, however, original television drama also established itself with some strength in the first decade. Writers, producers and actors competent to create original drama for television existed from the start. Our point is that they were available for children's television drama.

Children were used in the production of the 5-part serial, **The Little Father**, transmitted in 1962. Drama Department producers were seconded to the Children's Department prior to and during the launch year, to direct **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, **Siopa** and **Amhrán na mBeach Fián**. The serial format established itself quickly, serial drama dominating Drama Department output as early as 1965. All the essential elements to create viable and sustained children's live action television drama were in place in the early years of transmission.

Demographic reality forced the Drama Department to introduce a strong rural dimension to its output with **Down at Flannerys**, **Shinrone**, **The Riordans**, and to retain this dimension in **Bracken** and **Glenroe**. Children's drama never reflected the reality of rural Ireland, or indeed the reality of urban Ireland. The record shows the Drama Department engaging progressively with contemporary Ireland as the period under

review evolves. Indigenous children's drama, with a few exceptions, was mostly in the fantasy genre.

The Drama Department, in **Over the Bridge**, in **The Flats**, and in the Eugene McCabe trilogy, acknowledged the existence of Northern Ireland. The only reminder we have had of the Northern community in children's programming has been **Seán the Leprechaun**, and a short film series, **Curious Eyes**.

A number of child-centred productions, screened for adults, were highly relevant to the actuality of children's lives. **A Week in the Life of Martin Cluxton** (1971) reflected the actual and potential reality of the lives of many Irish children. **Oliver Twist**, which dealt with similar themes in a Victorian setting, would find a ready place in any children's schedule. What takes **Martin Cluxton** out of the category of children's drama is probably the focus of the play---the rhetoric and other content was too complex for child viewers, and its mode of delivery off-putting. A dynamic Children's and Young People's Drama Department, if one existed, would come up with a version of the Martin Cluxton story without any loss of accessibility for the young viewer, or any reduction in its impact.

Other productions in this genre were **Mr. Sing, My Heart's Delight**, 1974, **The Spike**, in 1978, and **The Lost Hour** in 1983, evidence again that the Department's producers could extract superb performances from child actors and deal effectively with child-centred themes. **The Lost Hour** dealt with the trauma of a boy and his family as his mother endured the final ravages of cancer. Children were also used effectively in **Seán**, 1980, in **Strumpet City**, 1980, in **Night in Tunisia**, 1983, and in **Access to the Children**, 1984, in another William Trevor play, **One of Ourselves**, 1983, and **The Key**, 1983. Talented young actors, producers who could direct children and writers who could write for them were available for the whole of the period under review. What was missing was a production structure in which viable children's drama could originate and develop.

Thursday Playdate, a Drama Department slot which occasionally relayed imported drama, scheduled a BBC drama

production about an Irish itinerant child and her life, **Katie, Year of the Child**, in 1979. The play, by Ian Cullen and John Norton, was the BBC's contribution to the Year of the Child. This was strong child-centred drama with an all-Irish cast dealing with a social topic which impinged on most Irish families.

In 1974 the Broadcasting Review Committee suggested "**a definite link between television between television and the official schools programme on drama literature which would achieve the dramatisation of suitable short stories by internationally recognised Irish and other authors** "(16.9). This programming, the Committee hoped, would find a market abroad. The recommendation was not taken up by the Drama Department, though Liam O Flaithearta's **Teangbhâil**, an Irish language play, and probably the best production of 1975, was a dramatisation of a story on the Leaving Certificate course. One popular Intermediate Certificate text was **First Confession** by Frank O'Connor. The version of this story screened by RTE was a very inferior BBC version. The 1970 transmission was in the adult schedules and achieved a place in the top TAM ratings.

With **Langrishe Go Down** RTE moved into a phase of acrimonious and expensive co-productions. The motivation was overseas sales. The ensuing tensions cumulatively led to the virtual destruction of the Drama Department, whose only function at the time of writing is to monitor the production of the in-house serials, **Glenroe** and **Fair City**.

The co-production idea had, however, got a successful tryout in children's drama with **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox** in 1971, the result of an RTE/BBC collaboration. EBU drama project contributions could, to a certain extent, also be described as co-productions. There were three of these in the period under review.

The over-reach of co-production was a major factor in the disintegration of the Drama Department; a wider application of this concept might have had a constructive outcome for children's drama. There were a number of excellent films for young people made in Ireland over the years based on Irish

themes and using Irish casts and technical personnel. Some of these were The Flight of the Doves, The Ballinch Bowl, and The Johnston Monster. The Johnston Monster, a Children's Film Foundation production, indicated that a co-production arrangement with this British company, as had been achieved in Australia, would have resulted in viable drama with a strong Irish character. The BBC also produced other children's drama in Ireland independent of RTE's co-operation. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 12)

New Drama Department output for the year 1981 was less than twelve hours. The range of provision reached close to seventy hours on occasion. Even at peak production the Drama Department output could only offer token resistance to the imported adult drama in the schedules, which often ran at 600 hours a year. Indigenous adult drama was in the same competitive warp vis-a-vis imported material as children's drama.

CHILDREN'S DRAMA : PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT

The Drama Department as such never took any interest in children's drama, although producers from that department were seconded from time to time to produce children's programmes. The view expressed to me by Noel O Briain, a former Head of Drama, was that children's drama was 'specialised programming', i.e. that it was the responsibility of the Children's Department of the day. This may also have been the view of the Children's Department---I have no record of any demand by the Children's Department that the Drama Department assume responsibility for children's drama. Individual producers, notably Joe O'Donnell, made strong appeals over the years for specific structures and drastically increased resourcing for children's drama. These appeals evoked no material response.

Home produced children's drama could only materialise within the narrow confines of the Children's Department, and the resourcing of such drama would be determined by the budget of that Department, which, as we saw, had to be stretched over a wide range of highly-competitive programming categories. These

constrictions determined the character, quality and supply of home produced children's drama; from the beginning, children's drama was trapped by the perceived allocation of DPCs and OHCs appropriate to children's programming. Two available comparisons can illustrate this constriction. In 1971/72 the average DPC estimate for home produced children's programming was £380 per hour, while that for adult drama was £2,260. In 1990/1991, total programme cost for home produced children's programmes was about £9,500 per hour, and total programme cost for home produced drama, mainly **Glenroe** and **Fair City**, was in the region of £80,000 an hour.

Had an organisational perspective existed which would have made home originated children's drama the responsibility of the Drama Department the allocation of OHCs and DPCs considered appropriate to children's drama might have been on a par with, or pro rata at least with those for adult drama. Children's drama would also have a more professional and sympathetic environment, and greater definition as a product. Real life drama of direct relevance to Irish children might have emerged.

This perspective could have been part of a wider programming strategy. All programming departments could have been persuaded to contribute programmes to the children's schedules, thus taking some programming, at least, out of the resourcing structure of Young People's Programmes. This approach existed for Irish language programmes from 1979. As it was only the Sports Department and the News Division contributed to the young people's schedules over the years.

If children's drama of better quality than that indicated above appeared, as happened from time to time, the originating factor was usually a special initiative by higher management. **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, for instance, would seem to have materialised as a result of the special fiat of the Controller of Programmes, Michael Barry. The 1916 plays by Bryan McMahon were part of the general government-inspired commemorative effort of the station to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising. **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox** originated in an EBU context.

INDICATED CHARACTER OF HOME-ORIGINATED PROVISION

The factors and perceptions which shaped the nature of the indigenous children's drama provision over the years are now fairly clear. As a genre it had virtually no definition within the station. There was no evidence of any corporate awareness of it as a production category, and there was no structural provision or resourcing for it. The corporate perception of children's drama was as children's programming; it was only coincidentally drama. As such it was trapped in the resourcing structure of children's programming, where it had to compete with the many other assertive schedule components described above. The 'cannibalisation' principle was operative for the duration of the period under review; any initiative in quantity or quality had to be at the expense of existing programming.

In such a production environment it is a miracle that any indigenous drama for children materialised at all. Children's drama did assert itself and survive somewhat in the manner of a threatened species in the natural world; it modified and adapted itself to the resources available, and also responded to the need for cheap Irish-language programming which would help the station meet its statutory requirements. As such, however, it was minority programming which could not have achieved mass audience appeal.

THE HOME PRODUCED DRAMA PROVISION FOR CHILDREN

Comprehensive details of the home produced drama provision, with background and production contexts, are given in Appendix A. At this point we will indicate the chief categories.

Home-produced children's drama made an ambitious debut in the form of a weekly bilingual serial---**Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, which was renamed Siopa in the Autumn schedules. Siopa an Bhreathnaigh appeared in the first week of transmission. The original plan seems to have been a conventional serial for children in the English language, but the concept was transformed at the planning stage by the introduction of 'a language situation' on the direction of the Controller of Programmes.

1966 saw a special initiative which resulted in four well-resourced, if highly ideological, plays for young people, following up the special intervention which had resulted in **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**. In 1964, following **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, there was no new venture in drama. One may speculate that the 'extravagance' implied by **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** had to be recouped through subsequent economies. The same phenomenon in noticeable in 1966. The funding for the 1916 plays had to come from the Department budget, with a resultant contraction in home produced children's programming to its lowest volume since the station began transmission. There would be no significant live action drama again until **Fortycoats** was transmitted in 1983.

Adult television drama in the early years, as Helena Sheehan demonstrated, was acutely derivative of theatre. Children's programming drew on the same source. Successful school plays were were re-enacted in studio, usually within the structure of variety programmes. Two school plays were presented in the launch year. In 1963 this was the only form of home produced children's drama represented in the schedules.

Daithi Lacha made his original appearance in the one-minute vocabulary programme, **Focal ar Fhocal**, and he introduced each episode of **Siopa**. In the Autumn of 1962 the feature matured to a five-minute voice-over and graphics narrative which could be described as a crude cartoon. The importance of **Daithi Lacha** in the general context of children's programming was that the programme initiated, however primitively, the craft of animation in Ireland.

Of the home produced drama for children in the first year of the station's operation, **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, **Siopa**, **Daithi Lacha** and **Amhrán na mBeach Fián** were either in Irish or bilingual. The remaining item, Peach Blossom, was in English. These productions were interesting and important events in the history of home produced television drama, in the history of animation drama, as developments in television-mediated Irish language drama, as markers of the accessibility of the television medium to minority cultures and to outlying

communities, but none of the productions qualifies as mass-audience children's television drama.

Whatever the limitations of **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, it did demonstrate that the 'despised serial format', to quote from Luke Gibbons's study in Television and Irish Society, had many programming advantages; serial or series drama was likely to predominate over the single play.

A production and scripting feature of **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** which has been repeated consistently down to the present day was the overloading of drama for children with adult characters.

There is little evidence that this production made any conscious effort to communicate with children as children, or that it had any of the accepted perspectives of children's drama, in particular that it should present its material from a child's perspective, and reflect the reality of Irish children's lives as children, and contribute in a deliberate way to the personal growth and development of Irish children. In so far as the serial was successful, it was successful for adults, to judge by the critical remarks of Gabriel Fallon. **(Appendix A : 1962)**

In 1964 the first home produced puppet series, **Cearta Húdai**, appeared. This would be a forerunner of many station-originated puppet series : **Murphy agus a Chairde**, **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**, **Baile Beag**, **Lug an Locha**, **Pajo**, and would include the interactive series, **Wanderly Wagon**, which would last for fourteen years. Puppet drama would be main component of the home produced drama provision.

Wanderly Wagon was an ingenious vehicle for fantasy. It was a durable format of immense potential, relatively economical to operate. The human characters throughout were almost exclusively adult, and mature adults at that, but the absence of child characters does not seem to have reduced its acceptability to its target audience, which would be children up to the age of ten or so. The puppets provided the attraction for the children.

Magic Mike Tales was a **Wanderly Wagon** spin-off, in

which the puppet characters from the series introduced and presented imported animation stories.

On January 8th, 1977, the 200th edition of **Wanderly Wagon** was transmitted. The programme had averaged about twenty episodes a year since 1967, but there had been several repeat showings.

The **Brogeen** series in 1969 made station history by being among the first RTE products to achieve overseas sales.

In the cartoon category, **Daithi Lacha** would be followed by **Lúidin Mac Lú**, **Ri Rá**, **An Saol ag Dul Thart** and other series and features devised by Aidan Hickey, which included **C.P. and Qwikswitch** and **The Magic Piano**. As well as series and serials there were individual puppet and cartoon features, which, in aggregate, constituted a considerable volume of programming.

'Cottage industry' is hardly a metaphor when applied to indigenous animation drama. The Lambert productions, Flann O Riain's **Daithi Lacha** and **Ri Rá**, Eamonn de Buitléir's **Lúidin Mac Lú**, and Jimmy Quinn's **Baile Beag**, were literally created at home with the help of family members---in garages, attics, backyard workshops and garden studios. By contrast the imported animation product was an industrial commodity, created in commercial studios staffed with adequate creative and technical personnel and operating in a fully-capitalised structure.

Animation programming, produced in these cottage industry conditions, was the most substantial component of the home produced children's drama provision in the years under review.

In addition to original animation features there were a number of acquired storyform series to which voice-over Irish language narration was appended. These included **Seán the Leprechaun**, **An Choill Mhór**, **An Gairdin Alainn**, **Doireann agus Daideo**, and **Superted**.

Live action drama which related to the reality of day-to-existence for Irish children as children, which reflected their environment, their language, their idiom, their phonetics, the situations in which they imagined themselves, the characters

of which were children rather than adults, where action predominated over talk, where the narrative generated suspense and excitement, material which was free of the baggage of Section 17 and was not limited by a shoe-string budget, finally materialised in 1971, in the form of a a three-part adaptation of Walter Macken's children's novel, **The Island of The Great Yellow Ox.**

For the **Telefis Scoile Gaeilge Shinsir** (1974) course, producer Brian Mac Lochlainn brought the Abbey Players into the studio to perform an abridged version of **Gunna Cam agus Slabhra Oir**, Seán O Tuama's history play in Irish on the theme of surrender and regrant. The play was one of the text options on the Leaving Certificate Honours course in Irish. School-related drama made intermittent appearances on Telefis Scoile over the years.

Home-originated films had minimal representation in the children's schedules. There were short actuality films based on fairytale themes made by independent producer Eamonn O'Connor and some films of children by David Shaw Smith. The most substantial film in the schedules was A Second of June. **A Second Of June** was a 40-minute drama documentary film which was transmitted on January 28th, 1985 on RTE 1, and repeated on June 2nd, 1985 on RTE 2 at 5.20. p.m. The programme note for June 2nd described the film as

> .....taking a frequently humorous look at the city of Dublin on the day of President Reagan's visit last year---a day spent by a young girl and boy whose circumstances and movements turn out to be curiously similar to those of characters in James Joyce's epic novel, Ullyses, evoking Dublin life 80 years before.

Curious Eyes was a short film series which originated in Northern Ireland, and in which, to quote the introductory note,

> "children from Northern Ireland and the Republic discover something of the time-honoured traditions and skills of their own environment".

The Dandelion on the Dungheap(1971) was a short film made by John Lowe, of the National Film Society, with assistance from Bord Scannán Eireann.

Irishmen and Irishwomen presented historical portraits in dramatic format. The programme was based on a book by Dublin writer Bernard Share. The series, according to the programme note, purported to highlight

> **personalities who rarely made the pages of conventional history books but who all added colour to the texture of their times.**

Irishmen and Irishwomen, essentially story drama, survived up to 1978 with many intervening repeats of series. The programme was children's drama by intent, at least, and it went out in the children's slot usually at 5.10. p.m. but the topics, approach and delivery were for a general if not an adult audience.

ACCESS COMMUNITY TELEVISION

The Access Community Project was a collaboration between Young People's Programmes and the Features Department. The approach of the project was to put personnel, resources and expertise at the disposal of individuals and communities, so that they might share their concerns and views with the national audience. The programmes focussed on the under-25 age-group---- **"those making major decisions about their lives."** (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 13)

The project encompassed documentaries and drama, and the broad concept included a plan for children's drama which never acquired formal status.

Seven plays made by young amateur groups with RTE assistance were screened in 1986, sparking off a confrontation with RTE unions who perceived this form of drama as a cheap substitute for professional drama.

Three plays for children resulted from the concept, two of them being contributions to EBU drama projects. **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, a comparatively long single play for young people lasting 40 minutes, written by Carolyn Swift and produced by Michael Murphy, was transmitted at 6.30 p.m. on Monday, October 25th, 1982. This was a history play performed by schoolchildren in Killorglin, Co. Kerry. Although not formally designated as an Access production, **Kevin's World**, written by by

Anthony Flaherty, and RTE's contribution to the EBU children's adventure drama exchange project, **The Adventure Show**, would seem to be a follow-up of **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, and the second play in the abandoned plan to produce a continuing stream of children's drama using the Outside Broadcast Unit. This play was filmed on location in Kilkenny, using a combination of professional actors and local schoolchildren. **Stowaway** was an EBU drama contribution, scripted and produced by Joe O'Donnell. The play was produced by Joe O'Donnell on the lines of **Kevin's World** and **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, using children from a country school as actors.

Wanderly Wagon had come to an end by 1980, but, just as **The Riordans** begot **Bracken** and **Bracken** begot **Glenroe**, **Wanderly Wagon** begot its successor, **Fortycoats**. Fortycoats, a real-life Dublin street character, was the inspiration for Fran Dempsey's Fortycoats in Wanderly Wagon. **Fortycoats** now acquired his own programme, but the structure was different, the **Fortycoats** formula being six-part serial stories. **Fortycoats** was a farce-fantasy series. The other main characters were an erratic schoolgirl, Slightly Bonkers, played by Virginia Cole and The Whirligig Witch, played by Laurie Morton. The first series went out in Spring, 1983.

The Ballinch Bowl was an hour-long drama made in Ireland by a German production company, WDR, which was transmitted on New Year's Eve, 1984, at 5.00 p.m. **The Johnston Monster** was filmed in Ireland by The Children's Film Foundation production and transmitted on RTE in 1987. These were films with Irish themes which used Irish casts, and indicated the kind of programme that RTE might have created with its own resources. They also indicate that indigenous drama of this kind made by RTE would have export potential, and that the potential existed for co-production arrangements with outside concerns.

In addition to the specific drama mentioned above considerable blocks of drama had been presented, and to a certain extent submerged, in educational drama series such as **Nothing To It**, **Bosco** and **Dilin O Deamhas**.

The profile of home produced children's drama emerging

from this summary is that of a marginalised category, of low definition in comparison to other categories of home produced children's programming. The only real evolution was in puppet drama. The live action contributions were severely circumscribed by available resourcing. The resourcing structure remained immutable after 1987 and is operative at time of writing. Animation remains the favoured format for children's drama. The EBU connection still generates home produced drama, and what might be called the Access concept, that of using rural young people's drama groups as casting sources, remains a constructive production strategy.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA

If indigenous children's drama was overshadowed by other segments of home produced children's programming, then it was practically obliterated as a schedule presence by the vast volume of imported children's drama screened over the period under review. Imported television drama for children, including the 'classical' content, was a media commodity with one perceived function---to entertain through dramatic interaction with the viewer. Home-produced programming in Ireland in any category evolved in a mesh of social, statutory and other expectations and contexts which had little to do with the intrinsic nature of the product itself.

In the first year the imported provision featured adaptations of classical literature such as **An Age of Kings, The History of Mr. Polly, Our Mutual Friend, The Last Chronicles of Barset; Little Women, Jo's Boys, ; The Treasure Seekers, The Moonstone,** and **The Master of Ballintrae.** There were four Western series, **Rin-Tin-Tin, Kit Carson, Buckskin, Annie Oakley** and **The Cisco Kid,** and four animation series, **Bom the Little Drummer, Muffin the Mule, Heckle and Jeckle** and **The BBC Puppet Theatre,** the historical drama serial, **Three Golden Nobles,** and **The Shirley Temple Storybook.**

Much of the 'classical' content had an excessively didactic emphasis, but the imported drama provision was substantial in volume, well-resourced, and several series were

attractive and entertaining viewing material. In 1962, with other viewing options still limited to the East coast, this material provided the immediate competitive and comparative context for home-produced children's drama.

Imports accounted for 54% of the children's schedules in 1962/1963. Apart from a French language series, these imports were exclusively in the English language, and were mainly drama. Selection by RTE was based on a set of perceptions derivative of print library criteria and a further set of perceptions derivative of cinema criteria. These perceptions might be expressed as views that literary classics, and consequently screen dramatisations of these classics, are "good for children", and that children enjoyed American Western films and cartoons. Imported information programmes were seen as cognitive contributions and thus, like the classics, had an educational premise.

Animation programming, despite a cautious attitude to this category in the launch year, constituted the major component of the imported provision throughout the period of our review, the cartoon being the favourite animation format. By the mid-1960s the Children's Department had become familiar with the highly-developed American market and Hanna-Barbera, Disney Studios, and Warner Brothers packages were frequent placements in the schedules. The cartoon, created for colour transmission, inevitably lost some of its impact in monochrome reception. When colour television became generally available in the mid-1970s cartoon provision increased dramatically, and the children's schedules became the vehicle for the core repertoire of the inexhaustible American production system. As well as named presentations, animation material, without specific notification in the published schedules, appeared in magazine programmes. Cartoons were a popular form of programming; a number of cartoon series achieved high places in the published TAM ratings.

The range of categories reflected by the provision was impressive; besides the vast provision of anthropmorphised fiction which could be described as the new-age fairytale, the

cartoon provision included graphic visualisations of literature, classical music, science fiction , traditional folklore and mythology.

From 1965 the schedules also contained an extensive range of Eastern bloc cartoon features and series. There were also Scandinavian cartoons and several popular features and series of French and Swiss origin, purchased through Britain with an English voice-over. Thus the cartoon schedule component, although overwhelmingly from American sources, contributed an European and an Eastern European dimension.

The animation provision had a developmental perspective, at least to the extent that substantial blocks of material catered for preschool audiences. The range of topic and treatment could extend to the whole range of the young people's audiences, catering at the top of the audience band for Leaving Certificate students studying prescribed texts such as **Animal Farm** and **Silas Marner**. Imported educational programming made extensive use of animation drama as a pedagogic medium.

Imported puppet drama formed a relatively small proportion of the provision but the representation was still substantial, of high quality and well-resourced, and reflected a wide range of uses. Much of the puppet drama was directed at preschool audiences, and this category originated mainly in Britain. American puppet animation originated mainly in the preschool series, **Sesame Street** and in the spin-off series of **Sesame Street, The Muppets** and **Fraggle Rock**. Puppets also featured in interactive situations with live actors, and they were also used extensively as presentation adjuncts. In the puppet category, only one series, **Fraggle Rock**, featured in the TAM ratings.

The imported live action drama provision in the schedules comprised extensive interlocking categories of real life drama, adventure drama, animal-related drama, drama derived from published literature, fantasy, history and costume drama, family and situation drama, musicals, drama set in the American West and Mid-West, and a vast range of cinema films.

The detail of a representative selection of the

imported drama provision is given in Appendix C. This Appendix shows a comparatively tentative start in the use of imported drama as a schedule component, but placement increases progressively in volume, variety and range, rising significantly with the introduction of colour, and again when RTE 2 comes on stream. As our period of review ends the schedules are mainly a relay structure for imported programming.

The volume is greater than our lists record; magazine programmes used substantial elements of imported programming without publishing details in the schedules.

As with animation material, many live action programmes on the lists achieved high TAM ratings. In relation to the imported live action drama young Irish audiences proved versatile and unpredictable, as liable to give published TAM ratings status to costume and history drama, such as **Katy, Boy Dominic,** and **Little House on the Prairie,** as to contemporary drama like **The Famous Five** and **The Hardy Boys.**

THE YOUNG AUDIENCE

Con Bushe, in the the Spring edition of the Irish Broadcasting Review, 1983, commented that very little is known about the young television audiences in Ireland. He referred to a once-off random survey of young people's viewing patterns and preferences which was carried out by the Audience Research Department of RTE which used a single-category sample for children between 4 and 14, but this information proved to be too **'undifferentiated'** to be of use. Other surveys that had been done, he claimed, used unrepresentative samples.

Con Bushe himself estimated the stay-at-home preschool audience in Ireland at half-a-million. TAM rating figures for RTE 2 generate a basic audience figure of around 200,000 for some older children's programmes. RTE 1 figures for some programmes would push up this figure to 400,000.

One useful survey of a specific audience grouping, eleven-year-olds, was carried out by John Quinn, then a radio producer in RTE's Education Department, in 1976. He summarised the general patterns emerging from a survey of a primary school

children's viewing habits which he conducted in 1976 as research for an M.A thesis for University College, Dublin in the Autumn/Winter issue of the Irish Broadcasting Review, 1978. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 14)

The profile of the Irish primary school child that emerged from the Quinn survey was that of an intensely active child with many preoccupations besides television. Television usage was intense but hardly addictive. Drama was a clear preference, action drama predominating in programme preference, but the children in the sample exercised a wide range of viewing options and included news and information programmes and children's serials in these options. The children in the sample also liked comedy, which conforms to Cullingford's research. There were strong indications that children liked the closed narrative offered by the film category.

A resolution was adopted by the INTO at its 1989 Congress which directed the CEC to prepare and present a report to members on the impact and influences of television viewing on primary school pupils in the Irish educational system. (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 15)

The Congress motion, and the report it generated, pointed to a serious level of concern among primary teachers arising from the classroom situation about addictive viewing by young children coming mainly but not exclusively from disadvantaged areas. They were also worried about the possibility of a connection between heavy viewing and a serious deterioration in language development. They had strong misgivings about sex role stereotyping and male-orientation of programming and continuity content. The tone of the report suggested that primary teachers needed to be convinced of the positive values of television viewing by young children. Hodge and Tripp record a similar level of suspicion about television viewing in Australian teachers.

In April and May, 1985, Marion H. Reynolds carried out a substantial survey of Irish teenagers in second-level schools in the areas of media and leisure use (Footnotes : Chapter Two : 16). Teenagers in 1985 seemed to be using video drama to

satisfy developmental needs through using narratives that they could process easily, indicated by the preference priority accorded to children's films; as cultural reinforcement through the use of music videos; as a source of information about sexuality and sexual activity; as a source of sexual stimulation and as a source of the stimulation deriving from screen horror and violence.

On the basis of the sparse research available Irish children seem to watch as much television as their foreign counterparts. Many Irish children will view twenty-four hours programming in the course of a week. The Irish child is a busy child; television viewing will be one of many uses of leisure time and indeed only one of the uses of media, but it will be the primary option. Irish children also make extensive use of video cassette material. The bulk of the television and video viewing material will be drama in one form or another. Irish children will watch children's programming if they feel that it is relevant to their lives and if it is resourced to the same extent as adult programming. Irish children use television as a formal source of social and other information, viewing news and information programmes in significant numbers.

They use available drama as a source of life and survival information. Irish children, where they can exercise discretion, as they do in video choice, show themselves to be highly precocious viewers, engaging enthusiastically with the whole range of adult screen drama provision. They use television and video as cultural formation agents. This is demonstrated by their use of the musical and sports provision on these media. They find home-produced serial drama with a realistic context a rewarding viewing experience.

In general the Irish child viewer would seem to be more selective than the English or American viewer as profiled by conventional research, watching a wider variety of programme categories and using television to a greater extent for information acquisition and for cultural formation.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have shown how the character of the national television service which commenced transmissions in 1962 evolved from the general media environments, local and international. The cultural location of Ireland within the global English language media spectrum was a major formative factor. The severely limited catchment area and restricted capital base of the new service made it inevitable that there would be a high level of programme 'borrowing' from international English language sources. These factors, and the strong cultural emphasis of the enabling legislation, were significant influences in the shaping of schedule content.

We have mapped out the general programming environment in which the children's drama provision, imported and home produced, developed and shown how this environment further determined the quality and characteristics of the station-originated schedule component. We have outlined the corporate and structural factors which have worked to frustrate the development of viable television drama for young people. We have looked at the viewing patterns and preferences of young Irish audiences. We have given some indication of the the main characteristics of station-originated programming for children, of station-originated children's drama and of imported children's drama over the period under review.

In Chapters Three, Four and Five we propose to analyse the provision in greater detail in generic and thematic categories. This analysis will compare and contrast, in broad terms, home produced and imported material within the categories and provide opportunities for consideration of comparative aspects such as volume, scope, quality and ideological tendencies.

The analyis of the schedule content for the years under review can be organised in a number of ways. Two major paradigms which suggest themselves, and which have evident developmental contexts, are the fantasy and the reality or verisimilitude paradigms. These paradigms encompass most, if not all, of the provision.

In Chapter Three we will concern ourselves with the fantasy paradigm, in which consideration of animation drama will predominate; we will also discuss categories which feature an extensive, though not exclusive use of animation : fantasy, drama based on folklore and mythology, science fiction and drama in educational programmes.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FANTASY PARADIGM.

THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

In our evolution of a developmental framework in Chapter One we noted distinct phases of development where children regarded all television content as real, and where children regarded all television content as fantasy. Conventional television studies would seem to reflect a similar divergence. Silverstone (1981, 1988), Esslin (1982, 1987) and others offer a perception of television content as mythic culture. Fiske (1984, 1987) tends towards the view that television content is overwhelmingly rooted in reality, even if the particular segment is fantasy.

> "Wonderwoman or the Six Million Dollar Man are "realistic" because their "fantastic" actions and abilities conform to the laws of cause and effect...." (Fiske : 1987 : 24).

As we engage, in line with Caughie's (1984) suggestion, with the historic actuality of schedule content on a specific service over a particular period, the categorisation of programming into the 'real' and the 'fantastic' becomes less complex.

In our consideration of the programming in the period under review fictionality is not an issue. Drama is systematically fictional. Within the fictional spectrum, however, content in any medium resolves itself into material where the action is portrayed in exclusively human terms within the matrix of human experience, and material where emprirical reality is suspended in favour of ultra-natural schemata. For the purposes of this analysis I will categorise these divisions as verisimilous programming and formal fantasy.

In our general survey of the children's drama provision in Chapter Two it became evident that formal fantasy was

the dominant schedule category. For this reason I give this area of programming priority of consideration.

THE FANTASY PARADIGM

Any form of drama involves main modality cancellation, or the the willing suspension of disbelief. We know that the textual material we see or hear is a representation of reality; we process it as if it were reality. When we are dealing with fantasy we are quite aware that the textual content does not conform to the reality of our experience. Our main modality cancellation applies not only to the representational structure but to the content itself. We accept the suspension of the natural order and its replacement by ultra-natural forces and factors; our main gratification is this reversal of empirical reality. We are no longer prisoners of experience and we take a subversive pleasure in our freedom.

However, we make the same paradigmatic demands of fantasy as we make of reality. We select the elements of fantasy from the paradigms of reality; our flying horse is a composite of the real and empirically established elements of 'horse', 'flying', 'wings' and 'air'.

The power of fantasy lies in the syntagmatic area; we combine these elements in relationships for which there is no corresponding model in empirical reality. 'Man' and 'invisibility' have empirical reality, an invisible man does not.

Having exercised this category of syntagmatic power, we insist that our concepts retain the general syntagmatic structures of reality, as Fiske has indicated above; our fantasy must have a recognisable system; it must evolve in a logical narrative structure; the fantasy narrative must not only be sequential, but consequential, and must conform to the laws of cause and effect.

The most comprehensive block of fantasy material in the schedules, in both home produced and imported television drama for children, was in the animation category. One of the intriguing aspects of drama is the ease with which the dramatic text can dispense with the human agency of the actor and function

adequately through synthetic characterisation provided by an artefact such as a cartoon figure or a puppet. The high degree of acceptability accorded by viewers to animation drama--attested by the volume of such material in the schedules---indicates that this type of enacted narrative incorporates responses to human needs. These responses, however, belong to a wider paradigm---that of fantasy, which, John Fiske argues in Television Culture, is a strategy of resistance to hegemonic perceptions of reality. For Fiske popular culture is the embodiment of this resistance, but it may also be discerned in folklore, mythology and science fiction as mediated by television, indeed in the whole spectrum of imaginative as opposed to 'real life' drama.

Fantasy can be seen as a form of resistance or opposition to what is perceived as the established and immutable order of reality. As such it is an exercise of power in the area of personality not colonised by the dominant perception of what is real and immutable. As John Fiske (1987) suggests, fantasy embodies the power of the subordinate to exert some control over representation. Fantasy is not, Fiske argues, an escape from social reality, but more in the nature of a direct response to the dominant ideology and its embodiment in social relations. In fantasy, the subordinate can make things happen which dominant perceptions of reality would not permit.

The consumer of fantasy is systematically in a subordinate situation. The child by definition is subordinate. Mythology and folklore came from peasant or otherwise socially deprived cultures. Science fiction can be seen as a reaction to the subordination of man to physical and biological limitations.

Fantasy, we noted in our introductory chapter in the context of child development, contributes in a significant way to the cultivation of discriminatory power---the competence to judge between what is real and unreal.

ANIMATION DRAMA

Animation drama, in and adjacent to the children's programme band, and available in other areas of the general schedules in the period under review, could be patterned into

content and format categories such as 'real-life' drama, featuring human characterisations rather than humanised animals or other fantasy creations; anthropomorphic fantasy, where human characteristics are ascribed to 'creature' characterisations; adventure narratives; animated versions of 'classical' literature; features based in the American West or Mid-West; costume features and series with historical themes; series and features based on folklore and mythology; drama based on animals; musical features; science fiction features and series, and ranges of specific fantasy themes. Thus animation drama has as wide a thematic and format range as conventional live action VTR or film drama. Ultimately the primary signifying component on screen is the same for both classifications----a still image projected in combination with other still images in rapid sequence to create the illusion of movement. The secondary signifying component, the soundtrack, is common to both classifications.

There was considerable animation content of a dramatic character in educational programming. Full-Length animation features created for cinema also found their way into television schedules.

CARTOON DRAMA

Don Bluth, of Sullivan Bluth, Dublin, in an interview with Gay Byrne on the Late Late Show of November 23rd, 1990, described the process of making a conventional cartoon feature. The story is selected, written up in linear form, and then converted into a narrative sequence of dialogue and sound effects, essentially an aural play similar to a radio play. This narrative is substantially viable aurally, and is usually a high quality dramatic entity. The illustration and the animation are then appended to the 'radio play'.

The product is a strong aural text reinforced and elucidated by a strong visual text, or two congruent enacted narratives which combine to form a dramatic entity of considerable force. Cartoon drama is thus a unique form of drama, drawing on the craft of the film and the radio play. Because the aural text is the basic or generative text, the soundtrack plays a

fundamental role in the generation of meaning.

IMPORTED CARTOON DRAMA

Cartoons made their appearance in the first week of the station's transmission. The first cartoon transmitted was an animated version of an Enid Blyton story series---**Bom the Little Drummer**. Later in the week there was a puppet feature with a live presenter, **Muffin the Mule**. These two series, with **Heckle and Jeckle**, featuring two magpies, provided the major part of the animation contribution in the first months of the station's operation.

The relative scarcity of cartoon material in the schedules in the launch year indicated a cautious attitude to their use as programming material; there was no shortage of available cartoon material on the animation market. In the second year of transmission, however, the Children's Department scheduled the **Hanna-Barbera** package. In 1964 the **Disneyland** package, which included conventional fiction films and nature features as well as animations, was acquired. **Warner Brothers** features such as **Bugs Bunny** and **Woody Woodpecker** were established elements of the schedules by the mid-sixties.

Midway through the first decade the station was absorbing the general output of the highly-developed American market. Titles which dominated the animation selections were **Disneyland, Animaland, Popeye, Felix the Cat, Huckleberry Hound, Majilla Gorilla, The Flintstones, Melotoons, Warner Cartoons, Hillbilly Bears, Quickdraw McGraw, Woody Woodpecker, Bozo the Clown, Top Cat, Bugs Bunny, The Roadrunner Show, Mr. Magoo, The Magic Pencil, Peebles and Bam-Bam, The Banana Splits, Porky the Pig, Deputy Dawg**----many of these apparently inexhaustible packages achieving repertoire status. Later **Popeye, The Pink Panther, Tom and Jerry** and the **Scoobydoo** cluster of programmes would be added to this list.

The schedules included many examples of popular literature for children converted to animation formats. We will comment on these in our survey of literature-based drama in Chapter Five. Classical music provided the inspiration for **Peter**

and the **Wolf**, **Fantasia**, **Carnival of the Animals** and other animation programmes, mainly in the Disney Studios packages.

The Irish audience was already acquainted with many of the cartoon characters featured in these packages. This acquaintance derived from three main sources---the cinema, where the usual programme offering was a short documentary, a cartoon, and the advertised feature film; published print material, normally comics, and provision on other television services available to the Irish viewer.

From 1965 the schedules contained an extensive range of Eastern bloc cartoon features from Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. There were also Finnish and Swedish cartoons and several popular features and series of French origin, purchased through Britain with an English voice-over. **Babar**, **Jeremy and Barpapa**, and the **The Magic Roundabout** were the most notable of these. **The Saga of Noggin the Nog** came from Denmark, and **Belle and Sebastian**, a series about a boy and a giant dog, came from Switzerland.

The schedules in the 1970s also reflected increased availability of animation material from the Eastern bloc countries. Series like **Professor Balthazar**, and **Michaela**, from Yugoslavia, **Lolek and Bolek** and several other cartoon series from Poland, various Hungarian series and substantial series of Czech cartoons established the Eastern bloc as a major source of children's programming.

Cartoons, thus, to a marginal extent, offered experience of cultures other than the American culture, and also provided a contact point with the Eastern bloc. One Polish animator, speaking on BBC television following the collapse of communism in Poland, said that Eastern bloc animation material, which invariably escaped the surveillance of censors, frequently incorporated political comment and satire.

ANIMATION DRAMA WITH AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In the late 1960s, programming policy for children reflected increased awareness of the needs of the pre-school section of the audience. Elements of imported children's drama

which demonstrated this awareness were programmes such as **Ivor the Engine**, a BBC cartoon feature, and puppet animations such as **Trumpton**, **Camberwick Green**, **The Magic Roundabout**, **Pogleswood** and **Filopat and Patofil**. Later animation programmes for preschool children, which included puppet series, were **The Wombles**, **Chigley**, **Clangers**, **Mumphie**, **Hattytown**, **Noddy**, **Paddington Bear**, **Hector's House**, **Bagpuss**, **Cockleshell Bay**, **The Plasticines** and **Superted**, a Welsh feature, currently produced in association with Hanna-Barbera, which would have Irish language dialogue appended in the late 1980s. Programmes of British origin dominated the imported preschool provision.

The schedules included a number of imported educational series which had considerable dramatic content in animation and actuality formats.

The long-running **Sesame Street** was the most significant in this category. The Children's Television Workshop, which produced **Sesame Street**, also brought out **The Electric Company**, designed to improve basic reading. Some **Dr. Seuss** series, which concentrated on elementary reading skills, were also included in the schedules. RTE also acquired **Take Hart**, a BBC programme for hearing-impaired children. **Kaboodle** was an Australian preschool programme which replaced **Sesame Street** in the RTE schedules but was not retained.

Because educational programming was able to attract considerable funding from a variety of sources and often had policy priority in the source catchment area, the texts were well researched, well resourced and well presented.

Drama was used as a pedagogic tool to achieve pre-determined tutorial objectives. Drama was also used to develop attitudes which the programme source considered to be important, such as altruistic attitudes, or attitudes of racial tolerance, or trust in authority figures. Educational dramatic material was a product of source consensus as to how children should think, behave and express themselves; of all the dramatic forms it carried the heaviest value and ideology loading. For these reasons texts tended to have one or two dominant preferred readings.

It was important for such series to develop familiar

and consistent characters who reacted in a reliable, predictable manner; these characters turned up in various situations when they were required to illustrate a particular point, but there was no serial connection between the dramatic excerpts.

Although immense effort was devoted to closing the text and preferring the interpretation, these programmes may be a classic example of what Eco calls aberrant coding; the intake on the part of the young viewer may be totally in terms of dramatic gratification and the pedagogic message may be lost. Children may enjoy watching the antics of Big Bird, for example, without ever adverting to the pedagogic point that he is trying to make. In other words, children will still negotiate their own interpretation of the text, despite the best efforts of the production team to determine that interpretation. High viewing figures for Sesame Street, combined with undramatic improvement in pedagogic response, would suggest this. Liam O Murchú's intuition that Irish language tuition series may fail as tutorial strategies but succeed as entertainment may be confirmed in the assessment of the impact of educational programmes in general. (Appendix B : 7)

COLOUR

In the the 1960s and early 1970s the material we have been describing was received in monochrome. The move to colour transmission and reception in the 1970s expanded the demand for programme material which would exploit colour; the animation stocks answered this need, and the American production agencies in particular responded to the demand for new material. Established series were developed and new titles appeared in the schedules. New animation and effects technology and techniques reduced costs and facilitated increased production. Increased production costs for home originated material and expanded transmission time worked to increase the volume of animation material in the RTE schedules in the 1970s and 1980s.

NEW CATEGORIES

One development in the period under review was the exploitation of animation to represent real life situations rather

than anthropomorphic fantasy. A representative programme in this category would the cartoon feature, **Wait Till Your Father Comes Home**, in which the core characters are a conventional American family. The most successful in this genre was probably the **Charlie Brown** series, which also included the versatile dog, **Snoopy**, who generated several series in his own right.

Another development was the re-creation in animation format of series based on successful television and film series. **The Lone Ranger** would be one example. Mr. T., a leading character in the **A-Team** series, was the subject of the animated series, **Mr. T.. Lassie's Rescue Rangers, Davy Crockett**, and **Laurel and Hardy** were other examples of this development.

SCIENCE FICTION DRAMA

Science fiction is a loose term. The plot can hinge on a simple verifiable phenomenon like vanishing ink or the International Date Line, or the aerodynamics of a balloon, or the narrative can be fuelled by developments outside our experience. The story hinging on factors outside our experience offers us schemata which, through suspension of disbelief, we accept as rational. When this happens, however, we are back into the realm of the folktale and the myth. Most science fiction stories involving acceptance of premises outside our experience break down into the themes and motifs of the folktale, and can be rewritten in folk idiom in terms of hero, vehicle, weapon, journey, and so on.

Indeed, science fiction often unabashedly adopts the characters, costume and settings of the folktale. There is no essential difference between Buck Rogers and Fionn Mac Cumhail, or between the evil force trying to establish hegemony over the Milky Way and the evil Calif of Bagdad.

Science fiction in any age articulates contemporary concerns and exploits contemporary developments in technology; train and shipping timetables and contemporary geography perceptions were the basis of Jules Verne's **Around the World in Eighty Days**.

Interest in science fiction in the 1970s and 1980s

was fuelled by developments in the field of space exploration, by the political and military reality of the 'Star Wars' context, and by parallel developments in computer games, video games, and in VCR availability.

Developments in computer graphics generated new possibilities in animation and illustration styles which enhanced the futuristic texture of the science fiction cartoon, in particular the space saga.

Within the science fiction paradigm we can identify several story-types. One of the most substantial is the space saga, involving long voyages or quests and interstellar or intergalactic warfare.

There were numerous examples of the space saga in cartoon, puppet and actuality formats. A representative selection would be **Star Trek, Lost In Space, Logan's run, Blake's Run, Space 1999, Sting Ray, Battle of the Planets, Blake's Seven, Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers in the 25th Century, Battlestar Galactica, The Brothers Lionheart, The Martian Chronicles, Omni--the New Frontier, Wizards and Warriors, Flight of the Dreyfus, Ullyses 31---Oddessy in Space, He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, He-Man and She-Ra, The Bearcats, The Thundercats, Starman, Masters of the World, Galtar and the Golden Lance, Starman, Space Stars,** and **Space Oddyssey**, modelled on the return of Oddysseus to Ithica.

The basic structure of the space saga derived from folklore and mythology---indeed it does not seem to be possible to devise a space saga which does not use the themes and motifs of mythology. The magic horse becomes the space-ship, the sword of light becomes the ray gun; hero and heroine conform to mythological norms. Quite often the mythological base is incorporated without any attempt at disguise or transformation-----characters, locations, costumes, and events, might have been lifted directly from the written mythology compendium. **Space Oddyssey**, for example, was explicitly modelled on Homer's tale of the return of Oddysseus.

Proppian morphology has been applied with considerable success to conventional television drama by Roger Silverstone (Silverstone, 1981); the Proppian model seems validated by

televised science fiction to a greater than by other genres.

A common science fiction theme, not necessarily excluded from the above list, was the time factor, which involved the protagonists going backward or forward in time. Some programmes in the lists exploiting the time dimension were **The Time Tunnel, Into the Labyrinth, Valley of the Dinosaurs, Travellers in Time, Around The World in Eighty Days,** and **A Hitch In Time.**

Another science-fiction story-type was the one which made our Earth the terminus of the voyage. Quite often in this type of story we find that an extra-terrestrial has to accommodate himself to conditions here. Frequently this predicament was an opportunity for situation comedy. **Mork and Mindy** and **Alf** were this type of series. **Close Encounters of Third Kind, E.T. and Friends, The Cat From Outer Space** and **My Favourite Martian** were variations on the theme.

Transformations of humans into people with extraordinary featured in general audience programming such as **The Invisible Man, Gemini Man, Six Million Dollar Man, The Bionic Woman, Wonderwoman, Superman, Million Dollar Memory, The Invisible Boy,** and **Land of Giants.**

The Invisible Men and **Rocket To The Moon** were based on stories by H. G. Wells. There was a feature film called **Robinson Crusoe on Mars.**

Series which involved telepathic or similar powers were **Silver,** about a boy injured in a car crash who developed extra sensory and imaginative powers, and **The Powers of Matthew Star.**

Underwater adventure was frequently a science fiction exercise. Titles of programmes in the lists with an underwater setting were **Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea, The Voyage of the Mimi, The Return of Captain Nemo** and **The Man from Atlantis.**

Other titles in the lists were **The Stranger,** a children's science fiction series, **Children of the Stone, Planet of the Apes, Five Weeks in a Balloon, Once Upon a Time In Space, The Children's Story,** a six part BBC science fiction series, **One**

Hour To Zero, Little Orbit the Astrodog, Chocky, Chocky's Challenge, and Chocky's Children. The Chocky series was a Thames TV science production written by John Wyndham. John Wyndham wrote The Day of the Triffids, also listed, in which man-eating plants of outer space origin ran riot on earth.

Space Stars was a cartoon feature attractive enough to win a top TAM rating. Space Ghost and Dino Boy, and Once Upon a Time in Space were among the animation programmes transmitted.

The Glitter Ball was a science fiction film made by the Children's Film Foundation.

Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World was a general audience feature.

Inner Space was the inverse of outer space, one of a number of attempts to miniaturise humans and leave them at the mercy of the elements of matter, in this case inside a human body. Honey, I've Shrunk the Kids, not on our lists, was a later cinematic working of this theme. This type of story exploits scalar contrasts, and the genre could trace its pedigree back to Gulliver's Travels, to Gargantua and Pantagruel, and to Greek and Eastern mythologies.

PROGRAMMING DERIVED FROM FOLKLORE AND MYTHOLOGY

The lists of imported television drama for children in the period under review contained vast quantities of dramatised folklore and mythology in animation and live action formats.

The most extensive category within this genre was the dramatised folktale. One of the earliest block titles in the schedules was The Shirley Temple Storybook. Shirley Temple, now a young adult, introduced and then acted in dramatised versions of popular folktales. Tatum O'Neal exploited the same formula in Fairie Tale Theatre.

Children's TV Around the World, an anthology assembled by the American Institute of Televisual Arts, also included story material.

Traveller's Tales was another generic heading. Manfred was a series of narrated children's stories. The BBC story programme, Jackanory, and Jackanory Playhouse, which presented

enacted stories, was also acquired by RTE. Storybook International was a HTV series.

Fables of the Green Forest, Karelian Tales, Romanian Folktales, European Folktales, the Hanna-Barbera series, Shirt Tales, the Granada series, Once Upon a Time, and an animation series, European Fairytales, were all storyform presentations with a strong folklore or mythology base, usually enacted but occasionally mediated through a narrator.

Disney packages frequently included folklore segments.

These block titles represent collectively an enormous anthology of enacted and narrated folklore and mythology from all over the world.

Well-known folktales or groups of tales presented individually in a variety of formats and treatments included Snow White, Jack and the Beanstalk, The Emperor's New Clothes, The Legend of the Juggler, The Musicians of Bremen, Aesop's Fables, Hansel and Gretel, The Little Match Girl, The Little Mermaid, Tom Thumb, Mother Goose, Sleeping Beauty, The Pied Piper of Hamelin, The Ugly Duckling, The Grasshopper and the Ant, Thumbelina, Cinderella, Puss-in-Boots, Rapunzel, Rapunzel, and William Tell.

Less familiar folktales presented as features or series were The Lion and the Gipsy Woman, The Woodcutter's Son, Totarka, Zarabanda, The King and The Proud Princess, The Northern Lights, The Dancing Princesses, The Olden Days Coat, Matt the Gooseboy, The Man, The Snake and the Fox, The Fisherman's Son, The Mountain King's Son, The Night the Animals Talked, In The Forest of Owls, The Goose Field, The Prince and the Demons, The Black Stork, The Gold Ring, The Frog King, and The Moonstone Gem. Many of these were of European origin. Some of the stories were presented through the medium of puppetry.

The Feathered Serpent was a serial based on Aztec lore. Other tales listed include Rip Van Winkle, Tony and the Tick-tock Dragon, The Fourth King, a Christmas musical, Eighteen-foot People, My Little Prince, and The River of Giants.

Some of these stories were folk derivatives written by named authors.

Films such as Hans Christian Andersen and The

Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm were essentially anthologies of well-known folktales or fairytales. Kipling's **Just So** stories were variants of folktales.

Even if they were not part of the manuscript or the original oral tale, many folklore structures, themes and motifs were included in treatments of series based on folk-heroes such as Robin Hood. **The Adventures of Robin Hood** and **Robin of Sherwood** were two series which were frequently featured in the RTE schedules. There were also individual films on Robin Hood. King Arthur was another folk hero whose television exploits, and those of his knights, featured in series such as **Legend of King Arthur, Knights of the Round Table**, and **The Square Knights of the Round Table**. These treatments were rarely pure folklore but were worked in a folk framework. The Arabian Nights Tales also got representation, usually in cinema film format, with **Arabian Nights, A Thousand and One Nights, The Thief of Bagdad**, and **The Golden Voyage of Sinbad. The Oddyssey, Voyage of Oddysseus, Ullyses** and **Jason and the Argonauts** represented Greek mythology in the schedules.

Baron Munchausen made at least three appearances, but his exploits belonged more to literature than to folklore. However, the tall tale which **Baron Munchausen** personified was very much a folklore category.

The topic of Christmas attracted a variety of treatments which rooted this festive season in tradition, even if it would be very difficult to find a direct reference to Rudolf the Rednosed Reindeer, or even to Santa Claus, in folklore collections. Some genuine Christmas folklore in the lists would be **Nativity Play**, featuring Grace Kelly, **The Fir Tree, The Night the Animals Talked**, and **The Story of the Carol**.

The historical drama category and drama based on period literature might, on strict analysis, be found to contain more folklore than history.

FANTASY FILMS AND SERIES

Some examples of fantasy films in the non-animation category were **The Wizard of Oz, Return to Oz, Willie Wonka and**

The Chocolate Factory, Baron Munchausen, It's a Mad, Mad World, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Voyage of Sinbad, and All the Money in the World, which featured a leprechaun.

Series and serials hinging on the fantasy premise included Emu's Christmas Adventures, Tabitha, Catweazle, Vice Versa, and The Phoenix and the Carpet.

SOME CARTOON CATEGORIES

Christmas programmes in the course of the decade invariably included one or more cartoon features on the Santa Claus theme. Santa Claus is Coming to Town, The Little Drummer Boy, Rudolf the Rednosed Reindeer, Racoons at Xmas, The Great Santa Claus Caper, Santa Claus and Mickey's Christmas Carol were regular Christmas presentations. Easter Bunny is Coming to Town The First Easter Rabbit and Daffy Duck's Easter Show were typical titles in the Easter schedules.

Historical drama had a weak representation in the animation category, but the occasional title surfaced, such as Mouse on the Mayflower or The Four Musketeers.

In addition to the interminable Roadrunner saga the chase theme was successfully exploited in series such as The Great Race, Dastardly and Muttley, and The Perils of Penelope Pitstop.

Titles like Spook Billy, Scoobydoo, Casper the Friendly Ghost,The Real Ghostbusters, The 13 Ghosts of Scoobydoo, Galloping Ghost and Funky Phantom indicated the strength of the supernatural theme and confirmed the general instinct of animation providers to follow the broad categories of cinema and film provision in the creation of animation material.

A number of cartoon series achieved published TAM ratings. Among these were the Disney package, Mickey and Donald, the Hanna Barbera series of cartoon gags titled The Jokebook, The Voyages of Dr. Doolittle, and the All-New Popeye Show.

Interwoven with the vaguely classifiable material we have described was a broad miscellany of titles which are difficult to categorise, but which added significantly to the richness and variety of the animation provision. Some of these titles were The New Schmoo, Shinbone Alley, Oum the White Dolphin,

Adventures of a Pencil, Little Lulu, Pugwash, The Monchichis, Here Comes Garfield, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Maya the Bee, The Get-Along Gang, Dragon's Lair, Supergran, Herself the Elf, Bambinger, The Gummi Bears, Strawberry Shortcake, The Blinkins, Hugo the Hippo, Dr. Snuggles, Peter No-Tail, Adventures of a Mouse, Paw Paws, Ludwig, Bristleship, The Wuzzles, The Man Who Planted Trees, and The Mouse on the Motorcycle.

In addition to the specified series and features a considerable volume of cartoon material was transmitted in programmes usually designated as **Cartoon Time**. Magazine programmes such as **Anything Goes** and **Pajo's Junkbox** also included 'ad hoc' cartoon features not detailed in the published programme notes.

ANIMATION---PUPPETRY

Forms of animation other than the cartoon include direct manipulation of puppets, and filmed animations, where movement is simulated by filming the model is a sequence of positions and stances. Either product is more economic in time and materials than the cartoon.

The potential of the cartoon for imaginative treatment of the topic or the setting is in practice unlimited. While a rich range of effects may be achieved in puppet drama, the puppet story of necessity evolves in a limited number of settings, and expression of movement and character is inhibited by technical constraints. Because of the the technical limitations, exposition of the plot in puppet drama is invariably dependent on dialogue, or a dialogue substitute such as electronic gibberish or signifying music.

Despite the constrictions on expressive versatility, the applications of puppetry range far wider than those of the cartoon; the puppet is a viable theatrical medium in its own right and also functions effectively in theatre in combination with human actors and performers. While cartoon content has been merged successfully with live action content in films such as **Who Framed Roger Rabbit?** this form of combination has not proved popular. On the other hand the puppet, as in E.T., merges comfortably into the live action milieu, and on television the puppet has established

itself as a successful human adjunct in storyform and presentation programming.

Some versions of puppet drama in the schedules would have appealed to adults; **The Wind in the Willows** would be one example, and Jim Henson's **The Muppets** would be another.

For the most part, the imported puppet drama provided was mainly directed at the preschool audience. Much of the best preschool material in the schedules was of British origin---series such as **The Crumpot Candles, Gumby, Camberwick Green, Trumpton, Chigley, Clangers, The Wombles** and **Cockleshell Bay.**

The Magic Roundabout was a puppet-based filmed animation for preschool children, made in France, but acquired from the BBC with an English voice-over.

The Thames TV production of **The Wind in the Willows** was a puppet-based adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's novel which achieved several repeats.

Some random titles from various sources were **Thumbelina, The Moonstone Gem, Hansel and Gretel, Pogleswood, Ponny and Sonny, Filopat and Patofil, Mumphie, Buttonville,** and **The Plasticines.**

American puppet animation surfaced mainly in the preschool series, **Sesame Street** and in the spin-off series of **Sesame Street, The Muppets** and **Fraggle Rock.** The puppets in those series were the creations of Jim Henson. Jim Henson also contributed a feature on fantasy technology, the use of which he illustrated in a story called **The Luck Child.** The character from **Sesame Street, Big Bird,** broke out of his parent programme on one occasion to contribute a feature called **Big Bird in China.**

The generic description 'animation' applied to many programmes in the published schedules is often ambivalent in that it may apply equally validly to cartoon and puppet-based material. The list of puppet-based features may be far more extensive than that given here.

Puppets were also used extensively as presentation adjuncts, working as a character to whom the live presenter relates. Puppets also worked successfully as adjuncts to human participants in series like **Alf,** and in series such as **Sesame**

Street and **The Muppets**. Puppets continued to be a medium of instruction in a wide range of formal preschool programmes, and were resorted to frequently as a medium of enaction of folktales.

HOME PRODUCED CARTOON PROVISION

Commercial cartoon feature production needs an industrial structure. Anne-Marie Smyth, writing in the Sunday Tribune, November 18th, 1990 on the Irish contribution to the **Ninja Turtle** series, stated that a twenty-two minute episode requires about 18,000 individual drawings. The Murakami-Wolf firm, situated in Dublin, with a work-force of 120, was only able to produce ten **Turtle** episodes a year.

Lack of resources, personnel and the absence of a production structure determined to a large extent the quality of the Irish cartoon feature transmitted on RTE in the period under review.

Focal ar Fhocal, the earliest domestic attempt at home produced cartoon production for television, was a one-minute presentation featuring **Daithi Lacha**. The purpose of **Focal ar Fhocal** was to teach Irish language vocabulary. The feature had elementary animation, achieved mainly by camera movement.

Later, **Daithi Lacha** graduated to introducing each episode of the second series of **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**. Later still, **Daithi Lacha** became a five-minute Irish language feature in its own right, with improved, but still primitive, animation. Each episode told a story about the young duck, Daithi, and his friend Maidhc an Madra. There was a certain level of enaction of the narrative, but **Daithi Lacha** remained a third-person narration depending on quoted rather than enacted dialogue.

Daithi Lacha acquired his audience and became well-known enough to feature in pantomime and review jokes. We would have to concede that he did appeal to, and was useful to, a minority audience who had a linguistic interest in the programme. The Irish was simple and language structures uncomplicated. What is at issue, however, is mass audience appeal.

One condition for mass audience appeal is facility of transformation of the material by the viewer into viewer-related

concepts. Another is entertainment value. Another is visual appeal.

An Irish-language script for the general viewer in Ireland requires massive and off-putting transformations. These transformations will often fail to materialise, because the viewer will not have the vocabulary or the linguistic competence necessary to decode the content, so that the sound-track, in the communications sense, is mere non-signifying 'noise'.

Entertainment value for the mass audience was reduced by the didactic objective of the programme and by the relatively low degree of narrative enactment. Visual appeal was lowered by the minimal rate of animation and by a poorly resourced production situation.

Seán The Leprechaun was a technical improvement on **Daithi Lacha**, but animation was still minimal. Again, it had a voice-over third person narrative presentation. It appeared first in its original English version; subsequent transmissions had a voice-over commentary in Irish by Séamas Ó Tuama.

Lúidin Mac Lú was probably our first viable home produced cartoon feature which would qualify technically for categorisation both as an animated feature and as drama.

Despite being poorly resourced--it was produced by the de Buitléir family in their garden studio--the visual appeal was high, and the musical backing by Paddy Moloney was unusually effective.

Again, it had an Irish language script. For viewers who knew sufficient Irish transformational difficulties could be and were overcome, because the Irish was simple and direct, but the linguistic barrier was an impediment to mass audience viewing.

Ri Rá, drawn and animated by Flann Ó Riain, with narration and voices by Peadar Lamb, was not as successful as **Lúidin Mac Lú**, either technically or dramatically, although the bi-lingual dimension may have made it more accessible.

An Choill Mhór, **An Gairdin Alainn** and **Doireann agus Deaideo** were bought-in material to which Irish-language voice-over narration was added.

The Magic Piano, drawn by Aidan Hickey, with a

soundtrack of classical music, broke out of the straight-jacket of the linguistic objective, but possibly acquired a musical straight-jacket instead. **The Magic Piano**, despite the classical music base, had many of the characteristics of the conventional imported cartoon---the frenetic sound-track, zany graphic humour and well-developed characterisation in the cartoon idiom.

We had two individual features, **An Axe, An Apple, and a Buckskin Jacket**, created by Quentin Mitchell as a contribution to the Christmas programmes, and **A Dog's Tail**, a cartoon story based on the illustrations of dogs in the calligraphy of the Book of Kells, drawn by Aidan Hickey. Other cartoon material, also by Aidan Hickey, appeared in Bosco.

In summary, most of home produced cartoon provision was in the Irish language; most of it, visually and thematically, though not necessarily linguistically, was directed at lower age-groups; much of it had a didactic objective; all of it was poorly resourced at point of production.

Of the home produced series and features mentioned, **Focal ar Fhocal**, **Daithi Lacha** and **Seán the Leprechaun** had only minimal animation and were not directly comparable to the conventional cartoon feature. **An Choill Mhór**, **Doireann agus Deaideo** and **An Gairdin Alainn** were narrational features with an Irish language commentary ; the basic script and the graphics were imported.

Lúidin Mac Lú was a viable cartoon feature, totally home produced, but the Irish-language verbal script severely restricted the audience range. **Ri Rá** was also viable, but more limited in range, operating on variations of a single voice.

The Magic Piano might offer some competition to imported material in terms of entertainment intent, graphic versatility and sound back-up, but it was still a poorly-resourced programme. **An Axe, An Apple, and a Buckskin Jacket**, and **A Dog's Tail**, were single features.

An Saol ag Dul Thart, a twelve-part bi-lingual cartoon series made by Aidan Hickey, appeared in 1978. The theme was village life, this time from the perspective of an old lady with a hyper-active imagination who sat in her window all day, and put

her own fantastical construction on what she observed. **An Saol Ag Dul Thart** had the advantage of having three actors to do the voices.

There was a new departure for home produced animation drama in 1982---a venture into science fiction with **C. P. and Qwikswitch,** a short animation series of five-minute episodes, again drawn by Aidan Hickey. This is the only record we have of science fiction in any format.

Including material in the preschool programme, **Bosco,** we are talking about twelve hours at most of potentially competitive home produced cartoon material in the twentyfive years under review. A single **Pink Panther** or **Bugs Bunny** or **Disney** season might exceed this volume.

The home produced cartoon provision was rooted in the minority rather than the majority culture, in text language, content theme and visual idiom; we must conclude that the home produced cartoons did not provide the local texture inevitably missing from the imported cartoon provision, nor counterbalance to any significant degree the impact of imported cartoons.

They were, however, a unique creative entity in their own right, giving expression in this format to important minority culture content which might not otherwise have found expression. Given the resource environment in which they were produced they also represent unique personal achievements for their creators.

HOME PRODUCED PUPPET DRAMA

Puppet drama constitutes the most substantial segment of home produced children's drama in the RTE schedules.

The first puppets were ventriloquists' dolls, operated as a variety spot and as a children's programme presentation medium by Seoirse Ó Baoill. The construction of basic puppets and their use in elementary puppet drama was an item in the Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin crafts show, **Céapars.**

The long and productive partnership between the Lambert family and the Children's Department in Telefis Eireann began in 1964.

Cearta Húdai was the first outcome of this

partnership. **Cearta Húdai** was , as we have seen, a ten-part ten-minute series using eighteen-inch puppets, with one actor, Chris Curran, supplying all the the voices. The programme was bilingual, using more Irish than English. The location was a forge, a folklore setting. The working of the story-line employed anthropomorphisation. Discounting the bilingual factor, the programme was in the preschool genre.

In 1965 the same team produced a new series, **Murphy agus a Chairde**, on the same scale and employing the same production approach, Chris Curran again providing all the voices. Transmissions continued until 1968 and in all 132 episodes were produced. The programme notes described **Murphy agus a Chairde** as a new fairytale series. As with **Cearta Húdai**, the script was bilingual, using more Irish than English. Again, anthropomorphisation was employed. If we ignore the bilingual implications, this programme was also in the preschool genre.

Because puppet drama depends on the aural text for exposition to a greater degree than the cartoon, lack of competence in Irish will inevitably reduce accessibility to the content for the younger viewer of bilingual puppet drama.

In 1966, Eugene Lambert created **Fingledoodle** for Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin. **Fingledoodle** was a koala bear who talked electronic gibberish, and was a presentation device used by Bláithin in her art and crafts programme.

In 1967 **Wanderly Wagon**, devised by producer Don Lenox and presented as a modern fairytale, was launched. **Wanderly Wagon** was an intriguing combination of live actors and anthropomorphisised puppet characters which included Fox, Crow, Judge the Singing Dog, Grania the Elephant and Pádhraig Ó Curragh, the horse. The versatile caravan was an ingenious setting which allowed for every conceivable variation of plot.

Wanderly Wagon meandered out of the black-and-white era into the colour, proving immensely successful as a colour programme. It lasted fourteen years, although production was spasmodic; in some seasons no new programmes were made but previous series were repeated. In all, however, at least two hundred thirty-minute episodes were produced.

Although premised in Irish folklore, **Wanderly Wagon** did not have a bilingual commitment. The over-all narrative was uncomplicated; the wagon simply wandered from place to place. The journey could be terrestrial or interstellar; episode plots were generally generated by engagement with new characters who emerged out of the wood or the mist. Budgetary constraints confined most of the action to the wagon interior and the wagon's immediate environment and the dramatic situations were mostly the interaction of the three adult characters, Rory, O'Brien and Fairy Godmother, with the puppet characters.

The device allowed for audience participation; letters could be read out and greetings delivered; the series generated commercial spin-offs such as yearbooks, records and toys, in particular a very successful cuddly replica of Judge the Dog.

In **Magic Mike Tales**, the puppet characters of **Wanderly Wagon** adopted a presentation role; they introduced imported cartoon features.

In 1969 Eugene Lambert created the puppets for a twelve-part version of the Patricia Lynch fairytale, **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**. This programme was exclusively in English.Each episode was twenty to twenty-five minutes in length--unusually long for a puppet feature. This was an elegant and successful programme, and managed to achieve the first international sale of a home-produced drama series--to Norwegian television as a Christmas transmission.

Over the years the Lamberts contributed several individual features to the schedules. The list includes **Little Red Riding Hood**, **Bandecoote**, **Hansel and Gretel**, **Jack and the Beanstalk**, **Goldilocks and the Three Bears**, **The City Mouse and the Country Mouse** and **The Devil's Bridge**. Eugene Lambert devised the puppets for the Lecky Thompson/Quentin Mitchell version of Sinéad De Valera's fairytale, **The Spinning Wheel**. Another successful creation by Eugene Lambert was the glove puppet, **Bosco**, the focus of the long-running preschool programme of the same name. In practice, **Bosco** was simply an adjunct to the presenters of the show, who used him as a representation of the preschool audience; he voiced the preschool child's feelings and reactions and asked

their questions, operating as a medium of identification and bonding.

The craft and operation of puppetry was not confined to the Lambert family in the period under review. **Baile Beag** made its pilot appearance in 1974. **Baile Beag** was produced as a cottage industry by Jimmy Quinn, with scripts by Pádhraig Ó Siochrú, Tony Hickey and others. The scripts were normally bilingual, but Irish-only scripts and English-only scripts were also enacted.

Baile Beag was a little Irish village, and the stories centred on the day-to-day activities of two boys, Muiris and Jimin. For the most part the stories presented the actuality of rural village life, although anthropomorphisation was resorted to from time to time. The series was transmitted in ten-minute episodes with one reader doing the voices. **Baile Beag** remained in the schedules from 1974 to 1987, averaging roughly fourteen episodes a year, and achieving regular repeat showings.

Noah and the Animals, transmitted in 1976, was a short puppet film created and directed by Seamas Culhane.

Lug appeared in 1981. This short five-minute series derives its story material from Irish prehistory and mythology. It was written by Bernard Share, and the puppets and animation were created by Jimmy Quinn.

The Irish-language preschool programme, **Dilin Ó Deamhas**, had a regular short puppet feature, **Muintir na Móna**, about a turf-cutter, his family, and his donkey.

As a footnote to this review of home produced puppet drama, it is appropriate to mention the role of puppet characters in programme presentation.

The foam-rubber puppet, Pajo, a rodent, has been presenting his own Saturday morning magazine programme, **Pajo's Junkbox**, since 1986. Pajo currently has his own drama series.

As the period of our review ends, **Zig and Zag**, two glove puppets, are preparing to assist presenter Ian Dempsey in the presentation of children's programmes under the umbrella title, Dempsey's Den.

Zig and Zag keep up a constant patter during the presentation delivery. They have a subversive texture, in that

they can be rude or otherwise naughty. They interact with programme guests, dispense programme information and relate in a very personal way with the audience, particularly in contact segments such as phone-ins or birthday greetings. **Zig and Zag** have proved to be a tremendously successful bonding strategy.

Their appeal, however, extended far beyond the children's audience. The two puppets in a relatively short time established themselves as components of the popular culture, generating in the process a dynamic spin-off facsimile industry which includes replicas of themselves, joke-books, T-shirts, posters, mugs, copybooks, erasers, Easter eggs, and other artefacts. The fact that they have acquired a national constituency has been acknowledged by a Jacob's Award.

The imported puppet drama programmes were of high quality, well resourced, and world market commodities produced in solid commercial structures. By contrast, Irish puppet drama was poorly resourced; it was often a family effort produced in a domestic context, and it evolved in an unstructured production situation. Despite these constraints, it has been possible to provide a sustained supply of this type of drama; **Murphy agus a Cbairde, Wanderly Wagon** and **Baile Beag** survived over a number of years and the limits on further production have been set more by the lack of station resources than a drying-up of the creativity or the energy of the production teams. Valuable skills were developed. A momentum was generated through the patronage of this segment of dramatic production which is still effective. Puppet drama was the only segment of home produced drama for children which offered a credible challenge to the imported product.

HOME PRODUCED PROGRAMMES WITH A FOLKLORE PREMISE

The major home produced folklore segment, stories, raises problems of classification. The television story, even the most dead-pan narration, has dramatic characteristics. These characteristics are intensified by voice variation techniques and by the addition of sets, graphics and costume, but the representation becomes viable drama only when characters become distinct and enaction is substituted for narration.

Home produced story programmes with some dramatic characteristics, which would not qualify as viable drama were : **Tales of Wonder, Once Upon a Time, Long Ago In Ireland, Fadó, Fadó, Hansel agus Gretel, Eoinin na nEan, The Goldfish and the Egg, Twenty-Minute Tales, Teatime Tales, Storyroom Special, Christmas in My Father's Time**, with Eamonn Kelly, Jimmy O'Dea's **Christmas Stories, Ten Minute Tales**, by Eddie Linehan and others; **Storyteller**, a programme in which Eddie Linehan gave his own highly personalised renditions of Irish myths, and **Aunt Poppy's Storytime**.

These programmes featured Irish folk material, international folk material, and original stories. When folklore was presented it was usually refashioned to the reader's own idiom and perception of the tale.

Puppet features created by the Lamberts, usually for Christmas schedules, included **Little Red Riding Hood, Bandecoote, Hansel and Gretel, Jack and the Beanstalk, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, The City Mouse and the Country Mouse**, and **The Devil's Bridge**. The Lamberts also provided and operated the puppets for the Quentin Mitchell/ Colin Lecky Thompson version of Sile Bean De Valera's **The Spinning Wheel**, and for **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**, derived from Patricia Lynch's fairytale.

Two short films by independent producer Eamonn O'Connor were also transmitted---**Red Riding Hood** and **Goldilocks and The Three Bears**. These were actuality productions. **Noah and the Animals**, made by independent producer Seamus Culhane, was an animation feature.

Aidan Hickey's cartoon feature, **A Dog's Tale**, was an animation and characterisation of a graphic motif from the Book of Kells.

The history series, **Irishmen and Irishwomen**, and the history play, **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, owed more to folklore and tradition than to documentary history.

Both **The Ballinch Bowl** and **The Johnston Monster** depended on a folk-historical premise, but they were modern stories in a contemporary setting.

The major animation programmes in the home produced

provision, **Cearta Húdai**, **Murphy agus a Chairde**, **Lúidín Mac Lú**, **Seán the Leprechaun**, and **Rí Rá**, might be described as synthetic folklore; they employed folk and mythological settings and character types, and anthropomorphisation, which is a folklore device, but they were not fashioned from any identifiable folklore or mythological narratives or other sources; they were new texts fashioned from traditional imaginative residue in the minds of their creators.

Wanderly Wagon, superficially, was also a folk derivative. Rory and O'Brien were descended from two high kings and Fairy Godmother was borrowed directly from international folklore. The magical wagon was one on the strongest international folk motifs. The talking animals and birds could have come directly from Aesop. The storylines were littered with folk and mythological archetypes. Our category, however, relates to classifiable folktales and myths reworked as cinema or television narratives.

Fortycoats came closer to this definition, Fortycoats being a character from urban Dublin folklore. The working of the stories, however, while employing the same manipulation of motifs and archetypes as **Wanderly Wagon**, of which **Fortycoats** was a derivative programme, removed Fortycoats from his folklore base and made him a new creation.

FANTASY

Wanderly Wagon, with over two hundred half-hour episodes, was an impressive entity of fantasy drama by any standards. **Wanderly Wagon** reflected all of the fantasy characteristics we have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter; these characteristics were intensified by the integral animation element in the programme.

Fortycoats also qualified for the fantasy classification. **Wanderly Wagon** invariably took itself very seriously; **Fortycoats** was more a formal blend of fantasy and farce. The format was also different---**Fortycoats**, instead of a loose continuity, was presented in six-episode blocks, each block delivering a specific story.

Two films using actors by Eamonn O'Connor, Red Riding Hood, and Goldilocks and the Three Bears, would also qualify as fantasy, as would Cinderella, a general audience Christmas pantomime put on the the Variety Department of RTE.

Daithi Lacha, Cearta Húdai, Murphy agus a Chairde, Lúidin Mac Lú, Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune, An Saol Ag Dul Thart, Baile Beag, Wanderly Wagon and Fortycoats and other home produced animation material made fantasy the predominant category of home produced television drama for children in the period under review.

As we pointed out, there was only one title that we can classify as science fiction in the home produced lists----C. P. and Qwikswitch, an animation series by Aidan Hickey about two robots who, apparently, assembled themselves from interstellar garbage which had crashed into the planet Junkus and now wanted to get off the planet and join their real progenitors, the earth people. The series is currently in production. It is now called C. P., Qwikswitch and Stop. Stop is a lady parking meter.

HOME PRODUCED DRAMA WITH AN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Triopal Treapal, Bábaró, Bosco and Dilin O Deamhas have all exploited dramatic presentation, storytelling, play and action-song techniques. Bosco and Dilin O Deamhas have, in addition, made extensive of use of puppets as presentation devices and in drama inserts. Bosco has also used station-originated cartoons.

Triopal Treapal, Bábaró, Bosco and Dilin O Deamhas operated on a visualisation of the target child premised from playschool and nursery school experience. Playschool and nursery school direction in Ireland drew on Piagetan, Froebel and Montessori theory and practice and involved self-motivated activity and handling of materials.

The target child visualised by Bosco spoke Hiberno-English, was ego-centred to a high degree, relating programme material to his or her own experience, liked stories and action songs, and liked elementary craft activity such as drawing or making paper hats. The programme, unlike Sesame Street, evolved a

condescending approach to children, illustrated by a tendency towards baby-talk on the part of the presenters, and a 'talking-down' to the child. Bosco was also a male representation. This fact does not seem to have reduced viewing gratifications for girl viewers, but it did reinforce the the perception of the role superiority of boys in the Irish family unit, and the supportive role of girls in the same context.

Bosco featured a high level of dramatised content, including Bosco-centred animation stories such as **Bosco and the Bears, Bosco Hunts for Treasure, Bosco Goes Skiing, Bosco and the Genie** and so on, frequently created by Aidan Hickey.

Dilin O Deamhas was directed at children attending all-Irish nursery and primary schools. It followed the **Triopal Treapal/Bábaró** model, using children on the set, with the addition of the **Muintir na Móna** puppet inset. **Dilin O Deamhas** was a uni-lingual programme presented exclusively in Irish. The visualised target child here was a child who was able to process basic functional directions in Irish, who could understand a story in Irish, play simple games in Irish, and sing a song in Irish and perform the accompanying actions. The presumption was that the child would have acquired the relevant processing skills from an all-Irish school, or in an Irish-speaking family environment. For the minority target audience, **Dilin O Deamhas** was acceptable and effective provision.

The overall impression one gets of educational material exploiting drama techniques, whether imported or home produced, is that the educational or informative component did not readily cross cultural barriers. Television may not be effective as a formal pedagogic medium, because it normally lacks reinforcement or evaluation structures. Also, television may not be effective as a pedagogic medium because it is perceived by children as a recreational medium.

DRAMATIC CRITERIA

The cartoon programme, for the most part, is a closed narrative in a series structure---the feature delivers a complete story, but we approach the broadcast with considerable familiarity

and expectation; we are familiar with the characters, their environment, their personality traits, their behavioural conventions; and with text motifs from previous broadcasts, from cinema presentations, and from published material, normally comics. This prescience may have accumulated over a long period---some cartoon characters have been in existence in one format or another for more than fifty years.

The staple cartoon presentation is a five-minute or ten-minute closed narrative, with a highly accelerated pace achieved by quick transition from equilibrium to disequilibrium, with strong conceptual reinforcement from parallel visual, aural and verbal texts. The quick sequence of situational crises invariably holds the attention of the child viewer.

The usual, though by no means exclusive, method of characterisation is anthropomorphisation, or the ascription of human characteristics to animal or other non-human representations. Graphic treatments can draw on unlimited identity paradigms to reinforce character individuality and differentiation, resulting in enhanced character assimilation and retention.

Examples of this type of cartoon programme would be **Bugs Bunny**, **Woody Woodpecker**, **Popeye**, **Roadrunner**, **The Pink Panther**, and **Tom and Jerry**. Cartoon features from Eastern bloc countries and from some European countries have a weaker impact because the prescience and familiarisation we have been talking about does not exist.

The cartoon format can also sustain interest over a longer period---the half-hour or hour-long programme--allowing for greater narrative complexity and character elucidation. The longer show, such as **The Flintstones**, essentially a situation comedy driven by family conflict, tends to focus on a group of characters rather than an individual character. Many of the longer cartoon features have strong central themes. Examples would be ghostbreaking in **Scoobydoo**, on inter-galactic conflict in science fiction stories, or a crime-fighting situation in **Spiderman**. Major animation features for cinema like the Disney productions of **Snow White** and **Cinderella** confirm the potential of the cartoon format

to mediate long and complex narratives.

There was also a large volume of cartoon material other than that based on familiar stock characters; this material in the main took the form of adaptations of literary works or folklore material. These are specific closed narratives.

Cartoon material invariably responds to the requirements of enacted narrative and dramatic characterisation, and provides a supportive environment for the action more effectively, perhaps, than actuality drama in any form. The reasons for this are that cartoon drama operates a priori on an overt suspension of disbelief contract; the viewer knows that the cartoon is representational. The animation process allows for greater control of narrative exposition and progression, and characterisation may be intensified by animation techniques.

At the same time, the level of control available to graphic mediation determines the totality of the image to such as extent that there is little room left for free associations or interpretative options, leading to what Christian Metz, in relation to excessive detail in film called **'paradigmatic impoverishment'**. (Metz : 1974)

The formulation of the aural enacted narrative before the illustrations and animation content are appended reinforces the dramatic intensity of the cartoon feature.

The puppet drama segment has a different texture and dramatic impact to that of the cartoon. The dramatic ingredients are the same; characters are created through visual and aural signification and differentiation; these characters enact consequential narrative sequences in settings supportive of the action. What is filmed, however, has a three-dimensional actuality as compared with the two-dimensional actuality of the cartoon frame, and the filmed movement is actual, while the movement in the cartoon is simulated.

The cartoon treatment of characters can apply limitless variations of expression, and the simulated movement of the cartoon is infinitely more flexible than the comparatively clumsy movement of the puppet character, but for many children the puppet format is more accessible and its impact more immediate

than that of the cartoon because it is smaller in scope: narrative movement is at a slower pace, and the three-dimensional subject has a higher modality impact.

Puppets as dramatic media have a long history and have provided popular folk entertainment, the Penguin Dictionary of Theatre tells us, since the dawn of drama. The bibliography of Gorelik's New Theatres for Old (Gorelik, 1974), an historical survey of theatre, lists 28 works on the subject of puppets. On television the puppet show retains much of its theatrical characteristics----a limited number of sets, three-dimensional representation, and a greater dependence on dialogue, or sound effects which suggest dialogue, than the cartoon.

Many children will have some experience, however elementary, of puppet theatre. Children, personalising their toys in private play, create an intimate form of puppet drama of their own, and may see the puppet performance on television as an extension of this play. Children may also possess puppet toys.

Children, therefore, may bring more media information to the viewing of a puppet show than to any other form of television drama. They may have an advanced perception of the techniques and apparatus of puppet drama, but this knowledge, paradoxically, intensifies the suspension of disbelief or main modality cancellation---a puppet will often seem more real to a child than a cartoon or an actuality representation. The play aspect is intensified if the child comes into possession of a toy modelled on the puppet character; replicas of characters in long-running puppet shows are frequently in commercial distribution.

The pace of the puppet segment may also suit some children better than the frenetic pace of the cartoon. The enacted puppet narrative tends to unfold at a slow pace, with relatively gentle variations and interventions, because narrative progression is circumscribed by the necessities of manipulation.

In the developmental context, puppet drama contributes an important fantasy component to the child's development; emotional interaction with the puppet characters can be quite intense.

To be successful, a puppet drama segment must, as a

basic requirement, be accessible to the viewer. The viewer must be able to interpret the setting, to distinguish and identify the characters, to understand what these characters are saying and what they are doing.

In **Cearta Húdaí** and in **Murphy agus a Chairde** this accessibility was diminished by the fact that one actor, Chris Curran, supplied the voices for all the characters, and because some of the dialogue was in the Irish language. The puppets were string-manipulated, severely limiting movement and action, so that the viewer's potential to identify and interpret the action is dependent on understanding the dialogue.

Fingledoodle and **Wanderly Wagon** featured puppets as adjuncts to real people, **Fingledoodle** being a presentation aid, and the **Wanderly Wagon** puppets characters in a dramatic series, interacting with human actors. The puppet Bosco in the preschool series of the same name also belonged to the interactive category. Bosco had a clearly pedagogic role, although he occasionally appeared in dramatised stories about himself. Also in the interactive category were the presentation puppets, **Pajo**, and **Zig and Zag**. Interactive puppets have a very strong modality for young viewers, reinforced by the seriousness with which the live performers treat their artificial counterparts.

The **Wanderly Wagon** puppets were manually-operated puppets, generally in fixed locations; they were not suspended. They had a larger and more attractive setting than the box proscenium of **Cearta Húdaí** and **Murphy agus a Chairde**---the wagon interior or exterior--and, as the cast provided the voices, a greater variety of voices was available for characterisation. The verbal script was in English, making all of it accessible to a mass audience. Interaction with adult actors enhanced puppet credibility.

In the narrative sense the role of the puppet characters in **Wanderly Wagon** was subordinate to that of the actors; they rarely moved the storyline, but were incidental to its elucidation.

The dramatic impact of **Cearta Húdaí** and of **Murphy agus a Chairde** was diluted by poor resourcing and the bi-lingual

factor; the puppets in Wanderly Wagon had at best a coordinate role in the programme; **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune** was a well-resourced uni-lingual twelve-part puppet drama serial in twenty to twenty-five-minute episodes which came up the standards of its imported counterparts. Character discrimination was facilitated by the allocation of a different voice for each character. The serial was an adaptation of a popular children's book widely available to and read by Irish children---a fact which stimulated prior interest in the programme.

Baile Beag represented an advance in technique; it was filmed animation, where the illusion of movement was created mainly by filming the puppet figures in different stances and locations, and editing the result.

Baile Beag broke new dramatic ground; it was the first puppet series reflecting the actuality of contemporary life in Ireland to any significant degree. The stories were child-centred and presented from a child's perspective. But it was a cottage industry product, and, as with **Cearta Húdai** and **Murphy agus a Chairde**, one reader did all the voices.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

The imported cartoon provision catered for every section of the children's and young people's audience, from the preschool age-group to that of the young adult.

Cartoons provide a wide range of gratifications within the dramatic experience paradigm : pleasure deriving from narrative, from enaction; visual, aural imaginative, and aesthetic gratifications. Some of these are exclusive to the cartoon format.

There will also be cognitive acquisitions. A child who likes space sagas, for instance, may derive a complex version of the cosmos from programmes like **Battlestar Galactica**. There will be some degree of graphic modelling which may result in an externalisation of text decoding in the form of drawing. Examples of this would be the popularity of the **Ninja Turtles** as drawing subjects with young children.

Hodge and Tripp find young children's liking for cartoons to be a natural and healthy developmental phenomenon,

ideally adapted to children's growing powers. Far from causing confusion between fantasy and reality, as lobby groups maintain, the largeness of the gap, Hodge and Tripp argue, actually helps children to discriminate between fantasy and reality. Children, Hodge and Tripp concluded, "**need a diet rich in explicit fantasy---including cartoons, in order to develop a confident and discriminating modality system**". (Hodge and Tripp, 1986)
As John Fiske (1987), commenting on the Hodge and Tripp conclusion points out, children learn to discriminate between high modality material such as news, and low modality material like the cartoon, and the discrimination helps them to cope with problematic content in the low modality programme---violence, for example---by deciding that it is not in the realm of reality.

The reading of cartoons, in particular cartoons employing anthropomorphisation strategies, calls powerful transformational operations into play. This view suggests, according to Hodge and Tripp, that cartoons are not trivial forms which stunt the growing mind, "**but that they have a positive cultural value and as important a role in emotional and intellectual development as Bethleheim[1976] demonstrated for the humble fairytale...**"[in The Uses of Enchantment]

Rejecting Winn's '**plug-in drug**' theory, Hodge and Tripp assert that children in general prefer the programme types which are the best available for their cognitive development, and mention cartoons as corresponding to the syntagmatic and paradigmatic structures and to the transformational facility available to younger children.

Some transformations, however, will be beyond the scope of very young children; if the storyline demands a disguise, for instance, the very young child may see two distinct characters rather than one transformed character.[Anne Phoenix]

Cartoons remain a favourite form or entertainment right through to adulthood, but their formative impact declines as the child grows older; later stages of development demand different media forms, such as actuality adventure drama. (Cullingford, 1984)

Alan Dundes (1965), introducing the survey of the

discipline of folklore, The Study of Folklore, which he edited, attempted a definition of folklore in terms of its forms. These forms include myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, superstitions, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, greeting and leave-taking formulas, traditional or folk dance, costume, drama, art, belief, traditional or folk medicine, music, songs, speech, rhymes, street cries, grafitti, games, designs, festival customs---indeed the total identification fabric of a community at any given time in its history, made up of inherited and newly-generated material.

As such, folklore is a major form of cultural expression, and consequently a dynamic developmental environment in its own right. Children in any society acquire and develop their personal and social identity in this environment; most children will have acquired a considerable store of storyform folklore, games formulae, expression formulae and so on in the family and peer group milieu and at school. Some elements of folklore, such as proverbs and superstitions, and other value codes, dictate behaviour patterns.

The Dublin Opinion in the 1960s published a famous cartoon in which a seanachaí had just begun his story with the traditional formula "Bhi fear ann fadó...." He stops because he realises that he has no audience. The be-shawled and báinin-clad family members and neighbours who used listen avidly to his sagas are gathered around the television set, which is showing a picture of a gyrating rock-star.

The implication that the television set replaced the seanachai has more truth in it than the cartoonist intended. It replaced him as a teller of tales in the general sense, and it also replaced him in his own speciality, making a vast store of local and international folklore and mythology available in an accessible form to Irish children and to general audiences, and familiarising these audiences with the global pool of motifs, narrative formulae, archetypes and stereotypes.

The wider field of folklore and mythology studies, in particular the work of Propp and Levi-Straus, have generated valuable perspectives for the study of television narrative. The

conventional tales relayed by television in serial and series form can also be perceived as folklore and myth, or, more accurately, as a global compendium of narrative resolving itself into indexes of motifs, narrative formulae, archetypes and stereotypes, with functions in society similar to those of myth and folklore.

Storyform folklore is normally fantasy, with all the developmental potential and gratifications of the fantasy genre, the chief acquisitions being imaginative stimulation and discrimination between reality and non-reality.

The bulk of the home produced puppet drama was in the fantasy area, and we could assume some developmental contribution appropriate to fantasy from the home produced provision. This contribution was increased because the viewer was familiar to some degree with the phonetics, idiom and language structure of the verbal script, and because some representation of the local environment was inescapable in the text. The fantasy material was based to some extent on Irish tradition, the broad details of which were part of the cultural capital of the Irish child viewer.

The puppet programmes to which children responded in a substantial concrete way were unilingual presentations; **Wanderly Wagon** promoted an intense dialogue with its audience; there were **'Make Your Own Brogeen'** competitions in the RTE Guide, and **Muintir na Móna** featured in a popular set of preschool books in Irish.

The presentation puppets, **Zig and Zag**, also generated and continue to generate, an enthusiastic dialogue through phone-ins, letters, art work and cards.

Considered as a block, the predominant orientation that emerged from home produced animated programming was towards a manifestation of the national mythology : the perception of a national community where folk tradition had a premium value, and where the appropriate language, if it could be spoken and understood, would be Irish. As this perception was very much part of the national culture, home produced animation drama for television was essentially an indigenous cultural product.

Animation material constituted the the largest segment of home produced television drama for children. It did not to any significant degree provide a mediated version of the

personal and social world of Irish children, nor of their environment, nor provide behavioural or relational or emotional modelling for them.

One negative characteristic of the home produced animation provision was the almost total disenfranchisement of girl viewers in representational terms. The demography over the whole period under review is overwhelmingly male; female characters are substantially 'annihilated' from the provision; such female characters as we find are invariably caricatures such as witches or old busybodies; the small number of female characters who might be described as corresponding to normality have subordinate or stereotypical roles.

Anthropomorphism, the ascription of human character to what is not human, is a major cartoon strategy; it is also an important feature of folklore, of stories told or read by parents to small children, of early reading material for children, of early educational texts, preschool games and children's drama. By the time the Irish child comes to watch cartoons on television, he will already have acquired some degree of sophistication in anthropomorphous processing.

The same background conditioning will have given the Irish child considerable experience in situational transformations such as magical effects, or other situational consequences at variance with normal experience.

The general formula for transcultural processing of television texts will apply; Irish children will relate to the core content which is also part of their own experience, and operate a tolerance of the content which is specific to the source culture.

This core content includes a wide range of universal graphic and narrative motifs such as the chase, falling, explosions, the recovery of the character from some devastating mishap, and simple, intense goal-directed narratives. An example would be Bugs Bunny in pursuit of carrots.

Cartoons, like any other media product, tend to reflect to a high degree the physical content of the source environment. They will also reflect the visual, aural and verbal

language of the source culture. The Irish child will have no local model for the national park of which Yogi Bear is an inhabitant, or indeed for Yogi Bear himself; neither will he or she have any personal acquaintance with the skyscraper environment through which the myopic Mr. Magoo gropes his peril-strewn way. Nor will the Irish child have any direct experience of the language patterns of these characters.

The Irish child viewer will, however, derive considerable gratification from the cartoon experience despite these competence deficiencies, but the deficiencies imply the possibility of a skewed assimilation of the cultural variables in the content for the transcultural child viewer, as compared to a more accurate reading by the child viewer in the source culture.

As powerful conveyors of the physical environment of the source culture, cartoons endorse the cultural values, ideals, structures, organisation, and behavioural patterns of the country of origin, since these form the operational context of the narrative, and are invariably unquestioned in the text. If cultural imperialism is a valid concept, then cartoons play as significant a part in this process as actuality texts, and must be seen as vehicles of cultural invasion and colonisation.

Cartoons in general present a world where the constraints and inhibitions of normal life are removed or inverted. Thus a major gratification of the cartoon is the subversive gratification. Like folklore and mythology, the cartoon reorganises the power structures of the real world so that the mouse and the canary can cope with the cat or the laws of gravity be set at nought; where the helpless and hopeless win out in the end. Cartoons parallel the child's imagination, which confers powers on the child that the reality of his or her situation negates.

If we are to believe John Fiske, in Television Culture, and Hodge and Tripp, children relegate cartoon material to a low modality category, perceiving text content as belonging to a world outside the order of normality. As such, the cartoon is unlikely to be an active model for personal behaviour. The cumulative ideological impact of cartoon programmes is, however,

more difficult to gauge.

Children's programming is generated in a production environment influenced by local perceptions of children's needs, by available academic perceptions, by perceptions of children's viewing patterns, by local family values and needs, by operative social structures, by operative behavioural norms, by pressure group input, by national ideologies, and by commercial objectives such as potential sales of spin-off programme products and projected use of children's programming as a vehicle for child-related advertising.

These influences at source combine to produce a text that will inevitably be biased towards source values. Writers, artists, and performers can only draw on their own experience and values, which will normally conform to source patterns.

The cartoon will often contain explicit ideological input. Disney Studios were maintained by CIA funding during the war years, in return for production of instructional material for the army. Wartime general-audience cartoon features were explicitly ideological, and many of these features are still being transmitted. The strident **Donald Duck** was the usual vehicle for wartime patriotism, promoting War Bonds, exhorting eternal vigilance against enemy infiltration and lampooning the Fuhrer. (c.f **Donald Duck Joins Up : Richard Shale : 1982**).

A wide cross-section of longer cartoon features, notably space sagas, can be summarised as variations of the primal theme of enlightened individualism versus repressive collectivism or personal dictatorship. Enlightened individualism, which will always win, is the central American myth. In one space saga which I saw, the totalitarian villains wore Russian fur hats, and had heavy Breshnev-like features. John Fiske found the same perspectives in **Dr. Who** [Fiske : 1984]

The anti-totalitarian argument is expressed in a particularly powerful and explicit way in the cartoon version of George Orwell's **Animal Farm**.

In the earlier versions of **Tom and Jerry**, the cat-and-mouse game was played around the feet of a black Momma, which was a facet of dominant cultural thinking that the appropriate role

for the black was that of a servant. That this was interpreted as racialist expression seems to be confirmed by the replacement of the black feet with those of a young white woman in current editions of Tom and Jerry.

Hugh Lofting wrote his earliest **Doctor Doolittle** stories in the Flanders trenches; according to John Townsend, Hugh Lofting has been described as a racist and a chauvinist. There was a situation in one of the **Doctor Doolittle** books where the black Prince Bumpo begged the good doctor to turn him white, and Townsend laments that Lofting shared the insensitivity of many of the Englishmen of his day. **The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle** was one of RTE's most popular cartoon transmissions.

Just as an animal care ideology and a pro-environment ideology is implicit in animal-centred actuality drama, science fiction implies a range of science and technology ideologies, and various cosmologies and metaphysical systems, which were frequently profound enough to raise such questions as the origin of matter, or energy, or life. 'Mutant' is a term with which many primary school children are now familiar.

The main slice of the science fiction provision was concerned with space travel. Space sagas, as we have seen, usually followed folklore and mythological structures. More often than not they involved interplanetary and even intergalactic wars. These could only be constructed from earth-bound experience, and outer space was the battleground for dominant terrestrial ideologies. These conflicts usually took the form of a totalitarian tyranny challenged by an individualistic hero or hero-group implicitly championing democracy---in other words, science fiction was the site of the main ideological battle of our era.

Perhaps the most pervasive ideological impact is in the subliminal and overt conditioning towards consumerism; the cartoon, at a very impressionable age, predisposes the child viewer towards the viewing of television commercials. The attention-grabbing techniques and compact narrative style of the cartoon are developed and applied more seductively in the standard television commercial. It is clear that the pedagogic techniques

of **Sesame** Street evolved to a large extent from the study of commercials.

Cartoons, and, according to Gerbner (1980), Fiske (1984, 1987), and Hodge and Tripp (1986), the general range of children's programming, will reflect racist ideologies by making the main protagonists, as in **Scoobydoo**, white and middle class; they will reflect sexist bias by an uneven distribution of male and female characters in the cartoon demography, and by the allocation of a disproportionate amount of catalytic power to the male characters.

CARTOON DRAMA : IMPORTED AND HOME PRODUCED : COMPARISON

In contrast with the vast anthology of imported cartoon provision outlined above, the home-produced contribution of comparable material was minuscule.

We had nothing to compare with the conventional American package---the Disney Studios or Warner Brothers or Hanna-Barbera product. There was nothing comparable to a single **Mickey Mouse** or **Bugs Bunny** or **Pink Panther** episode in duration, graphic or sound-track technique in the whole list of home produced cartoons, and no example of a 13-part season of such episodes, or of sustained production of blocks of such episodes year after year.

With the possible exceptions of **The Magic Piano, An Axe, an Apple and a Buckskin Jacket, A Dog's Tale** and C.P. and Qwikswitch, the home product in the twenty-five years under review had a pedagogic rather than an entertainment objective. Humour, when present, was of the quiet, subdued variety, and more often than not was verbal rather than visual. The bulk of the imported cartoon material was humour-driven in visual and aural terms, the humour being of a slapstick, frenetic nature, usually achieved by powerful audio-visual techniques. Aidan Hickey's **The Magic Piano**, however, delivered humour in audio-visual idiom.

Home production has been unable to effect sustained delivery of any one feature, with the arguable exception of the **Daithi Lacha** series, to a degree of volume which would make the feature in question part of the cultural capital of the viewing

community. **Ri Rá**, for example, would not achieve the same level of recall in an Irish audience as, say, **Tom and Jerry**.

Daithi Lacha, **Seán The Leprechaun**, **Lúidin Mac Lú**, **Ri Rá**, **An Choill Mhór**, **An Gairdin Alainn**, and the Bosco features could be described, if we assume that the Irish language communication impediment, where present, was overcome, as preschool material or material for the younger age-groups, but this was the only category of cartoon provision to offer any significant competition to imported cartoon material in the period under review.

Whole thematic categories were missing from the home produced cartoon provision. To mention a few, we have no adaptation of a literary work, very little animated folklore, very little science fiction, no ghost stories, nothing in the chase genre, and, apart from the **Axe, the Apple and the Buckskin Jacket**, a Christmas feature, nothing in the way of a seasonal feature.

Our conclusion must be that the imported cartoon provision was substantial, varied, well resourced, with a high degree of viewer acceptability, and with significant cultural and intercultural implications.

In the cultural context, effects are difficult to establish. If the amalgam of imported cartoon material has had a cultural impact on young Irish viewers, transmitting values and attitudes , then these values cannot have been counter-acted or corrected to any significant degree by the home provision.

Irish children will not find their physical environment reflected in the graphic backgrounds of the anthology of imported cartoons we have surveyed. The personae of the anthropomorphisms and the other characterisations will not correspond to those of the people whom they know. The phonetics and idiom of the cartoon characters will not correspond to those with which they are familiar in real life. The narrative content will not reflect their traditions or their immediate social reality.

It follows that the imported cartoon provision will not help towards the formation or deepening of a sense of Irish identity or cultural consciousness for the average child, nor will

the viewing experience enhance the capacity of Irish children to make sense of the Irish milieu in which they live.

It may be that we can take another view---that the Irish child, in particular the modern Irish child---is born into a culture of which the imported cartoon is already an integral part---incorporated into that culture by cinema, comics, television programming practice and VCR availability; that the cartoon provision we are talking about is an enhancement of that culture, and that the processing of this cartoon provision is primarily cultural development rather than accommodation of cultural invasion and colonisation.

IMPORTED PUPPET DRAMA : IMPLIED VALUES

Imported puppet drama was significantly less in volume than imported cartoon drama; the total cultural impact would be proportionately less than that of the cartoon provision. Nevertheless, imported puppet drama invariably carried a heavy loading of source values, perspectives and ideologies.

British preschool puppet series convey cumulatively an image of a rigidly-structured society where every character has an allotted role; this social structure was the source of resolution for any problems that might occur in the characters' lives. The voices used in characterisation also reflected a class-structured society---posh establishment voices for authority figures and for privileged characters---less sophisticated voices for vocationally-designated characters---and rough working-class voices for villains.

The Thames TV version of The Wind in the Willows carried these values explicitly. Mole was a timid, well-meaning middle-class citizen trusting to the sagacity or arch-conservative Badger. Most of their energy was devoted to preserving the aristocratic Toad of Toad Hall from his own folly. Toad's misdemeanours were always forgivable, but not those of the delinquent stoats and weasels, who, inevitably, were working-class characterisations. Toad must survive at all costs, preferably sadder but wiser, because if Toad goes the caste system

which he represents, in which Badger thrives, in which Mole feels secure, and in which the weasels and stoats are contained, goes with him.

The Henson puppets in **Sesame Street**, **The Muppets**, and **Fraggle Rock**, conveyed a wide range of American mainstream values and perceptions. In contrast with the almost feudal demographic structures discernible in British puppet drama, the motivation of the Henson puppet characters was an aggressive individualism. American puppet drama operated on the general maxim that another point of view exists; characters will expound and listen to this point of view, but pursue their own goals with tenacity.

The **Sesame Street** puppet drama was of necessity pedagogically driven; underlying the educational methodology there was an educational ideology targeting in particular minority groups in American society---blacks and Hispanics mainly---which implied that the dominant educational system was the path to personal fulfilment and economic success.

The programmes were designed for maximum accessibility to the child audience at source. This would facilitate some degree of general visual accessibility for Irish children, as would the literacy and numeracy base of the pedagogic content, but there remained a wide range of visual and aural transformations, sited in home and physical environments, which may have been beyond their processing competence. The processing of Irish children would also have been informed by their own preschool or educational system, which differed in many areas from that which generated the imported text. One example would be the aural representation of the letter 'z', pronounced 'zee' in **Sesame Street**, and 'zed' in Ireland.

ANIMATION DRAMA : FUTURE TRENDS

Reductions in home production, the necessity to provide programmes for a second channel, and the necessity to acquire material to support new revenue earning initiative, increased the general dependence on imported programming in the 1980s.

In the competitive context, new programming outlets

such as Channel Four, the development of satellite channels, extended morning television provision, and the general expansion of transmission hours, increased the demand for all types of programming material. The animation feature and series remained in demand as a trouble-free filler of the children's slot, and as ideal material to meet the voracious demand for children's programming on the satellite channels, in particular The Children's Channel.

The general cutback in the production of children's programmes worldwide, round-the-clock transmission and the proliferation of satellite channels combined to increase the ratio of repeat showings; the repertoire built up over the past fifty years will be in continual transmission.

Simultaneous with this cutback a new source of cartoon material has emerged. Japan's contribution of cartoon material to world television networks was insignificant until 1980. In the last decade, however, Japan has emerged as the largest producer of animation material for the world market, the current production volume exceeding that of the United States.

Where new programmes are made they will have the benefit of major technological developments in animation crafts such as computer applications.

A new market has also identified itself; the multi-million pound cartoon feature designed for cinema transmission continues to be commercially viable. In time these productions will make their way into the television repertoire.

The VCR revolution has had significant impact on cartoon viewing. Many of the animation features seen on television are available for rental fees as low as fifty pence per night, and are also available at prices comparable to those for books for outright purchase.

The current strategy of grouping children's programmes under a unified presentation format such as The Den also favours animation content in the schedules; the two or three hour afternoon schedule must be filled and long-running animation series are a trouble-free and cheap strategy towards meeting this commitment.

The home produced animation drama provided indicated a wealth of indigenous talent for this type of creative commodity. This graphic talent has been exploited by multi-national concerns producing full-length animated features for the world cinema and television markets, the Sullivan Bluth Company and Murakami Wolf, both firms enjoying substantial IDA funding and generous tax rebate arrangements. The initial IDA grant to Sullivan Bluth was £5 million, according to an article in the Irish Times by Helen Meany on August 1st, 1991.

It should be pointed out, however, that the storyboards and soundtracks are produced and directed by American creative teams; the local graphic work is dictated by these sources and, although requiring a high level of skill, is substantially a manufacturing process.

Sullivan Bluth is engaged in the production of full-length cinema cartoon features for the world market; titles already in circulation include **The Land Before Time, An American Tale, All Dogs Go To Heaven** and **Rock-a-Doodle**, the theme of which is derived from Chaucer's Chaunticleer in **The Canterbury Tales**. Helen Meany quotes this feature as costing £200,000 per minute. Murakami Wolf make episodes of long-running series under contract. Their current work is the production of a block of **Ninja Turtle** programmes.

Sullivan Bluth and Murakami Wolf, as producers of animation drama for export, exploit the artistic talent generated by the Irish post-primary and third-level education system, particularly in the VEC sector, where art courses have proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s.

There have also been developments in voice-over and sub-titling applications. The Telegael firm in Connemara has appended Irish-language sound-tracks to continental cartoon and other series which have been transmitted in the RTE schedules. Telegael will have an important function in programming if the Irish language television service is launched in the near future.

The new commercial television station TV3, or whatever version of a third station is eventually set up, will inevitably expand the supply of imported animation drama for Irish audiences.

THE LIVE ACTION COMPONENT

In this chapter we have given a brief overview of the major category of the schedule content, the imaginative paradigm, which was substantially animation drama. The imaginative category has transpired to be one of surprising strength, range and variety, establishing television as a major vehicle for formal fantasy in the new 'special effects' idiom and also as an important relay and conservation agency for much of the global folk and mythological heritage. While the home produced component was creditable given the structures and resourcing in which it emerged, it did not yield to any significant extent drama which would conform to the model implied by the dramatic and developmental criteria evolved in Chapter One for children's television drama which, arguably, would best correspond to the needs and preferences of Irish children.

In Chapter Four we will discuss some important categories in the live action or verisimilous component of the provision: real life, adventure and animal-centred drama. By verisimilous we mean television drama which attempts to reflect the real world of young people, where the situations and action conform to human experience, where the viewer and the subject can interact free of the intervention, or perhaps of the distortion, of the graphic artist or the special effects expert.

Again, our main preoccupation will be the identification of live action drama created to developmental criteria, which relflected the preferences of Irish children both in content and in treatment, which was action-driven, which had a high level of resourcing and high production values, which was generated in the Irish cultural milieu and explored topics and situations of immediate relevance to Irish children in the visual and aural idioms of their own culture. This may prove a frustrating search.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIVE ACTION DRAMA.

The paradigm of the fantastic which we examined in Chapter Three was mainly enacted narrative mediated by two-dimensional and three-dimensional representational artefacts. The acceptance of these artefacts as representational agents implied one plane of main modality cancellation; as we noted, a further cancellation of main modality was frequently called for in relation to the narrative content. Animation and other forms of fantasy imply a conscious movement away from verisimilitude; indeed, as Fiske (1987) suggests, fantasy implies a resistance to verisimilitude.

Our journey in Chapter Four is in the opposite direction---towards the drama in the schedules which approximated to the actuality of children's lives. This, essentially, is a search for a closer modal fit between the schedule content and the social and physical environments of the child viewer. This closer modal fit should materialise in live action television drama---camera-mediated drama using human representational agents or actors in real or constructed locations. We will begin with the film provision.

To quote James Monaco on the subject of film, the history of the recording arts has been a progression towards verisimilitude; colour film reproduces more of reality than does black and white; sound film is more closely parallel to actual experience than is silent. Film, according to Monaco, does not completely eliminate third-party intervention between the subject and the observer, but it does significantly reduce the distortion the presence of an artist inevitably introduces. (Monaco : 1977 : 7)

When we move into the spectrum of verisimilitude we do not automatically dismantle the scaffolding of fantasy, folklore and mythology. As we noted in Chapter Three, anthropology-

premised television studies would see the general range of television output in terms of a modern mythology. "The public, broadcast texts of television : images, narratives, icons, rituals are the site of contemporary mythic culture." (Silverstone : 1988). Esslin (1982), finds parallels between the structures and formulae of mythology and conventional television drama , and an intriguing correspondence between myth and the motifs of television commercials.

FILMS

Films have a strong presence in all our theme categories; real-life drama, adventure, historical and costume drama, folklore and mythology, the American West and mid-West, animal-centred drama, drama derived from literature, environment-based drama, comedy, musical drama, fantasy, science fiction, school themes, and family drama. The lists also include full-length animation features made originally for cinema.

Films were rarely scheduled in regular children's programmes slots---it wouldn't normally be possible to accommodate a full-length film in the time available---the films on our list, if they were short comedy features, appeared in the early evening, or if full-length, on weekend afternoons or during bank holidays or at Christmas and Easter.

The cinema film made its own special contribution to the television schedules by providing blocks of programming which would not materialise from conventional television production. It is doubtful, for instance, if television could originate anything like the comedy shorts of **Charlie Chaplin, Harold LLoyd, The Three Stooges, Buster Keaton,** and **Laurel and Hardy,** or the vast repertoire of silent comedy. Nor can television production create musical drama with the scope and impact of **The Wizard of Oz, Calamity Jane, Mary Poppins, Oliver,** or **Hans Christian Andersen.** The cinema film, too, was a particularly effective vehicle for fantasy, because of its potential for the exploitation of special effects. **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang,** written by Ian Fleming and scripted by Roald Dahl, **The Incredible Rocky Mountain Race,** the **Superman** film series,

including **Supergirl**, Roald Dahl's **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**, **Herbie Rides Again**, or **Indiana Jones** would hardly have been as popular if they had been produced with the comparatively meagre resources of television drama.

Cinema films made before television were a powerful audio-visual archive of many facets of the first half of this century, made accessible to new audiences by transmission on television. As Monaco (1977) points out, television worked to conserve texts considered ephemeral by their original creators; films made in the 1930s, for example, have proved far more durable as cultural products than literature of the same period.

The cinema film on television was also unique in narrative terms; invariably it presented a closed narrative, whereas other forms of television drama were presented more often than not in series or in serial format. As the single television play gave way to serials, series and mini-series the cinema film on television became the staple medium for the considerable gratifications of the closed narrative.

The cinema films on our imported drama lists constituted on the whole a distinct category with unique features of its own deriving from the scale and scope of the treatment, the high level of resourcing, superior audio-visual presentation, and specific narrative conventions appropriate to film.

This is not to say that television is a completely satisfactory medium for the television film. To quote Monaco again, **"the curved screen, the lack of definition and contrast, the difficulties of broadcast reception, all work to minimize the effectiveness of the TV image."** (Monaco : 1977 : 381). Television turned to film on a large scale in the 1960s as an available source of product; the attractive feature for networks, according to Monaco, was that film had been 'pre-sold'; television could exploit the publicity already generated by the film studios and cinema chains; it could also exploit the 'star' factor.

SOME FILM CATEGORIES

Shirley Temple films featured in the selections from the earliest years, as single items in the schedules, or grouped in 'seasons'. **Dimples**, **The Little Colonel**, **Little Miss Markham**, and **Heidi** were some of the titles in these seasons.

Among the films in the children's schedules which were based on literary works were **Tom Sawyer**, **Huckleberry Finn**, **Alice in Wonderland**, **The Prince and the Pauper**, which was a Mark Twain rags to riches story, **The Railway Children**, **The Secret Life of Walter Mitty**, **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**, **Little Lord Fauntleroy**, **Swallows and Amazons**, **A Christmas Memory** by Truman Capote, **Ring of Bright Water** from the book by Gavin Maxwell, **Wind in the Willows**, **Wizard of Oz**, **David Copperfield**, **Oliver Twist**, **A Christmas Carol**, **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**, **The Moonspinners**, **The Deerslayer**, **Rip Van Winkle**, **Black Beauty**, and **The Red Pony**, based on John Steinbeck's novel.

The conventional cinema programme in the 1950s and 1960s frequently included a short comedy film as a prelude to the main feature. These film comedies were successfully packaged for television and well received. Series mentioned in the RTE schedules were **The Three Stooges**, **Laurel and Hardy**, **Buster Keaton**, **Harold Lloyd** and **Charlie Chaplin**. The **Abbot and Costello** films, also listed frequently, and the occasional **Marx Brothers** film, were normally full-length features. Some full-length **Chaplin** films were also scheduled.

Silent comedy shorts were often presented under titles such as **Comedy Capers**, **The Hilarious Hundred**, **Old Time Comedy** and **Hollywood Silents**.

Filmed musicals tended to be scheduled as holiday viewing, at Christmas and Easter and on bank holidays. Musical films were general audience material but selections had a bias towards young viewers. Typical titles were **A Hard Day's Night** and **Yellow Submarine**, which were Beatle films; **Tickle Me**, **Clambake**, and **Elvis**, starring Elvis Presley and his music; **Summer Holiday**, with Cliff Richard and **Quest**, with Tommy Steele.

The lists also included examples of more conventional musicals like **The Wizard of Oz**, **Calamity Jane**, **Mary Poppins**,

Oliver, and **Hans Christian Andersen**. On a higher musical plane we had films of **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** and of **Sleeping Beauty**, a Kirov ballet performance.

One film listed, **I'm Looking to You**, considered music and song as military recruitment propaganda, in the context of the impact of war on the lives of children.

Extending fantasy to the realm of folklore and mythology, we find titles such as **Pulcinella**, **The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm**, **Tom Thumb**, **The Slipper And The Rose**, **Baron Munchausen**, **The Mountain King's Son**, **Thief of Bagdad**, **Pinnochio**, and **Cinderella**.

Fantasy on a more modest budget was provided by **The Boy and The Ball**, **The Boy With The Green Hair**, **The Boy Who Turned Yellow**, **Kitty and the Red Shoes**, **Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer**, and one or two **Jeannie** films, about a modern witch released from a bottle.

There were also films with a historical base such as **The Cossacks**, **Marco Polo**, **The Flame and the Arrow**, **The Camerons** : seafaring films in this genre included **The Treasure of the Dutch**, **Blackbeard the Pirate**, **Summer on Miracle Island**, **Morgan the Pirate**, and **The Voyage of Sinbad**.

In addition to seafaring films, the Film Department in RTE has over the years acquired and scheduled many exciting adventure films for children. **The Mudlark** was about a poor boy intent on breaking through the security surrounding Buckingham Palace, and getting to see Queen Victoria. **Raiders of the Lost Ark** was Steven Spielberg's version of the death-defying rescue of the Ark of the Covenant from the hands of the Nazis by antiquarian Indiana Jones; **Indiana Jones** was another film on the same theme. **Fire in the Stone** was about opals; **Hide and Seek** had a crime theme; **A Hitch in Time** was a science fiction film.**Only Angels Have Wings** was a 1939 film about the fortunes of a small airline in South America.**One Hour To Zero** was a children's thriller involving a nuclear power station in Wales.

The Children's Film Foundation made a number of films specifically for child audiences. Some of these were acquired for transmission by RTE. CFF titles in the lists are **Sammy's**

Super T-Shirt, The Glitter Ball and **The Johnston Monster**, which was set in Ireland.

Films which featured animals included **Lassie Come Home, Gypsy Colt**, a re-make of **Lassie Come Home**, which substituted the colt Gypsy for the collie; **Lassie's Great Adventure; The Black Stallion; Nestor the Christmas Donkey;** films about **Benji**, the Scotch terrier; **Black Beauty;** a film called **The Red Deer;** and **The Cat from Outer Space**, a live action Disney production about an alien cat with a magical collar who landed on earth in a space capsule.

Tom Brown's Schooldays, Goodbye, Mr. Chips, Revenge Of The Nerds and **Mulligan's Stew** were films with school-related themes.

Orphan themes surfaced occasionally in the film category, with titles such as **Boys' Town**, and **Where The Lilies Bloom**, about four children orphaned when their father dies, who keep the news of his death from the neighbours for months to avoid being taken into care.

Flight of the Doves, with which, as we have said, we have classification problems, and the short low-budget **A Second of June**, made for £10,000 by a twenty-two year old Jesuit student, were the only examples of home-produced cinema films on our lists.

DRAMATIC CRITERIA

The cinema film is designed for a different viewing environment to that of television. As John Ellis notes in **Visible Fictions**, cinema attendance is a 'special event', individual or couple-centred, compared with the family-centred nature of television viewing and the ongoing, non-specific nature of television provision. Cinema is a collective experience; the cinema audience is disciplined by conventions and formal rules, the most pertinent of which is silence; distractions are further eliminated by the technical requirement of theatre darkness; the attention of the audience is artificially focussed on the bright screen on which the images are projected, and this attention is riveted by an over-loud

sound-track. The cinema text is created to exploit these conditions both visually and aurally, and the encoded content of the cinema film is most accessible in these conditions. The visual images on the outsize screen acquire larger than life proportions and dominate, even to the extent of intimidating, the captive and immobile audience in the darkened auditorium. The aural images, conveyed by dialogue, sound effects and music, assault the sensory system, hammering home the preferred reading. (Ellis : 1982)

The cinema film transferred to television cannot dominate the viewer in scalar, visual or aural aspects to the same degree as cinema. The sitting-room is not a disciplined viewing environment; the room lights will not be turned off to achieve a higher impact of screen content; there isn't a commissionaire at the sitting-room door to control domestic traffic; the volume of the television cannot normally be turned up to achieve cinema verisimilitude. Furthermore, the concentrated 'gaze' which characterises cinema viewing may corrode to the 'glance' of television assimilation.

There will be an inevitable loss of encoded content when a cinema film is screened on television, but it is unlikely to be of a degree that will prevent assimilation of the narrative. The dramatic impact of the televised film will still exceed that of a comparable conventional television drama, because the cinema film will normally have enjoyed a higher level of resourcing, technical, creative and material, than the television drama. The film camera will have a wider and deeper perspective; including more detail, and more 'epiphanised' or highlighted detail, than the television text. The film sound-track will have greater specificity, though less pervasiveness, than the television sound-track; the cinema uses sound as a vehicle for narrative to a greater degree than the conventional television production; music, as a narrative device, as a characterisation device, as a creator of mood, as an indicator of historic time, is normally used to greater effect in the film than the conventional television text.

Quite a number of the films we have mentioned were in

black and white. Both categories, the black and white film, and the colour film, raise questions about the semiotic impact of colour---colour as a source of meaning. This question also arose in the 1960s, before the advent of colour transmission, when films made in colour were received in black and white. A variant of the same problem arises today, when films originally made in black and white are subjected to a recently-evolved computer controlled colouring process and transmitted as colour films.

Differentiated as art forms, the black and white film has shown considerable development as a dramatic medium since its inception---the black and white film was free of the burden of colour verisimilitude and could achieve effects in mood and alienation not available to the colour film. The later black and white films had the advantage of improved technology. A distinct evolution in quality and craft is perceptible in the black and white film which has not so far materialised in the colour film. (Stephenson and Debrix : 1965)

Colour is probably perceived in a modality context; black and white films are distanced from immediacy and pertinence by lack of colour; but lack of colour due to source factors or transmission or reception factors does not seem to inhibit narrative assimilation.

A context which is becoming increasingly more significant is the wide availability of cinema films in video cassette format for VCR usage. Figures published in the ITV Oracle teletext service in October, 1991, give some idea of the extent of video usage in England. The item referred to a drop in video rentals from 396 million annually to 384 million annually; and the same item quoted the annual total of cinema visits as remaining static at 100 million. The emerging pattern is that at least four times as many films are viewed at home as in the cinema, because the rented video cassette can normally be presumed to have more than one viewer.

Children are among the most avid users of video cassettes; this new development in television usage has placed immense powers of selection and reception control in the hands of children. The availability of a film outside conventional

television schedule structures, in video cassette formats and in the cinema, contributes to a social processing which may enhance accessibility to the text content when the child comes to view it. It has sources of publicity which are independent of television programming, and which are better resourced than those of television. The cinema film also tends to exploit the star performer factor. For these and other reasons, children may approach a viewing of a cinema film on television with a considerable amount of prior knowledge of the content. As Monaco points out, the cinema film on television is substantially 'pre-sold'.

The cinema film also unfolds itself in aural, visual, narrative filmic clichés and conventions with which the child becomes familiar in time and which also facilitate access to the content.

MUSICAL DRAMA

Film proved a successful medium for musical drama. Films musicals were normally in the fantasy genre. Recurring titles in the schedules were **The Chocolate Soldier, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Tales of Beatrix Potter, The Wizard of Oz, The Magic Flute, Peter and the Wolf, Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker, Swan Lake, The Carnival of Animals**, and **Mary Poppins**.

Musical drama takes many forms---opera, ballet, operetta, musical comedy, the stage musical, films incorporating music and dance, the dramatic musical video, and dramatic features and series featuring vocalists or musicians.

Music is also an important dramatic element, particularly in film; music, in the realistic film, can further the plot, substitute for dialogue, provide a supportive background for screen action, give information, intensify emotional content and amplify states of mind, clarify intent, contribute to continuity, create a dimension of interest in otherwise drab scenery, foreshadow developments to come, give coherence to montages and perform many other functions.

Child viewers are sensitive to most of these uses of

music. They are particularly sensitive to atmospheric music; the music accompanying a segment of a horror film, for instance, can be particularly frightening. (Himmelweit et al. : 1958)

The presence of music in the text calls for a range of specific modality cancellations; an orchestra is rarely present when a ship sinks in a storm, for example. Musical drama makes similar demands on credulity; one does not normally sing one's way through life, or burst into a song and dance routine at the bus-stop.

Children accept these conventions readily; the assimilation of dramatic conventions is a major development in media sophistication. Music as a mood conditioner probably helps the child in the area of emotional discrimination.

The short musical video is currently a very popular viewing choice with young people. These videos are highly dramatic in character, conveying forceful visual and aural narratives. The videos are expensively produced, enjoy a high ratio of repeat showings, and are also available for VCR viewing. These musical video texts circulate vast complexes of meanings and constitute immense iconographies of youth culture and popular culture. (Fiske : 1989).

Other cinema musicals, or films with music, song and dance, which appeared in the schedules over the years under review were **The Golden Vanity, Hans Brinkler and the Magic Skates, Anna and the King, West Side Story, Return to Oz, HMS Pinafore, The Sound of Music, Oliver, Calamity Jane,** and a **Gilbert and Sullivan** season. Some quasi-dramatic programmes which featured pop groups and performers as actors were **The Monkees, The Osmonds film Going Coconuts,** and the **Elvis Presley** films. Other musical drama programmes were **You Mustn't Believe all This, I'm Looking To You, The Story of the Carol,** and **Rock School**. The series **Fame** incorporated music, song and dance.

Animation programmes frequently resorted to music as soundtrack material, and there were several animation programmes which attempted a visualisation of well-known classical and other musical material.

We can only quote four examples of home produced live

action musical drama which would invite the specific attention of young people : the Christmas pantomime, **Cinderella**, put on by the RTE Variety Department, a **Rock Nativity** put on by the same department, and two Abbey Theatre shows transferred directly from the stage to the television studio, the bilingual Abbey Pantomime, **Ferdinand agus an Prionsa**, taken from the main Abbey stage, and the all-Irish rock musical, **Johnny Orfeo**, transferred from the Peacock.

Music was a feature of may other home produced drama programmes; music and song were strong elements in **Murphy agus a Chairde**, **Lúidín Mac Lú**, **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**, **Wanderly Wagon**, and, if we can claim it, **Flight of the Doves**. A main objective of **Lúidín Mac Lú**, according to its producer, Eamonn de Buitléir, was to inculcate a love of Irish music in its young viewers. Aidan Hickey's, **The Magic Piano** was, to a large extent, a visualisation of well-known light classical pieces in animation format.

The imported provision we have been describing so far in this chapter was marked by a high level of production values, and the provision clearly offered wide ranges of emotional and aesthetic gratifications in aural and visual paradigms, cognitive acquisitions and media sophistication. The verisimilitude of the film is more intense than conventional television provision; the closed narrative structure, greater aural and visual definition, and more effective synecdochic and metonymic strategies combine to create a rich dramatic experience. The cinema film, at the same time, is more often than not an adult-orientated mass audience text, more likely to disenfranchise children in representational terms than to include them.

REAL-LIFE AND ADVENTURE SERIES AND FEATURES.

The categorisation of children's television drama as 'real life' drama hinges to a major extent on the degree of transformation child viewers must apply to a text to relate it to their own experience of life as children.

In our compilation of a category of real life drama we

will generally exclude animation drama, non-animation fantasy, historical drama, folklore and mythology, musicals, science fiction, and other categories which imply a priori a distancing of the content from contemporary actuality.

Despite the distancing in time, the stories of E. Nesbitt---in particular **The Treasure Seekers** and **The Railway Children**----Susan Coolidge's **Katy** , and Francis Hodgson Burnett's **The Secret Garden**, **The Little Princess**, and even **Little Lord Fauntleroy**, dealt substantially with the reality of children's lives.

One classification which reflected the actuality of children's lives, at least in the source culture, was the child-centred drama series in a neighbourhood setting, examples of which would be **The Boy Next Door**, **Our Gang**, **The Terrific Adventures of the Terrible Ten**, **The Doubledeckers**, **The Brady Bunch**, **The Little Rascals**, **The Adventures of Curly and His Gang**, **Kids of Degrassi Street**, **Just William**, and **The BMX Bandits**.

Another substantial classification within the real-life genre was drama related to work situations or careers. These ranged from the exotic, like **Circus Boy**, **Elephant Boy**, and **Maja**, to the mundane, as in **Joe**, who helped out in his father's cafe. **The Flower of Gloster** dealt with barge life, **Stories of Tuktu** was about Eskimo life. The **Follyfoot** stories revolved around horses and ponies. **Ballet Shoes** was a career story about ballet dancers. In the series **One of a Kind**, ten year old Lizzie helped her mother run a sea-side snack stand. **The Flockton Flyer** was written around a railway family. **Andy Robson** was about a miner's son and had a 1930s setting. **Worzel Gummidge** was a working scarecrow, and the children in the story were farm children. **Brother to the Ox** was about farm life in Yorkshire. **Cougar** featured an American farm threatened by a predatory mountain lion. **One's a Heifer**, set in rural Canada, was a story constructed around a boy and stray calves. **And Now Miguel** was a film about a shepherd boy who wanted to prove that he could look after his father's flocks. Effort and grit were rewarded in **Fame** and in **The Tap Dance Kid**. **The Paper Lads** was about a paper round.

Sport in a work-situation context was represented by the BBC 6-part series, **Jockey School**. **Breakpoint** was a tennis-based serial. In **Freewheelin'** the activity was skateboard riding; **Space Riders** was about motorcycling, and **Sea Urchins**, a New Zealand series, was based on dinghy sailing. **A Different Kind of Winning** was another skateboard drama feature. Baseball was the subject of **Champs**, and of **Someone in the Kitchen with Jamie**. Sailing was the subject of **Swallows and Amazons**. **The Gymnast** examined the pressures on a girl who wanted to be a gymnast.

Several imported series and features in the years under review dealt with the vast matrix of family relationships, and with the relationships of children to adults inside and outside the family network. **Heidi** dealt with the relationship between a little girl and her grandfather, in the setting of the Swiss Alps. **Grandpa's Day**, and **Mandy's Grandmother** explored the same broad theme. **One of the Boys**, a story about a young-at-heart grandad, reached first place in the TAM ratings. Roundabout was about an old man and a boy. **The Flaxton Boys** centred on a boy and his mother in the Yorkshire Moors. **On Your Tod--at 18** was about a boy who moved out of home to live on his own. **The Little House on the Prairie**, **The Little House Years** and **The Family Jewels** were basically about family relationships. **Pollyanna**, **Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm** and **All the Green Years** could be described in the same terms. **That Girl**, **Getting Together**, and **Benny and Marie**, were teen trauma series. **Going Along** had a peer pressure theme; **Evan's Corner** was about the world of an 8-year old. **The Little Silver Trumpet** was about a family on holiday. **Seven Little Australians** concerned the children of the two marriages of a temperamental father. **The Penny Box** involved a young boy, his great-aunt and and a mysterious box; **If I'm Lost, How Come I Found You?** was about a boy and his delinquent aunt; **In Falcon Territory** was set in Iceland, and told what happened when two brothers and their eccentric uncle went camping. **Double Trouble** was a situation comedy about 16 year-old twins. **The Edison Twins**, a long running series, had a similar theme. **The Trouble With Mother** dealt with

parent/child perspectives. **The World According To Nicholas** showed how the child of divorced parents coped with the break-up of his family.

The orphan theme posits the opposite of normal family relationships, and is thus a focus of reality. **Thursday's Child,** by Noel Streatfield, was about Margaret, a foundling; **Father Murphy** was about a priest who ran an orphanage; **Boys' Town** had a similar theme; **Dodger, Bonzo and the Rest** dealt with a threatened children's home. **The Orphans** also dealt with this topic, and **Sweetwater,** which featured a nine-year-old orphan. In **I Don't Know Who I Am!** an adopted child wanted to find his natural parents.

Drama dealing with physical and mental handicap could be another classification inside the 'real life' genre. **The Secret Garden** was about mental and physical rehabilitation. **Helen Keller** was about blindness and deafness. **Mom and Dad Can't Hear Me** centred on a little girl with deaf parents. **The Limping Boy** was about physical handicap. In **Melinda's Blind,** a young car crash victim adjusted to the consequences of the crash; **Silence** considered the situation where a deaf boy lost his parents; **Counting Sheep** was about a little girl who was ill. In **300 miles for Stephanie** a father ran marathons to win remission for his dying daughter. **George Goes to Hospital** took some of the terror out of that experience for children who watched the programme. **Clown White** was an exercise in drama for the deaf. **The Skating Ring** was about a boy with a speech defect. **Letty** was a young wheelchair detective. **The Yearling** was about a crippled boy on a farm.

Variations of the displacement theme also cropped up frequently. In **Brandon Chase** three boys ran away to live in the woods. **The Runaways** had a similar theme. **The Great Gilly Hopkins** was a runaway orphan girl. **Stig of the Dump** built and furnished his house from scrapyard junk. **The Mad Dog Gang** was about city children in the country. Island settings were usually displacement settings. Some island-based series with real-life contexts were **Island in the Snow, The Castaways, Mystery Island, The Swiss Family Robinson, Butterfly Island, Children's Island,**

The Coral Island, The Lost Islands, Ritter's Cove, Heno's Island and **Island of Adventure.**

A number of programmes in the lists looked at childhood or childhood events as a specific experience. **All The Green Years** was such a programme. **The Sky is Blue** was a film about a boy and a kite. **The Red Balloon** was a similar evocation. **Tom Grattan's War** was about children in time of war. **Joni Jones**, a Welsh language series, with subtitles, concentrated on the life of a young boy in Wales during the second World War. **An Only Child**, a Granada production, was Frank O'Connor's fictional version of his own childhood. **Rainbow** was a Canadian drama series about growing up. **I Can Jump Puddles**, and **Saturdee** were about growing up in Australia. The perspectives of younger children were dealt with in **My Mum's a Courgette**, in which a mother embarrassed her children by taking a job as a supermarket model, and in **The Fur Coat Club**, in which little girls were locked up in a shop for the night. **The Stray** was about a visit by schoolchildren to a zoo. **The Snowman** featured a little boy's relationship with the snowman he had created.

Many programmes which properly belonged to the fantasy category had a substratum of reality, or through binary opposition invoked a consideration of reality. **Tom's Midnight Garden** and C.S. Lewis's **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** ultimately invoked a consideration of the reality of dying. This kind of consideration was also implicit in ghost stories such as **The Ghosts of Motley Hall**, Penelope Lively's **Ghost of Thomas Kempe, Nobody's House, The Watersprite and Susan, The Haunting of Jessie Palmer**, and indirectly in **Highway to Heaven. The Powers of Matthew Star** and **Silver** dealt with psychic powers. **Jamie**, in a junkshop setting, and featuring a magic carpet, also blended fantasy and reality. **The Boy Who Turned Yellow** and **The Phantom Tree-House** reflected the same blend. Role reversal arising from magical transformations featured in **Vice Versa**, the father becoming the son and the son the father.

Contemporary child-centred adventure stories also had a reality context. Top TAM rating programmes of this type were **The Adventures of the Famous Five, The Nancy Drew Mysteries**, and

The Hardy Boys Mysteries. Films made by the Children's Film Foundation---Hijack! , about three children on a hi-jacked yacht; On the Run; Sammy's Super T-Shirt and The Glitter Ball, also met this requirement. Miscellaneous adventure series with a realistic context which we find in the lists were Freewheelers, The Georgian House, The Clifton House Mystery, The Chinese Puzzle, Who Spooked Rodney?, Children of the Stone and Journey to Survival, about six teenagers in the wilderness.

Other adventure stories evoking a processing of reality were The Patchwork Hero, Soup and Me and One Hour To Zero, a children's thriller concerning a nuclear power station set in Wales. The Hostages was a children's thriller involving farm children and convicts. Children of Fire Mountain was a thirteen-part adventure series from New Zealand. Tightrope to Terror was an Alpine thriller involving two sisters in a runaway cable car. The Adventures of Niko and Boy Dominic also belong to this classification.

Racial considerations were raised by programmes such as Massa Peter, a Danish children's serial with a slavery theme; in The Cosby Show, which featured a black family, and in Different Strokes, in which a rich, white family adopted Negro children. Joey and Red Hawk dealt with the relationship between an American Indian boy and whites.

The difference between being rich and poor emerged in such programmes as Silver Spoons, Lord Tramp, and It Isn't Easy Being a Teenage Millionaire. The Huntsman was about a Canadian boy who collected lost golf balls and sold them back to the players.

A miscellany of titles difficult to classify include a thirteen-part Granada series called Sam, written by John Finch, the series Hogg's Back, Winter of the Witch, Valentine's Second Chance, The Rocking-Chair Rebellion, It's a Mile From Here, The Witches and the Grinning God, The House on the Hill, The Happy Apple, and The Smith Family.

School life in America was represented by Head of the Class, and by War Between the Classes and Fame. Dear Loving Heart dealt with the trauma of high school romance.

A number of series reflected life in countries which had a language other than English. **Pippi Longstocking, Robert,** and **Ticko** were three Swedish series. **George** was a serial about a Swiss boy. **You Can Come To Visit My Place** was a Greek story. **Esa of Kannisari** was a film from Finland. **Ukiliq** was an Eskimo story. **The Flame Trees of Thika** was set in Kenya. **The Diary of Anne Frank** was located in Amsterdam.

The most notable collection of European drama for children was the EBU series, **The Adventure Show,** a drama exchange project designed to foster intercultural appreciation. The series was not confined to European drama. RTE transmitted seven programmes in the series, beginning with the Irish contribution, **Kevin's World.**

The Norwegian story **Escape** featured a ten-year-old deaf boy who befriended a runaway thief. **Danny's Egg** was set in Australia and featured a boy who rescued an emu egg from a marauding iguana. In **The Bell,** a Spanish story, village children recover an ancient church bell from the bottom of a lake. In the Belgian story, **Simon and Sarah,** a brother and sister are taken into care and sent to different foster homes where they were both unhappy. **The Stone Collector** was a Swedish story about a boy who found it difficult to make friends. In **Joost,** from Holland, a young boy coped mischievously with a rain-sodden sojourn at a summer camp.

In the EBU stories the adventure element was credible, child-centred, and rooted in contemporary reality.

<u>DRAMATIC CRITERIA</u>

The imported drama in the 'real-life' category was, for the most part, conventional children's television drama created for a young audience which explored themes of relevance or concern to young people and used children in character roles. The inclusive audience span to which the texts in the category appealed was probably from eight years of age to the mid-teens. As the programmes we have discussed indicate, a treatment of almost any topic can be evolved to meet the developmental, informational and entertainment needs of the various child audiences in this age-band.

By definition, texts in this category represented the actuality of children's lives in the source culture, and, necessarily to a lower degree of fidelity, the actuality of children's lives in receiving cultures, on the assumption that many of the primary contexts of childhood are common to all cultures.

The primary developmental contribution of real-life drama is in the area of self-image---a deepening of the sense of self.

SELF-IMAGE

The conclusions of a Sesame Street review document, prepared by The Children's Television Workshop team in 1972, referring to the pedagogic methodology of this programme series, expressed the developmental context of this self-image. (Lesser : I974 : 248)

An enhanced sense of self "enables the child to feel better about himself; to rely with more confidence on his own resources; to find constructive outlets for his emotions; to be more likely to face failure without collapsing."

Real-life television drama for children can provide verbal and non-verbal modelling for child viewers which will enable them to articulate their feelings in words and to express these feelings in non-verbal ways.

The sense of self in the drama texts in this category is developed in the context of others; an awareness develops that others exist; that children must relate to others; that the way children relate to others has implications for themselves.

With a better understanding of others, the child, according to the CTW team, will "be able to take another person's point of view, to understand that person's perspective, thoughts and feelings; anticipate how others will react to his actions, to reflect upon the possible consequences of his actions; communicate effectively with others; enter groups constructively and work comfortably within them; understand the value of sharing, helping and reciprocity."

With a deeper sense of shared experience the child will "appreciate both the similarities and differences between himself and others; discriminate when to accept and when to reject peer-group influences; discriminate when aggression is appropriate or inappropriate; find alternative forms of resolving conflict with others without resorting to violence."

There are many other agencies and factors which contribute to self-awareness, awareness of others, and shared experience. Television is unique in that is normally a private periodic sanctuary, to quote Gerald S. Lesser, in which children can develop these qualities on their own, "without surveillance and exacting expectations". Real-life children's drama, we would argue, has immense developmental potential in these processes.

In addition to the enhancement of control over their immediate world, real-life children's drama can provide modelling for children which would help them to cope with anxiety-generating situations peripheral to their world----involvement with the handicapped, for example; with children from family structures different to their own; with delinquents, orphans, with children of racial minorities; with children from different cultures, with children from socio-economic groups other than their own; with children in displacement situations.

The cognitive and informational content in this category is particularly pertinent to children.

The vast anthology of imported children's real-life television drama presented by Telefis Eireann/RTE in the twenty-five years under review clearly had the potential to make a developmental contribution to the personal growth of Irish children in so far as the material was accessible to the Irish child.

ACCESSIBILITY TO IRISH CHILDREN

The degree of accessibility, as we have suggested above, depends on the complexity of the transformational efforts needed by the average Irish child to process the imported text. The primary area of accessibility will be the universal experience of children---the facets of experience which Irish children share with children of all cultures----of family

structures, friends, play, educational structures, authority structures, basic child possessions. Material environments also share common features----houses, bedrooms, kitchens, streets, schools, hospitals, houses of worship, hide-aways, means of transport, parks, waterways, woods, and the general natural environment. Corresponding activity and vocational patterns as they impinge on children of all cultures can also be identified.

There is also a basic infrastructure of plot patterns and thematic patterns which will facilitate intercultural interface.

The Irish child has also the advantage in sharing to a high degree of proficiency the mainstream global language in which the bulk of this material is produced, although he or she will miss out on idiomatic refinements, and phonetics may present some problems. The child viewer in the cross-cultural viewing situation may also miss out on implicit sub-texts.

In addition, the Irish child will have first-hand familiarity with many of the multi-national mass-market artefacts and cultural commodities which may be included in the content.

Although there will be complex transformational operations of varying levels of complexity at all stages of viewing, the core content at least of the real-life drama texts we have been reviewing will be generally accessible to Irish children.

The average Irish child, exposed to the extensive provision of animation television drama already reviewed, should be competent to distinguish between media fantasy and media reality by the time he or she comes to view the actuality drama in the present category.

The topics and themes indicate that the content of the real-life category had substantial areas of conformity with the actual life of children in general and, cultural differences apart, with the lives of children in any culture. The Irish child will normally have considerable competence in the verbal language of the text, and have some degree of familiarity with cultural commodity content and other mass-market content which

has a global profile.

For these reasons Irish children should be normally competent to form mature reality judgements on the content of the imported text in this category on the basis of their experience of their own lives and environment.

However, they are equally liable to absorb any skewed versions of reality that may be latent in these texts. These uncontested assumptions are likely to be in the text demography---an imbalance of distribution and catalytic power between boys and girls to the advantage of the former, for example----disproportionate representation of minority cultures, and so on. They are also liable to absorb latent and explicit values and ideologies.

<u>VALUE SYSTEMS IMPLICIT IN REAL LIFE DRAMA PROVISION</u>

Media provision for children is a vehicle for a wide range of source perceptions as to what children should read or hear or view, and most media texts for children formally incorporate a preferred reading with a developmental or ideological objective.

Many of these source values and ideologies are positive, promoting understanding of self and others, directed at breaking down barriers between groups and individuals, making such points as kindness to animals or environmental conservation, demonstrating constructive alternatives to violent solutions of problems, explicitly promoting altruism. Quite often, too, there is an unchallenged acceptance of the hegemonic source culture, invariably in the public arena---law enforcement, educational practice, religion and various authority structures. The most pervasive expression of the hegemonic source culture is likely to be in life-styles which form the unevaluated background to the story. The child characters in the story frequently project a positive image of their particular world, and by implication of their social, economic and cultural environment.

It is difficult to say if this latent and explicit content has any effect on young Irish viewers. A relevant context might by the emigration statistics. It may be no more

than coincidence that the destination of the majority of our emigrants in our most recent exodus has been to countries which provided most of the television drama in this and other categories---to England, The U.S.A., Canada and Australia, countries plagued with domestic unemployment and, with the exception of England, with penal immigration restrictions.

The usual explanation may suffice--that Irish emigrants gravitate towards English-speaking countries. The English language would be equally valuable in continental Europe for the low-grade employment Irish emigrants are prepared to accept in English-speaking countries, and employment opportunities equally if not more numerous; yet there has been no significant emigration to EC countries other than England, despite our active membership of the EC.

These emigrants have grown up with Irish television. One wonders whether the recent emigration patterns would be the same if entertainment television on RTE had projected continental Europe to the same degree for Irish children as it projected the United States, Canada, Australia and Britain.

REAL LIFE DRAMA----HOME PRODUCED

The home produced television drama in the schedules in the period under review which might reflect the reality of Irish children's lives is live action drama originating wholly or partly in Ireland. As real life drama is the vital category for evaluation of the degree to which the home produced drama provision was relevant developmentally to Irish children, we will review to total live action provision in detail, and decide which elements of this provision qualify for inclusion in the real life category.

Siopa an Bhreathnaigh, launched in the first week of transmission, was a bi-lingual programme, but the argument was that the linguistic premise reflected a real-life situation---that there were a number of shops in Dublin operated by migrants from the Gaeltachtaí who were native Irish speakers, who spoke Irish among themselves and spoke English to their customers. The stories involved domestic situations within the Breathnach

family, conveyed mainly through Irish, and interaction with customers, which could be through the medium of Irish, English or French. Whatever the conformity to reality of the linguistic situation, the series was driven by linguistic rather than dramatic objectives. In the second season the shop migrated to the West of Ireland, to an Irish-speaking community. Local involvement now dictated the story-lines.

If we discount the linguistic objectives, we have a substantial and sustained work-situation drama series conveying the reality of commercial activity in its time, and also conveying in the content perceptions of contemporary social reality. It included child characters, and reflected some of the reality of the lives of Irish children, and of the interaction of Irish children with their family and community.

The series reflected to a significant degree the overall culture of the catchment area served by Telefis Eireann, and also the conflicting subcultures within that area. Culturally, the series could not have been a product of any other community.

Despite the shortcomings of the series, which arose in part from the lack of an effective production structure, and from the conflict between dramatic and linguistic objectives, **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** could have provided the basis from which a regular provision of television drama relevant to the reality Irish children's lives might have evolved.

In 1966 the four half-hour 1916 commemoration plays written by Bryan McMahon under commission were transmitted. These were **The Bicycle Man, A Boy at the Train, The School** on **the Green**, and **Children of the Dream**. The first three of these plays were in the English language. Incorporated in the commission was a commitment to reality-----reality fifty years previously--the real life context of the 1916 Rising for a cross-section of young people in Ireland.

"...through the eyes of ordinary Irish people, we are given a glimpse of the feelings and forces which so strongly inspired the men and women who eventually found themselves taking a leading part in the affairs of the nation...." says a programme note. In the same note the author himself is quoted as

describing his plays as "human incidents set against a background of superhuman events."

The terms of the commission, and the premises of the author, were heavily ideological. The author did not question his ideological premises or allow for a counter-view.

There was an obvious distancing in time. Three of the plays at least, **The Bicycle Man**, **A Boy at the Train**, and **The School on the Green**, had several layers of reality---historical, social, ideological and material. The fourth play, **Children of the Dream**, was a synthesis of Patrick Pearse's children's stories. All of the plays were child-centred--the main characters were children.

Ultimately the plays were components of a myth of origin, developed more fully in the total commemorative provision by the station in 1966.

We have already commented on **Wanderly Wagon**, which hinged primarily on the operation of puppets. Even though **Wanderly Wagon** included live actors, the category remained fantasy, and the gratifications for young viewers were those appropriate to fantasy. The derivative follow-up programme, Fortycoats, was also fantasy.

In the 1967 schedules there was an information programme with dramatic characteristics, **Adventures of Two Boys**, in which the camera followed two boys around Dublin as they explored the city.

If one can argue that rehearsals and selectivity confer a degree of dramatic validity on a text, then the next slice of real life drama would be in 1970, in **Buachaill Ar An Oileán**, an EBU documentary on the everyday life of a boy on the Aran Islands, scripted by Breandán O hEithir.

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox (1971), treasure-maps and golden idol apart, had several layers of actuality context for Irish children : physical environments, weather conditions, idiom, basic narrative situations and ethnic types. Local children got involved with holidaymakers, borrowed boats, got swept out to sea, were hungry, wet, terrified and elated, were protective of each other, knew that their parents were

worried. Irish children would have more familiarity with the archaeological and mythological elements of the story than other viewers.

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox was the only example in the schedules in the period under review of home-originated drama which corresponded in significant degree to the cultural schemata of the average Irish child. It was also the first example transmitted of 'home produced' actuality drama untrammelled ab initio by extraneous objectives such as the language revival or myths of origin, although there were cognitive acquisitions in the text in both these areas.

RTE can only claim a peripheral role in the creation of the series. The co-production arrangement, however, generated the level of resources essential for the production of a three-part series relevant to the actuality of Irish children's lives which came up to the standards of imported drama.

A Day in the Life of Martin Cluxton (1971), was a Drama Department production, intended for adult viewing. Martin Cluxton was sent to Glenmulkan Reformatory in the West of Ireland for "robbing cars"--a city boy transferred to a harsh rural regime for punishment---and he was now back in the uncaring and equally harsh urban environment of Dublin.

"By including the rural discourse, Martin Cluxton comes closer to the reality of contemporary Ireland," says Martin McLoone in Television and Irish Society.

A Day in the Life of Martin Cluxton reflected the actual and potential reality of life for many Irish children. As a straight narrative, uncluttered by partisan rhetoric--its avowed purpose was to show up the inadequacies of the Irish reform school system----it might have been acceptable to young viewers. However, the difficult construction and the complicated legislative context and the dramatic device of having several characters speak directly and at length into camera removed it from the category of drama generally accessible to children.

An abbreviated version by the BBC of Frank O'Connor's classic story about childhood, **First Confession**, was transmitted in the adult schedules in 1971. Many thousands of Irish children

had detailed familiarity with this story, because it was a school text. The ordeal of First Confession was a major childhood experience for most Irish children---the topic and situation were within the actual experience of the average Irish viewer, child or adult.

An abridged version of **Gerry**, an improvised workshop drama by the Ballyfermot Community Drama Workshop, appeared on Tangents, the general audience magazine programme. The participants were boys in the 12 to 15 age-group. The play portrayed violence in the street, at school and in the home. The boys used their own names in the play, and after the transmission the presenter, John O'Donoghue, spoke to the boys about, among other topics, their use of **"strong language"** in the enaction of their story.

Irishmen and Irishwomen (1975) can be classified as historical drama, or costume drama, or educational drama, but the programme did not provide the immediacy and relevance to the actuality of children's lives which would categorise it as real-life drama.

Yassu Corfu was a three-part documentary about Corfu, as seen through the eyes of Irish children, transmitted in 1976. As with **Buachaill ar an Oileán**, we can only claim that this programme had dramatic characteristics.

In 1977 RTE transmitted David Shaw Smith's **Sophie**. David Shaw Smith's camera pursued his 9-year old daughter, Sophie, in her normal play activities, during the long, hot summer of 1976. Situations included Sophie and her pony, Angus, Sophie and her toys, Sophie and the flowers, the bees, the butterflies, Sophie in the attic dressing up with clothes found in an old trunk. Organised in a narrative sequence, this material, unified by its theme, became relevant children's drama with considerable actuality content for younger Irish children.

The Spike appeared in 1978. This was an adult series, transmitted after the 9 o'clock news. **The Spike** was the local name for a public sector school, which included adult and community education in its brief as well as post primary education. As a post primary school the pupils were mostly

underprivileged and socially deprived children.

To quote again from Helena Sheehan, it was shot in Ringsend Technical Institute, with classes actually in session, and cast with pupils from Ringsend and Ballymun, **"giving it an authenticity which blurred the line between fact and fiction."** It had, despite its late time-slot, and adult brief, a huge audience of young people, who in the main extracted subversive gratifications from it. Potential models of subversive behaviour in schools were alarming, and generated protest on a scale sufficient to force the suspension of transmission after the fifth episode, although many other factors came into play in the controversy.

The Spike, whatever its shortcomings, indicated a demand in the young Irish audience for home produced dramatic material which would reflect the actuality of Irish society as it impinged on young people.

Flight of the Doves, a film version of Walter Macken's second novel for children, appeared on St. Patrick's Day, 1979. The story concerned the Dove children, two orphans who ran away to Ireland, and who were pursued by a detective because they had come into a large inheritance. The film was made in Ireland with a predominantly English cast. The Macken family were unhappy about the adaptation, maintaining that it was not an authentic version of the original story, and that it was highly Americanised by its director. Nevertheless **Flight of the Doves** had strong reality contexts for young Irish viewers, particularly in the area of marginalised urban and rural subcultures; the runaways were sheltered by the Dublin inner city community and by itinerants.

Curious Eyes, another 1979 transmission, was a series of four short films in which children from Northern Ireland and from the South become acquainted with traditional skills and crafts. The topics were violin-making, farm horses, island crafts, and ship-building. The unique aspect was the all-Ireland perspective of the series.

Another 1979 transmission was **Katie, Year of the Child**, a a feature made for the UNESCO-directed Year of the

Child in 1979. This was a BBC programme, scheduled for adult viewing. Katie Collins was a fourteen year old itinerant girl. The travelling family were camped by the roadside in County Dublin. Katie's mother was ailing. Her father had gone to England, not to work, but to 'make his fortune'. There were nine younger Collinses, and the responsibility for looking after them and her sick mother fell on Katie. Margaret Kelly, who acted as Katie, was herself an itinerant. Other itinerants, in particular travelling children, took part in the play. The main adult characters in the cast were played by Irish actors. The programme had a searing reality, and its purpose was to draw attention to the plight of itinerant children, not just in Ireland but in England. Director John Norton's forte was hard-hitting social drama.

Itinerants are a minority within our community, but a high-profile minority who impinge continuously on the settled majority, and---usually negatively---on the consciousness of most Irish settled children. One role of this type of drama was to break down barriers and promote understanding between majority and minority communities. The drama, however, was not addressed to children but to the general, and specifically adult, audience. The programme was a BBC production. Its claims on our attention are based on the topic, the location, and the cast.

Another play, made by the RTE Drama Department for adult viewing, **The Lost Hour**, was transmitted by RTE in 1982. This was an adaptation of part of the text of **The Leavetaking**, by John McGahern, and dealt with the trauma of a fourteen-year-old boy as his mother's illness from cancer worsened. The story was presented from the boy's perspective. The setting was rural Ireland in the 1940s. This was a very subtle and sensitive play, which demonstrated that RTE, permitting itself the structures and the resources, could produce relevant and profound drama for the young Irish audience. The death theme need not necessarily be excluded from children's drama, but it needs a specific treatment which takes account of the young person's competence to process the presentation.

O'Donoghue's Revenge, by Carolyn Swift, acted by the children of Killorglin Primary School in Kerry, and transmitted in 1982, was a history play. The reality and identification context was in the enaction---Irish children acting out a narrative from local tradition and being perceived to do so by their schoolgoing contemporaries. The programme provided role models for school activity.

The theme of **The Ballinch Bowl**, a German production, was the discovery of a valuable early Christian chalice on a farm. The reality context comes from well-publicised actual events such as the story of the Derrynaflan chalice.

The Irish contribution to the EBU project was, as already mentioned, **Kevin's World**, scripted by Tony Flaherty and produced by Michael Murphy. The story revolved around Kevin, a young dreamer who led a sort of Walter Mitty existence, but found himself entangled in a real-life adventure. It was filmed on location in Kilkenny and some of the leading roles were played by boys and girls in the ten-twelve age-group from Kilkenny schools. The production approach was obviously that applied in **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, and in the Access Community Project, with which Michael Murphy was also associated.

A Second of June was transmitted in 1985. This was a 40-minute film took a frequently humorous look at the city of Dublin through the eyes of a young girl and boy on the day of President Reagan's visit in 1984. The boy sold earrings on O'Connell Bridge, and the girl worked in a hamburger restaurant in Grafton Street. They lived in the outer suburbs and came in to town on the then-new DART train and drifted around individually. The boy played video games. A funeral made its way to Glasnevin Cemetery, and babies were born in Holles Street Hospital. On the street there were demonstrations and protests. The Presidential cavalcade passed. The two finally met and went to a singing pub. Apart from the Ullyses parody, this film, made for cinema, obviously had a substantial real-life context for young Irish viewers.

The Johnston Monster was a 1987 transmission. This fifty minute film was made in Ireland with a predominantly Irish

cast by the British organisation, The Children's Film Foundation. The story concerned a legendary monster at the bottom of an Irish lake, and was inspired perhaps by newspaper stories of an incident where three priests, while fishing, saw what they reported as a monster in Lough Ree near Clonmacnoise.

Nothing To It was a weekly guidance programme for teenagers presented in 1987, with Veronica Coburn, Pauline McGlynn and Mikel Murfi. The programme probed the concerns of teenagers and young adults such as job-hunting, recreation, pop culture, computers, finance and so on, in dramatic format. The basic setting was a bedsitter from which the trio emerge to tackle a hostile world. Each playlet was followed by a discussion and studio analysis. The three actors, who did all the characters, were gifted and versatile and overcame the budgetary and resource constrictions by a highly innovative and imaginative form of drama. Despite the career guidance objective, or perhaps because of it, these playlets were firmly rooted in the reality of the lives of Irish teenagers.

Three of the seven productions of the **Access Community Drama** project dealt with youth topics. **The Changeling**, by Relays Productions, Ballinasloe, was, to quote Helena Sheehan, " **a simple slice of everyday life for a young schoolgirl, whose mother's hospitalisation was interfering with her swimming practice." There Has To Be A Reason** by the Leixlip Theatre Group was a about a youth's suicide. **Vandals**, by Everyman Productions, Sligo, involved a deprived boy being sentenced for vandalism to community service in a city dump.

The Access Community Drama project featured amateur drama groups, and the programmes were filmed locally. Although there were many reservations about the quality of these productions, they did give a unique perspective of Irish life which was unlikely to materialise from any other source, including professional drama. The series gave television drama experience to young people who would not normally have access to this medium.

ANALYSIS---HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA

If this exercise has been a search for real-life children's drama produced solely by Telefis Eireann/RTE to dramatic criteria only, without the intervention of some other objective, then that search has been fruitless.

Siopa an Bhreathnaigh, and **Siopa**, the most substantial and sustained contribution to domestic television drama for children, was a bi-lingual project the objectives of which were primarily linguistic. It appeared in the first year of the station's transmission, and, curiously, was the only credible exercise in conventional Irish-language or bilingual drama for children, as compared with animation drama, in the period under review.

A Day In The Life of Martin Cluxton, The Spike and **The Lost Hour** were Drama Department productions specifically for adult viewing. **A Day in the Life of Martin Cluxton** and **The Lost Hour** were child-centred, presented from the child's perspective, and the plays demonstrated the range and quality of the skills and competences available if the policies, resources and structures had existed which would generate a sustained provision of competitive home produced children's drama. **The Spike** experience gave some idea of the demand for such drama.

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox, the best example we have of children's drama reflecting the cultural schemata and dramatic expectations of the Irish child audience, materialised in a co-production situation in which RTE had a subsidiary role.

First Confession, Katie--Year of the Child, The Flight of the Doves, The Ballinch Bowl and **The Johnston Monster** were essentially imported programmes which exploited Irish writing, topics, locations and acting talent. These programmes also demonstrated that RTE might have produced, directly or through patronage of independent producers, similar or even more acceptable real life children's drama.

The Access Community Drama generated five drama programmes for young people, shifting the focus away from the studio and engaging with the vibrant and vital amateur drama movement and schools drama movement. The Access Community

Project was stifled in a complex struggle between professionals and amateurs, in a welter of urban and rural partisanship. This debate was also about resources; amateur drama needed the same level of resourcing as professional drama if it was to achieve the same level of acceptability. Again, there was a major intervention of a media ideology; the primary objective was not to produce drama but to increase the access of rural communities to television.

The Adventures of Two Boys and **Buachaill ar an Oileán** were, at best, in the drama context, low-impact drama, their main function being informational. **Yassu Corfu**, **Sophie** and **Curious Eyes** were low-budget programmes by independent producers, more descriptive and informational than dramatic. **A Second of June** was a valid and worthwhile contribution to Irish drama for children, and the only programme in our lists originating as an Irish cinema film.

Of the drama hidden away in specialised programmes and in activity and magazine programmes the most relevant to the actuality of young people's lives was the **Nothing To It** series, which, in addition to having an energetic, even frenetic pace, presented the job-seeking, bed-sitter and other situations in a very humorous way. Drama in this programme, however, had a specialised application---it was used as a careers guidance device.

When we come to compare the home provision of real-life drama with imported drama in the same category, the first concession we have to make is on the volume aspect. Even if we accept that all the material we have considered in our discussion on home produced drama volume may be validly categorised as such, we are talking about a total output over twenty five years of 50 hours of realistic drama. Deducting the Drama Department contribution, which was for adults, and material produced by foreign production agencies, the nett total is closer to 40 hours. This is a crude total; it could be further diluted by removing specialised drama and marginal drama. Half a dozen series in our catalogue of imported real life drama would exceed the total home produced provision in

this category in the twentyfive years under review.

MISSING CLASSIFICATIONS

Whole classifications within the category are missing from the domestic provision, or have only a token presence. There was no child-centred drama in a neighbourhood setting. Apart from the **Nothing To It** series, we had no drama related to work situations or careers. We had no sport-centred drama. We had very little drama dealing with family relationships, or with relationships of any kind. We had no drama dealing with physical handicap or rehabilitation. We had no 'metaphysical' drama for young people---for example we had no ghost stories. We have produced no school drama for children. Irish children, to find these and other contexts relevant to them, would have had to turn to imported drama in the children's schedules, or to adult drama, or to the drama provision for young people and for adults on other channels. The imported drama in the real-life category answered the developmental needs of Irish children by providing dramatic treatments of innumerable real-life situations directly pertinent to their own lives---dramatic treatments not available to any significant degree from domestic sources in the period under review.

SITUATION COMEDY AND FAMILY-BASED SERIES

Bordering on the children's schedules, and occasionally included in them, were numerous situation comedies and family series featuring children and young people which attracted child audiences within the family viewing context, or which would attract young audiences because of their humour or other specific features.

These programmes featured the same set of leading characters in a constant location or institution week after week. Each programme was a self-contained play, with the problem unravelled and solved within the episode. Many series, however, contained elements of the serial; the main storyline solves the posed problem within the episode, but a subsidiary storyline such as an ongoing romance could bridge the whole series.

These shows, according to Monaco, are the staple fare on American prime-time television. Monaco sees them as derived from radio. They are character-centred rather than event-centred, and this, Monaco asserts, is their shortcoming; a successful series can run almost forever, but the characters, like Pirandello's, can become frozen in a particular moment, never developing, never changing. (Monaco : 1977 : 393)

The series has a high degree of intertextuality; expectations of content are determined generically, by reference to previous episodes and to treatments of series discourses in other media. They are designed to be habit-forming and to appeal to the widest possible spectrum of viewers ; the conventional series has a commercial genesis and is driven by a commercial objective---to deliver maximum audiences to advertisers.

Typical programmes from the schedules were **Bachelor Father, Margie, Bewitched, Tabitha, The Governor and J.J., Nanny and the Professor, Funny Face, I Dream of Jeannie, The Partridge Family, Needles and Pins, Apple's Way, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir, Hogg's Back, The Beverly Hillbillies, The Waltons, The Monroes, Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em, The Dick Van Dyke Show, Mind Your Language, Jenny, Tammy, Mork and Mindy, The Great American Hero, Here's Lucy, Ma and Pa Kettle, That Girl, Car 54 Where Were You?, The Sullivans, Thomas and Sarah, L for Lester**--a driving school comedy, **The Over the Hill Gang, Paper Moon, Only When I Laugh, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, We Got It Maid, Sons and Daughters, Green Acres, Cox and Box, Get Smart, Hart to Hart, The Cosby Show, The People's Court, Alf, The Wrong Arm of the Law, The Optimist,** and **Valerie**, about a housewife with three teenage boys, whose father, a pilot, was continually absent.

The bulk of the material came for America. Of the above list, **The Sullivans** and **Sons and Daughters** were Australian; **Hogg's Back, Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em, Mind Your Language, Jenny, Thomas and Sarah, L for Lester, Only When I Laugh** and **Cox and Box** were British.

The American situation comedy or family series reflected more than any other type of drama the mainstream values of the dominant American culture, exemplified by the

American house, the American car, consumer patterns, youth and family culture and behaviour norms, the educational system, recreational patterns, and other features which were the unquestioned premises of the programmes. Even when the screen family came from a minority American culture, as in The Cosby Show, the reflected values and aspirations were those of mainstream white America.

The family-centred series imaged to some degree the immediate social reality of children---their relationships with siblings, with the adult members of their families and with other adults such as neighbours. However, this type of series was not child-centred; the norms of child behaviour were adult prescriptions.

Despite the heavy ideological loading, these series, in so far as they provided child models, did underline the existence of another view, and map out the matrix of behavioural consequence. This modelling may have been more acceptable because it was delivered with a light, often humorous touch.

We have nothing comparable to offer from home produced programmes for young people, and very little of the genre from home produced adult programming.

ADVENTURE FEATURES AND SERIES

The adventure, in literature, on film and in television drama, is rarely isolated from other narrative categories. The adventure story may be historical; it may be a folktale; it may be realistic and contemporary; it may belong to various categories of fantasy. It may be in animation or live action format.

Adventure implies contrast to the humdrum normality of conventional existence; it implies risk, chance, intense conflict and uncertain outcome. The denotive quality of the adventure story is action.

The adventure story in the English language has a strong literary pedigree. The format for the English language adventure story is perceived by critics as deriving from the work of Defoe and Scott. The genre was particularly popular in

the nineteenth century. Many of the adventure serials, series and features in the schedules during the period under review were adaptations of nineteenth century stories which were popular as children's literature.

MARINE ADVENTURE

One adventure classification we might examine for comparison purposes is marine adventure. We can only quote one example from the home production lists, The Island of the Great Yellow Ox. This is an excellent example of maritime adventure, involving a curragh escapade, a storm, a shipwreck situation, a forced stay on a desert island, pirates--to all effects and purposes, and an island treasure.

A random list of sea adventures from the lists of imported drama would include Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, Hurricane, Adventures of the Seaspray, Barrier Reef, Captain Zeppos, The Rovers , Salvage, The Beachcombers, Primus, Men of the Sea. The Man from Atlantis, The Crimson Pirate, The Secret of the Purple Reef, Morgan the Pirate, Captain Horatio Hornblower, The Pirates of Monterey, Robinson Crusoe, Castaways, The Lost Island, The Swiss Family Robinson, Summer on Miracle Island, The Children of Volcanic Island, Marooned, Mystery Island, Donovan's Reef, Mystery on Fire Island, Island in the Snow, Sea Urchins, Coral Island, Butterfly Island, Children's Island, Smuggler, Moonfleet, Drake's Venture, The Sea Chase, Barbary Coast, The Doonbolt Chase, Ghost of Cape Horn, Return of the Antelope, Adventures of Captain Fabian, Wake of the Red Witch, Captain Blood, Blacke's Magic--which was about a ghost ship, various voyages of Sinbad and Ullyses and the Argonauts, Adventures of Pickle and Bill, Voyage of the Mimi, Flipper and other dolphin stories, Hi-jack, about a yacht, May-day, May-day and Chopper, about sea rescue.

This list can be subdivided into any number of classifications---tall ship stories, island stories, pirate stories, smuggling stories, ghost ships, underwater adventure, onshore situations such as beachcombing and salvage, modern stories, historical contexts.

Another title from our list of home produced programmes, which, strictly speaking, was a bought-in feature, is **The Johnston Monster**, the CFF film about an alleged monster in an Irish lake. We can classify this as inland waterways adventure. **Swallows and Amazons** would be an imported counterpart, as would **Saunders of the River**, **Riverboat**, and **The Flower of Gloster**.

Flight of the Doves, if we can claim it, has a runaway theme, and involves chase and avoidance of capture. On the Run, a Nina Bawden story, was a Children's Film Foundation production. We have mentioned a number of such themes in our discussion on real-life drama. **Richard and Sarah**, The Belgian entry in the EBU series, **The Adventure Show**, and **The Great Gilly Hopkins** had runaway orphans and chase themes.

The Adventures of Two Boys, also on the home produced lists, was an information programme featuring two boys walking around Dublin.

We can list one programme which might be classified as historical adventure---**O'Donoghue's Revenge**---set in the sixteenth century, about the consequences for a Crown agent who takes over the land of the local chieftain, O'Donoghue. Examples of imported historical adventure in the lists were: **Flight of the Heron**, **The Adventures of Robin Hood**, **The Moon Stallion**, **The Son of Monte Cristo**, **Man in the Iron Mask**, **Louisiana Story**, **Christopher Columbus**, **Marco Polo**, **The Chisholms**, **The Campbells**, **Boy Dominic**, and **Tom Grattan's War**. We could add adaptations of the works of Scott and Stevenson and many other adaptations of literary works, and much of the Wild West category.

The treasure trove theme was the main narrative impetus of **The Ballinch Bowl**. Many of the imported adventure programmes incorporated a treasure theme. **Treasure Island** would be a representative example.

Our potential list of home produced live action adventure drama for the twentyfive years under review would have a maximum volume of eight hours gross, and if we remove **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox**, **Flight of the Doves**, **The Johnston Monster**, and **The Ballinch Bowl** because they were basically

foreign productions, and The Adventures of Two Boys because it was primarily an information series, we are left with about two hours of actuality adventure drama for the period under review.

The imported adventure drama lists included long-running, multi-season general audience action packages such as **Batman, Sapphire and Steel, The Fall Guy, Tarzan, Dick Tracy, The A-Team, Charlie Chan, The Man from UNCLE, Get Smart, Hart to Hart, Wonderwoman, Gemini Man, The Incredible Hulk, Spiderwoman, Six Million Dollar Man, Return of The Saint, Dick Barton--Special Agent**, the **Superman** films and **Supergirl**. Most of these were scheduled in or around children's viewing time and targeted the general audience.

Many of the series mentioned involved crime, detection, investigation, and bringing the criminal to justice. Other series with similar themes were **Smith, Switch, The Partners, Letty, Automen, The Nancy Drew Mysteries** and **The Hardy Boys Mysteries; The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes; Brat Farrar; Kodean,** and **CHIPS.**

We have no domestic representation of aeronautical adventure, provided in imported material like **Bailey's Bird, Blake, The Great Airship Adventure, Tales of the Golden Monkey, The Flying Kiwi, Spenser Pilots, Woobinda, The Great Balloon Adventure, Five Weeks in a Balloon,** and in various helicopter-centred series.

We have no home produced categories of outdoor, environment-based adventure, or wild-life or animal-related adventure, indicated by titles such as **Woobinda, Stories of Tuktu, Tarzan, Daktari, Cowboy in Africa, Bring 'em Back Alive, Jungle Boy, Sierra, Park Ranger, Maya, Camp Wilderness; Valley of the Eagles; Grizzly Adams; The White Heron; My Friend the Dolphin; Elephant Boy; Northwest Mounted Police; Cougar; Children of Fire Mountain; In Falcon Territory; Wild Boy; Zoom the White Dolphin; Crin Blanc; The Moon Stallion; Born Free; Lost in the Wild,** and **Storm Boy.**

Other classifications which we find in the imported drama lists are adventure related to exploration, circus stories, science fiction stories, ghost stories, chase themes,

escape themes, hostage themes, railway adventure, treasure trove themes in various forms, work-related adventure such as **Code Red**, based on a fire-brigade.

Most of the categories we are considering---Animation Drama, Real-life Drama, Drama Based on Literature, Animal-related Drama, Televised Cinema Films, Westerns, Historical Drama, Folklore-based and Mythology-Based Drama, and Musical Drama, involve adventure to some degree.

Elaborating a little on the film classifications, the prototypes for relevant adventure drama for young people would be films such as **Tightrope to Terror**, an Alpine thriller in which two sisters are trapped in a runaway cable car; the films made by **The Children's Film Foundation**, and films in the EBU drama series, **The Adventure Show**. These films were rooted in a convincing actuality context, and were made for children, taking account of their specific interests, needs and processing ability.

DRAMATIC CRITERIA

Adventure drama is characterised by accelerated narrative movement; equilibrium spans tend to be shorter than in other forms of drama, disequilibrium segments tend to be longer, and the transition from equilibrium to disequilibrium precipitate and frequently violent. This movement, if handled skilfully, can generate sustained viewer tension and intense emotional involvement.

Binary oppositional content tends to be stark and uncomplicated---good, evil, strong, weak, black, white, generating clear axes of conflict. Quite often the oppositional forces belong to the realm of nature---storms, avalanches, river rapids, cliffs---or man-made situations such as the runaway train, or adventure in a war context. In the human domain in this category the conflict is frequently between children and adults, adding the subversion gratification to other viewing pleasures.

Specificity is very high in characterisation---adventure drama tends to produce stereotypes; the pirate captain, for example, or the sleuth hero will immediately be

recognisable for what they are. At the same time adventure drama is likely to contain characters of low specificity, cannon fodder, 'spear-carriers' and the like, who are readily expendable at no emotional cost to the viewer.

Action segments will also tend to be conventional; swordfights, gunfights, chases and so on generally follow well-established patterns.

Adventure drama on film or video tape will aim for maximum audio-visual impact; the soundtrack will have a significant role in the generation of meaning and the advancement of the narrative.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

The critical consensus about children's viewing patterns seems to be that children prefer action to talk in drama. Cullingford (1984) and others conclude that the favourite viewing material of the widest cross-section of children is action drama.

Adventure drama, then, is perceived by children as recreational. Children tend to relegate adventure drama to the fantasy category, discriminating sharply between realistic content and content that has no counterpart in real life. They are likely to conclude that situations like the gunfight or the car chase belong to the realm of fantasy. They get pleasure from recognising cliché situations and from anticipating the way these will work out. The cliché situations are often part of their own play activity. The swiftly-alternating narrative progression, the acutely-polarised conflict and sharply-contrasted characterisation create intense involvement with the text content, precipitating a wide range of strong emotional reactions--security, insecurity, fear, horror, suspense, relief, identification, rejection---the negative reactions tolerable because of the security of the viewing situation, and confidence in the stability of stereotype or motif or convention which will guarantee a gratifying outcome in the end--e.g. that the hero will survive. (c.f. Cullingford (1984))

Adventure drama clearly advances modality competence

through differentiation between fantasy and reality and increases media sophistication by reinforcing recognition of recurring situations and conventions. Adventure drama also allows for rehearsal of articulated and unarticulated emotional response over a wider range of situations than that normally provided by the actuality of the child's life.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR IRISH CHILDREN

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox would offer a median standard of accessibility for Irish children, corresponding as it does to the environmental, relational and linguistic experience of the Irish child, and hinging on a traditional story motif, Druidic treasure, accessible to the children from educational sources.

Reading and the cinema will have provided some orientation and for many Irish children towards the conventional adventure story in the imported schedules. Evolving in well-established dramatic conventions, the television adventure story content is probably more accessible for the young Irish viewer than that of real-life drama, in that the adventure story is more formulistic, and rarely has a problematic subtext. The adventure story also tends to have less verbal content, and less complex verbal content, relying to a greater extent than conventional drama on visual and aural narrative sequences. The verbal content is invariably in the English language. The content may present complex transformational problems for lower age-groups, but genre and formula familiarity will facilitate transformational operations in the upper segments of the child audience.

MODALITY PROCESSING CONTEXT

This is an acrimonious area, some research sectors maintaining that impressionable children model their behaviour on the violent content of action drama. The overall research consensus, as expressed by Fiske (1987), Hodge and Tripp (1986), and Cullingford (1984), seems to be that children are likely to process the adventure story as fantasy. Its real-life context

for children is often in the realm of play; they will frequently articulate content in play terms, but will not incorporate it into their normal behaviour.

There is the important area of identification; children, particularly at adolescence, tend to identify with heroic characters and to fantasise about themselves in these roles. Hodge and Tripp would see this tendency as a developmental motivation, and note the irony of the situation where lobbyists direct their strongest criticism at categories of programming for which adolescents have greatest cognitive and developmental need. This development phase can be quite strong; television viewing is only one aspect of it; it can be the basis of artistic creativity, the basis of vocational orientation, or it can be the basis of a life-long flight from reality into the realms of fantasy---the Walter Mitty syndrome of adulthood. The basic Irish character is particularly prone to heroic identification, and the tendency is not confined to children.

VALUE SYSTEMS IMPLICIT IN PROVISION

In the adventure drama conflict of necessity hinges on oppositional value systems. The protagonists project dominant value systems; the antagonists reject and challenge these, and the normal outcome is that the challenge will be defeated. Class ideologies may emerge in the demography of villains and heroes; the designation of Lady Agnes as the villain in **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox** may be a proletarian ideology. The adventure story has an inbuilt ideology of action as compared to negotiation; this perspective may incorporate an ideology of violence as a strategy of first resort.

Adventure drama also produces an oversimplification of issues, substituting the core tendency of a situation for its totality, drawing a stark line of demarcation and cutting out the middle ground and common ground. The alternative view is rarely presented. Translated into real life this perspective makes for violent confrontation and conflict.

SERIES AND FEATURES BASED ON ANIMALS

The category of animal centred programmes was one of the more substantial in the imported children's drama lists. We have no comparable home-produced segment.

Animal representation was strongest in the animation category, but we have to apply the qualifications implied by anthropomorphisation to this representation. Anthropomorphisation in the animation context is the ascription of human characteristics to non-human imagery. As viewers we relate to these human characteristics. The **Pink Panther** may have a physical correspondence to a panther and **Bugs Bunny** to a rabbit, but we relate to **The Pink Panther** as a whimsical mischief-maker in the human domain, and to **Bugs Bunny** as the eternal jester figure of human drama. **Yogi Bear** is the typical free-loader of human society. We process the animals of **Animal Farm**, not as animals, but as oppressed and exploited humans.

Outside the animation classification the imported provision featured horses, ponies, wild stallions, mules, donkeys, pigs, dogs, deer, elephants, lions, bears, chimpanzees, seals, dolphins, kangaroos, and the occasional bird. There were also drama series and features about the smaller animals such as river-bank fauna, hamsters and frogs.

Horses came in all variations. **My Friend Flicka** was a film about a boy's love for a wild horse. **The Wild Stallion**, sometimes called **Crin Blanc**, was a French series. **Thunder** was another wild stallion. **Black Beauty** appeared in film and series format. **Misty**, **Secret Pony**, and Steinbeck's **The Red Pony** dealt with ponies, life and death. The **Follyfoot** series was set in a farm where neglected horses were restored to well-being. Other series listed were **My Brother Talks to Horses** and **A Horse in the House**. **Mr. Ed** was a talking horse who featured in a long-running situation comedy series. There was also a talking mule, **Francis**. **Nestor, Christmas Donkey** was a film feature for Christmas.

Dog stories were quite plentiful. **Rin-Tin-Tin**, subtitled as **The Adventures of a Boy and His Dog in the American West**, and **Lassie**, operating in the same environment, made early

appearances in the schedules. **Lassie** featured in several series and in films such as **The Hills of Home** and **Lassie's Great Adventure**. The prototype **Lassie** story, **Lassie Come Home**, which had a British setting, was also shown. This 1943 film was based on the book by Eric Knight, in which a prize-winning collie was sold by the impoverished family who owned her to a Scottish landowner, but trekked all the way back home to Yorkshire. Benji, an American Scotch terrier equally at home in city or country or outer space, made several appearances. **The Littlest Hobo**, and **No More, My Lady** were stray dog stories. Another stray dog story, **A Dog of Flanders**, described by one reviewer as the loveliest children's film ever made, was about a young Dutch boy, his grandfather, and the stray dog they adopted. At least three film versions exist of this 1872 novel by Ouida. The lists also included a Czechoslovakian feature, **I And My Dog**.

Flipper the dolphin had a strong presence over the whole period under review. Other dolphin-centred series were **My Friend the Dolphin** and **Zoom, the White Dolphin**.

Bears featured in **Grizzly Adams**, in **B.J and the Bear** and in **Gentle Ben**. Several seasons of **Gentle Ben**, a long-running series based on the book by Walt Morey about a small boy and a giant brown bear, were transmitted.

Elephants were the subject of **Maya**, of **Elephant Boy** and of **An Elephant Called Slowly**. Elephants usually appeared in Tarzan programmes and in other series involving big game.

There was only one kangaroo of note, **Skippy**. This series was located in an Australian National Park. Seals were also in short supply, only one seal series being transmitted, **Salty**. Similarly, there was only one chimpanzee series, **Me and My Chimp**, but chimps featured incidentally in several programmes.

Birds received little dramatic attention in the live action sector. **The Eagle of the Ninth**, by Rosemary Sutcliff, was set in Roman Britain. The eagle mentioned was a legion mascot and symbol.

Australia was the source of two series featuring

veterinary surgeons---**Woobinda**, about a vet in the outback, and **Young Ramsey**.

The British series, **All Creatures Great and Small**, based on the autobiographical writings of vet James Heriot, was a tea-time transmission targeting a general audience. This was an immensely successful series, presenting environments and agricultural contexts very similar to those of Ireland.

One by One and **Zoo Vet** were set in zoos. Other zoo stories were **Zoo Robber** and **Zebra in the Kitchen**, which was about a boy who released zoo animals for ideological reasons.

Nature reserves and national parks were common locations for animal-centred series such as Daktari. **Born Free**, as film and as series, dealt with lions. **Bring 'Em Back Alive**, starring the legendary Frank Buck, was a series about big game hunting.

Wild life based series, series set in national parks which featured wild animals, circus series, zoo series and series which featured veterinary surgeons usually had larger scope than other classifications and generated more vivid conflict; confrontation with ivory hunters in a national park setting, for example, could be the basis for a major adventure story. Conflict in zoo, circus and veterinary stories often derived from cruelty and abuse situations.

The lives and contexts of smaller creatures were proved to be equally valid as a source of dramatic material. Among the titles listed were **The Animal Story** and **The Little Ark**. **Tales of The River Bank** was an ingenious series in which live animals were used as characters in combination with voice-over narration. **Hammy Hamster** featured a real hamster in the leading role.

The Peppermint Pig was a five-part series featuring an intelligent pig, based on the story by Nina Bawden. **The Night The Animals Talked** was a Christmas story in animation format. The schedules also featured a dramatisation of a Mark Twain story, **The Notorious Jumping Frog**. **One's a Heifer**, set in Canada, was about a boy and stray calves. Other animal-centred were **The Boy Who Liked Deer** and **The Red Deer**.

In many of these programmes, a specific animal, Black Beauty the colt, Lassie the dog, Skippy the kangaroo, Flipper the dolphin, Hammy the hamster, was the centre and motivator of the action. The action was delivered in actuality idiom---but anthropomorphisation was occasionally employed for comedy reasons in programmes like **Mr. Ed**, who was a talking horse, and out of narrative necessity in the smaller animal classification in programmes like **Hammy the Hamster** and **Tales of the River Bank**.

The animal-centred category was characterised through and through by a pronounced kindness-to-animals ethic and by a strong overall pro-environment and pro-natural-heritage ideology.

DRAMATIC CRITERIA

Live action animal centred drama was to some extent an anthropomorphised variant. The featured animal demonstrated emotions and intuitions proper to humans; the valued qualities in the animal were the attributes that paralleled human characteristics. Lassie's summing up of a complex situation and deciding on a course of action such as fetching a rope was basically the application of a human strategy.

Animal centred drama in the schedules had a strong central character focus. Evolution of the storyline tended to operate in generic motifs which were relatively easy to predict. This increased accessibility.

Settings supported the main theme to a stronger degree than in other drama categories; the featured animal was usually provided with an appropriate habitat and operational environment.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

Children relate to animals in a complex way in real life; animals can be uncritical, undemanding non-competitive companions, a focus for love and other emotions, or a sibling substitute; animals are also a species over whom even the very young child can exercise power in various forms. The animal will invariably acknowledge the source of this power by recognition

of the child as carer and provider. Child development is the acquisition of power.

Children will bring considerable personal experience to the viewing of animal centred drama, and this experience will intensify viewing gratifications.

Despite accelerated urbanisation in recent years, Ireland remains a predominantly agricultural country, and most children, including those in urban areas, have ready access to animals. Many children own animals of one sort or another.

Whatever the animal, the relationship is usually the same; the animal provides a focus for emotion, and the animal's response is an acknowledgement of power. In the television drama text the same relationship is implied; the animal will be fiercely loyal to one individual or family.

The anthropomorphisation element, invariably disguised, will already be part of the cultural capital of the viewer from animation drama and personal experience with pets and toys and experience derived from nurturing and educational contexts. The environmental components---fields, woods, mountains, waterways---will be generally accessible to the Irish child. Animals, like puppets, are circumscribed by what they can do; storylines, for this reason, tend to be simplistic.

Animal-centred drama programmes probably present a selective and sanitised view of the reality of animal lives. Problematic and traumatic dimensions of animal care such as sanitary aspects or the necessity to put down an animal rarely surface. The featured animal is rarely representative of its class. In contrast with wild life documentaries the animal-centred drama programme will usually ignore the carnivorous dimension of animal survival.

The accomplishments of animals in this type of drama are frequently at variance with the reality of animal behaviour. Children, however, will probably have enough experience of actual animal behaviour to cope with the distortion of reality in this area; they have a range of competences to process anthropomorphic situations and a store of generic clichés and narrative motifs which will enable them to relegate

uncharacteristic animal behaviour to the realm of fiction.

Animal-centred drama, despite celebrating animal intelligence and virtuosity, subscribes explicitly to the pet ideology, which is premised in a perspective of human species superiority. This acrimonious context includes animal liberation campaigns, pet wastage controversies---half a million dogs are put down annually in Britain---breeding controversies, meat-based pet food contexts and many others. (Duffy : 1984)

Inside and outside this species superiority perspective, these programmes carry an intense kindness-to-animals bias; the programmes also imply a strong pro-environment stance. The use of national parks as locations for many of these programmes generates and propagates a distortion of actuality which might be described as the wilderness myth; there is some substance in the view that national parks are a sop offered by governments to placate environmentalists while genuine wildernesses are being destroyed at a catastrophic rate by commercial concerns. (Duffy : 1984)

As we pointed out, home produced children's drama made no contribution to this category in the period under review. It was one area which could have provide a substantial block of home produced children's drama which would probably have found an enthusiastic audience.

CULTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

The categories of live action drama we have examined in this chapter---films, musical drama, real life drama, adventure drama and drama featuring animals---aggregate to a vast anthology of television-mediated experience. We have outlined some of the developmental and enrichment potential implicit in the provision and we have indicated some cultural and ideological contexts. As with the fantasy component surveyed in Chapter Three, the enrichment potential is sited almost exclusively in the imported provision. Our review of the live action schedule sector did not reveal any significant quota of drama generated in the cultural milieu of the Irish child viewer. The Irish child viewer, as an Irish child, was substantially disenfranchised by the live action

provision in the years under review.

By now the dominance of imported programming in the drama provision is abundantly clear. In Chapters Three and Four we have given some attention to the source values and ideologies suggested by the programming, imported and home originated. In Chapter Five we will concentrate on two categories which reflected source values and perspectives to a more obvious degree: drama derived from literature and drama with historical contexts. We will also indicate the general sources of our research material and summarise the home produced television drama for children since 1987 before proceeding to the formulation of some conclusions from our survey and analysis in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE

VISIBLE FICTIONS.

If published fiction achieves a mention in contemporay television studies it is usually to prove the point that the tools of literary criticism are inadequate to the task of evaluating television. (Fiske and Hartley, 1978). The enormous debt of television drama to published fiction has received little attention. Film studies are equally reticent about the debt of cinema to literature. The more fundamental filtering of most screen output through a literary medium, the script, has also been substantially ignored by media research. Television studies, as Caughie (1984) implies, may be more concerned with creating a new epistemology than engaging with the actuality of schedule content.

Literature-based drama forms one of the more substantial categories in the list of dramatic material for children appearing in the RTE schedules between 1962 and 1987. 'Literature', in the context of literary criticism, is a controversial and emotive term; not every critic would be prepared to accept the works of Enid Blyton or The Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys Mysteries as literature. As source material for screen drama literature is synonymous with published fiction.

The source material is not confined to prose fiction; many animation and live action features in the schedules derived from graphic material published as comics, or as syndicated comic strip features in newspapers. Examples would be Garfield, Spiderman, Charlie Brown, Superman, Batman and The Incredible Hulk.

HOME PRODUCED DRAMA BASED ON PUBLISHED FICTION

Home produced television drama based on published fiction makes a very short catalogue. By now we are familiar

with the titles, which have already cropped up several times in previous classifications. We have an animated version of **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**, based on the **Brogeen** stories of Patricia Lynch, two dramatisations of works by Walter Macken, **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox**, and **Flight of the Doves**, a version of Frank O'Connor's **First Confession**, and **The Lost Hour**, based on The Leavetaking by John McGahern. **A Second of June** has a loose association with the **Ullyses** of James Joyce. This is our extended catalogue; if we apply strict selection criteria the only titles we are left with under this heading are **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**, and **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox**.

IMPORTED DRAMA BASED ON PUBLISHED FICTION

On the other hand, the catalogue of imported 'visible fiction' in the schedules, to borrow and distort John Ellis's phrase (Ellis, 1982) was, in effect, a massive, audio-visual anthology of children's literature in the English language, and of adult literature perceived in its day to be appropriate reading material for children.

ANIMATION VERSIONS OF PUBLISHED FICTION

Schedule titles in the animation category alone constitute a substantial library. Bom the **Little Drummer**, and **Noddy**, by Enid Blyton, were early examples of literary material in animated format. **The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle**, based on the books by Hugh Lofting, was a very popular animation series. **Charlotte's Web**, from E.B. White's outstanding children's story about the bacon pig, Wilbur, whose life was saved by Charlotte the spider, was a full-length cartoon feature. **Around the World in Eighty Days**, by Jules Verne, formed the basis of an animation series which received many repeat showings. An animation version of **Cyrano de Bergerac**, the sad lover with the outsize nose, was also repeated a number of times. **Pinnochio**, which featured regularly in its Disney version, was originally created by Carlo Collodi, and first published in book form in 1883.

Several different animation treatments of **The Wind in the Willows** by Kenneth Grahame were transmitted. Kenneth Grahame

was Secretary of the Bank of England, and **The Wind in the Willows** was a retirement project. If we revert Grahame's animal characters to people, we have a fairly accurate representation of the social life and attitudes of the pre-1914 milieu in which the author lived.

Animal Farm, George Orwell's fable about totalitarianism, was a Leaving Certificate text, and the full-length animation version was regularly scheduled for the benefit of the student audience. An animation version of George Eliot's **Silas Marner**, by Alison de Vere, was also scheduled. **Silas Marner** was a Leaving Certificate optional text.

The only practicable way to present enacted versions of texts such as **Charlotte's Web**, **Animal Farm**, and **The Wind and the Willows** was through the medium of animation, although Frederick Ashton did manage to convey a convincing version of the **Tales of Beatrix Potter**, also in the schedules, through the medium of ballet, using masked dancers.

The 1939 Fleishcher animation of **Gulliver's Travels** was shown a number of times. Oscar Wilde's **The Remarkable Rocket** also appeared in animation format. Rudyard Kipling's **Jungle Book** and **Just** So stories were transmitted and **Beware the Jabberwocky**, based on the text by Lewis Carroll.

The work of Dickens in animated format was represented by **The Pickwick Papers** and **Nicholas Nickleby**. There was also a send-up version of **The Christmas Carol**, starring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck.

Another series listed was **The Last of the Mohicans**, based on James Fennimore Cooper's novel.

The realm of poetry was represented in animated format by Longfellow's **The Song of Hiawatha**.

LIVE ACTION VERSIONS OF LITERATURE

Filmed and video-taped actuality versions of well-known literary works did not emerge from a vacuum; many works of literature had been dramatised for stage, and, in the arena of drama for children, the texts used in school drama were often dramatisations of popular books. We can examine this provision

from the perspective of a historian of children's literature in the English language.

The earliest dramatisation of Shakespearian drama was the BBC series, **The Age of Kings**. This was a sequence of Shakespeare's history plays which had been produced by Michael Barry who had been Head of Television Drama with the BBC before his appointment as Controller of Programmes in Telefis Eireann.

There was one Shakespeare season, but for the most part the plays selected for transmission were texts on the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate courses : **Hamlet**, **MacBeth**, **The Tempest**, **King Lear**, **Romeo and Juliet**, **The Merchant of Venice**, **Julius Casear**, **Henry the Fourth** and **As You Like It**.

Gulliver's Travels and **Robinson Crusoe** would appear very early in a history of children's literature in English. In addition to the 1939 Fleishcher animation, **Gulliver's Travels** by Jonathan Swift appeared both as a film and as a four-part serial. The serial was entitled **Gulliver in Lilliput**. Daniel Defoe's **Robinson Crusoe** appeared in a filmed version and in a thirteen-part serial format. There was also an ice-skating version : **Robinson Crusoe on Ice**.

Scott, with Defoe, is credited with being the progenitor of the adventure story; dramatisations of his work in the schedules include **Ivanhoe**, **Kenilworth**, **Rob Roy**, **The Fortunes of Nigel**, and **The Talisman**. Scott's literary star is pretty dim at the moment; these novels have very few readers other than students engaged in specific literature studies, and the only media through which the work of this writer can be made accessible to the general public is television drama and the cinema.

Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen, was an Intermediate Certificate text, and **Persuasion** a Leaving Certificate text. The 1949 Laurence Olivier/Maureen O'Sullivan version of **Pride and Prejudice** received a number of showings. The five-part Australian serial version was also shown a number of times. The only available version of **Persuasion**, a six-part ITV production, was also shown.

Wuthering Heights, by Emily Bronte, was also a Leaving

Certificate text and appeared in film and serial versions, the serial version being scripted by Hugh Leonard. Charlotte Bronte's **Jane Eyre** was screened several times as a general audience feature. There was also a dramatisation of the lives of the Brontes---**The Brontes of Haworth**.

Charles Dickens is more extensively represented in the schedules than any other author. The works of Dickens appeared in animation versions, in musical versions, in cinema films, in series and serials, in anthologies and biographies. Titles listed include **Our Mutual Friend**, **The Old Curiosity Shop**, **Oliver Twist**, **David Copperfield**, **A Tale of Two Cities**, **Dombey and Son**, in thirteen parts, **A Christmas Carol**, **Hard Times**, **Great Expectations**, **The Pickwick Papers**, **Nicholas Nickleby** and **Bleak House**. The musical **Oliver** received several showings. There was a biographical series on Dickens called **Dickens of London**, and a musical pot-pourri of the works of Dickens called **You Mustn't Believe All This**. Listed as well was a development of the Oliver Twist story, **The Further Adventures of Oliver Twist**. On one occasion at least there was a short season of films based on the works of Dickens. Of these titles **Hard Times** and **Great Expectations** were examination texts, and some of the showings were for the benefit of students.

After Dickens, the writer whose work was represented most frequently in the lists of imported television drama for children was Robert Louis Stevenson. Not surprisingly, **Treasure Island**, as a feature film, and as a four-part BBC serial, got the greatest number of showings. There were also a number of derivatives of **Treasure Island**, among them **Adventures of Long John Silver** and **Return to Treasure Island**. **Kidnapped**, **The Master of Ballintrae**, and the seven-part **Black Arrow**, which featured in the the TAM ratings on one occasion, were frequently repeated over the period under review. **St. Ives** was also shown.

Alice in Wonderland, **Alice Through the Looking Glass**, and **Beware the Jabberwocky** were the works of Lewis Carroll which were transmitted. There were at least two actuality film versions of **Alice in Wonderland** available, and an exciting animation version created by Disney Studios.

The History of Mr. Polly, by H.G. Wells, made an early appearance in the schedules. A science fiction work by Wells, **Rocket to the Moon**, filmed partially in Ireland, was transmitted subsequently.

The work of Anthony Trollope is represented by the ponderous title of **The Last Chronicles of Barset**, and, for general audiences, **The Pallisers**.

In addition to the animation version of **Silas Marner** already mentioned, the work of George Eliot was further represented by a dramatisation of the **The Mill On the Floss**.

Early Victorian writers got substantial representation. **The Moonstone** by Wilkie Collins was in the lists and a long serialisation in sixteen episodes of Charles Kingsley's **Hereward the Wake**. There were several repeats of **Tom Brown's Schooldays**, the classic and seminal school story by Thomas Hughes, in film feature and serial format. Captain Marryat's **The Children of the New Forest**, an historical work on the Cavaliers and Roundheads theme, also appeared.

R.M. Ballantyne published **The Coral Island** in 1857. This book was a development of the **Robinson Crusoe** theme, with three characters instead of one. Like Defoe, Ballantyne had a rigid perspective of civilisation--the British perspective, incorporating Christianity as a supreme value. A nine-part serialisation of the novel got repeated showings.

We also find H. Rider Haggard's **King Solomon's Mines**, and Joseph Conrad's **Lord Jim**. The latter was a Leaving Certificate text. Another Leaving Certificate text, serialised by the BBC and acquired by RTE, was Thomas Hardy's **The Mayor of Casterbridge**. Adaptations of **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, featured a number of times in the lists. The work of Saki was represented by a **Bulldog Drummond** series. Another title from the conventional children's library of this period was **Lorna Doone**, by R.D. Blackamore. Like the work of Rider Haggard, Conrad and Hardy, Blackamore's novel, as literature and as television drama, crossed the ever-shifting and highly subjective line between adult and children's material.

Anna Sewell, who died in 1878, wrote only one book, **Black Beauty**, which was published in 1877. She wrote to instil kindness to animals in her young readers. This sense of compassion was probably the basis of the appeal of **Black Beauty**. A dramatisation of **Black Beauty** appeared in the schedules in 1972 and was repeated several times throughout the decade. In the 1980s an excellent five part MTM adaptation became available. A sequel was also scheduled---**The Courage of Black Beauty**.

With **Stalky**, which does not seem to have been adapted for television, Rudyard Kipling evolved the basis of the conventional boarding-school story which had been initiated by Thomas Hughes. The consensus about Kipling was that he worshipped the empire ideal. Whether the Empire ideology survived in the Kipling material selected for its schedules by RTE, **The Jungle Book** and the **Just So** stories, is a matter for debate. **The Jungle Book** centred on the struggle between the the jungle boy Mowgli and the great tiger Shere Khan. There was a 1942 film version directed by Alexander Korda, and the 1967 animation version made by Disney Studios. The Mowgli theme was similar to the Tarzan theme. The **Just So** stories were animal folklore, and answer such questions as **How the Camel Got His Hump** and **How the Leopard Got His Spots**.

The children's novels of Edith Nesbit and Frances Hodgson Burnett, written at the turn of the century, marked the emergence of a more child-centred form of writing. Edith Nesbit was born in 1858 and died in 1924. She belonged to the realism school of children's writing, but she could handle history and fantasy equally well.

The Treasure Seekers was the earliest adaptation to appear in the RTE schedules and was based on the Bastable family, the children of which are continually involved in schemes to improve the family's fortunes. There was usually a positive outcome to these schemes, even if the fortune never materialised. **The Railway Children**, a story set in a small Yorkshire railway station and featuring trains, exists in film and serial formats. **The Phoenix and the Carpet** was a fantasy

development of a situation where a strange egg fell into a fire, releasing the Phoenix. **The Enchanted Castle** was a six part BBC adaptation of the Nesbit book of the same name. The story was set in Tudor times.

Frances Hodgson Burnett was almost an exact contemporary of Edith Nesbit. She lived in America and in England and had a cosmopolitan outlook. This was revealed in what was simultaneously one of the most popular and one of the most reviled characterisations in literature, **Little Lord Fauntleroy**, the story of a New York messenger boy who inherited an earldom. The 1936 film version has been used, and a serialised adaptation. **The Little Princess**, also transmitted by RTE, reversed the Lord Fauntleroy theme; Sara Crewe was a rich and privileged pupil in an English boarding school who was suddenly discovered to be poor, and her status was reduced to that of a servant. Like Fauntleroy, her innate strength of character survived the change in her fortunes. **The Secret Garden** told the story of Mary Lennox, a spoiled child who grew up in India, but who came to live with her uncle on the edge of the Yorkshire moors. The house has a derelict walled garden, which she was determined to rehabilitate. The re-creation of the garden transformed Mary's character and restored the health of her hypochondriac invalid cousin.

The schedules also included versions of **The Box of Delights**, based on John Masefield's fantasy adventure, J.M. Barrie's **Peter Pan**, and C. S. Forster's **Captain Horatio Hornblower**. John Meade Falkner was the author of **Moonfleet**, published in 1898, a boys' adventure story with a smuggling theme set in Dorset. The adaptation appeared in serial format.

ADAPTATIONS OF EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

Washington Irving's **Rip Van Winkle** was probably the oldest American text we find in dramatic form in the schedules.

James Fennimore Cooper has been described as the American Walter Scott. He lived from 1789 to 1851. He wrote sympathetically about the Indians, although he didn't have any first-hand knowledge of tribal life. Dramatisations of Cooper's

works which appeared in the RTE schedules were **The Last of the Mohicans**, **The Pathfinder** and **The Deerslayer**. These works were in the 'noble savage' tradition.

Mark Twain's writings get representation on a par with those of Dickens and Robert Louis Stevenson, the most frequently selected dramatisation being that of **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**. A derivative series, **Huckleberry Finn and Friends** was also listed frequently. **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** was a frequent choice, in film and serial format. Another Mark Twain work, **The One Million Pound Bank Note** and a film version of **The Prince and the Pauper**, starring Errol Flynn, about a beggar who changes places with a prince, were also in the schedules. **The Legend of Mark Twain** was a biography based on the life of Samuel Clemens and was set in the Mississippi environment where he grew up. Although not strictly 'western', dramatisations of the works of Mark Twain had, like **The Little House on the Prairie**, a frontier edge. Twain's books for young people were written in the 1870s and 1880s.

American writer Jack London was a contemporary of Mark Twain. He was a realistic writer, and the available film version of his story of dogs and men, **Call of the Wild**, a 1930s effort with Clark Gable and Loretta Young, hardly did justice to his talent. Another contemporary of Mark Twain was Lyman Frank Baum, a grossly under-rated writer of children's fiction.

Baum made literary history by constructing the all-American fairy story. Dorothy, the heroine, no matter what transformations she and her environment undergo, remains a solid Kansas girl throughout **The Wizard of Oz**. His fantasy land of Oz was named from the label on the bottom drawer of his filing cabinet, O--Z. The musical version of **The Wizard of Oz**, starring Judy Garland, and sequels such as **Journey Back to Oz**, were frequent listings in the RTE schedules.

Louisa M. Alcott predated these writers by a generation. She lamented, when asked to write a girl's story by her editor, that the only girls she knew were her sisters. **Little Women**, and **Jo's Boys**, dramatisations of which appeared in the RTE lists, marked a new departure in writing for children---

a move towards realism, humour and warmth. This trend was continued in the **Katy** books by Susan Coolidge, which were written in the 1879s and 1880s. **Katy** proved quite a success with young Irish viewers, reaching first place in the TAM ratings.These authors followed the fortunes of their characters into adulthood in a number of sequels. The girls, according to John Rowe Townsend, inevitably grew up to be very submissive and conventional young women.

Pollyanna was based on the book by Eleanor M. Porter, which featured a girl who changed the life of everyone with whom she came in contact by her optimistic outlook. Hayley Mills was the perfect characterisation for Pollyanna in the 1960 film by David Swift. A serial version of **Pollyanna** was also transmitted by RTE. **Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm** adapted from the book by Kate Douglas Wiggin had a similar theme.

An occasional Christmas selection was **The Gifts of Love**, adapted from the story by O. Henry. **The Revenge of Red Chief** was another O. Henry story.

ADAPTATIONS OF MODERN LITERATURE

Nineteenth century writing, then, constituted the most significant source of dramatisations of American literature which we find and around the RTE children's schedules.

Modern American writing was represented by the Spenser Tracy film of Hemingway's **The Old Man and the Sea**, which was a Leaving Certificate text. The series based on James Thurber's **My World and Welcome To It**, a tea-time transmission, targeted a general audience. We also find a series of **Damon Runyon** stories of low life in New York, and a 1949 version of John Steinbeck's **The Red Pony**, with Robert Mitchum.

Laura Ingalls Wilder, born in 1867, wrote a series of children's books based on her memories of her settler childhood in Wisconsin which became the basis of one of the most popular series to be transmitted by RTE in the period under review, **The Little House on the Prairie**. The first of these books was published in 1932, when she was sixty-five.

Gentle Ben, by Walt Morey, published in 1965, about a

boy and a giant bear, provided the inspiration for a long-running series of the same name.

Carolyn Keene was one of the pseudonyms used by the group of writers who produced the **Nancy Drew** and the **Hardy Boys** series of sleuthing adventures which were immensely popular as children's reading material from the 1930s down to the present day. The **Nancy Drew Mysteries** and the **Hardy Boys' Mysteries**, often transmitted in tandem, were extremely popular television programmes which consistently achieved high audience figures.

Mary Mapes Dodge wrote **Hans Brinkler, or The Silver Skates**, a story about a Dutch boy that centred on a race for a prize pair of skates, an adaptation of which was also transmitted.

E. B. White wrote **Charlotte's Web**, to which we have already referred.

American poetry appeared in an animated version of Longfellow's **Hiawatha**. If we regard the work of T.S. Eliot as American, we can find a number of showings of **Murder in the Cathedral**, an option on the Honours Leaving Certificate course.

ADAPTATIONS OF MODERN ENGLISH FICTION

Adaptations of children's fiction by modern British writers also had a strong presence in the schedules. The cartoon version of George Orwell's **Animal Farm**, a Leaving Certificate text, has already been mentioned. The Leaving Certificate audience was also targeted, and served, by a number of transmissions of Peter Brook's uneven black and white version of William Golding's **Lord of the Flies**.

The dramatisations of Enid Blyton's **Famous Five** series of books which appeared on RTE consistently attracted top TAM ratings. Roald Dahl's contemporary fantasy, **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**, was a regular selection for transmission at Christmas. Ian Fleming's **Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang**, a fantasy which featured a versatile car, also made frequent appearances.

A two-part version of C.S Lewis's **The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe** was also selected. This was a profound allegory. The four children pass through the back of a wardrobe

into the land of Narnia, ruled over by a wise Lion who, we learn eventually, represents Christ. At the end of the story the children learn that in the ordinary world they are dead; they have been killed in a railway accident.

The work of children's writer Rumer Godden is represented by a 'Kizzi' series, derived from her **Didakoi** books. **Midnight is a Place** was based on a story by Joan Aiken. Richmal Crompton's **William** books, popular since the 1930s, formed the basis of the **Just William** series. Leon Garfield, whose favourite period is the eighteenth century, wrote **Smith**, the story of a young London criminal who became an agent of the law, and **Devil-in-the-Fog**, about a troupe of wandering actors. Eric Knight wrote **Lassie Come Home**, the story of a collie taken to northern Scotland who trekked the 400 miles back home to Yorkshire. **Lassie Come Home** was published in 1940; it inspired a successful film and several American series.

Phillipa Pearce was the author of **Tom's Midnight Garden**, which formed the basis of a series which could be listed under several classifications. The basic device is a science fiction motif; Tom is dreamed by the old housekeeper in his uncle's house back into her Victorian childhood.

Arthur Ransome wrote **Swallows and Amazons**, the theme of which was inland sailing. Noel Streatfield wrote **Ballet Shoes**, about three girls with ambitions for stage careers, and **Thursday's Child**, a foundling story. Rosemary Sutcliff, whose forte was historical fiction, wrote **The Eagle of the Ninth**, set in Roman Britain. **Worzel Gummidge**, the scarecrow hero of the series of that name, was originally created by children's writer Barbara Euphan Todd. Contemporary writer Nina Bawden wrote three books which formed the basis of programmes transmitted on RTE: **On the Run**, a Children's Film Foundation film, **The Peppermint Pig**, a series about an intelligent pig, and **A Handful of Thieves**. Penelope Lively was the author of **The Ghost of Thomas Kempe**, a contemporary ghost story. Alison Utley wrote **A Traveller in Time**, the adaptation of which appeared in the RTE schedules. Australian-born Pamela Lyndon Travers, who spent most of her life in London, wrote **Mary Poppins**, a version of which

was filmed by Disney Studios.

ADAPTATIONS FROM OTHER SOURCES

Continental literature for children got scant representation, apart from dramatisations of the work of Alexander Dumas. Dumas titles in the lists are **The Count of Monte Cristo, Son of Monte Cristo, The Black Tulip, Man in the Iron Mask**, and, as we would expect, **The Three Musketeers**. An adaptation of Baroness Orczy's **Scarlet Pimpernel** was also transmitted. There were at least three film versions of **The Hunchback of Notre Dame**, Victor Hugo's tale. The one selected for transmission by RTE was the 1957 version, with Anthony Quinn as Quasimodo, and Gina Lollobrigida as Esmeralda.

Most of the work of Jules Verne can be described as science fiction, but it was science fiction solidly based on available scientific knowledge. We have already mentioned the animation version of **Around the World in Eighty Days**. Other versions of this story were also listed, in serial and in cinema film formats. The 1958 film version starring David Niven and Shirley McLaine featured consistently in the schedules down through the years. Other Verne novels adapted for cinema and appearing in the schedules were **Five Weeks in a Balloon** and **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea**, featuring Captain Nemo, who also appeared in a spin-off series, **Return of Captain Nemo**. A series of film adaptations of the works of this author, under the title of **The World of Jules Verne**, was also listed.

The Diary of Anne Frank, the allegedly genuine record of a young Dutch Jewish girl's experience in hiding during Hitler's pogrom was also transmitted.

There was also a ten-episode version of the **Oddyssey** in the lists, and an unconvincing film version of **Omar Khayyam** with Cornel Wilde, in which the celebrated Persian poet saved his country from a gang of assassins.

Occasionally, drama based on literature was grouped under umbrella titles such as **Animated Classics, Book Adventures**, and **Rainbow Classics**.

LITERATURE ORIENTATION

This brief survey by no means exhausts the category. Many other examples of imported dramatised children's literature will be listed as animal-centred stories, as ghost stories, as adventures, or categorised as real-life material. The range of literature derivatives also extends to Batman, Superman, The Incredible Hulk, and other heroes of popular comics.

The predominant classifications here are English and American literature, nineteenth century authors providing the bulk of the base material.

It was a vast collection, one of the more impressive categories in our study. The peculiar and particular achievement of television was to conserve and rejuvenate a massive store of basically Victorian literature, most of which was forgotten or ignored as reading material. Who will read Charles Kingsley's Hereward the Wake today, or Dickens' Our Mutual Friend or the works of Sir Walter Scott?

Copyright costs of contemporary works may have had something to do with the selection of this material for dramatisation, but the basic motivation was probably a traditional perception of what constituted children's literature, and, as a logical corollary, of what was appropriate as television material for children. This perception, in the cultural context, made the corpus of literature-based drama which appeared on RTE in the period under review a medium for the transmission of the sets of values inherent in this literature, to which the meagre provision of comparable home-produced material could offer no challenge.

If, on the other hand, we consider that access to vast quantities of classic English literature, facilitated by dramatisation, enaction, and substitution of easily-accessible audio-visual material for large tracts of difficult and obscure literary text to be a cultural acquisition and an important formative, cognitive and educational influence, then we would probably agree that the Children's and Young People's Department did extremely well in the provision of imported children's drama based on literature.

DRAMATIC CRITERIA

It should come as no surprise to us that the works of Victorian writers adapted well as television serial material; they were frequently published originally in serial format in popular magazines, and when they proved popular in that medium, re-issued as books. The serial structure was latent quite often, if not overt, in the basic literary text. The works of Charles Dickens were usually published in serial format, as were the works of Stevenson. The children's stories of Edith Nesbit and Frances Hodgson Burnett usually appeared initially in this format.

The extent to which the content of the original literary work emerged in the new medium product was decided to a large extent by the scripting technique, which was adaptation. The guideline for adapters was that they should write their script as the original writer would have written it, if he had had the opportunity to fashion his story in screenplay format. Adapters were seen as having two main responsibilities---to retain as far as possible the content, impact, and qualities of the original, and to meet to a pragmatic degree the demands of the medium for which they were writing. Where these two aims conflicted, the demands of the new medium would have precedence.Thus the screen version of a literary work, while usually identifiable with the original, will have undergone many modifications; the craft of adaptation is that of making medium-dictated changes in the original work.

The most common modification was compression; dramatisation takes longer than any other literary form : "John rode Black Beauty back to the village at breakneck speed" takes a second to read, but the implied scene would take several minutes, and considerable resources, to depict on screen; the adapter has to make a series of judgements as to whether the scene should be retained or deleted. Scenes will be condensed and eliminated, sections of the main plot will be dropped, several sub-plots will disappear, characters will be eliminated, or, if a number of characters are performing the same functions, fused. The degree of compression will also be dictated by the

available time to retell the story; more compression will be necessary for a single feature than a serial adaptation. The level of resources available dictates modifications; scenes with heavy cost factors are likely to be eliminated.

Censorial factors will also be operative. Adapters of the Brothers Grimm version of **Hansel and Gretel** might have to dispense with or modify the scene of the witch being cooked in the oven; if vilification of stepmothers is out, the part of the basic story where the stepmother brings the children to the wood hoping that they will perish will also have to be modified.

Despite all these modifications, some quite severe, the resultant screen text will retain the main content of the original text, affording substantial access to the intent of original author. This basic fidelity is one yardstick of critical appraisal. The other is the viability of the adaptation as drama in its own right in the new medium.

One attraction of literature as a source of screen drama is the 'pre-sold' dimension identified by James Monaco (1977) in the context of cinema: these texts are already well known as literature.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

The implied developmental context in this category is a cultural one, in the refinement and educational sense; television has made the content of a vast library of literary material, constituting the cultural texture of previous and present generations, available to some extent to Irish children in a readily accessible form. Television has imaged this material for them in a highly graphic manner, and synthesised and reinforced the main themes and narratives. Dramatised literature has thus contributed to cultural continuity, but this cultural continuity has been filtered through a new medium.

The cultural continuum to which this literature subscribes is that associated with the mainstream global language, English, of which Ireland is a colony in cultural terms. The dominant values, even in the American contribution, derive substantially from Victorian and imperial England.

TELEVISION AND READING

A relevant context is the connection between television viewing and reading---whether television retards or motivates general reading activity. This remains an area of acrimonious and inconclusive debate.

The adaptations themselves are frequently the target of opprobrium from proponents of children's literature. In **Children and Literature---Views and Reviews**, edited by Virginia Haviland and published by The Bodley Head, 1974, there is consistent condemnation of the Disney Studios adaptations of well-known literary works such as **Pinnochio** and **Mary Poppins**. The following extract from a contribution by children's literature expert Frances Clark Sayers is typical of the general attitude.

> "I call him (Walt Disney) to account for his debasement of the traditional literature of childhood, in films and in the books he publishes.
> He shows scant respect for the integrity of the original creations of authors, manipulating and vulgarising everything for his own ends.....
> The acerbity of Mary Poppins, unpredictable, full of wonder and mystery, becomes, with Mr. Disney's treatment, one great marsh-mallow-covered cream puff.
> He made a young tough of Peter Pan and transformed Pinnochio into a slapstick sadistic revel......"

The question of whether the transmission of literature-derived drama encourages or retards reading, or has a neutral effect, is encompassed by the wider debate on television and reading in general.

The Himmelweit et al. Report (1958) found that children, once they started viewing, read less than before. For Himmelweit this was equally true for books and comics. Once the novelty of viewing wore off, children reverted to reading, but opted more for books than for comics. Ultimately the Himmelweit Report concludes that television inspires rather than retards reading, and the serialisation of books on television arouses the child's interest and curiosity about literature. Television may also spur the child's interest in non-fiction material.

Marie Winn, in **The Plug-in Drug**, devotes a chapter to

the relationship between television and reading. Before television, according to Winn, reading was the major imaginative experience. Her central complaint about television relates to the ease of transformation; on television one hears and sees the word; Winn values the laborious transformations implied by the written word. In relation to the imagination she quotes Bruno Bettelheim (1963), who noted that : "Television captures the imagination, but does not liberate it. A good book at once stimulates and frees the mind." In semiotic terms Winn and Bettelheim are suggesting that reading implies paradigmatic enrichment, whereas television implies paradigmatic impoverishment. Winn ignores the dramatisation of literature on television, but adverts to the network efforts to promote reading. No network, however, has said what she wanted to hear : "Turn off the set and read a book instead."

The INTO Report (Footnotes, Chapter Two : 15) suggests a positive relationship between television viewing and reading, and notes that children like to read programme-related material such as yearbooks.

The Children's Television Workshop, which produced The Electric Company, was happy that this programme, also transmitted on RTE, could help with the development of reading skills. The success of the Dr. Seuss series hinged more on the production and sale of spin-off programme-related reading material than on the in-programme content.

Ultimately this debate is about the comparative values of two types of reading : the reading of the literary text, and the more complex reading of the audio-visual text on the television screen. The reading of the literary text implies a range of skills acquired laboriously over a long period, and the existence of elaborate educational structures to impart and develop these skills. The reading skills associated with television texts are acquired without special instruction, and without relevant instruction structures. The research of Hodge and Tripp (1986) confirms what seems to be the universal suspicion of television by educators, which will persist, they imply, until television literacy and appreciation become an

unchallenged component of the school curriculum.

HISTORICAL DRAMA

The imported programming in the schedules incorporated a substantial segment of historical drama, or of dramatised fiction in an historical setting.

While set and costume designers usually took great care to achieve historical accuracy in dress and physical environments, the objective of the history-based series, serials and features in and around the children's schedules in the period under review was rarely historical accuracy; the main attraction of a historical theme was its potential for conflict-based action. Quite often the content owed more to folklore than to verifiable history.

Drama based on history will usually be costume drama. Costume implies a specific modality context; the child will distance text content from his or her immediate area of identification; costume drama permits visual and aural treatments of dramatic situations which would be traumatic in a real-life, contemporary format. A gory sword-fight in a history drama will be tolerable; a stabbing incident in a contemporary drama could be quite disturbing. Effectively, the child processes history drama as fantasy.

History drama invariably has a high level of ideological loading; any particular segment of dramatised history is likely to be a constituent of the national mega-myth of the source country.

BRITISH HISTORY IN HISTORICAL DRAMA

Programmes in this category were predominantly concerned with British history and folk-history. Indeed, if we organise the relevant material in the schedules in a rough historical chronology, a general parallel to British history up to the first World War will emerge.

This arbitrary account starts with Roman Britain, which was the setting for the serial adaptation of the Rosemary Sutcliff novel, **The Eagle of the Ninth.**

The Arthurian legends were basically a troubadour rendition in feudal concepts of folklore deriving from a sixth century Welsh prince. Arthurian lore was represented by **Arthur of the Britons**, and by **The Moon Stallion**, which counterpoints modern times with the Arthurian period.

Using our chronological arrangement, the next period which got attention was the Norman conquest of Britain, resisted by **Hereward the Wake**, who was the subject of the novel of the same name by Charles Kingsley. **Hereward the Wake** was adapted for television in sixteen episodes by the BBC, and transmitted by RTE.

The Normans brought feudalism to England. The feudal system was the environment in which the **Robin Hood** legend was set. There were several **Robin Hood** series and features, notably **The Adventures of Robin Hood** and **The King's Outlaw**. Scott's novels, **Ivanhoe** and **The Talisman**, and Stevenson's **Black Arrow**, had feudal settings. **The Wars of the Roses** and **The Black Shield of Falworth** also had a feudal back-drop.

Welsh history and folklore was represented by a Sianel 4 production, **Owain, Prince of Wales**, set in the fifteenth century, and by **Hawksmoor**, which was about a Welsh outlaw in the Robin Hood mould.

The lists featured a number of series based on Tudor times. One of the earliest was **Three Golden Nobles**. Edith Nesbit's **The Enchanted Castle** was also set in this period.

The British monarchy from the days of King John was the subject of **The Age of Kings**, a long series based on Shakespeare's history plays. These plays, by critical consensus, celebrated the English state; the desired end was the stability and continuity of the Crown.

The Elizabethan decades were the era of the tall ship and adventure on the high seas, but the swashbuckling age lasted right up to the end of the nineteenth century, and, in Oriental settings, began much earlier.

The Borderers was a series dealing with Scottish border conflict in the 1560s.

The Splendid Spur was set in the period of the

Cromwellian wars. **The Children of the New Forest**, a Captain Marryat novel, had the same setting.

Jacobean themes were well represented with **Flight of the Heron**, **Bonnie Prince Charlie**, **The Hill of the Red Fox**, **Doom Castle** and **The Camerons**. Scott's work, **Rob Roy**, and Stevenson's novel, **Kidnapped**, also had Jacobean themes.

Social life in the eighteenth century was the background to **Smith**, and to **Devil-in-The-Fog**, both by Leon Garfield. Smith was an apprentice pickpocket who sides with the law of the land to bring greater villains to justice. The setting was central London. **Devil in the Fog** was about a company of itinerant actors and their exploits.

Moonfleet was an eighteenth century smuggling saga. The Napoleonic Wars was the background for **Operation Patch**, and the aftermath of these wars, around 1820, was the period in which the high TAM rating series **Boy Dominic**, a Yorkshire Television serial, was set. There was also an eulogistic series on the highwayman **Dick Turpin**.

Other marine adventures set roughly in this period were **Hurricane**, located in the West Indies, **Adventures of the Seaspray**, **Captain Horatio Hornblower**, **Blacke's Magic**, **Return of the Antelope**, **Wake of the Red Witch** and **Captain Blood**.

Yorkshire was the setting for **The Brontes of Haworth**, which was about the famous literary family.

Mr. Quilp was about a London shopkeeper and his struggle with moneylenders in the 1840s. **Matt and Jenny** was set in the same period.

A sense of the historical reality of this period was also conveyed by **The Voyage of Charles Darwin**, based on the botanical explorations of the famous naturalist.

The long list of television and film adaptations of the works of **Charles Dickens** which we have already mentioned could be taken as revealing the social history of nineteenth century England. A social history of the same period could be constructed from the many other Victorian fictional works which had been adapted for television or cinema and were included in the RTE schedules as young people's programming.

Programmes contingent to the children's schedules, which children watched, such as **Upstairs, Downstairs** and **Edwardian Lady**, conveyed an historical perception of Edwardian times.

Other programmes with a strong sense of history were **Tom Grattan's War**, about a thirteen-year-old boy's experiences during the 1914--1918 war, and **I'm Looking To You**, a film about children in time of war.

AMERICAN HISTORY

For Hollywood, and the television production companies, American history began with Columbus. There was one film on our list entitled **Christopher Columbus**. There were early pioneer and frontier sagas, such as adaptations of **James Fennimore Cooper** novels, and series about **Daniel Boone** and **Davy Crockett**. **The Chisholms**, a series about a pioneering family, belongs to a later period.

The Best of Families was a series built around three eighteenth century USA families. **Rip Van Winkle** by Washington Irving, and the environment of Sleepy Hollow also belonged to eighteenth century America.

The works of **Mark Twain** and television and film versions thereof reflected the social structures of mid-nineteenth-century America. The lists included a number of Civil War stories based on this period, including **The Ravelled Thread** and **The Rebel Slave**.

Two series listed dealt with Irish emigration to the United States----**The Mannions of America** and Taylor Caldwell's **The Captains and the Kings**.

If the conventional Western, which was always a historical work, must be assigned a position in time, it would probably be in the two decades following the Civil War.

THE WESTERN

The corpus of Western material, in all its variations, while invariably myth, was nevertheless the repository of much factual historical material. In bulk, the Western provision

represented a large and varied pattern of theme clusters---the pioneering theme in terms of frontier and trail---the primitive community on the defensive---the lone hero-gunman---economic agrarian conflict---man versus environment---law and order themes---gold rush and similar themes.

There is general critical agreement that the American Western film, like the American gangster film, amalgamates to a mythology. The Western genre is a mythology rooted in American history and sociology, sharing with actuality a visible and verifiable terrain. As mythology, the Western is a tribal myth of origin, with a frontier locale and a pioneering ethic, the aggregate content of which constituted a multifaceted myth of origin which rooted white American identity in an agrarian and pioneering past. As such the American Western is an ideological statement, expressing a primitivistic individualism and the ideal of a physical and economic environment where all options are open. Stuart Hall, in a paper on television discourse, encapsulated the 'Western' genre as follows :

> "The Western tale, of course, arose out of--though it quickly ceased to conform to--the real historical circumstances of the opening up of the American West.......This is _the_ archetypal American story, America of the frontier, of the expanding and unsettled West, the 'virgin land' before law and society fully settled in, still closer to Nature than to law and order. It is the land of _men_, of independent men, isolated in their confrontations with Nature or Evil.....a land where women are either subordinate...or..if somewhat more liberated...destined to be inadvertently or conveniently shot in the penultimate reel.." (Hall:1973)

Stuart Hall classifies the Western as the paradigm action-narrative, the perfect myth.

In Ireland, the television audience for Westerns had been created by the cinema. For young people, the Western was perceived by schedule planners as healthy escapism, ensuring exciting action and clear-cut conflict.

In the early years Telefis Eireann provided a generous supply of drama in the Western genre. The bulk of this material was in the classic Western format. The advantage of television

as compared with the cinema was that television could supply, through serialisation, a sustained presentation of the adventures of a favourite character or set or characters. Western films were scheduled in special slots such as **The Saturday Western**, which went out at 6.06. p.m.

We have already noticed that the animation titles included many Western settings. Generic Western series in the children's schedules, or adjacent to the children's schedules and targeting general audiences, were **Buckskin**, **Tombstone Territory**, **The Cisco Kid**, **Kit Carson**, **The Lone Ranger**, **Gunsmoke**, **Hopalong Cassidy**, **The Man from Shiloh**, **The High Chaparral** and **The Virginian**. **Annie Oakley** was a long-running series about a girl sharpshooter. There were a number of frontier or pioneering Westerns with an earlier historical setting. Examples would be **Daniel Boone** and **Davy Crockett**, and variations of the theme of the westward trail such as **Wagon Train** and **Dusty's Trail**. Heroes of the Prairie was also frontier mythology. Adaptations of the works of **James Fennimore** Cooper belonged to the frontier and pioneer categories.

The foundation myth was developed more fully in **The Road West**, in films like **The Plainsmen** and **Louisiana Story**, **How the West Was Won**, in Michener's **Centennial**, in **Young Country**, in **The Young Pioneers**, and in **The Chisholms**. The most popular variations on the pioneer myth with young Irish viewers were dramatisations of the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder which constituted the **Little House on the Prairie** series. This series, and a sequel, **Little House---A New Beginning**, achieved high TAM ratings.

Ranching, rustling, sheep and cattle conflicts, cattle drives and the land hunger theme formed the plot sources for series like **The Big Valley**, **The Real Mccoys**, and **The High Chaparral**, although they were also the stock in trade of most Westerns. **Bonanza**, a Western series which starred Michael Landon, ran for fourteen years on American television. RTE transmitted several seasons of this programme. The outlaw theme was represented by **The Legend of Jesse James**. Other titles in the lists were **The Monroes**, **Alias Smith and Jones**, **Ramsbottom**

Rides Again, **Cade's County** and **The Man from the Alamo**.

The American West got musical treatment in features like **Calamity Jane** and **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers**. **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** was also presented in dramatic, non-musical serial format. **The Over-The-Hill-Gang** was a spoof western series featuring geriatric heroes. The U.S. Cavalry feature in series such as **F Troop**, **Boots and Saddles** and **Camp Wilderness**.

Red Indians were an ever-present context, but Indian-centred themes were not popular with RTE selectors. Some titles were **Jessy Becomes an Indian**, **Chief Crazy Horse**, **Last of the Mohicans**, **Last of the Comanches**, **The Last of the Indians**, **Mohawk**, and a version of the O. Henry story, **The Revenge of Red Chief**.

Trains and railways were a consistent Western theme. One long-running railway-based series was **Casey Jones**. The Charles Bronson film, **Breakheart Pass**, could also be included in this category.

Many nature series, even modern programmes, had a frontier edge. **Sierra**, set in a nature reserve, and featuring park rangers, was such a series. **Grizzly Adams** was another. Adaptations of the work of **Mark Twain** had the same appeal. The American Mid-West was the location of many series, serials and features for which the great outdoors was the setting. Disney film features and series like **Rin-Tin-Tin** and **Lassie** conveyed this world. **Rainbow Country**, a twenty-six part Canadian series, was set in North-West Canada.

Very little of the home produced drama for children corresponded generically to the Western, though elements of our own myth of origin can be found if we look for them. The Irish language was part of this myth---the generation of an Irish language media text has its ultimate origin in a perception of Irish national identity. Folklore material and folklore derivatives have, somewhere in their genesis, the premise that this material was part of our national heritage and cultural identity.

There was one example at least of the dramatised myth

of origin---the set of four plays by **Bryan McMahon** commissioned to commemorate the 1916 rising. These plays incorporated, in high profile, the belief that our modern state emerged from the events of 1916, and that the beliefs and motivations of the instigators of that rebellion constitute the unquestionable premises of Irish nationalism. This code is quite distinct from precepts of citizenship.

OTHER HISTORICAL DRAMA

Drama based on American history was less prolific than material deriving from British history, but we can still trace a thin trail from Columbus through the War of Independence and pioneer and frontier settlement to the Civil War, and on into the great move west and north-west in the late nineteenth century, engaging along the way with Irish emigration to the United States.

Irish and Australian history merged in **Against the Wind**, a thirteen-part serial against the background of convict transportation. There were a number of Australian series and features, such as **The Little Convict**, based on the convict/settler theme.

European history got relatively thin representation. We can glean some historical background from the Dumas material, the **Monte Cristo** novels, **The Man in the Iron Mask**, and **The Black Tulip**, and from the adaptation of the Dickens novel, **A Tale of Two Cities**. **Operation Patch** was about the Napoleonic Wars. There was an eight-part **Beau Geste** serial involving the French Foreign Legion, a series on **Peter the Great** and a feature about the Swiss patriot William Tell called **Crossbow**.

Finally, a whimsical view of world history could be extracted from the Mel Brooks series **When Things Were Rotten**.

HOME PRODUCED HISTORICAL DRAMA

The home-produced historical drama in the children's schedules was made up of the 1916 commemoration plays by Brian McMahon; the series **Irishmen and Irishwomen** based on the published collection of socio-historical portraits of the same

name by Bernard Share; the Access-Community-Drama-formula play by Carolyn Swift, **O'Donoghue's Revenge**; three features with historical premises, **I, Patrick,** a treatment of St. Patrick's Confession for general viewing, , the film **A Second of June,** and **The Ballinch Bowl,** about the discovery of an ancient chalice. From Telefis Scoile sources we can add two plays in Irish, **Gunna Cam agus Slabhra Óir** by Seán Ó Tuama, which was about the sixteenth century historical phase of conquest by Britain called **Surrender and Regrant,** and **Seosamh Mac Grianna,** a play presented by Donegal children about an important writer in Irish from the Donegal Gaeltacht.

Arranging the subject matter in chronological sequence we relate through **I, Patrick,** and **The Ballinch Bowl** to early Christian Ireland; we become involved with the colonisation of Ireland by Britain through **O'Donoghue's Revenge** and **Gunna Cam agus Slabhra Óir; Irishmen and Irishwomen** spanned the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and gave us portraits of Irish people who achieved celebrity or notoriety outside the main stream of military and constitutional history; the **1916** plays and the **Seosamh Mac Grianna** play gave us an insight into the political genesis of our modern state and into the Gaelic Ireland premises of our political perspectives. We got a glimpse of contemporary Ireland on the occasion of President Ronald Reagan's state visit in **A Second of June.**

There was, of course, no plan to deliver any such sequence or overview of Irish history; we are merely trying to establish if such an overview was latent in the provision of home produced historical drama.

Missing from our sequence is pre-Christian Ireland, the Scandinavian invasions, the Norman conquest, feudal Ireland, Ireland under the Stuarts, the Cromwellian phase, the Williamite Wars, the Penal laws, the United Irishmen, Emmet's rising, O'Connell, the Young Ireland period, the Famine, The Fenians, the War of Independence and the Civil War, to mention some of the standard reference points of conventional Irish historical studies. Contemporary Irish history is blatantly absent.

We would have to agree that the overview of Irish

history which emerged from the home produced provision of historical drama for young people was very much weaker than the overview which emerged of British or even of American history in imported children's drama. The domestic provision, in particular I, Patrick, O'Donoghue's Revenge, Irishmen and Irishwomen, and the Telefis Scoile productions, was very poorly resourced and lost out in quantity and quality and sustained impact. Many of the British series ranged from six to sixteen episodes and some of them were repeated several times in the RTE schedules.

Referring specifically to history plays, Thomas Heywood, in his Apology for Actors, 1612, had this to say :

> ":...Playes were writ with this ayme, and carryed with this methode, to teach the subjects obedience to their King, to shew the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions and insurrections, to present them (the subjects) with the flourishing estate of such as live in obedience, exhorting them to alleagance, dehorting them from from all trayterous and fellonious stratagems...." (Shakespeare : The Histories : Waith (1965) : Introduction : P. 2 :)

This would be the overall ideology of The Age of Kings. Whether it persisted all the way down to Upstairs, Downstairs is a matter for examination.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DRAMA PROVISION, 1962--1987

Animation drama dominated children's programming on Telefis Eireann/RTE during the period under review. The animation provision was impressive in volume, content range and product quality, and, on the evidence that a number of animation programmes achieved placements in the published TAM ratings, enjoyed a high level of viewer acceptability.

The vast volume of imported cartoon material in the schedules constituted a significant cultural import, shaped by, and transmitting, source values, perceptions, environment and expression, in which the receiving culture found little more than coincidental representation.

Irish children, to the extent that they were in

possession of the visual, aural and verbal languages of the cartoon, would have been able to process the core content of the cartoon component.

The viewing competence of Irish children was likely to have been extensive. Their domestic and educational formation would already have provided them with skills in anthropomorphic transformations. Reading material such as comics, cinema provision and cartoon provision on other available television services would have reinforced these skills and increased their prescience of this genre and advanced the general accessibility of the imported cartoon provision in the RTE schedules.

The imported cartoon provision offered a wide range of potential developmental, cognitive, aesthetic and cultural acquisitions and a wide range of potential entertainment gratifications. Potentially, viewing the imported cartoon provision was a highly enriching experience for Irish children.

By comparison, to mass market criteria, the home produced cartoon provision was negligible, poorly resourced, unsustained in delivery and, while competent, of indifferent competitive quality. It was restricted in audience range, catering mainly for preschool and kindergarten audiences. Verbal texts for the most part were bilingual or in the Irish language, precluding mass-audience appeal and accessibility. The over-all orientation of the home produced provision was didactic rather than recreational.

The home produced cartoon provision was too weak to offer any significant corrective or challenge to the ideological, value or attitudinal conditioning potential of the imported cartoon provision, or to offer any corrective to potential skewed interpretation of objective reality in this provision. The home produced cartoon provision was also too limited to compensate for the absence or under-representation of Irish children's immediate experience, their physical and social environment and their functional language from the imported cartoon provision, or to provide idiomatic or behavioural role modelling or other elements of a reliable self-image for them consonant with their own culture.

The enrichment potential of the cartoon provision derived in the main from imported cartoons. This enrichment related in the developmental context to narrative competence, to modality judgement formation---the power to discriminate between fantasy and actuality---to development of transformational skills---anthropomorphic processing, situational and character transformations---aesthetic development in the graphic and kinetic disciplines, cognitive development, development in media and genre sophistication through assimilation and discrimination of a wide range of cartoon genre motifs, conventions and narrative structures, and the development of the acute sense of incongruity---and by inference, of congruity---which is the basis of cartoon humour.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the cartoon provision on Telefis Eireann/RTE, reinforced by cartoon provision on other channels, did contribute to this developmental enrichment, but that the enrichment accrued to the Irish child as a child, not necessarily as an Irish child.

Similarly, the cultural thrust of the cartoon provision, in so far as it may be presumed to have had a formative influence, contributing to the formation of values, attitudes and beliefs, was not towards a development of indigenous Irish culture, or Irish attitudes, values and beliefs, but in the direction of the main source of imported cartoon material. The main formative influence was clearly that of the dominant American culture, mediated through North American verbal, visual and aural languages. The formative impact of the cartoon provision did little for our children as Irish children, or as European children, or as children of a global community. The conditioning implicit in this substantial segment of children's programming on RTE over the period under review was towards acceptance of dominant American values.

In the skills-acquisition context, the home produced cartoon provision was a considerable achievement, given the lack of resourcing and the absence of a production structure.

In the context of minority-language development, and minority culture development, the Irish language and bi-lingual

cartoon has been a significant, if limited, achievement, extending the usage of the Irish language to a new and popular media format.

Puppet drama in the main was directed at the preschool and junior segment of the young audience. The volume of imported puppet drama exceeded that of home produced puppet drama, but the imbalance was not as pronounced as it was in the case of cartoons; home produced puppet drama and puppet usage offered a substantial and sustained challenge to the imported variant.

While there was a substantial presence of American puppet series and features in the schedules, the predominant source of supply was England. The material from both sources was well-resourced and of high competitive standards; it was also heavily ideological, value-laden and attitude-forming, but the home produced provision was of sufficient strength, and sustained to a sufficient degree to counteract the impact of the imported provision to some extent, and to compensate, however inadequately, for the omission of the Irish child's physical, linguistic and social environment, culture and experience, from imported puppet drama.

Puppet drama constituted the most substantial segment of home produced children's drama in the period under review. The home produced provision included conventional serial puppet drama, puppets interacting with human actors, puppets functioning in educational contexts and puppets functioning in presentation contexts. Series were presented in Irish, in English and in bi-lingual formats. Production of some series was sustained over long periods. The thematic range was also wide. Fantasy predominated, anthropomorphisation being a frequent strategy, but we have also had real-life situations such as those reflected in **Baile Beag**.

The sustained home produced puppet drama provision was a significant achievement for the RTE Children's Department, given the lack of resourcing and the absence of a reliable production structure.

Because puppet drama depends on the aural text for

exposition to a greater degree than the cartoon, lack of competence in Irish would have inevitably reduced accessibility to the content for the younger viewer where programmes were in Irish or bi-lingual.

In the context of minority-language development, and minority culture development, the Irish language and bi-lingual puppet drama was an important, if limited, extension to the use of the Irish language. However, as in the case of cartoons, this provision was undertaken without any corresponding studies, or the development of communications studies perspectives, relative to the mass media contexts of second language material, or the specific viewing situation of the average Irish child in relation to such material. Irish language narrations appended to imported graphics in current schedules also failed to take account of the limitations of the average Irish child in the comprehension and use of the Irish language.

Imported puppet programmes were of high quality, well resourced, and world market commodities produced in solid commercial structures. By contrast, the Irish product was poorly resourced, was often a family effort produced in a domestic context, and evolved in an unstructured production situation.

Home-originated puppet-based material generated on occasion a high level of audience interest and participation. A home market was identified for this type of programme. **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune** was proved marketable overseas. Spin-off products proved a viable proposition in the case of **Wanderly Wagon** and **Bosco**. Puppetry proved an effective medium for Irish language drama, for bi-lingual drama, and for English language drama. Puppets were also used effectively as presentation media.

Like cartoon drama, puppet drama can contribute to modality judgement formation, to the development of transformational skills, to aesthetic development, to cognitive development, to development in media and genre sophistication, to narrative development and to the development of a sense of incongruity, but puppet drama also has additional gratifications derivative of manipulative associations, of associations with play, and gratifications derivative of the three dimensional

actuality of the puppet figure and set. The modality of the puppet character is higher than that of the cartoon, because live performers are frequently seen to relate directly to the puppet, and child viewers normally have manipulative experience of their own which they bring to the puppet viewing situation.

The bulk of the home produced puppet drama was in the fantasy area, and we could assume some developmental contribution appropriate to fantasy from the home produced provision. This contribution was increased because the viewer was familiar to some degree with the phonetics, idiom and language structure of the verbal script, and because some representation of the local environment was inescapable in the text. The fantasy material was based to some extent on Irish tradition, the broad details of which would have been part of the cultural capital of the young viewer.

The character demography of the puppet provision reflected a pronounced male orientation.

The puppet programmes to which children responded in a substantial concrete way were unilingual presentations.

Considered as a block, the predominant orientation that emerged from home produced animation programming was towards a manifestation of the national mythology : the perception of national community where folk tradition has a premium value, and where the appropriate language, if it could be spoken and understood, would be Irish. As this perception is very much part of the national culture, home produced animation children's drama for television was very much an indigenous cultural product.

While contributing many gratifications and considerable enrichment derivative of drama, of cartoon and puppet drama, and of home produced children's television drama, it did not to any significant degree provide a mediated version of the personal and social world of Irish children, nor of their environment, nor did it provide behavioural or relational or emotional modelling for them to any significant degree.

The home produced animation drama indicated a wealth of indigenous talent for this type of creative commodity.

Valuable skills were developed. A momentum was generated through the limited patronage of this segment of dramatic production which still survives. However, the genesis of this drama and its heavy presence in the Telefis Eireann/RTE children's schedules throughout the station's history can be attributed to the budgetary constrictions placed on children's programming; it was the only type of sustained television drama provision for children that could have emerged given the structural status of the children's programming department and the pattern of resourcing of that department.

LIVE ACTION TELEVISION DRAMA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The imported live action provision was almost as extensive as the animation provision. In this provision the schedule content could be grouped into a range of categories with indeterminate and frequently intersecting boundaries. The broad categories we used in our analysis were real life drama, which reflected the actuality of children's lives in the source culture, adventure drama, animal-related drama, drama derived from published literature, fantasy drama, history and costume drama, family and situation drama, musical drama, drama set in the American West and Mid-West, films originally made for cinema and educational drama.

As our analysis of the schedule content in the period under review has shown, the live action provision included real life drama relating to neighbourhood child communities; drama relating to work situations and careers; drama relating to sport; drama relating to family relationships; drama relating to school life; drama with orphan-related themes; drama dealing with physical and mental handicap; displacement themes; drama about childhood; drama with racial themes; drama with class themes; child-centred adventure stories; tall ship stories; island stories; pirate stories; smuggling stories; ghost ships; underwater adventure; beachcombing and salvage; air/sea rescue; series involving crime, detection, investigation; aeronautical adventure; environment-based adventure; wild-life and animal-related adventure; adventure related to exploration; circus

stories; science fiction stories; ghost stories; chase themes; escape themes; hostage themes; railway adventure; treasure trove themes; work-related adventure; drama involving horses; drama involving ponies; drama involving wild stallions; drama involving mules; drama involving donkeys; drama involving pigs; drama involving dogs; drama involving deer; drama involving elephants; drama involving lions; drama involving bears; drama involving chimpanzees; drama involving seals; drama involving dolphins; drama involving kangaroos; drama involving birds; drama involving hamsters and frogs; drama involving big game animals; circus series; zoo series; series featuring vets; drama in educational series; vast quantities of dramatised folklore; cinema films with a fantasy premise; science fiction drama; drama involving ghosts or psychic powers; innumerable cinema films; historical drama, incorporating in particular a very comprehensive overview of British history; costume drama; a massive audio-visual anthology of children's literature in the English language; opera; ballet; operettas; musical comedy; adaptations of stage musicals; films incorporating music and dance; the dramatic musical video; dramatic features and series featuring vocalists or musicians; situation comedies; general audience family drama; drama features and series set in the American West and Midwest.

The home produced component of the live action provision was relatively insignificant by comparison and presented continuous classification difficulties.

The animation provision was, essentially, in the fantasy paradigm, implying a constructive resistance to verisimilitude and reality. The live action provision was, systematically, verisimilous, conveying the actuality of the source environment. The cross-section of live-action drama we have reviewed demonstrated an immense range of real-life contexts for children of the source cultures, the core situations of which also reflected the environmental and social reality of Irish children. Accessibility to this core content was facilitated because the linguistic medium was English, and because Ireland shares in varying degrees a range of consumer

and media environments with the source cultures.

In addition to real life contexts, the live action component also offered immense ranges of dramatic experience, making the total spectrum of drama in all its forms and styles, with attendant gratifications, available to Irish children.

As with animation material, the vast volume of imported live action drama in the schedules constituted a significant cultural import, shaped by, and transmitting, source values, perceptions, environment and expression. Considered as a block, the cultural environment of the Irish child received little more than coincidental representation in the live action provision.

Because the imported drama component was processed in the vacuum resulting from the dearth of home originated drama in the schedules, the values and conditioning implicit in the imported provision were proportionately more likely to become incorporated in the schemata of the Irish child viewer.

SOURCES OF MATERIAL.

Appendices A, B and C have not listed all of the drama for young people, imported or home produced, transmitted on Telefis Eireann/RTE from 1962 to 1987, but they have identified a representative, and comprehensive, selection and have dealt in some detail with the over-all programming background, and have evolved a general historical perspective both of home produced children's programming, home produced children's drama, and the imported children's drama provision. Indications should have emerged of the programme types and categories, of relevant corporate structures, policies, statutory constraints, resource provision and audience contexts.

Some of the perceptions recorded in this thesis are personal; I have been a viewer of RTE transmissions for all of the period under review. I have also contributed as scriptwriter to children's and adult programming on RTE since 1969; some impressions derive from personal involvement with the programmes and the programme makers.

The crude research material for examination of the

young people's programme provision is in general readily accessible---in the published schedules, at the local video rental outlet, the local children's bookshop, and in current transmission on domestic, British and satellite channels; the broad bulk of children's programming tends to remain in the schedules for decades; new children's audiences for whom the transmission will be a fresh experience are continually evolving. As production of new programming for children contracts, and outlets such as satellite channels proliferate, repeat programming and use of repertoire material becomes a major schedule compilation strategy.

In the compilation of the provision under review, my main source of detailed information about the programmes has been the schedules as published in the RTV Guide and the RTE Guide, and relevant articles and programme notes. The National Library in Kildare Street, Dublin, and the RTE Library, Donnybrook, have substantial, though not complete sets, of The RTV Guide and The RTE Guide. The search for programme information through these publications can be simultaneously frustrating and intensely rewarding; the relevant programme may be indicated by a line or two in the schedule, or there can be expanded notes and promotional articles, frequently by or about producers, performers or other creative personnel, which give valuable insights into the programme genesis, intent and sometimes audience response. These articles and notes are normally supported by graphic material.

One particular difficulty relevant to home produced drama concerns material presented within the confines of a magazine programme. This material will not receive individual mention in the schedule listing or the programme note; if one hasn't actually seen the transmission the only indication that it came out may be an incidental reference much later in an article summarising the programme's activities.

Children's and young people's programming will feature with surprising regularity in the top TAM ratings published regularly in the RTE Guide, thus giving an indication of audience impact.

Attempts to unearth contemporary newspaper reviews of children's schedule content will not prove a rewarding experience. Most newspapers review television programme material, but this coverage rarely extends to children's programmes. News items about the children's provision may appear occasionally when a programme wins an award. The presentation puppets Zig and Zag have attracted this kind of publicity. Adult programmes which become newsworthy, such as The Spike, have from time to time generated huge files of cuttings. Station PR material, and articles about programme personalities in newspapers and magazine have occasionally featured contributors to young people's programming.

The Irish Broadcasting Review, an RTE quarterly which was published from 1979 to 1983, provides valuable insights into programming attitudes and contemporary media-related debates. The RTE library has a full set of the Irish Broadcasting Review. Gapped collections may be found in other libraries.

ARCHIVES

The dearth of early archive material is not peculiar to RTE; most poorly resourced television services which began operations in the 1950s and 1960s adopted the practice of scrubbing and re-using tapes. The RTE central library was set up in 1968, six years after transmission began. The archive concept has also developed very slowly; in RTE the lack of archive material became embarrassing when the station wanted to celebrate twenty-one years of transmission. Children's programming, however, seems to have survived to a greater extent than other programming categories.

Current researchers of young people's programmes are particularly fortunate that the present Head of Young People's Programmes, John Condon, is also station archivist.

The main archival activity at the moment is the logging of available material on computer; this is an ongoing process, and the entries are quite detailed.

The absence of a title from the computer listing does not mean that copies are not in existence; a copy, or fragment,

may turn up eventually.

There are no copies of **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, or of **Cearta Húdai**, or of Murphy **agus a** Chairde, according to the computer listing, although short excerpts of **Murphy agus a Chairde** exist somewhere in the station, because they were transmitted on the satirical Network programme, **Night Hawks**. Some editions of Let's Draw and The School Around the Corner have survived. One of the plays in the 1916 commemoration project, The Bicycle Man (1966), has survived intact. About a hundred editions of **Wanderly Wagon** are in existence. **Brogeen Follows The Magic Tune** has not survived intact, but there are some valuable fragments. Contributions to EBU programming have in general survived. The full set of **Lúidín Mac Lú** programmes, in black and white and colour, seems to have been logged. **Johnny** Orfeo, the Irish language rock musical, did not survive. Much of the Irish language preschool material has been retained.

As we progress into the 1970s the proportion of programming which has been retained has increased substantially, and the development of the video cassette has ensured the survival of most programming in the 1980s and current programming.

The loss of early programming such as **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** makes relevant comment and graphics in the RTV Guide a valuable if not precious resource, and underlines the importance of a comprehensive record of home produced children's programming which would include such material.

The RTE Central Library, under the direction of John McMahon, functions primarily as a source of programme material, but there is a strong commitment to archival conservation. John McMahon, interviewed by Ann McDonnell in The RTE Book (1989) expressed concern about the durability of archive material on video and film. Black and white film stored well, but colour film tended to fade. Archive technology at present is moving towards digital storage.

Much of the imported drama, in particular the closed narratives we have listed, is still in the public domain, in original format and as continuation material; many animation

characters such as Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny and Popeye have been around for fifty years. The local video rental outlet is an accessible archive for a substantial range of the listed titles, in animation and live action formats. For literature derivatives original literary texts will often be found in the children's section of an average bookshop. Children's television drama has a high repeat factor; many of the imported series and serials mentioned are still in transmission on RTE and on other services. Plot outlines and general information about films and high profile series and serials can be found in a wide range of digests and other peripheral media literature.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S TELEVISION DRAMA SINCE 1987

Since 1987 there has been no significant change in the major trends we have noted for home produced young people's drama in the twentyfive years under review. The provision has been sparse, and dominated, as we would expect, by animation drama. The provision was, as we might also expect, predominantly Irish language drama. The EBU dimension persisted, and also what we identified as the Access Community Drama strategy, the use of rural amateur groups as a casting resource.

In the Irish language animation category there were series of **Superted**, with Irish language dialogue appended, assembled by RTE under the direction of Donal Farmer, and **Scéalaiocht Janosch**, German stories with Irish language dialogue appended, made by Telegael. There was a puppet series, **An Baile Seo Againne**, and an original animation series in Irish, **Mise Agus Pangur Bán**, made by a Galway concern, OE Teo.

Pajo and his friends survived the ending of the Saturday morning magazine/action programme, **The Whole Shebang**, and continued as an independent puppet feature, still in transmission.

If You Believe This was a beautifully-drawn cartoon series by Aidan Hickey which gave whimsical perspectives of familiar objects such as the sleeping-bag and the hot-water bottle.

Currently, RTE is participating in a major EBU

animation project, designed to counteract the dominance of American animation material in European children's programming. This project will generate several blocks of animation programming.

Live action drama also survived within the severe constrictions of the Young People's Department's budget. Thirty or so episodes of **The Fáilte Road Cafe**, written by Owen Roe, were presented from 1988 onwards as a segment in **The Whole Shebang**. This entertaining studio series, which could be described as heightened actuality rather than fantasy, was performed mainly by The Whole Shebang presentation team. It went out on Saturday mornings and was effectively lost as audience material to potential viewers who did not watch the host programme.

Deco was a seven part drama series in Irish produced on film by Paddy McClintock on a very small budget, with scripts by Tony Barry and Gabriel Rosenstock. Deco, the leading character, was an average teenager, and the series dealt with the conventional exploits of himself and his friends. In one episode Deco and his friends entered a competition in which a prize was offered for a photograph of the elusive corncrake. Their efforts were frustrated by an unscrupulous birdwatcher, played by Jimmy Bartley. Another episode concentrated on the efforts of the group to put on a school play.

An excellent and moving twenty-minute play was scripted and presented by young cancer patients within the confines of the magazine/activity programme, **Jo-Maxi**. One of the themes of the play was the frustration of the young patients at the patronising attitudes of medical staff who assumed that they would not understand the medical and other contexts of their situation.

Craggaunowen was another EBU contribution, directed by Joe O'Donnell in 1990 as part of the EBU series, **Living Museums**. The subject of the programme was the the restored crannóg settlement in Co. Clare, and it involved the re-enaction of life in the pre-Celtic communities who lived on stilt-supported dwellings on Irish lakes.

Perhaps the most hopeful sign that original live action drama for Irish young people will survive, no matter what restrictions are placed on its development, was **Free Spirits**, which was filmed in Castleblayney and directed by Tom McArdle, but written, acted and produced by the members of the Drumlin Youth Drama Group in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.

Free Spirits was transmitted on December 28th, 1990. It was a half-hour play, and direct production costs were less than £5000. Generically it belongs to the same tradition as **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, **Kevin's World** and **Stowaway**, at least in the sense that it was made, not in the studio or in Dublin, but in small-town Ireland.

The cast were mainly fifteen-year olds, and the play was very much their perception of youth culture in contemporary Ireland, presented in a loose narrative which started when a teacher in a boarding-school classroom called on Justin to answer a question. Justin was not there; he was hitching back home to Castleblayney. This opening metaphor sets the mood of the play; Castleblayney was not a town which young people wanted to leave, but a home town to which one fled in desperation for the good times and companionship it offered.

The story spanned Justin's week at home, before his capitulation and return to the boarding-school, but concentrated for the most part on the normal leisure activities of the younger teenagers in the town, which could be summed up as simply messing about. The play has a happy and optimistic orientation, and at the same time it brings in, with considerable skill and subtlety, a substantial range of youth-related discourses----education, family and personal relationships, religious practice, secret phobias and worries. The play is girl-centred, and the girl-talk which weaves through the whole play is particularly effective. The teenage community in the play, far from complaining about the limitations of small-town life in Ireland, exploits local amenities to the full.

There is a beer-party in a local quarry. The local Saturday night disco, a modern youth version of The Ballroom of

Romance, is an important focus of the action, and the motivation for attendance at Mass on Sunday, or pretended attendance, because one girl wanted to know what the sermon was about so that she could convince her mother that she had been there, was mainly to follow up the relationships established at the disco. The group drift down to the lake-side to plague a youngster who wants to fish. A friendly swan paddles nearby. A girl who is terrified of swans is pushed into the water. Justin returns to the boarding-school, with a vague promise to Debra that they might go to a rock concert some time.

The freshness and vitality of **Free Spirits** derive from its local emphasis; it makes very little concession in terms of accent, idiom, action, character, environment or theme to the world outside Castleblayney, and this fidelity to the tested reality of the Drumlin Theatre Group's experience of life generates a convincing representation of contemporary Irish youth culture, which had not found representation so far in Irish television drama.

If it is inevitable that indigenous television drama for Irish young people must continue to be be confined to the meagre resources that have characterised this category of provision over the past three decades, then **Free Spirits** is the best example available of the excellent work that can be achieved within these limits.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DISENFRANCHISED GENERATIONS

In our opening chapter we evolved, by implication, a formula for the type of television drama that would best correspond to the needs and preferences of Irish children. This would be child-centred drama, developmentally-orientated, generated in the Irish cultural milieu and dealing with topics immediately relevant to Irish children in the idiom of that culture. The drama would be action-driven. It would have high production values. It would conform to mass-audience rather than minority-audience criteria. This optimum specification derives another dimension from Chapter Four. It would be live action drama, allowing for greater verisimilitude and more relevant reality contexts. In summary, our ideal schedule component would be well-resourced home produced live action drama.

Our first conclusion must be that this type of drama did not materialise to any significant extent in the schedules over the period under review. The dominant, indeed, almost exclusive, live action component was imported drama.

The dramatic and developmental criteria outlined in Chapter One imply considerable developmental potential and ranges of potential uses and gratifications in animation drama. Again, the animation drama that would best correspond to the needs and preferences of Irish children would be generated in their own cultural milieu, have high production values, and be well-resourced.

The animation sector was also dominated by imported programming, but there was a strong home produced component. Some segments of home produced animation drama did meet the viewing needs and preferences Irish child viewers. Much of the product, however, had a minority audience orientation. On the whole production values were low and resourcing minimal.

In Chapter Two we outlined the factors which determined that imported programming would be the major schedule component, and the factors which, correlatively, determined the resourcing structure of the home produced provision we have reviewed.

The primary determinant of the character of the programming derived from the cultural location of Telefis Eireann/RTE within the market-driven English-language audio-visual media spectrum. The service transmitted to a non-viable catchment area which could not generate the resources to create home-originated viewer-acceptable programming to an extent which would dominate the schedules. The availability, at comparatively low cost, of large supplies of accessible programming material in the English language from Britain, from America and Australia, and to a lesser extent from New Zealand and Canada, provided a relatively easy solution to the schedule compilation difficulties arising from inadequate home production.

There were statutory and corporate factors which made a high rate of imported programming inevitable. The station had a statutory obligation to pay its way: this meant maximising advertisement revenue, with a consequent need for programming to carry the commercials which the station could not originate itself; the self-sufficiency obligation made also made cost analysis a continuous preoccupation of management.

The television programming division had to compete for resources with strong administrative and technological divisions. Within the progamming division, and in the corporate structure as a whole, children's programming had a weak status, attracting only minimal resourcing which had to be distributed over a wide range of competing programming categories within the children's programming brief.

Home produced children's drama, within the children's programming department, within the television programming division, and within the overall corporate structure of Telefis Eireann/RTE, had an extremely low profile and little professional definition.

In 1979 the station decided that there would be no specific Irish language department---that each programming area would generate its own Irish language programming. The approach predicated here, that of various programming departments making programmes for children, without actually collapsing the children's department, might have increased the provision and the quality of some categories of home-produced children's programming, because other Departments had more generous cost structures, available professional expertise and relevant production cultures.

As it was only one department, Sports, made a consistent contribution to children's programming in the years under review. News and current affairs made occasional contributions. The Drama Department, which was the repository of drama production skills and drama production culture in the station, played only a minimal and peripheral role over the years in the production of children's drama.

Other structural factors adversely affected the development of home produced children's programming. The imposition of the heavy responsibility for the development of educational broadcasting for schools on the children's programmes department at a sensitive time in the development of children's programming distorted and inhibited such momentum as had been built up since 1962. In the subsequent reorganisation, the absorption of children's programmes into a new department, Irish and Young People's Programmes, relegated children's programming to at best a shared perception of priority.

The statutory obligation to provide programming in Irish determined the character of a substantial proportion of the drama provision in the Children's Department. While the provision of drama in Irish, or bilingual drama, could not be dismissed out of hand as a negative development, it did mean that a significant proportion of text content would escape the comprehension of the average child viewer; it also gave a didactic aspect to Irish language and bilingual drama because Irish was a school subject and perceived as such by the mass child audience.

The overall factor which decided the volume, scope and quality of home produced children's programming, including drama, was the budgetary allocation, which restricted home produced programming to the cheapest forms of studio production. The budgetary allocation in general permitted low-cost animation drama assembled in domestic rather than professional environments, but little else. Drama produced in such structures was likely to have low production values and to offer at best a restricted range of 'uses and gratifications'.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS

If there were developmental acquisitions for Irish children from the schedule material we have reviewed in Chapters Three, Four and Five, these occurred in informal, unsupervised viewing situations without any form of evaluation. At best we can only identify potential developmental aspects in the provision.

From a semiotic perspective we can look at the potential development as the acquisition and refinement of a range of sense-making competences. Some of these would paradigmatic competence---the ability to relate a particular signifier to an element of experience, and syntagmatic competence, the ability to combine and arrange representations in meaningful sequences. Transformational competence is also a fundamental developmental requisite. This is the ability to recognise change and evolution in a basic representation or in a syntagmatic combination. A further vital developmental attribute is the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal, and the subjective categorisation of problematic content such as representations of violence as real or unreal.

NARRATIVE COMPETENCE

George Gerbner (1980), estimated that the average American child will have assimilated in varying degrees 30,000 television-mediated narratives in the course of childhood. Narrative is probably the most universal of sense-making systems, and skills which enable us to process narratives must

be seen as developmental acquisitions.

The primary acquisition from the drama provision may well have been in the area of narrative competence. Assuming that Gerbner's figure of exposure to 30,000 narratives throughout the duration of childhood has some general validity for the Irish child, and the indications by Barthes, Levi-Strauss, Todorov, Esslin, Silverstone and others that narrative may be a basic way of making sense of our experience of reality has also some validity, the narrative elements of the drama provision, imported and home produced, must have contributed enormously to sophistication in this fundamental sensemaking and communication system.

Implied in narrative sophistication are syntagmatic and paradigmatic competences, and acquisition of complex signifying and reading systems, classification systems, and complex relational logic. Implied too in this context is the simultaneous processing of parallel aural, visual and verbal narratives, or distinct aural, visual and verbal narratives. Serial and series processing, and genre, convention and motif recognition, imply complex intertextual relations and interpretative skills.

Narrative progression also contributes immensely to the development of transformational power--the ability to process changes, permutations, combinations, interactions and reactions in a basic set of representations as the narrative evolves. Narrative evolution involves continuous representation of situations involving choice and consequence----narrative thus implies a moral context, and the processing of narrative a strong element of moral formation.

Television has provided Irish children with more narratives, and more complex narratives, than any other source. The narrative intake from one evening's television viewing would, for many children, exceed the narrative intake from a whole year's unprescribed fiction reading. The content of one evening's television viewing expressed in writing would exceed the prescribed classroom reading of most children, including postprimary children, in the course of a school year. The main

area of narrative use and acquisition for children, however, is language use. Teachers have noted a marked deterioration in language use by Irish children in recent years, and suspect that this may relate to the use of television by children as a substitute for play. The massive narrative intake suggested by the provision is clearly internalised rather than externalised. Narrative acquisition by Irish children from television and video, and narrative competence---which would include intertextuality and assimilation of narrative formulae and motifs---is one specific field which would merit further enquiry.

The outcome of further research may indicate a blind spot in educational practice which fails to recognise the media-derived narrative competence of modern Irish children and consequently fails to exploit this competence by providing outlets for narrative expression. These outlets can be oral, graphic and three dimensional as well as written, and can also be expressed through activity such as dance, music, creative drama and media studies applications.

OTHER POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTAL ACQUISITIONS

The provision indicated a wide range of other potential developmental acquisitions for Irish children. Humour permeates the whole provision, and develops discrimination between congruity and incongruity. The whole provision is intensely representational, developing communication skills through assimilation and reinforcement of decoding and interpretation strategies. Implicit in the assimilation of the provision outlined is a massive amount of cognitive acquisition. The high volume of live action fantasy material, added to the animation material which we have already discussed, had the potential to contribute to modality judgement formation. Assimilation and processing of fantasy can be an exercise of profound cultural power, unleashing immense creativity and offering an important area of personal definition and growth. Central to personal definition and growth is the use of fantasy as a range of alternatives to the dominant perceptions of

reality. The provision also had the potential to contribute immensely to the development of transformational power--the ability to process changes, permutations, combinations and interactions in a basic set of representations.

The real life drama in the lists provided potential behavioural modelling, situational rehearsal, emotional modelling, language modelling and many other forms of survival rehearsal and information. There was a substantial ethical and value input in the provision which, cumulatively, could have contributed a degree of moral formation. Real life drama content promoted altruism, tolerance, and social responsibility and may be said to have imaged in general terms the real world of the child. Similar developmental acquisitions accrued from adventure drama, animal-related drama, situation comedy, family drama and the film provision.

Action and adventure drama are the favourite viewing categories of children and young people. Interaction with the action category of drama is characterised by a high level of character recognition and identification. This category provides a powerful imaginative stimulus. The modality judgement factor which makes the distinction between content which is an imaginative construct, and content which is to be incorporated into the schemata of the real world, is continually in play. Animal-related and environment-based drama reinforce spatial and environmental reality and precepts of conservation. Dramatised folklore, mythology, and associated programme types such as science fiction, historical drama and the Western facilitated access for the Irish child to the immense global narrative heritage, which forms the common core of the global cultural spectrum.

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF PROVISION

As with animation drama, the live action drama provided in the schedules constituted a significant cultural import, shaped by, and transmitting, source values, perceptions, attitudes, ideologies, expression, and environment in powerful visual, aural and verbal idioms, and in which the indigenous

Irish culture found little more than coincidental representation. The cultural thrust of the live action drama provision was not towards a development of indigenous Irish culture, or Irish attitudes, values and beliefs, but in the direction of the main sources of the imported drama. The formative impact of the live action drama provision, originating as it did in the international English-language media spectrum, did little for our children as Irish children, or as European children, or as children of a global community. The considerable developmental enrichment evident in the live action drama provision accrued to the Irish child as a child, not necessarily as an Irish child.

While many positive acquisitions were indicated by the live action drama provision, the Irish child's viewer's imagination may have been substantially colonised by the source cultures. These cultures, through the texts in the schedules, aggressively projected powerful sets of meanings liable to be absorbed, in the absence of corrective or alternative sets of meanings in the home provision, by Irish children.

Many of these source values and ideologies were positive, promoting understanding of self and others, directed at breaking down barriers between groups and individuals, making such points as kindness to animals or environmental conservation, demonstrating constructive alternatives to violent solution of problems; explicitly promoting altruism.

Simultaneously, there was an unchallenged acceptance of the hegemonic source culture in the imported text, invariably relating to the public arena---to law enforcement, educational practice, religion, various authority structures, and political ideologies. The most pervasive expression of the hegemonic source culture would have been in the life-styles which formed the unevaluated background to the stories. These would have a far higher modality status in live action drama than in animation drama.

The imported drama in the real-life category answered the developmental needs of Irish children by providing dramatic treatments of innumerable real-life situations directly

pertinent to their own lives---dramatic treatments not available to any significant degree from domestic sources in the period under review.

The category was of such strength and range that we must assume some assimilation of the source values, attitudes and ideologies which formed the premises of this material. Action drama was often, as we have seen, a constituent of the national megamyth of the source country, incorporating strong and simplistic perceptions of right and wrong, and frequently demonstrating violence as a strategy of first resort. Right was often rooted in the authority structure. Villains were frequently of opposite ideologies to the dominant one; the usual confrontation was between individualism, seen as positive, and collectivism, seen as negative.

The animal-centred category was characterised by a pronounced kindness-to-animals ethic, and by a strong overall pro-environment and pro-natural-heritage ideology. These stories also promoted source cultures and values. Big-game themes and themes relating to nature reserves frequently carried imperialistic ideologies. The physical environment reflected in animal-centred stories was effectively promotional material for the source country in a sense not substantially different from tourist propaganda. Nature reserve and national park propaganda often obscured commercial and government exploitation of the environment in other other areas.

Educational dramatic material was a product of source consensus as to how children should think, behave and express themselves; of all the dramatic forms it carried the heaviest value and ideology loading.

The predominant literary classifications derived from English and American literature, nineteenth century authors providing the bulk of the base material. The basic selection criterion was, we may speculate, a traditional perception of what constituted suitable children's literature. This perception, in the cultural context, made the corpus of literature-based drama appearing on RTE in the period under review a medium for the transmission of the sets of values

inherent in this literature, to which, as we demonstrated in a comprehensive review in Chapter Five, the meagre provision of comparable home-produced material could offer no challenge. The cultural continuum to which this literature subscribed was that associated with the mainstream global language, English, of which Ireland was a colony in cultural terms. The values which dominated this anthology, even in the American contribution, derived substantially from Victorian and imperial England.

As with literature, imported children's television drama made a vast range of international folklore accessible to Irish children. Folklore is more a corpus of global or human rather than national or local expression in the sense that there is a central pool of motifs, narratives, archetypes and stereotypes which express themselves communally or even individually in local idioms, situations and applications. The science fiction genre can be demonstrated to have a close relationship, in terms of theme, structure and motif, with international folklore.

The fantasy text, evolving as it often did from the corpus of international folklore, or perhaps expressing what Jung defined as the universal subconscious, was probably a positive cultural import in that it was potentially an acquisition by the local culture much in the same way as international folktales became absorbed in the local folk tradition. Commentators like Silverstone and Esslin who see general television output as contemporary mythic culture are at or approaching a position where the more comprehensive blocks of television drama, soap opera situation comedy and family-centred series, may be perceived to resolve themselves into global patterns of structures, formulae and motifs similar to those noted for folklore and mythology in indexes such as the Arne/Thompson index (Types of the Folktale, 1961).

The imported films on our lists were transcultural viewing experiences for Irish children, with all the associated ideological and value loading.

History drama inevitably had a high level of ideological loading; any particular segment of dramatised

history was likely to be a constituent of the national mega-myth of the source country. There was also a strong overall 'law-and-order' ideology in much of the historical material. In our analysis of drama with historical contexts in Chapter Five we demonstrated the strong and sustained schedule representation of British and American history, and the almost total exclusion of Irish history as dramatic source material over the period under review.

Drama in a musical context invariably was a powerful carrier of source ideologies and values, because it was normally an explicit megamyth expression. At the same time, lyrics and dance items in screen musicals tend to shed their local or source characteristics, and to express themselves in universal terms.

The American situation comedy or family series reflected more than any other type of drama the mainstream values of the dominant American culture. These and other aspects of the dominant source ideology were structured into the text by its commercial genesis; the series and the popular serial were obliged to deliver maximum audiences to advertisers, who were often multi-national concerns.

The Western theme-cluster, as we have seen, constituted a multifaceted myth of origin, which rooted white American identity in an agrarian and pioneering past.

When we add the adult imported and general audience material on the home services which children watched, and accessible material, for children and adults, on foreign stations, and dramatic material in VCR form, it is evident that the television set was, for Irish children, a major acculturation medium.

The implied acculturation was specific, not random. It promoted, expanded and developed the dominant value systems and their material expression within the English-language global spectrum. It promoted these values so aggressively that it was difficult to remember that other value systems, which, in the EC context, might have been more beneficial, such as those associated with the French-language spectrum, existed. In 1991

an American/English-dominated military coalition was at war with Iraq. The impossibility for the average Irish person of constructing an Iraqi perspective of this conflict demonstrated one consequence of the attitude formation implicit in this acculturation.

CULTURAL FEATURES OF HOME PRODUCED DRAMA PROVISION

The logic which designates imported drama for children as a transcultural product categorises home produced drama as a product of the indigenous culture. Theoretically, home produced television drama for Irish children should reflect the actuality of the Irish child's personal, social and physical environment; the narratives enacted by that drama should derive from these contexts and their expression be determined by the operative communication systems of the Irish cultural complex. Consequently, the transformational operations predicated by cultural variables in the imported text should not be necessary.

The level of identification should be more intense because the text languages, verbal, aural and visual should correspond to those in possession of Irish child viewers, and the physical environment and social matrix represented in the text should also correspond to that of Irish child viewers. Irish children should find that the actual and potential reality of their personal, social, and physical environments is modelled for them in their own cultural idiom in home produced television drama for children, without intervening complex transformations. Cumulatively, Irish child viewers should be able to find, to some degree, a mediated self-image in home produced television drama for children, which charts the stream of their development and rehearses this development for them.

To achieve cultural impact, overall provision, or provision in a particular category, would have to be substantial, wide-ranging, and sustained. It should also have high production values and a high level of audience appeal.

The home produced cartoon provision, compared with the imported provision, has been insignificant in volume, poorly resourced, unsustained in delivery and of indifferent

competitive quality. It had a narrow audience range. Verbal texts for the most part have been bilingual or in the Irish language, precluding mass-audience appeal. The over-all orientation of the home produced provision was didactic rather than recreational.

In contrast, provision of puppet drama and puppet usage was substantial, wide-ranging and sustained in delivery. In terms of reflecting the actuality of children's lives, puppet provision is systematically in the fantasy genre. A noteworthy feature of puppet programmes has been the dominance of adults, and the limited representation of children, in the texts. Home produced puppet drama and cartoon drama have consistently reflected a male-dominated demography. Puppet drama cannot accurately reflect physical environment, and is a weak medium for social environment. The Irish language programmes, the bilingual programmes and the preschool programmes had in-built didactic objectives. Nevertheless, home produced puppet drama, on balance, did have verbal texts which reflected in broad detail the idiom, phonetics and narrative structures of the operative mainstream culture in Ireland in the period under review.

For the small minority culture within the catchment area identified by the ability to process texts wholly or partially in the Irish language, the provision of animation Irish language or bilingual programmes had considerable enrichment potential.

This minority area was, however, fragmented by five different dialects----four native or indigenous to particular Gaeltachtai--the fifth being acquired non-native Irish---which complicated the reception situation.

Considered as a block, the predominant orientation that emerged from the text content of home produced animation programming was towards a manifestation of the national mythology : the perception of a national community where folk tradition has a premium value, and where the appropriate language, if it could be spoken and understood, would be Irish. As this perception, including the ambivalence towards the Irish

language evinced by the bi-lingual approach, is part of the national culture, home produced animation children's drama for television was very much an indigenous cultural product.

The category which has the optimum potential to reflect indigenous culture was the real-life category.

If we discount the linguistic context, we had in **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, and its sequel, **Siopa**, a substantial and sustained work-situation drama series conveying the reality of commercial activity in its time, and also conveying in the content perceptions of contemporary social reality and reflecting to a significant degree the over-all culture of the catchment area served by Telefis Eireann.

We cannot, however, discount the linguistic objectives. The verbal text, though bi-lingual, had a heavy Irish-language input, and by design **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** was a programme for enhancing skills in the Irish language. On balance, the acquisitions were more likely to accrue to the Irish-speaking minority than to the general cultural milieu.

The **1916** commemoration plays were a many-faceted cultural product transmitted to an audience which in general accepted the unquestioned 'myth of origin' which was the premise of these plays.

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox had several layers of actuality context for Irish children, including physical environments, weather conditions, idiom, basic narrative situations and ethnic types. **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox** is the only example we had in the period under review of home-originated drama which corresponded in significant degree to the cultural schemata of the average Irish child. **Flight of the Doves** merited Ultan Macken's accusations of stage Irishism, but that production also had a heavy indigenous cultural loading, particularly in the crowd scenes which formed the backgrounds to the dialogue, and in the representation of marginal cultures in our society.

A Day in the Life of Martin Cluxton, The Spike, A Second of June, and **Gerry**, the Ballyfermot Workshop production, reflected in different ways a range of aspects of the urban

culture of Ireland. The **Lost Hour** reflected rural Irish culture with considerable fidelity. **Katie, Year of the Child,** mirrored the unique culture of Irish itinerants. The **Access** drama programmes, deliberately and inadvertently, were in the main cultural manifestations of rural Ireland. Productions such as **Curious Eyes, The Ballinch Bowl, Kevin's World,** and **The Johnston Monster** reflected the indigenous culture in a variety of ways. The **Nothing To It** series was firmly rooted in the cultural reality of the lives of Irish teenagers.

We have already noted the classification problems relating to much of the material ascribed to the real life category. When we talk about home produced real life drama as a cultural entity, we are are talking about forty hours at most of screen time produced over a span of twenty-five years---and, by applying strict classification criteria---perhaps ten hours at most---hardly enough to make a formative contribution to the cultural orientation of the mass child audience.

Proportionately, the **Siopa** and **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** contribution, the school plays relayed from studio, **Slógadh** and **An Fhéile Scoldrámaiochta** productions, the didactic drama in Irish language tuition programmes, animation programmes and story programmes in the Irish language made a significant contribution to the minority culture defined by the Irish language, adding to the number of bi-lingual and Irish language texts and making a considerable volume of Irish language material available via the new medium.

The home produced fantasy programming was by and large an indigenous cultural product. Home produced historical drama, drama based on literature, and musical drama for children, were too sparse and unrepresentative to have been formative cultural influence. Indigenous music, however, had a continuous presence in the soundtracks of a wide variety of programming.

VIEWING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

If television answers a specific need which children have it is probably the need for an uncritical and undemanding developmental medium to which they can relate in privacy and on

their own terms, socialising what they assimilate if they so wish. In this context child viewers will need material consonant with their syntagmatic and transformational ability. This would agree with the general view of the research that television functions primarily as an entertainment medium.

The consensus of the research regarding children's viewing preferences suggests that children prefer drama in one form or another. Comedy, a favourite programme option, is usually in dramatic format. Children prefer watching children on television than watching adults. They prefer action to talk. They prefer action and adventure drama to other types and have a particular liking for action drama evolving in familiar motifs and conventions. Children like humour in their drama.

In common with adults children also look to television drama for information for personal and social survival. This is supplied by drama which contributes to their cultural capital by providing role and situational modelling via characters with which they identify in a social and physical milieu which they can recognise as their own. An important source of this type of survival information would be home produced real life drama for children of a transformational complexity consonant with their developmental stage.

Another requirement for popular television is a high degree of correspondence between the discourses in the text and the discourses in society at a given time. Popularity of children's and young people's drama is likely to depend on the correspondence of text discourses to those of the operative youth culture, which will vary throughout the range of young people's audiences.

The implications of research on children's preferences would seem to be that children will watch animation drama, and real life drama created for children, if this material is entertaining, action-driven, humorous in texture, and relevant to their own lives. They tend to dislike didactic material, and material which involves too much transformational effort.

With didactic programmes such as educational material they will often extract the entertainment gratifications which

mediate the lesson, ignoring the lesson itself.

The imported provision in the RTE schedules met in broad outline the general requirements of material which would be popular with child viewers. The presence of cartoon features such as **Mickey and Donald**, **The Adventures of Doctor Doolittle**, and **The Jungle Book** in the TAM ratings support the general perception that cartoon material is popular with children. Child-centred adventure such as **The Famous Five**, **The Hardy Boys**, and **The Nancy Drew Mysteries** also received high placements in the TAM ratings. Child-centred historical adventure was also popular. **The Little House on the Prairie** and **Boy Dominic** were two series which regularly attracted audiences large enough to be represented in the published TAM ratings. Period costume drama, if the **Katy** series can be described as such, was not a viewing deterrent either.

We have very little research on the viewing patterns of Irish children and the way Irish children use television and video. The premises of such research as exists have been drawn from the general English-language media studies spectrum; very little research on the relationship of Irish children with screen media has been carried out, and there is a need for substantial work focussing on Irish children in this whole area.

Such research as exists suggests that it is unsafe to apply the findings of foreign research indiscriminately to Irish children. In general the Irish child viewer would seem to be more selective than the English or American viewer as profiled by conventional research, watching a wider variety of programme categories and using television to a greater extent for information acquisition and for cultural formation.

The general perception of such research that children are not disposed to watch children's programming is not borne out be surveys of the viewing patterns of Irish children. Irish children will watch children's programming if they feel that it is relevant to their lives and if it is resourced to the same extent as adult programming. Irish children, while avid serial and series viewers, also like a substantial closed narrative.

The general perception of foreign research that

children are not disposed to view news and information programmes is not confirmed by the Irish experience. Irish children use television as a formal source of social and other information, viewing news and information programmes in significant numbers.

The general preference of children for action drama indicated by foreign research is reflected in Irish children's viewing patterns, but Irish children are voracious and precocious viewers of adult drama on television and video and they seem to use this as a source of life information and survival information denied to them in the home and school environments.

They also use television and video as cultural formation agents, particularly in the areas of music and sport.

They find home-produced serial drama with a realistic context a rewarding viewing experience.

We can only make tentative assumptions about the validity of these indications in the absence of comprehensive research in the area of media use by Irish children

If Irish primary teachers are worried about the consequences of heavy television viewing by primary school children their worries should be taken seriously. The suggestion by teachers that the wide-spread pattern of deterioration in language development may be due to heavy television viewing substituting for play is an area worth further enquiry. Suggestions by the same professional body that home produced programming is characterised by sex stereotyping and male-dominated programme and continuity content also merits further examination.

In the area of home produced programming one would have to discount drama material in the Irish language as answering directly to the developmental needs of the average Irish child, or as possessing the qualities of popular television. For the average Irish child viewer the transformational effort involved in processing the second language is too great, and quite often, because Irish is a school subject, Irish is seen as a didactic medium, linking

television with school and education, which is a relationship children tend to resist.

Humour-driven English language puppet-centred features such as **Wanderly Wagon**, **Zig and Zag** and **Bosco** drew large inter-active child audiences and could be said to respond to children's needs for accessible media characters to which they could relate.

In the real life category, **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox**, and to a lesser extent, **The Flight of the Doves**, had all the ingredients of potentially popular television. **The Spike**, although an adult programme, generated huge audiences of young people because it articulated discourses latent and overt in Irish society about contemporary Irish education.

In general, however, the provision of home produced drama for young people was too weakly resourced, too weakly promoted, and permeated to an excessive degree by pedagogic and ideological objectives to respond the the actual developmental needs of Irish children, or to meet the specifications of popular television.

ACCESSIBILITY

The text content of the imported provision is in general accessible to Irish children, who are in substantial possession of the verbal language, English, and additionally, of the aural and visual languages of the texts. Accessibility is further enhanced by the fact that significant areas of experience are common to children of all cultures. Family structures and family relationships, peer-group structures, education systems, recreational activities, are some of these areas. The multi-national consumer environment which may be part of the cultural capital of the Irish child will also increase the accessibility of the imported text. Processing competences such as anthropomorphic decoding which originate in the home educational and nurturing systems also increase accessibility. The Irish child will also be in possession of a range of inter-cultural narrative motifs and conventions from educational and nurturing sources which will enhance the accessibility of the

imported texts. Generally, accessibility will be developmentally-related----as processing skills and media sophistication develop, more difficult transformational operations will be possible, and a wider range of text content be accessible. At the same time, given that the viewing of an imported text is a transcultural activity, substantial areas of text content in the cultural variables area will escape the comprehension of the Irish child viewer.

It does not follow, however, that home produced drama is automatically more accessible for the Irish child than imported drama.

Text accessibility depends on a multiplicity of factors such as genre recognition, narrative type recognition, motif and convention recognition, commonality of encoding and decoding systems, and the quality of these systems, which may depend at source on production skills and resourcing, and at reception on media sophistication.

The quality of the signification in home produced programming was variable. In **Cearta Húdai** and **Murphy agus a Chairde**, for instance, all the characters were performed by the one actor, which may have underlined the versatility of the actor, but may also have weakened the signification. This was fundamentally a resource problem. Poor quality scripting may also inhibit signification---many of the home productions were excessively verbose. Irish language texts and the Irish element of bilingual input were, given the general state of Irish language competence, beyond the transformational powers of the average child viewer. The redundancy which might have elucidated this content was often missing.

Puppet programming, however, and the more successful programmes in the provision, had that extra dimension of accessibility derivative of source programming.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The imported provision will not normally reflect the actuality of the physical environment of Irish children, although Irish children will be able to relate to the core

environmental infrastructure---earth, sky, water, buildings, thoroughfares and so on. They will also be able to relate to artefacts of the multi-national consumer system. Climatic environments will differ substantially from their own. Urban environments will also be different. Physical environments, even if presented in terms of challenge and difficulty, are a powerful ideological statement of the source culture.

The home produced drama for children as a whole in the period under review did not reflect the physical environment of Ireland; with one two exceptions this drama was overwhelmingly a studio product backed by basic sets.

IDIOM. PHONETICS AND LANGUAGE.

Verbal language in the imported texts, even if child viewers have significant core competence in the mainstream language, will have idiomatic inflections which will be outside their transformational ability, and will rarely reflect their own idiomatic patterns or develop their idiomatic power.

The concept of idiom can also be extended to aural and visual languages. Graphics, design features and sound tracks have their own cultural inflections.

The imported provision will rarely reflect the phonetic system of the Irish child. This will inhibit to some degree the assimilation of verbal textual content. The provision will not provide a phonetic modelling which will enhance enunciation in the local idiom.

The imported drama provision incorporated a vast range of English language usage. Language in drama is specifically selected to unfold the narrative and reinforce characterisation; its signifying function is further reinforced visually by the enaction and the settings and aurally by the soundtrack. Language in drama has a far more powerful impact than in real life. If the imported provision increased language competence it was probably in the recognition area; Irish children would increase their familiarity with patterns of expression in the source culture. The provision will not have provided modelling to any significant degree in the phonetics, idiom, and language

usage unique to the Irish child's social environment.

Ireland localises the mainstream global language, English, to an intense degree. In broad terms, the localised variant is the product of the grafting of the vocabulary of English on to the phonetic and idiomatic structures of the Gaelic language. The English language as used in Ireland is characterised by a a great variety of dialects, phonetic systems, and patterns of idiomatic expression, the sharpest divergences being between the north and the south of the country, and between the Dublin metropolitan area and rural Ireland. There is no standard or even dominant dialect. The situation is further complicated by the high linguistic profile, combined with relatively low usage and comprehension, of the Irish language. Irish language usage reflects three distinct major linguistic systems---Munster, Connaught and Ulster.

In the Irish language provision the Munster dialect predominated. The Daithi Lacha series was presented in Connaught Irish. I have not been able to identify any substantial provision in the Donegal dialect; yet children in the Gaeltacht areas of Donegal must be presumed to be among the audience for Irish language programmes for children.

Children in one Gaeltacht area would have immense transformational problems in processing a text presented in the language and phonetics of another Gaeltacht area---there are acute differences of idiom, vocabulary and phonetics. Standardisation of Irish as between dialects has only been achieved in relation to spelling.

In regard to home produced English language drama, idiomatic variation is controlled to some extent by the script; the texts in general reflect a wide variety of phonetic systems, depending on the origin of the actor---several phonetic systems may be in operation in the one episode.

ROLE MODELLING

The level of behaviouristic modelling from television is difficult to establish. The extensive violence debate centres on this topic. If the well-established general interest in

television drama indicates that television at least in part functions as a source of survival information, then the countless representations of situations in which individual viewers find themselves, or may find themselves in the future, along with representations of possible responses to the these situations, and of possible consequences to these responses, form an important element of the potential survival information in the television drama corpus.

The general personal and social development of children, independent of television usage, requires the acquisition of a range of such responses. The imported television drama in the schedules in the period under review was a vast compendium of situations, responses, and consequential outcomes of responses which are mirrored in the actual life of every Irish child.

Of necessity, these television text situations were culturally generated and the responses culturally determined and required varying degrees of transformation and modification by the Irish child viewer. What the imported provision systematically excluded was a range of situations and responses generated in the cultural environment of the Irish child viewer.

The range of situations and responses in the home produced provision was severely limited by the range and resourcing of the indigenous productions. Puppet drama, the main segment of the provision, generates a more restricted range of situations than other types of screen drama. Irish language drama, while generating a substantial range of situations for those competent in Irish, will not have a pronounced modelling function for the average Irish child viewer. Home produced real life drama, the source with the greatest potential for role and situational modelling, had, as we have seen, an extremely weak presence in the schedules.

MODELLING FOR EMOTIVE EXPRESSION

The articulation of emotional response, and the acquisition of verbal and gestural formulae to express feelings, is an important part of child development. The imported drama in

the schedules contained a vast amount of representations of emotional responses, and of verbal and gestural formulae and conventions for expression of feeling. Again, the detail of this expression was culturally determined. Missing from the imported provision was a range of models appropriate to the cultural environment of the Irish child viewer.

In the home produced part of the provision, the source with the greatest potential for modelling emotive response would be the real life drama category, but the category was too insignificant to have much impact in this context. To a limited degree emotive modelling was available in the puppet drama provision, but hardly to the extent that it met a developmental need.

REALITY CONSTRUCTION

Whether we consider children's television drama as a communicated text, or simply as drama, the process of assimilation involves an instinctive judgement on the part of the viewer on the validity of the representation, in terms of past personal experience, in terms the experience of others as communicated to the viewer, as gauged by probability, as compared with conventional beliefs, or as measured by intuition. The product of this complex process on the part of child viewers is or becomes a component of their world view, or the empirical basis of the aggregate schemata of internal protocols through which they survive in their cultural environment. Ultimately the world view of the child is a subjective construct. It is also largely determined by the child's indigenous culture.

Television drama for children, in so far as it represents objective reality, can make an important contribution to this world view. However, the process of communication itself, and the nature of the dramatic experience, work to qualify the objective validity of any element of dramatic communication in a number of ways.

The dramatic text is a semiotic composite, every element of which is representational, and thus open to misrepresentation, to aberrant decoding and to a variety of

interpretations. Dramatic processing systematically involves main modality cancellation, which allows us to engage with the enacted text as an actual, contemporaneous experience, despite irrefutable physical evidence to the contrary. Much of the text content may be formal fantasy, which implies further modality applications such as anthropomorphic processing; the nonconformity to reality is conceded, but validity is tested on the basis of logic and consequential credibility.

The imported text systematically possesses non-accessible elements because it is viewed in a culture other than the source culture. There is extensive critical consensus that American and British drama texts, including animation drama, have substantial areas which present a seriously skewed version of objective reality.

Children's drama is, as we have seen, shaped in accordance with formal perceptions about what children should view, and is more value-laden than general audience drama. Source ideologies will also contribute to a distortion of objective reality.

The generic determination of texts as police series, Wild West series and so on, and indeed as children's drama, implies modification of content to comply with the type formula, and the filtering of content and context through the relevant generic perspective. Genre implies distortion of reality.

These and other features of imported texts combine to dilute the objective reality reflected in the provision of imported drama for children in the schedules in the period under review. The component of a world view which Irish children will derive from the imported children's drama in the schedules seems unlikely to contribute significantly to their cultural competence in their own milieu, and seems likely to condition them towards acceptance, as real, of the dominant versions of reality in the global English language spectrum. It cannot be claimed, however, that they will acquire a reliable interpretation of these versions of reality either.

The overall orientation of the home produced provision is towards fantasy drama. This can make a contribution to

discriminatory power between reality and non-reality.

For Irish child viewers, the main contribution of home produced drama should be affirmation and confirmation of the schemata through which they survive in their own culture. This is possible only if indigenous drama is clearly a product of the Irish cultural environment, reflecting the actuality of the Irish child's life.

In view of the predominance of fantasy, and the limited scope of the provision, it seems unlikely that home produced drama for children made much of a contribution to the construction of a world view for the average Irish child in the period under review.

EXCLUDED CONTENT

What was missing systematically from the imported drama provision was material which reflected the cultural actuality of the lives of Irish children, which generated a recognisable image of Irish children and of their social actuality, which reflected their immediate physical environment, which used narratives generated in their cultural milieu, which characterised these narratives with cultural types with which they were familiar, which gave characters the language, idiom and phonetics generated by their culture, which reflected the values and ideologies of their culture.

There was a systematic imbalance in favour of imported drama for children; imported drama in any category will cover a wider thematic and treatment range than that of home produced drama. Individual home produced series, episodes or features will tend to be shorter than the imported counterpart.

The home produced cartoon provision, as we saw, was mainly in the preschool range; it did not and could not appeal to the general audience of young people as the imported provision did; it did not provide animation versions of literature or international folktales, or musical extravaganzas, or science fiction. Home produced puppet drama and puppet usage did in fact offer a substantial challenge to the imported material in this classification.

Whole classifications were missing from the domestic live action provision, or had only a token presence. For example, there wasn't any child-centred drama in a neighbourhood setting---the **Our Gang** type of drama. Apart from the **Nothing To It** series, **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** and **The Failte Road Cafe**, there was no drama related to work situations or careers. There was no sport-centred drama. There was very little drama dealing with family relationships, or with relationships of any kind. There was no drama dealing with physical handicap or rehabilitation. There was no 'metaphysical' drama for young people---for example there were no ghost stories. There was no school drama for children. The home produced provision had only a minimal representation, concentrated in one or two programmes, of adventure involving crime and detection, adventure related to exploration, to the circus, science fiction adventure, ghost themes, chase themes, escape themes, island themes, hostage themes, railway adventure, treasure trove themes in various forms, and work-related adventure. There was no domestic representation of aeronautical adventure. There was no home produced categories of outdoor, environment-based adventure, or wild-life or animal-related adventure. There was only one title that we can classify as science fiction in the home produced lists----**C. P. and Qwikswitch**. Home produced drama based on published fiction in the same period makes a very short catalogue. If we apply strict selection criteria the only title we are left with under this heading is **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune**. We can only quote four examples of home produced musical drama which would invite the specific attention of young people. We can only quote two film titles, **A Second of June** and **Flight of the Doves**. The imported drama provision presented a substantial audio-visual history of England, and a less substantial, but still significant audio-visual history of the United States over the period under review; no profile of Irish history emerged from the domestic provision. We have nothing comparable to the situation or family comedy to offer from home produced programmes for young people. We have very little home produced drama for children that is comparable to the Western.

IDENTITY

The contribution of the imported provision to the formation of identity would have worked towards the entrenchment of the cultural features of the mainstream English language spectrum. In general, it must be conceded that the home produced drama provision was too weak to achieve any significant deepening of Irish identity. Nevertheless, in so far as it went, the thrust and intent of the home produced provision was very much in this direction. Irish language content, if it could have reached the broad domestic audience, worked very definitely towards the formation of a specific identity highly resistant to that of the mainstream English language spectrum.

As we have seen, the broad thrust of the home provision was towards the articulation of a basic nationalist aspiration, where cultural products would derive from folk tradition, and where the optimum medium of expression, if possible, would be the Irish language. Implicit in the Irish provision was a developmental aspiration towards the formation of Irish children to indigenous cultural criteria derivative of the national myth.

MEDIATED SELF-IMAGE

Children in a source culture producing significant quantities of indigenous children's drama can identify with the characters and situations generated by the narratives. The degree of identification intensifies when the text languages, verbal, aural and visual, correspond to those in possession of source viewers, and when the physical environment and social matrices represented in the text correspond to their own. The aggregate increment for children in the source culture from the synthesis of these representations of self, and their self-related contexts is a mediated self-image; the actual and potential reality of their personal, social, and physical environments is modelled for them in their own cultural idiom, without intervening complex transformations. The expansion of environments thus acquired can be an important enlargement of cultural capital.

Imported drama for Irish child viewers will not generate the same level of identification. Irish children will have to apply a series of complex transformations to most aspects of the imported material to decode the narrative. A level of identification will operate, but imported drama is unlikely to provide Irish children with a composite image of themselves, or map out the stream of their development, or provide them with expanded personal, social or physical environments, or reflect their actual language, idiom, phonetics, or the aural and visual languages of their own culture.

RTE, or its independent producers, did not generate significant quantities of indigenous children's drama in the period under review. It cannot be said that we have produced a significant body of children's drama where the text languages, verbal, aural and visual, corresponded to those in possession of Irish children, or where the physical environment and social matrix represented in the text corresponded to that of Irish children. We have not generated a comprehensive representation of self, or an impressive range of self-related contexts for Irish children, nor created the actual and potential reality of their personal, social, and physical environments, modelled for them in their own cultural idiom. The home produced drama provision, unlike its imported counterpart, did not map out a usable stream of development context for Irish children.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT

In the context of the over-all provision, home produced drama for children failed to compete in terms of programme quality, volume, genre, category and subject range with imported drama. The home produced segment of the provision did not have the developmental potential or the potential cumulative cultural impact of the imported provision.

However, within the parameters of station production, the production of drama for children compared very well with the production of adult drama by RTE, and exceedingly well when we take account of the comparative allocation of resources for

adult drama and children's drama, and the weak structural position of children's drama within the service.

Proportionate to the resources, some new drama for children emerged almost every year in the period under review. The productions were characterised by considerable ingenuity, talent and enthusiasm. A valuable production tradition was built up and sustained in a very difficult production environment. For the small Irish-speaking child audience the provision was comparatively generous, and provided vital cultural reinforcement in a new medium, creating many substantial and sustained texts. When the promised television service for Irish language programmes materialises the skills and tradition necessary to produce children's drama in Irish will be in place. What is indicated, however, is substantial parallel study of the factors affecting reception and processing of second language texts.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

While it is difficult to form conclusions as to the cumulative impact of the drama provision for children in the period under review, it could be argued that parallels emerge between the implications of the provision and social and educational developments in Ireland in the recent past.

We have a society of young people who have immense media sophistication. This is suggested by the thrust of the new Junior Curriculum, which indicates a fundamental change in educational perspective, and a fundamental transference in the educational power base from linear script-based and memory skills to graphic, three dimensional and hand and eye skills. In many ways this is a confirmation of the developmental impact of television over the past three decades, in which drama has played an essential part.

The shift in the patterns of third-level education also substantiate this shift. The regional and technological colleges and institutions now have more students than the universities. This shift may indicate a trend towards applied rather than academic disciplines.

There can be little doubt that the entrenchment of the cultural features of the English language spectrum has intensified in Ireland over the period under review, and that the young people of Ireland are in possession of much of the cultural capital derivative of that spectrum.

Emigration trends tend to confirm this ; emigration of young people in the main is towards the source areas of the broad bands of imported programming we have charted, although there may be no connection whatsoever between the two phenomena.

The drama provision did not draw to any significant extent on material in French or German or other non-English-speaking continental sources; our young people have not exploited the economic or educational potential of the EC, nor have they improved their competence in Continental languages, to any significant degree.

The drama provision did not extend Irish language drama to the mass audience; Irish young people, despite heavy educational input into Irish language development, remain inarticulate in the Irish language and have a low level of functional comprehension in this medium.

In summary, the profile of young viewers and their society emerging from the drama provision for children and young people over the twentyfive years under review corresponds in broad outline to the actuality of the present and emerging patterns of young Ireland.

APPLICATION OF THESIS CONTENT

Within these severe structural and budgetary constrictions which we have described, and frequently in spite of them, a considerable volume of home produced programming for children and young people did evolve over the period under review.

Our research has charted this provision in considerable detail. This research, provided in Appendices A and B, could form the basis of a a general history of home produced programming for children on Telefis Eireann/ RTE in the first twenty-five years of the station's operation. Such a history

does not exist at present. The data relating to the black and white period of the station's operation, and relevant graphic material not included in this thesis, is particularly useful because so little of the programming has survived in the archives.

Parallel with this general history of home produced programming for children there is a detailed summary of the home produced drama provision for children which could provide the basis for a history of home produced children's television drama. This is an essential undertaking if we are to have a comprehensive history of home produced television drama. The only account we have of this category or programming, **Irish Television Drama** by Dr. Helena Sheehan, gives very little attention to drama created for young viewers.

The dearth of historical perspectives in television studies has not been remedied to any significant extent since John Caughie adverted to the problem in **Screen** in 1984. Caughie wrote:

> ......The absence of history from academic and journalistic writing about television seems to me to be critical. The insistence on history, and the concern about its absence, is not simply an academic whine about gaps in research or an antiquarian fascination with the past, but is part of a desire to understand the movements of television and the continual re-workings and re-shapings of its relationship to the wider culture. The development of some detailed and retrospective sense of the development of television seems to me to be an absolute priority for critical writing, involving a history of forms, of scheduling, of institutions, and of the shifting relations with audiences, the national culture and the State....(Caughie : 1984).

Appendix C provides a comprehensive survey of imported children's television drama in the same period. This survey is valuable, not only as a comparative context for home produced children's television drama, but as an ideas reservoir and as a potential source of models for home-originated productions if viable production structures emerge in the future.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S TELEVISION DRAMA

Irish Television Drama---A Society and its Stories by Dr. Helena Sheehan, is the most comprehensive and authoritative analysis we have of Irish television drama. This study was published by RTE in 1987, and as such acquires the status of an official account of home produced television drama provision over the first twenty-five years of the station's operation. As a record and analysis of Drama Department output it is an excellent work, and, as criticism, might have been a direct response to John Caughie's plea for an historical perspective quoted above. One could easily assume, however, from a perfunctory reading, that RTE produced no television drama for children in the first twenty-five years of the station's operation.

This would have been an unique gap in programming provision, out of character with the evolution of programming on most other television services. The subtitle of the study is **A Society and its Stories**. The implication of Dr. Sheehan's study was that Irish society did not produce stories in this new medium for its children.

Was the omission premised on classification--on a judgement that dramatic material for children did not meet the generic requirements of television drama?

This thesis demonstrates that a considerable volume of station-originated television drama for children and young people was in fact produced.

Some of the titles in this catalogue were mentioned in **Irish Television Drama**. Dr. Sheehan did not categorise television drama in audience-specific genres; the premises of her study incorporated a view of drama as general audience material. If television drama created specifically created for young people had a sufficiently strong historical profile then it merited mention in her study--but in general rather than audience-specific terms.

Thus we find comments, in the context of general drama provision, on **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, on **Siopa**, on Bryan McMahon's four 1916 commemorative plays, and on the **Access**

Community Drama project, and a mention of The Island of the Great Yellow Ox.

Dr. Sheehan accepted the conventional definition of drama, and by extension, of television drama, as enacted narrative. Although she made no formal exclusion of animation drama from her field of study, there was no reference to animation drama in her catalogue of home produced dramatic material.

On the basis of the study, Telefis Eireann/RTE might be presumed not to have produced any animation drama, or, if produced, animation drama might have been excluded from the study on the grounds of generic qualification. Or such animation drama as had been produced may not have obtruded to a sufficient degree on the writer or her sources---a question again of profile and priority.

The bulk of the home-produced drama for children was in animation format, mainly in the puppet drama category. There were also some cartoon features and series. By excluding, deliberately or inadvertently, animation drama from her study, Dr. Sheehan missed out on a substantial volume of indigenous television drama.

There were also many examples of actuality drama--drama mediated through visible actors---not listed in Dr. Sheehan's study. There had been substantial story provision for children, much of it incorporating a high degree of enaction.

Does home produced animation drama merit inclusion in a history of Irish television drama ?

The arguments for classification of cartoon and puppet drama as drama and as television drama have already been set out. The Drama Department, in the period under review, produced about 1000 hours of drama, some of it in co-production arrangements. Of this total, roughly 700 hours represents serial and series drama. Adaptations of stage plays accounted for some 140 hours and the remaining 160 hours represents plays specifically written for television, including a high quota of adaptations of literary material.

About two hundred hours of original animation drama

was produced in the same period. The actual presence in the schedules was stronger than 200 hours, because there was a significant repeat factor. Puppet drama predominated in the animation provision, **Wanderly Wagon** accounting for at least 100 hours of the total. Some of the provision appeared in crafts and preschool programmes. The figure does not include the forty hours or so of story programming over the same period, much of which included graphic backup frequently kinetic in character. Comparatively, the home produced animation provision was a substantial contribution to station-originated drama; to ignore a contribution of this volume in a history of Irish television drama is to dismiss children and young people as an audience which merits attention and provision.

The virtual omission of children's television drama from Dr. Sheehan's study reinforces the perception recorded in Chapter Two---that drama for children as a production category had no professional or corporate definition within the organisation. Obviously, children's television drama was not a major concern of the organisation's spokespersons who were the primary sources of quoted comment in Dr. Sheehan's study. It had an equally low priority and profile within the Television Drama Department, the output of which was her main area of study.

This thesis, I would argue, provides a comprehensive catalogue of home-produced children's drama which complements and substantially completes the record of Irish television drama which Dr. Sheehan's study purported to provide.

THE FIELD OF DRAMA

In our first theoretical paradigm we examined the nature of drama, drawing on some perceptions from structural semiotics. Drama studies traditionally have been rigidly separated in stage, film and radio categories. The semiotic approach unifies the whole field of drama into a common area of dramatic performance and experience where drama is perceived as communication, and examines this common area in terms of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic planes which comprise the structure of the communication; of the signs, sign-systems and

signification which propose meanings; and of the responses to these systems in which meanings are constructed.

The paradigmatic and syntagmatic planes incorporate narrative structures, narrative dynamics such as equilibrium variation, conflict, suspense and involvement; and differentiation operations which are the basis of situation and character contruction. The signs, sign-systems and signification elements comprise the content of the communication and the craft of drama. The spectrum of response maps audience reaction to the communicated content, implying complex transformational activity and modality operations.

As Martin Esslin, a former director of drama, points out in his preface to The Field of Drama (1987), the perception of drama as a complex of signs and sign-systems is extremely useful to the practitioner of drama whose raison d'etre is the realisation of the meaning of the performance.

He laments, however,

> "...the obscure language and the excessively abstract way in which the, in many cases, outstandingly brilliant exponents of semiotics presented their findings....(Esslin, 1987)

The Field of Drama is Martin Esslin's attempt to translate some of these perceptions into practical terms.

Martin Esslin is also disappointed that practitioners of drama are not open to these new approaches indicated by the study of semiotics and other areas of communications studies.

Two areas of further enquiry are indicated here. The first is a comprehensive exploration of the nature of drama in the electronic era, using the perspectives of semiotics and related communications disciplines. The second area is an exploration of ways and means to effect the practical application of such findings, which depends on making these new perspectives accessible to drama practitioners.

A comprehensive exploration of the nature of drama in the electronic era, using the new perspectives, is essential because of the fragmented and isolated character of such explorations to date and because the traditional perspectives of dramatic theory are no longer adequate. They do not take

sufficient account, for instance, of the separation in time and space of performance and audience, or of the dispersed audience, of synchronic and diachronic audiences, or of new narrative structures such as the series and serial. Scalar factors such as the size of the images on the screen and the relation of these images to actuality dimensions are imperfectly understood. Subliminal and overt signification such as that provided by music in a soundtrack needs further elucidation. The contexts of anthropomorphisation, in particular the ease with which a puppet or a drawing may function effectively as a character, need to be explored. Semiotic perspectives can throw new light on the nature of the implied contract between audience and performance known as 'the willing suspension of disbelief'. The study of commonality of discourses between performance and audience may yield up, as John Fiske (1984) suggests, the elusive secret of the ingredients of popular drama. Studies of 'modal fit', to use the phrase of Hodge and Tripp (1986), and of rhetoric, as defined by Silverstone (1988), could elucidate the psychosomatic dimension of the drama experience.

The uses of drama in contemporary society should be part of such an exploration. Until recently drama was at most an occasional experience for a minority of people; drama at present, as available on television and on video, is a daily experience for most people and in a global context the the most widely shared recreational medium of mankind. The annual total of video rentals in the recent past in Great Britain, for example, has been close to 400 million. Traditional drama studies have given little attention to the social dimension of drama other than in the context of the immediate audience.

The second proposed area of further enquiry, the translation of the perspectives of semiotics and other communications disciplines into practical applications, is vital for the development of drama, particularly in the Irish context. Everyone has had experience of tedious drama productions on stage, screen and radio which have failed to retain our interest or involve us emotionally. The failure of drama to involve the viewer or listener originates in deficiencies in signification,

in narrative construction and evolution, in transformational facility, and in the irrelevancy, as we perceive them, of the discourses. Drama directed at child audiences must take particular account of these aspects. They are intensely relevant to Irish language drama.

Some areas of interface between the perceptions of semiotic and communications disciplines and the practical field of drama would be training courses, writers' seminars and acting and production workshops, but before this can happen third level drama departments, communications departments and film studies departments must make these perspectives accessible to the practitioners. Above all there is a necessity to bring all these perspectives of drama together in a comprehensive study of drama in the electronic era.

Within the spectrum of media research the relationship of children with television has attracted more attention than any other topic. The semiotic perspective applied so well by Hodge and Tripp (1986) is comparatively rare within this area, but it is extremely valuable in the context of children's television drama because it corresponds to the growing perception of drama as a complex of signification systems, and because it is a useful strategy for description of the viewing processes employed by children; of the developmental stages of children, and of viewing competence as it relates to particular stages of child development.

It is also necessary to translate these new perceptions into practical applications in the provision of programming for children by Irish television. In the mid-1980s children were still regarded by the Audience Research section in RTE as a single-category audience. While the children's programming sector has had a developmental perspective since 1962 the programme content was not always constructed to developmental criteria. The new perceptions derivative of semiotics and other communications disciplines can produce more effective developmental guidelines and indicate useful production and presentation approaches which would improve the assimilation of programme content by the target age-groups.

The Irish child viewer is situated at the intersection of two main cultural planes----the cultural matrix of the global English-language media spectrum which is the source of the overwhelming bulk of schedule content on RTE and the indigenous cultural plane, heavily shaded in the children's drama context by the minority culture associated with the Irish language. The average Irish child viewer is not absolutely secure in either plane. The Irish child viewer's cultural identity draws on both sources, but it is an identity in continuous crisis. There may be a third plane, relatively unexplored in the television context, that of youth culture, where the young Irish viewer feels more confident. (Reynolds, 1990)

Imported television drama systematically excludes representation of the indigenous cultural milieu. Irish language television drama for children also excludes it, systematically, because the text language is not generally available to the average child viewer, and also because the level of resourcing was never high enough to incorporate it.

It now seems likely that some form of an Irish language television service will be launched in 1993. The tentative decision to site it in Rath Chairn in County Meath rather than in one of the Gaeltachtaí suggests that the provision will target a countrywide audience whose primary language is English, and of whom many will have little if any competence in the Irish language. There are also indications that the output will include commercials, which will increase pressure on the new service to win a nationwide audience.

This development makes a further area of enquiry an extremely urgent matter----the study of the second-language viewing situation. It seems unlikely that the bi-lingual strategy, used not noticeably successfully by RTE in the twentyfive years under review, will be an operative option, because this approach was not adopted by Radio Na Gaeltachta. There seems to be little doubt that Telefis na Gaeltachta, if that is to be the name of the new station, will be able to assemble production teams competent to create and present high quality Irish language programming. Will this programming be

broadcast in a vacuum? What are the factors that will induce the average English speaking viewer with a low level of functional Irish to tune in to the programmes on this station? What are the factors which will induce this viewer to stay watching the programmes? What communications strategies are available to the programme-makers to help this viewer assimilate the programme content? What further strategies are available if the programmes are children's programmes?

The perspectives of semiotics and communications can be applied usefully to these problems, because the problems are basically transformational problems and the answers may lie in paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures appropriate to the language development stage of the target viewer, and in the range of strategies implied by these disciplines for strengthening modality.

> "Children and young people's programmes cannot be regarded by RTE as programmes that do not generate income. The popularity of programmes like Youngline, SBB Ina Shui and Bosco is reflected in the TAM ratings and these programmes have their share of commercials.....The clutter of ads is particularly noticeable around Christmas time...." (Con Bushe, Irish Broadcasting Review, Spring, 1983).

The revenue earning aspect of children's programming, much more relevant now than in 1983, with the popularity of Zig and Zag and the success of The Den as an audience bonding strategy, probably ensures the presence of children's programming in the problematic new commercial station, TV 3, when and if it is set up.

If there is a children's programme band in the new station it is likely to be import-based and may employ a personality presenter on the Den formula. Station-originated provision is likely to take the form low-cost studio programming. If home produced drama is used it will be made by independent producers, and is likely to be in the animation category. These predictions are made on the premises that the new enterprise has an extremely narrow capital base, that it

must return a profit to survive, and that independent producers will be making a major contribution to the home produced programming component.

The projected Irish language television service will have a major language revival premise. It will inevitably prioritise the young audiences; any language revival project would have to involve young people. Inbuilt in the language revival premise is a strong educational dimension; the service will also have to relate to schools. For these reasons I believe that the projected Irish language service will have a stronger commitment to children's programming than TV 3.

Telegael, an independent, though state-funded, media production company located in Connemara is already producing Irish language television texts for children. Some of these have been transmitted on RTE. So far the Telegael output for children has been dubbed material---Irish language soundtracks appended to imported graphic and film sequences. I would expect that the new service will have Irish language drama in this format---imported texts with appended Irish language soundtracks.

There is no indication that children's and young people's programming will not continue on RTE, nor is there any indication at present that the volume of output or the character of the schedule content will be much different to the provision of the past decade. Presentation format and audience bonding will continue to be refined; these are cost-effective strategies. Home produced drama is likely to be in the animation genre.

Without special initiatives, home produced live action and real life drama for young Irish audiences will not materialise on Irish television. Imported television drama will continue to dominate the domestic provision for young people, even in Irish language broadcasting, because the visual text will inevitably prove stronger than the appended Irish language text. Foreign channels will also become more accessible as cable-link provision extends and as satellite receiver dishes become cheaper. Video recorder ownership and rental acquisition of video recorders will expand, as will the number of television

sets and video recorders within households.

> "Children can start their TV day at five o'clock in the morning on Children's Channel with programmes like Jack in the Box, Roundabout, Telecat, My Little Pony and Friends. Sky provides the D.J. Kat Wake Up Club and the D.J. Family Entertainment before 7.30 a.m..." (INTO Report---Footnotes To Chapter Two : 15)

The impact of imported television will continue to be a live issue.

Two areas of further enquiry are indicated by the cultural and transcultural dimensions of the study. One area relates to the value and attitude intake by Irish children from the vast range of foreign programming available to them on domestic television, on foreign television and on video. The other area relates to minority culture products in a negative dominant culture environment---specifically Irish language programming transmitted in a mass-audience context.

There is a significant dearth of knowledge about the viewing patterns and preferences in the areas of television and video of young people in Ireland and the uses young people make of television and video provision. Further research in this area is particularly important, because there has been a pronounced tendency to apply the conclusions of foreign research indiscriminately to Irish young people. Available domestic research indicates that Irish children may have different viewing patterns to those indicated by foreign research and that they may make different uses of available material. Research into video preferences and use should be particularly rewarding because Irish children seem to have a high level of autonomy in video viewing.

Content analysis of home produced children's programming would be a new field of enquiry. One topic of preoccupation with educational interests in Ireland is that of male orientation and sex role stereotyping in textbooks; the examination of home originated programming for children in these contexts would be a worthwhile undertaking.

The relationship between language development and

television, in English-language and Irish-language contexts, is a major field for further research.

As we have said, the narrative assimilation and assimilation of narrative skills from television and video by Irish children and the potential applications of these skills in educational environments is also an area which merits further research.

The thesis should prove useful to those concerned with the provision of programming for children and young people in that it maps out the range of programming options available, particularly in the area of drama. A basic programming perspective also emerges from the thesis; programming should take account of the different young audiences and should respond to developmental needs.

The comparison of home produced and imported drama in this thesis has indicated a vast range of categories and themes not represented in home produced drama and has made a valuable reservoir of story-sources available to present and future programme makers.

It is not clear if the main thrust of the thesis will find immediate application. The thesis, I believe, establishes the developmental need for home produced live action children's drama reflecting the cultural reality of young people in Ireland. This drama will not materialise without special intervention.

Station-originated drama output by RTE in the immediate future will consist of 16 hours or so of Glenroe and 30 hours or so of Fair City.

The almost defunct Drama Department could be revived to produce relevant children's drama or a new young people's drama department could be created.

Live action children's drama is unlikely to materialise from the independent production sector. This sector is under-capitalised and has not performed convincingly in the provision of adult drama.

The future of children's television drama will be influenced by developments in the rapidly-changing environment

of broadcasting. Children's programming has, substantially, been a public service commitment. The report of the ad hoc Group on the future of public service broadcasting of the EBU, quoted in the Stokes Kennedy Crowley Report (1985), saw the virtual distribution monopoly of public service broadcasting organisations disappearing in the climate of new technological applications in transnational and national transmission and reception and forecast a shift from monopoly to pluralism and competition, a shift in broadcaster/viewer relationships because of the greater range of choice, a shift from national to international programming, from uniformity to diversity of techniques and systems, from regulation to deregulation, from homogeneity to fragmentation of the audience, from central transmission to regional and local transmission, and foresaw programme production cost advantage favouring relatively small video production centres.

Many of the changes foreseen by the EBU ad hoc group are already operative. The conventional wisdom would have been that pluralism and competition implied a severe retraction in children's programming. This has happened on some services but children's programming retains a secure place in most schedules. Children have their own satellite channel.

Given the rapid changes in the international political environment, it may not be too presumptuous to predict, despite the entrenched attitudes of the two political communities on this island, that some degree of merging between the two political entities will take place. This will have implications for the national communications climate; what may emerge is a situation where there will be five television services with a nationwide focus.

In that climate the regionalisation and localisation implied by the EBU report would intensify.

The broadcasting environment in Ireland remains extremely fluid. In a rapidly changing situation the best hopes for home produced live action children's drama reflecting the cultural reality of young people in Ireland is the application of new cost-effective production techniques and the on-going

development of video technology. The kind of drama that these approaches would generate is illustrated by **Free Spirits** (1991), on which we have commented in detail at the end of Chapter Five.

The EBU connection, a constant theme in this thesis, may prove more valuable in the future than in the past; resistance of the Americanisation of European media remains a continuing preoccupation with the European Community; there are indications, as we complete this study, that children's television programming will become a primary site for this confrontation, and that substantial funding will be made available to member broadcasting organisations to create culturally-determined schedule material which would be acceptable to young audiences throughout the Community.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF DRAMA

The first of the new Junior Certificate examinations in English were held in June, 1992. **Section Six** of the **Ordinary Level Paper** set out an excerpt from a playscript. Four text-based questions were asked. The fifth question, designed to test the general drama experience of the candidate, read as follows : **"Choose a scene from any play or film you have studied where there is tension or conflict. Say what the reason for this tension or conflict is, and briefly show how it develops in the scene."**

The option **"or film"** in this question marks a major development in the perception of the range of drama in the Irish postprimary curriculum. Curricular drama is no longer restricted to theatre scripts; screen drama, which, in the classroom situation, will mean drama available on video, is now an approved segment of English studies.

The extension of the range of drama to screen drama means that study will be based on the enaction rather than on the script, and, more significantly, that Irish children will be able to relate their vast informally-acquired experience of this genre to the curriculum component.

In this interface the students may be better prepared than their teachers. The expansion of the range of acceptable

drama to screen drama precipitates a need for intensive training for teachers in screen drama perspectives and in the interaction of young people with the screen text.

On the evidence of our study very few of the texts available for classroom study will be Irish productions.

The imminent nationwide focus on screen drama in the postprimary education sector implies further study and amplification of many of the themes in this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE : FOOTNOTES

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 1)

These included framing systems such as the architectural framework, pre-publicity and title sequences; sign systems at the actor's disposal; visual sign systems relating to set and location; sign systems sited in the text of the performance; aural sign systems and, specific to cinema and television, sign systems derived from camera work, from the linking of shots, and from montage and use of the rhythmic flow of images, which constitute the sign system of editing. (Esslin : 1987 : 103)

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 2)

Television drama presents a distorted version of reality at various levels. The first level is generic---drama, operating on a cancellation of main modality, or suspension of disbelief, is per se unreal. Drama does not guarantee a realistic vision of the world---it operates on the transformation of symbolic material into meaningful constructs.

However, we assume that the premises of the fictional product conform to objective reality; that the content is valid in terms of human experience. Collectively, drama presents an authoritative world view. The branch of communications which examines this world view is content analysis. A considerable volume of content analysis has been carried out on American television drama, which is the main import and export segment, under the agis of the Cultural Indicators Project, an agency supported by Federal funding and patronage. George Gerbner, who has done much work in this area, concedes the fictionality of

drama, but concludes that television drama cumulatively reveals perceptions of patterns of life and teaches lessons about the hierarchical values and forces in society. (Gerbner et al., 1969, 1980)

On the basis of work done over two decades by the Cultural Indicators Project, Gerbner and others have a assembled a detailed outline of the world portrayed in television drama. This world prioritises adults, males, professionals, whites and the middle class.

These categories are systematically over-represented in television drama---at the expense of other categories who are under-represented or not represented at all. Gerbner calls under-representation 'symbolic annihilation'.

Children as a group are under-represented in prime-television drama. Blacks do not emerge as equal to whites and women are not shown as being equal to men. Men appear more often, and have more dominant roles; women tend to be youthful, are typically objects of sexual desire, or are shown as being emotionally supportive of men in their risk-taking.

Gerbner and others have assembled an immense dossier of character and casting patterns established over two decades, which suggests that the prejudices of society are imbibed by television drama as its underlying, unchallenged value system. Cumulatively, television drama gives a skewed and biased version of reality.

Gerbner and his associates have also carried out research which suggests that heavy viewers of television tend to draw their personal vision of the world more from television than from the actuality of their own lives. The research suggests that their vision of the world is more like the the television world in areas where the the television world is most skewed; e.g. they might assume that there are more men than women in the world because the ratio of men to women on television drama is three to one, or that law enforcers have an automatic right to shoot at people who run away.

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 3)

The last decade has seen a rapid expansion of usage of video cassette recorders. The recording and replay of the text on a VCR creates a further range of channel and reception implications. (Reynolds, 1990)

The channel now incorporates additional sets of technologies, grammars and codes.

The viewer can see the episode again; a second viewing will be a different experience, involving a higher degree of content assimilation.

The exercise of the option to record and play back signifies a keener disposition to view; the text is no longer a random schedule option which happens to be available when he switches on the set. The time-shift option implies a strengthened specificity in viewing.

The VCR also nullifies the hitherto essential transience of the television broadcast. This nullification of transience is a further creative input by the viewer; an important aspiration of art is to make the transient permanent and durable.

The emergence in recent years of rental and purchase outlets for video cassettes contitutes a significant programming power shift from the television stations to the viewer, and implies a more intense viewing experience for the VCR user, because of the selection context, than the viewing of television schedule material.

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 4)

> "Nordenstreng and Varis have made an inventory of television program contents in various parts of the world, and their results prove that many developing countries rely heavily on imported material with very little air time devoted to domestically produced programs. In such cases the idea of using the media for creating or supporting local and national cultures has lost all meaning." (Hedebro : 1982)

According to the figures produced in the UNESCO report

from which Hedebro quoted (Nordenstreng and Varis : Television Traffic---a Oneway Street? Paris, 1974---UNESCO publications, No. 70), there were wide variations in the ratio between foreign and domestic productions. Some general conclusions could be made, however. Four countries had a very small proportion of imports; the United States and China with less than 2% from abroad, and Japan and the Soviet Union with even less. By contrast, about half the television programs in Latin America were of foreign origin. In Asia, aside from China and Japan, two distinct groups existed. One group imported one-third or less of its output, whereas the other group imported more than 50%. In the four African countries represented in the study (Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia), on average imported material made up roughly one-half of the output. (Hedebro : 1982)

Hedebro says :

> "Looking at the international flow of programs, a clear pattern can be seen. There are four major exporters---the United States, Great Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany--with the United States by far the most important source of television material. At the time of the study (early 1970s) the United States, with an annual export of 150,000 hours, sent more abroad than triple the combined amount of the other three countries. Most of this export consisted of entertainment programs...."(Hedebro : 1982)

Dr. Mary Kelly, on Colum Kenny's programme What's On The Box?, transmitted on RTE in June, 1990, stated that the EC countries were currently paying over one billion dollars annually to American producers of television texts.

The picture that emerges is clear. The international flows of television programs go in one direction---from the developed to the underdeveloped countries, the phenomenon described by Boyd-Barret (1977) as "uni-directional flow."

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 5)

The perception of our education system is that Irish children have very definite cultural needs, and that special provision must be made for these needs. The Department of Education actively discourages the use of imported textbooks in any area of the primary school curriculum. Imported textbooks are also relatively rare in post-primary schools.

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 6)

By definition, people who share the same culture share a common signification system and reference framework and may be presumed to have the potential to communicate effectively with one another.

We cannot make the same assumption about people who do not share the same culture. Yet we know from experience that people of different cultures do manage to communicate successfully with one another, and we must assume, as a first step towards understanding intercultural communication, that certain elements of diverse signification systems and certain features of experience are common to all cultures.

Beyond our cultural differences there are universal norms rooted in our humanity. Many of these norms relate to our basic biological needs, drives and determinants. We might term these as cultural universals.

Eating is biological, and a cultural constant or universal; how one satisfies one's hunger is cultural and might be described as a cultural variable. Clothing is a cultural universal; jeans would be a cultural variable. The marriage rite is a cultural universal; the marriage ceremony is a cultural variable.

The list of universals or shared frames of reference can be extended to tool manufacture and use, cultivation, provision of shelter, transport, communication systems, religious

systems, environmental organization, to ranges of feeling and expression and to numerous other areas.

The primary field of interface between cultures is this area of cultural universals or shared frames of reference---the common experience of mankind. When we are exposed to manifestations of another culture, we have a fair idea of what is involved, although much of the detail may escape us.

Relevant to this discussion is the concept of tolerance; intercultural communication requires a tolerance in interpretation of culturally determined constructs---we tolerate deviance from our constructs by concentrating on the central tendency of the construct rather than its possible variants. Sometimes we tolerate an incomplete message and complete the message contextually. Tolerance also operates in concept acquisition by children. Tolerance means that we are willing to communicate on the basis of a partial understanding of what is happening; we grasp at the cultural universal and try to unravel the cultural variable.

The unique features of these universal practices and processes, or the variables, constitute in large part the cultural characteristics of a particular society.

The further one goes in the direction of cultural universals, the greater the chances of intercultural communication. The further a situation moves in the opposite direction, towards areas which are not common experience, or where the variables obscure the universal substructure, the greater the chances of misunderstanding and non-understanding.

Another and quite obvious method of intercultural communication is the acquisistion of a sufficient proportion of the signification system of the other culture---some degree of fluency in its language, for instance.

A further method is interaction through the medium of a third culture; a culture acquired additionally to one's own, which is also shared by the other party.

Intercultural communication can also be facilitated by third-party mediation, such as translation.

The general factors of communication---the extent to

which the receiver is in possession of the signification system of the sender---determine the impact of intercultural communication.

As intercultural communication operates on the basis of tolerance---the strategy of concentrating on the central tendencies of constructs---it follows that intercultural communication will function within significantly narrower limits than those obtaining for communication between groups and individuals within the same culture.

Implied even in the most elementary form of communication is a certain loss of message content or a distortion of such content, because the receiver will not be in full possession of the codes of the sender. The received meaning will therefore differ from the intended meaning, as a consequence of aberrant decoding. Aberrant decoding is a feature of communication within a culture; it is of necessity aggravated in intercultural communication.

The extent of intercultural understanding, misunderstanding, or non-understanding will be determined by the cognitive and affective distance of the cultures involved from each other. (c.f. Fishcer and Merrill, 1976)

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 7)

Television commercials reinforce this homogeneity. A survey of advertisers in terms of air time on six commercial channels available in Ireland in July, 1987, (RTE 1, RTE 2, UTV, CHANNEL 4, SKY, SUPER) found that the same multi-national advertisers dominated commercials on all six stations : Proctor and Gamble, Unilever, Kellogs, Colgate Palm-Olive, and Coco-Cola. (Bell and Meehan : 1988 : 23)

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 8)

Children's television material is ideologically more loaded than adult television material. Children's television is engendered in a matrix of perceptions about child development, perceptions of social relationships, control and censorial mechanisms, pedagogic perceptions, perceptions of appropriate values, behavioural perceptions, moral value systems and formal source ideologies. Production costs may have been sponsored by a foundation with a particular viewpoint, or the material may have been produced with public service broadcasting funding, which also implies layers of ideological loading.

Animation programmes may seem innocuous on the surface, but very few animation programmes are value-free, as we will see when we examine the animation content of the schedule provision for the years under review. Many cartoons, for instance, will reflect a middle-class milieu, but the inevitable villain will usually be cast as working-class. Cartoons will also contain political propaganda. Intergalactic space sagas, to quote one example, will feature conventional American hero stereotypes, but the villains will belong to totalitarian tyrannies.

The Cultural Indicators Project, directed by George Gerbner, carried out intense content analysis of children's programming on American television, and found that the general pattern of reality distortion applicable to adult television also applied to children's television. The demography patterns of adult television tend to be reproduced in children's material, including cartoon features. (Gerbner et. al., 1980)

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 9)

CHILDREN'S SCHEDULES, THURSDAY,3rd NOVEMBER, 1988.

RTE 1	NETWORK 2	BBC 1	BBC 2
None	2.30 *Bosco 3.00 *D'Den 3.02 The Floradora Folk 3.10 Care Bears 3.45 The Owl Service 4.10*Pats Pals 4.30 *Happy Birthday 4.45 *Once Upon a Time 5.25 The Campbells(S) 6.00*Jo-Maxi 6.30 END	10.25 Play Bus. 10.50 Jimbo & the Jet Set 10.55 Five to Eleven. 3.50 Charlie Chalk 4.10 Superted. 4.20 Whats Your Story? 4.30 Bad Boyes(C/Ser.) 4.55. News Round. 5.05Blue Peter 5.35 Whats Your Story? 5.40 END	10.15--2.00 : SCHOOLS

UTV	CHANNEL 4	CHILDRENS CHAN	SUPER/SKY
12.10 Puddle Lane 4.00 Button Moon 4.10. Tin-Tin 4.20 Dangermouse 4.45. Gilbert's Fridge 5.15 Blockbusters 5.45. END	9.30---12.00 SCHOOLS	5.00 a.m. Cartoons 5.30 Cats & Co. 6.00 Stories Without Words 6.30--7.30 Wheeled WarriorsCuckoo Wrzl Gummidge 7.30 Roustabout (Spartakus) 8.00 Take One/Out of LimitsTelecat 8.30Pinwheel 9.00PRESCHOOL 10.00 MAGIC CORNER 10.15Under The Umbrella Tree 10.30---12.00 As 5-6.30 a.m. 12.00 Jack in the Box. 1.00 a.m Roustabout 2.00 a.mHuva 3a.m. END	3.00---4.00 Supertime. SKY--NONE

*Home Produced Children's Programming.

Bosco is a pre-school programme built around the puppet character, Bosco. Dempsey's Den is a highly-personalised continuity format, using the puppets Zig and Zag. Happy Birthday is a greetings feature which is part of the continuity presentation. Pat's Pals is a chat show for children, featuring Pat Ingoldsby. Once Upon a Time is a story feature. Jo-Maxi is a magazine/activity programme.

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 10)

Quite often, the imported text is the only source available to viewers of content reflecting their own particular cultural context and responding to their cultural needs in a meaningful way, although this may not be obvious from text labels. Kung Fu films, according to John Fiske, may articulate cultural norms for working-class boys more effectively than Grange Hill. As John Fiske (1987) points out :

> "The economic origin of the cultural commodity cannot account for the cultural use-value it may offer in its moment and place of reception and can neither control nor provoke the variety of meanings and pleasures it may provoke."

(Footnotes to Chapter I : 11)

The phenomenon of aberrant decoding as defined by Eco---what happens when a message which has been encoded by one code is decoded by another---applies to the whole range of mass media texts, but would seem to be of particular application to the reading of imported television texts. (Eco : 1976)

CHAPTER TWO : FOOTNOTES

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 1)

LOWENSTEIN'S THREE STAGES OF MEDIA GROWTH

In a paper entitled Use of Foreign Media by Developing Nations, included in International and Intercultural Communication (Fischer and Merrill : 1976), Ralph L. Lowenstein outlined the general evolution process of mass media. He envisaged three stages.

> "In the normal development process, each country moves through predictable stages of media growth, from "elite" to "specialised". (Fischer and Merrill : 1976)

The elite stage is characterised by general illiteracy and poverty. The media that do exist concentrate in urban areas and appeal to an urban elite of opinion leaders.

In the "popular" stage of media growth, the nation has broken through the barriers of poverty and illiteracy. The media at this stage appeal to a heterogeneous "mass" audience. Content of the media is geared to the lowest common denominator in this audience. The audience is affluent enough to be worth reaching; advertisers now subsidise the media, increasing range and accessibility.

The final stage of media development is attained when there is a coalescence of four factors : 1) higher education 2) affluence 3) leisure time and 4) population size of at least ten to fifteen million.

The higher education assures varied professional needs and tastes, a high degree of job specialisation, and a market for media appealing to a wide spectrum of interests. Affluence ensures that a variety of media can be afforded, and also that media provision can be supported and amplified by advertising revenue. Leisure time guarantees media use. Media provision moves

from the lowest common denominator to specialised and minority interest provision.

The population size specified is the minimum necessary to support the production and distribution of specialised media. A condition of viability would seem to be that this minimum population is literate in a single language.

Lowenstein's framework is a general pattern. Studies of specific countries imply modifications of this framework. He has the following to say about the small modern or modernizing country in which the factors of higher education, affluence and leisure time are present, but in which the factor of minimum population size is absent :

> "These countries may also move into the specialized stage by 'borrowing' specialised media from a larger country. Since a variety of specialised media today can only be found in countries where English, French and Russian are the dominant languages, the small, modernized nation must seek publications and programming in one of the four "technological" languages. Its small size precludes translation of such specialized material to any large degree.
>
> If the small country is in the mainstream of a "technological" language, the borrowing process is fairly simple to achieve. French-speaking Belgians, for example, borrow all sorts of media from France; Switzerland borrows from France and Germany; New Zealand borrows from England, Australia, Canada and the United States.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 2)

These extracts are from the Stokes Kennedy Crowley Report, 1985.

- o Section 24 of the 1960 Act requires RTE to be self-supporting.
- o RTE was obliged to establish and maintain a national television and sound broadcasting service.
- o RTE is obliged to be responsive to the interests and concerns of the whole community, to be mindful of the need for understanding and peace within the whole island of Ireland, to ensure that the programmes reflect the varied elements which make up the culture of the people of the

whole island of Ireland, and to have special regard for the elements which distinguish that culture and in particular for the Irish language.

In submissions to the Review, the RTE Authority extended the statement of role as follows :

- o Programming must serve the interests and concerns of the whole community, promote cultural understanding and reflect the various elements of Irish culture.
- o It is the authority's ambition that ultimately Irish language programmes would approach 20% of home-produced output.
- o It is the Authority's responsibility to ensure the maintenance and development of public service broadcasting on radio and television. The programme service should as far as possible :
  - -- have a distinctive Irish quality
  - -- reflect Irish values
  - -- recognise the organisation's responsibility for cultural and educational matters
  - -- include information on public institutions, new legislation etc.
  - -- meet the interests and needs of the large proportion of young people in the population
  - -- promote unity and a more caring society
  - -- promote understanding of the values and traditions of other countries , particularly member countries of the EC.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 3)

The vagueness of the public service concept can be gathered from the following public relations advertisement which appeared in the daily papers on Wednesday, July 4th, 1990 :

WITH ALL THE EVENTS HAPPENING LAST WEEKEND, THERE WAS ONLY ONE PLACE TO BE AND THAT WAS WITH RTE! IN JUST 24 HOURS WE BROUGHT YOU SUPERB COVERAGE OF :

- o The Homecoming---the Irish Team's triumphant return
- o Nelson Mandela---his arrival in Dublin and his

historic address to the Dáil

- o Italia '90---two Quarter Final matches.
- o The Irish Derby---extensive coverage of the Curragh.
- o GAA---Cork v. Kerry in the Munster Football Championship and other games from around the country.

RTE : YOUR RADIO AND TELEVISION NETWORK---PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING AT ITS BEST.

I have not been able to trace any published statement by RTE that children's progamming its perceived by the organisation as part of its public service commitment. The spokesperson in the station's PR section, whom I contacted in October, 1992, was very adamant that RTE regarded children's programming and educational programming as a public service commitment.

"Broadcasting organisations generally regard their main function in the field of education as the provision of programmes which are generally or indirectly educative, and consider that the provision of specifically educational programmes, while also a proper function of broadcasting, is a secondary one and demands the cooperation of other agencies, particularly those with direct responsibility for public education." (Broadcasting Review Committee Report, 1974 : 18.3.)

RTE accepted this perspective for educational programming, insisting that the Department of Education pay the costs of its Telefis Scoile series.

In regard to general programming for children, the public service aspect is diluted somewhat by the inescapable evidence that children's programming has carried a heavy loading over the years of child-related advertising.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 4)

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

In 1962 Eamonn Andrews was Chairman of the Authority, and Mr. Kevin McCourt was Director General.

Reporting to the Director General and the Authority was a management Committee consisting of :

- o CONTROLLER OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

- o CONTROLLER OF RADIO PROGRAMMES
- o HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION
- o DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

Seven Departments reported to the Management Committee and the Director General :

- o TELEVISION PROGRAMMES
- o RADIO PROGRAMMES
- o NEWS
- o ADMINISTRATION
- o ENGINEERING
- o ADVERTISEMENTS SALES
- o PUBLICATIONS.

The Television Programmes Division, headed by the Controller of Programmes, Mr. Michael Barry, had a number of programming departments : Films, Features, Sport, Drama, Children's Programmes.

This structure operated until 1967.

Ab initio the proportion of finances devoted to actual programming sets the limits of potential home produced programmes.

Expenditure on the television sector for the start-up year, 1961-1962, was £453, 301. Programmes (home-produced and acquired) cost £153, 552, or roughly one-third of the budget. This proportion, with some fluctuation was maintained up to 1965. The source for these figures is the 1974 Broadcasting Review Committee Report.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 5)

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION---HOME PRODUCED & IMPORTED MATERIAL

Year Ended 31st March	Total Hours	TV Home Origininated	Hours	Imported Material	Hours
1962					
1963	2,200	5.5%	112	6.45%	141
1964	2,222	4.3%	96	8.8%	186
1965	2,346	5.0%	117	3.0%	70
1966	2,297	4.0%	92	6.0%	138
1967	2,170	2.7%	62	4.9%	130
1968	2,202	2.7%	59	8.2%	171
1969	2,288	3.5%	84	4.9%	112
1970	2,210	2.8%	62	6.9%	142
1971	2,360	0.8%	17	7.9%	186
1972	2,420	1.6%	39	9.1%	220
1973	2,435	2.2%	54	7.8%	190

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 6)

On Saturday there was an episode of **Rin-Tin-Tin**, a series about a boy and his Alsation dog set in the American West; a reading of Dylan Thomas's nostalgic piece, **A Child's Christmas in Wales**, by Emlyn Williams, and the home produced **Children's Corner**, a variety programme presented by Audrey Meredith.

There were no children's programmes on the Sunday schedule.

Buckskin, an episode of a Western series, appeared on Monday, together with the second episode of **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, a bi-lingual drama serial, and the information programme, **At Home and Abroad**, presented by Seân Mac Réamoinn.

The Tuesday schedule comprised **Bom the Little Drummer**, a cartoon version of an Enid Blyton story; an information story about an RAF rescue exercise called **Man in the Water**, and a

traditional story told by Eamonn Kelly in the **Tales of Wonder** series, **The Bridge of Feathers**.

On Wednesday there was an episode of the BBC version of Louisa M. Allcot's **Little Women**, another **At Home and Abroad** presentation, and **Let's Draw**, an art and crafts programme with **Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin**.

The Thursday schedules consisted of an imported documentary, **Story of a Violin**; an episode of **Annie Oakley**, a Western series about a girl sharpshooter, and another **Tales of Wonder** presentation, **Seán From Ireland and the Old Men**, told this time by Séamas Ennis.

On Friday there was an imported interactive puppet feature, **Muffin the Mule**, a popular BBC programme. Phil Thompson, on loan from the BBC to set up sports programming, presented Sport and You, and there was a third programme in the **Home and Abroad** series.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 7)

The bi-lingual dimension was an important feature of home produced programming.

Section 17 of the Broadcasting Act of 1960 provides that "in performing its functions, the Authority shall bear constantly in mind the national aims of restoring the Irish language and preserving and developing the national culture and shall endeavour to promote the attainment of those aims."

The philosophy which shaped **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, and **Daithi Lacha**, and the general bi-lingual presentation approach was revealed in the article by Earnán de Blaghd, a member of the Radio Eireann Authority in the RTV Guide on January 10th, 1962.

> **"....dá gcuirfimis dráma Gaeilge a theilefisiú ar fea uair a chloig go tráth-rialta bheifi ag cur feirge ar chuid mhaith daoine agus b'fhéidir ag déanamh náimhde don teangain náisiúnta.**
> **Ach d'fhéadfaimis drámai Gaeilge nach mairfeadh thar ceathrú uair a chloig nó fiche neomat a thaispeáint go rialta gan aon dream a ghriosú i gcoinne na Gaeilge go mórmhór dá mbeadh na gearrdhrámai Gaeilge cliste agus**

taitneamhach...."

This note, by a committed revivalist, manifested a very nervous stance about the use of Irish on television. The Authority was obliged to meet its statutory obligations and would incur the wrath of the revivalists, organised campaigns to withold licence fees and possible court action to enforce the statutory obligation if there were little or no Irish programming in the schedules, and on the other hand, militant antagonism from the Language Freedom Movement, and switch-off reaction from viewers to the detriment of commercial ratings if there were too much Irish.

The Irish language as a mass medium communication system clearly posed problems, making the programming area a potential site of cultural and ideological conflict and of political power-play.

> "Despite festering resentment in some circles, the public attitude towards the language after 1922 was, as far as we can tell, broadly if inertly benign. All governments henceforth embraced the idea of revival, and promptly subcontracted the implementation of the policy to the Department of Education." J. J. Lee, IRELAND 1912--1985]

The statutory imposition in the 1960 Broadcasting Act can be seen as another excercise in delegation of responsibility.

The proponents of a significant element of programming in the Irish language would be the voluntary language revival associations, notably Gael-Linn and Conradh na Gaeilge. Articulated opposition to compulsory Irish in any form culminated in the foundation of the Language Freedom Movement in 1966.

Professor Lee notes the progressive dilution by Irish goverments of the revival aspiration, and maps out the various utilitarian arguments, social, economic, commercial and technical, that emerged over the years to rationalise this dilution. Some of these are reflected in an analysis by Liam O Murchú, Programming in a Minority Language, which appeared in the Winter edition of Administration in 1976.

> "When television came along it presented us with new problems. Television with its dominant domestic presence made clear demands for majority-viewing programmes; whatever one's private views about the language, it was a simple fact that it was not the language spoken by the great majority of the people.

It was, never-the-less, taught in schools; and some element, be it large or small, was retained. There was a vague but widespread sense of loyalty and affection to it---which however fell down when it came to putting it to practical use. The reasons why it was not put to practical use were many, but one reason took precedence over all the rest : there was no need to use it---the vast majority of people in the community had English as a home language anyway.

In addition to all this, there was the Gaeltacht, the small but tenacious heartland of native speakers, mostly on the western seaboard, who did have Irish as a home and general community language. What was the programme and schedule-maker's response to be to this complex, scattered and ill-assorted audience?

Perhaps the simplest thing to have done would have been to ignore it--to programme in English and accept no compromise until the language pattern changed. But neither the public itself nor the statutory injunction would have allowed that.

Equally, to attempt a spread of programmes satisfying all tastes within the limited language spectrum would have cut out majority audiences; that would have meant trouble for the service's long-term plans. For it so happens that all along the east coast we are recipients (non-paying!) of the main British national services, so that for something like half the population a choice of three or four alternative channels exists. This meant that plotting Irish programmes into the transmission schedule, particularly during peak hours, must be done with a weather eye to general audience acceptability.

There was a further complication. For, whereas any television service aiming at majority audiences would have to do just that, RTE--being both a commercial and public service concern, half of whose financial backing comes from advertising revenues---is constrained to break even financially from year to year, and hence cannot afford to lose any substantial part of its financial revenues. In theory at least, while, while the BBC may put on a programme of current affairs in Scots Gaelic or Welsh in the middle of the evening and suffer nothing more than some audience opprobrium, for RTE to do so would mean an automatic drop in ratings , which, if repeated over any sizable area of the schedule, would undoubtedly invite questions by advertisers as to whether their investment in time-slots surrounding such programmes was worthwhile.

Nevertheless, the statutory obligation is there; and it would not be there if there were not a goodly measure of agreement between all the political parties and on the part of the public in general that it should be there. Hence it became a matter for the broadcaster to put flesh upon the frame of the statute, and out of the dry, sometimes vague, legislative words

> to create programmes which would be neither dry nor vague but would give real audience satisfaction at both minority and majority level."

This 'flesh' more often than not was bilingual programming. In effect the bilingual idiom becomes a third language. Bilingualism is not a feature of the normal communication practice of Irish people. Hiberno-English will absorb and appropriate Irish words, phrases and structures; Gaeltacht idioms will absorb and appropriate English words and phrases, but the mixture of Irish and English typified by the bilingual approach has no parallel usage in society.

One consequence is a dilution of reality. The child will not be able to relate the language patterns of bilingual programming to any empirical referent.

Another consequence is the necessity for increased transformational activity to decode the bi-lingual content.

A third consequence is a distortion of programme objectives; bi-lingual input originates in statutory or educational discourses, and as such interposes itself between the programme maker and the viewer. What purports to be a drama segment is in fact a language lesson. In such cases the child, if he does switch off, will extract the entertainment gratifications from the text and ignore the pedagogic element.

Furthermore, if the statute is complied with by the mere presence of bi-lingual material in the schedules, the motivation to communicate effectively with the audience, and to create dramatic involvement, is weakened. Activists calling for more Irish language material in the schedules were satisfied by statistical confirmation; they rarely submitted the texts to critical analysis.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 7)

It is difficult to estimate the size of the child audience which could effectively process Irish language material

in 1962. One approach is to quantify the number of Irish medium primary schools. According to an article by Séamas O Buachalla in the 1981 issue of The Crane Bag there were 420 Irish medium primary schools in the State in 1960, most of these in the Gaeltacht. The total number of primary schools in the State is in the region of 3,200. Out of a total of 598 secondary schools, 37 were listed in 1968 as using Irish as the medium for instruction and organisation.

These figures represent a peak for the period under review. By 1979, according to Séamas O Buachalla, the number of Irish medium primary schools had shrunk to 160, and the number of Irish medium secondary schools to 15. In round figures, the Irish medium schools in 1979 enrolled 14,000 children out of a national enrolment of half a million, and the Irish medium secondary schools less than 6,000 out of a national enrolment of 196,000.

In 1962 it seems safe to assume that eighty per cent of Irish children would have had some transformational difficulty in processing the bulk of the home produced drama provision.

Very little if any research has been carried out on the usage by Irish children of Irish language television programmes. We can get some idea of likely attitudes from various surveys which have been carried out by Irish language agencies on attitudes towards Irish in schools. These surveys were reviewed by Pádhraig O Riagáin in a paper published by Institiúid Teangeolaiochta Eireann in 1985.

National Language Surveys, 1973 and 1983

ATTITUDE STATEMENTS (Public)	% Agreeing 1973	1983
Most children resent having to learn Irish	60%	44%
Children seldom learn enough Irish to use it after school.	77%	66%

National Language Survey, 1983

Amount of Irish respondents want in school programme.

All- Irish, with English as subject	3%
Irish taught as subject only	72%

INTO/MRBI NATIONAL SURVEY. 1985 (1.000 Adults)

COMPARISON WITH ITE SURVEY. 1983.

INTO/MRBI (1985)	ITE (1983)
3% speak Irish a lot.	5% of homes include someone who speaks Irish often/always.
11% speak Irish now and again.	10% of homes has someone who speaks Irish occasionally.
28% saw TV programme in Irish within past month	20% watch TV programmes in Irish a few times a week.

TEACHER RESPONSES

The INTO/MRBI survey also found that 75% of primary teachers believed that most of their students could understand Irish; 32% of teachers were satisfied that their pupils could also converse in Irish, but only 25% believed that the primary school course stimulated pupil interest in Irish language or culture. 60% of the teachers interviewed also believed that low achievement children should not be obliged to learn Irish, and the members of the public interviewed broadly agreed with this view.

Pádhraig O Riagáin, summing up his review, stated:

> ......surveys of schoolchildren and young adults clearly show that positive attitudes towards learning Irish rest in large part in the perceived advantages a knowledge of Irish gives in examinations or the job market.

This data, which conforms to general perceptions of Irish language usage and attitudes to the Irish language, confirms Irish language programming for children as minority programming. It indicates a low rate of switch-on probability, that the motivation is likely to be educational, and that the linguistic codes necessary to process the text are not generally available to Irish children. Such skills, where available, are likely to be available to academically gifted children.

IRISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES

In March, 1977, the RTE Authority appointed an advisory committee on Irish language broadcasting on radio and television. Séamas O Buachalla of Trinity College was asked to carry out a survey of the viewing and listening habits of young people which would be of use to this committee. He devised a questionnaire which was circulated among students at the various summer colleges in the Gaeltacht areas in July, 1978. A brief summary of the results of the survey was published in the Spring edition of the Irish Broadcasting Review in 1980.

640 students took part. The age limits were between 12 and 18. 40% were in the 12--15 age-group. 60% of the sample were girls. 46% were from cities; 25% came from large towns; 18% came from rural areas and 11% came from villages. All the respondents were attending post-primary schools. Only 2.3% of the sample were restricted to single-channel viewing.

Although 68% of the fathers and 69% of the mothers were stated to have a knowledge of Irish, only 3% of the homes featured regular use of Irish. This corresponds to the INTO/MRBI finding in 1985.

The choice of students attending Gaeltacht summer colleges as sample subjects probably reduced the relevance of the findings as indicators of the general attitudes of young people to radio and television throughout the country; students who attend these colleges are characterised by a higher median motivation towards examination success, and come from families where examination success has a similar priority.

This seems to be borne out by the fact that 17% of the respondents were not allowed to watch television during weekdays. The fact that 17% of the respondents were not allowed to watch television during weekdays may also indicate a widespread conviction among parents who prioritised examination success that television had a detrimental affect on academic achievement.

Of the students with unrestricted access to television, 36% viewed for one hour a day, 37% viewed for two hours and 26% viewed for more than two hours.

This is less than the viewing time indicated by the

Quinn survey and the Reynolds survey, and may imply that permitted viewing will be less if educational achievement has a high priority in the home.

The questionnaire listed seven programmes, **Tús Maith, An Baile Beag, Féach, Trom agus Eadtrom, PM, Súil Thart** and **SBB in Shui** from the current RTE schedules, and asked correspondents to list programmes which they had not seen.

60% had not seen **An Baile Beag**. 50% had not seen **Súil Thart**. 43% had not seen **SBB Ina Shui**. 32% had not seen **Tús Maith**. 23% had not seen **Féach** and 24% had not seen **PM**. 11% had not seen **Trom agus Eadtrom**.

An Baile Beag was a preschool puppet drama programme. **SBB Ina Shui** was a high profile pop music programme in Irish which occasionally reached the top TAM ratings.

89% were aware of the bi-lingual programme, **Trom Agus Eadtrom**. This programme projected itself forcefully and had a prime-time presentation slot. While the low awareness profile accorded to **SBB Ina Shui** in this survey is somewhat mystifying, the high consciousness-level of **Trom agus Eadtrom** indicates that promotion and pre-publicity is vital for Irish-language and bi-lingual programmes if switch-on probability is to be increased.

The other titles were information and news comment programmes

The respondents were asked to indicate their favourite programme from this list. **Trom agus Eadtrom** topped the preference ranking, securing more than three times the total votes of the second favourite, **Tús Maith**. The third favourite was **PM**, followed by **SBB Ina Shui**. **Féach, Súil Thart** and **An Baile Beag** had very low preference ratings.

Respondents were given a list of four programming areas, pop music, traditional music, current affairs and sport, and were asked to indicate the programme category in which they would like more Irish-language programming.

Three out of five wanted more pop music, two out of five wanted more traditional music, and sport. One in five wanted more current affairs programmes in Irish.

More information for our purposes might have been

gleaned from this survey if programme titles and programming categories had not been specified in the questions.

The interest in music programming, however, which the O Buachalla survey revealed, was borne out with greater emphasis in the Reynolds survey in 1985. The O Buachalla survey also indicated that musical interest is not necessarily confined to pop music. As Marion Reynolds recommended, the musical needs of Irish teenagers, and the degree to which these might be met by media provision, is an area which merits further study.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 9)

Schools broadcasting had been a regular feature of radio since 1937. It dropped off during the war years because teachers were unable to bring the heavy radio sets, and batteries, to school due to lack of petrol, but revived in the post-war years. One of the earliest objectives of the new Authority set up under the 1960 Act was the creation of a television service for schools.

Telefis Eireann, while prepared to make and transmit educational programmes directed at schools, was not prepared to fund such programming, and prevailed on the Goverment to authorise the Department of Education to pay the direct programming costs and to carry the additional cost of preparing the programme material. The Department of Education was also prevailed on to give grants to schools for the acquisition of television sets.

Telefis Eireann would be responsible for production and preparation and distribution of related literature to schools, and would also appoint schools broadcasts officers who would monitor the use of the programmes in schools.

Schools broadcasting was a relatively narrow specialisation within the children's programming spectrum, directed at a specific audience segment. Organisation of such ventures tends to be clumsy and diffused, involving at the curricular end a top-heavy amalgam of steering committees and

subject committees, ministerial and teacher interests, and on the other side the minuscule Children's Programme Department, which in practice meant Maeve Conway. Planning was inevitably divorced from the realities of production---production staff did not have the time to attend all these meetings.

Funding was always acrimonious and unpredictable. The eventual product was invariably well received and classroom television has become a feature of Irish educational practice, but its advent at this particular point in time put additional strain on a Children's Department which had not fully established itself. (c.f. Educational Broadcasting Committee Report, 1982)

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 10)

Colour television had interesting political implications. The Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in August, 1972, requested RTE not to increase the present quantity of colour film transmission because of the effects of possible growth in colour receivers on the balance of payments and on wage demands. In the Dáil on the 10th May, 1973, the Minister voiced the fear that the high cost of colour programme-making would have to be borne by viewers with black and white sets and repeated his worries that the upsurge in purchase of colour sets could jeopardise general economic policy by aggravating imports. These arguments faded out through the decade as it became obvious that viewers, deprived of colour programming on the home channel, would turn to BBC and ITV where available.

The colour set attracted a higher licence fee, and the higher licence fee met with strong consumer resistance, expressed by refusal to pay. In 1979 the Authority was of the opinion that 22% of set owners were evading payment of the licence fee. The campaign to recoup this revenue led to some highly questionable advertising where the epithet "sponger" was a key phrase.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 11)

RTE2 was inaugurated from a gala concert at the Cork Opera House on November 2nd, 1978, by An Taoiseach, Jack Lynch. The second channel had a political genesis, the contexts of which were irrelevant within a decade. Viewers in the single channel area, aware of the gratuitous programme options available where BBC and ITV transmissions could be received, began to complain to public representatives about the lack of viewing choice. These complaints had implications for licence fee collection. Programme choice became the media and political catchphrase of the 1970s.

The issue was addressed by the Dáil Broadcasting Review Committee, which reported in 1974. Four possibilities were considered : rebroadcasting on the existing service of selected BBC and ITV programmes, a second RTE channel, multi-channel cable provision, of which RTE would have a monopoly, general licensing of cable television operators.

Copyright complexities ruled out the various largescale rebroadcasting options, but the implications of viewer and advertising loss for RTE, and loss of station morale, were also taken into consideration. There were also strong submissions that the Irish viewing public should have some control over programming content. The Committee voiced the opinion that 'a broadcasting service is a vitally important medium for expression of a country's culture; the fostering of the culture of Ireland calls for the support of RTE and this has become more important with the country's membership of the European Economic Community.' The favoured option was a second channel administered by RTE.

The RTE Authority, in its 1979 Annual Report, was quite happy that Irish viewers were watching the programmes on the new Channel. Top TAM ratings for RTE2 programmes were around the 30 mark, as compared with top ratings in the upper 60s for RTE 1 output.

Conceived as a medium for controlled rebroadcasting of imported programming, the new service was permitted to import 80% of its output. The management took up this option with some energy. The import/export comparison for the first five months of

the new service's operation, reported in the RTE Authority's 1979 Annual Report, recorded a total of 1,796 hours of transmission, of which 1,547 hours was imported material, and 249 hours home produced. The ratio here was roughly 86% to 14%. Irish language programming for this period amounted to amounted to 20 hours.

Children's programming for the initial five months period amounted to 54 hours, or 3% of output, all of it imported. The children's inserts were random and consisted mainly of animation material. The service did not have a specific children's programme band.

The new service seriously aggravated the over-all adverse imbalance of imported versus home produced programming on RTE. The over-all imported quotient for RTE1 and RTE2 in the year ending March 31st, 1980 was 68%; and in the year ending March 31st 1981 62%. Stokes Kennedy Crowley, in their 1985 Report, estimated that the imported quotient of overall RTE output in the years 1982/1983, 1983/1984., and 1984/1985 averaged at 71%.

The steadily increasing volume of imported programming on RTE in the early 1970s had already alarmed some people. A group emerged in the mid-1970s calling themselves calling itself Citizens for Better Broadcasting. Their campaign, which had no effect whatsoever on programming policy, sought to secure a dominant share of the schedule for home-produced programming. [Sheehan : 1987 : 154]

The submissions by RTE to the Broadcasting Review Committee included arguments that a second channel run by RTE would foster the culture of Ireland, afford opportunities to increase the output of home produced programmes of high standard, and that it would allow the range of imported programming to be widened; the additional imported material would not have to be confined to that transmitted by British services.

The RTE2 schedule for Wednesday, November 22nd, 1978, gives us some idea of the extent to which the programmes were likely to foster the culture of Ireland, or draw on wider programme sources, or increase the output of home produced programmes of high standards.

Programmes began at 7.00 p.m. with **This Is Your Life**,

a Thames Television production. This was followed at 7.30 by the Granada Television soap opera, **Coronation Street**. There was a 25 minute home produced motoring magazine, **Motor Ways**, presented by Paddy McClintock, at 8.00 p.m. The next item was a BBC musical compilation, **One More Time**. This was followed by **Botanic Man**, a David Bellamy environmental programme, made by Thames Television. **World Week** was a home produced international current affairs programme presented by Brian Black and Emer O'Kelly. At 10.30 p.m. there was an hour-long episode of **Edward and Mrs. Simpson**, a dramatisation of the abdication saga of King Edward V111, also a Thames Television production. Transmission ended with **Newsnight**, a 15 minute news programme presented by Dermot Mullane.

The news programmes drew heavily on material broadcast on BBC and ITV, on international news agency material, and on material already transmitted on RTE1 bulletins. Of the 4 hours of transmission, Thames TV supplied 2 hours.

"Catering largely to minority tastes, RTE 2 was moderately successful, but it was always seen as 'the second channel' and never really attracted a substantial audience," comments Claire Duignan in The RTE Book [Tower House, 1989].

When the Minister for Communications announced in 1988 that he intended to allow the establishment of a new commercial channel, the Authority, to prepare for this local competition, decided to relaunch RTE 2 with a new range of programmes, a new image and a new name. The objective was to reach the 15 to 34 age-group, which was an audience that RTE programmes on both channels had failed substantially to attract, but which was a very important audience to advertisers, constituting as it did the major consumer category.

The revamped RTE 2 was launched on October 8, 1982 as Network 2, a name selected by random members of the public from a short-list of 18 titles. The RTE Design Department came up with an attractive new logo and identity package.

There were some fundamental changes in programming structures. All children's programmes were moved to Network 2, creating a wide children's programming band which ran from 2.3 0p.m. to 6.00 p.m. All sports coverage was moved to the new

channel, and virtually all Irish language programming.

The children's programmes for Monday, 9th October, 1988, the first week of the new format, give some idea of the new orientation. Children's programmes opened at 2.30 p.m. with **Bosco**. **Dempsey's Den**, presented by Ian Dempsey with the puppets **Zig and Zag** came on at 3.00 p.m. and presented the children's programme band up to 5.30 p.m. This schedule included **The Smurfs**, **Baile Beag**, **The Fabulous Fleischer Folio of Spring**, **Queintin's Magic Show**, **Heidi**, **Happy Birthday**, a presentation birthday greetings item, **Catweazle**, and **Wonderstruck**. At 5.30 p.m. the **Den** closed and **Jo-Maxi**, a new magazine programme for 10--14 year olds came on. **Jo-Maxi** had four presenters, two of which normally went on the road and presented material from outside the studio. The programme was music-driven, and included information items, fashion, animal care, environmental topics, book reviews, a swop spot, personality guests and profiles of interesting young people.

This, more or less, is the schedule structure of children's programming on RTE 2 at the timme of writing.

The Australian soap opera, **Home and Away**, came on at 6.30. This programme was designed to attract the elusive 15--34 age-band. The TAM ratings were usually in the mid-20s, as compared with mid-60s ratings for programmes like **Glenroe** and **The Late Late Show**.

The new image and schedule structure increased switch-on probability to some extent, but not significantly. The second channel now had clear functions, and shed the vague brief of 'alternative' programming. If the viewer wanted children's programmes or sport or Irish language programmes he or she had to tune in to Network 2. The extent to which the new service attracted additional viewers can be guaged from the following comparison of published TAM ratings. For the week ending on September 4, 1988, published TAM ratings ranged from 42 to 36 for RTE 1 programmes, and from 30 to 20 for RTE 2 programmes. For the week ending February 19th, 1989, the RTE 1 ratings ranged from 62 to 37 and the Network 2 ratings from 32 to 21. **Coronation Street** topped the RTE2 and Network 2 ratings, at 281,000 homes and 298,000 homes respectively, which suggested an increase of 17,000

homes for that particular programme.

Within the period under review, children's programming was insignificant on RTE 2. Where children's programmes of interest to us were transmitted on the new service we include them in the general RTE provision.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 12)

The Children's Film Foundation was an organisation set up and funded by the British film industry to produce films for child audiences. The Foundation has a deep appreciation of children's film needs and has produced many excellent films, some of which were transmitted by RTE in the period under review. The Foundation has an Australian counterpart which also does excellent work.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 13)

<u>THE ACCESS COMMUNITY PROJECT</u>

The over-all cost of each programme was £30,000. The programmes were recorded by the Outside Broadcasts Unit.

Three phases were planned, the first phase being 18 programmes in an experimental series, going out in the 1983/84 broadcasting year. The second phase was 16 programmes which went out in 1985. The third phase, Access Community Drama, was transmitted in 1986. Phases 1 and 2 were documentary features, local groups creating and presenting programmes on their activities and areas of interest.

The groups who presented programmes in the first phased were The Dealga Housing Co-operative, Dundalk; The Grapevine Arts Centre, Dublin; Derry Youthways; The Coolmine Drug

Therapeutic Centre; a Sligo group who presented a programme called **Men Talking**; a Dublin group working for handicapped people; Prisoners, who presented a 15-minute play; an University College, Cork group who recorded a review; seminarians from Carlow; gays; young farmers; itinerants; factory workers; young Gardai; musicians; an umemployed group.

The final programme in the first phase was an overview of the series.

Titles in the second phase were **The Newcomers**, a Clare programme; **Preparing for Marriage**, from Waterford; **Red Tape**, a programme by a Civil Service group; **Living for Laughs**, by the Killorglin Pantomime Group; **Class of '85**, another Waterford programme, and **Co-ops for a Change**, also from Waterford; **Cancer : Three Young Patients**; **Kerrymen Talking**; **Youth Talking**, from Tralee; **Living in Harmony**, based on work with the mentally handicapped by the Brothers of Charity in Galway; **A Model in the Making**, a programme about the world of fashion, from Limerick; **Move With Macra**, about young farmers; **A Young Church**; **Alcoholism, A Treatable Illness**.

We will deal with the **Access Drama Programme** later.

The scheme was a worthwhile undertaking; the topics, themes, locations and communities represented were wide-ranging. The people involved would not have got on television without some special provision such as the **Access Community Programme**. The programmes represented an overview of Irish life in the early '80s that would otherwise have been lost. In particular the series gave a platform to young people.

However, the station itself and the production team were a little bit too self-conscious about access programming. This type of programming, without specific categorisation, had being going on for two decades. A national television service is, by definition, accessible television.

A definite policy move to improve accessibility to the general range of home-produced programming, instead of channelling it into a specific series, might have been a better move.

The TAM ratings for the series were not too impressive; no programme achieved a Top Ten rating; ratings ranged

from 19 at worst to 40 at best.

The source for the data is the ISSUES IN BROADCASTING pamphlet, Number 6, ACCESS COMMUNITY TELEVISION, by Michael Murphy.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 14)

THE QUINN SURVEY

The study investigated the leisure activities of a nationwide sample of children in the 5th standard in primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. The mean age of the sample was 11 years 7 months. There were 720 children in the sample, 352 boys and 362 girls; 309 came from the single-channel area and 411 from the multi-channel area; 367 of the children came from city schools, 261 from urban schools and 92 from rural schools.

On the mornings of the 9th, 11th and 14th of June, 1976, each child was asked to complete a diary of how he or she had spent the leisure time of the previous day, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. The data collected was computerised and a table of leisure activities in terms of mean time extracted.

Television viewing, with a total mean time of 267 minutes for the three days in the survey, emerged as the most popular leisure time activity, but it by no means dominated the children's lives. Outings, lying about, organised and unorganised play and hobbies aggregated to 790 minutes. Home-related activities such as meals and housework, visiting and religious services accounted for 331 minutes. Less than an hour on average was spent on school homework. Leisure reading accounted for 79 minutes of total mean time.

The 267 minutes mean time quotient for television viewing broke down to 72 minutes for Tuesday, 83 minutes for Thursday and 112 minutes for Sunday.

However, heavy patterns of viewing for many children in the sample were indicated by the distribution of total viewing time.

Half the sample watched at least four hours television

over the three days. A quarter watched more than six hours and one tenth watched for more than eight hours. 8% watched for between eight and ten hours and 2 % viewed for between ten and sixteen hours.

On average boys spent thirtyfive minutes more than girls watching television over the three days, and children in single channel areas watched for 286 minutes, while children from multi-channel areas watched for 257 minutes. There were some instances of very heavy viewing from single-channel areas. This conforms to the pattern which emerged in the Himmellweit Report---there was a suggestion of indiscriminate viewing in single-channel area, perhaps because of family viewing patterns, but children with access to a second channel tended to narrow their interest in programmes, becoming more selective and opting for programming with a higher level of entertainment gratification when a choice was presented.

Three potential trends were indicated here; Irish children in 1976 were not necessarily indiscriminate viewers, but exercised choice a) in the way they used their leisure time and b) in the way they used television; discrimination intensified as more viewing options became available; in a multi-choice situation children were likely to opt for programmes which offered a higher level of entertainment.

Mean total viewing time for city children was 287 minutes; for urban children 261 minutes; for rural children 237 minutes.

No significant differences in viewing patterns or preferences were indicated by school location or socio-economic status.

The data also yielded information about the categories of television programming the children watched. The mean total viewing time broke down into the following distribution:

Category	Mean Time in Minutes
Films	64.5
Serial Drama	45.7
News/Information/Documentary	32.4
Crime/Detective	25.4
Adult/Family Comedy	17.9

Children's serial	17.3
Adventure/Western/ Science Fiction	15.9
Sport	12.3
Cartoons	8.4
Music/Variety	6.9
Children's Information	4.6
Panel/Quiz/Give-away	2.2
Children's comedy/entertainment	1.9

Single-channel children viewed most heavily in the majority of these categories.

There were wide swings within the above distribution. 60% of the sample viewed no children's serial over the three days. 71% viewed no adventure programmes. 60% viewed no crime/detective programmes.

The conventional viewing patterns indicated by Cullingford and others are contradicted to some extent in this ranking. The news and information category has a surprisingly high placement. The children's serial category is also high on the list, contradicting the perception that children will not view children's programmes to any significant extent.

The preference priority given to films, which is also supported by the Marion H. Reynolds research on video use, may indicate that Irish children prefer a substantial closed narrative, if available, to serial material.

The action drama rating for crime/detection, adventure/western/science fiction, at 25.4 minutes and 15.9 minutes respectively, compared with 64.5 minutes for films, would probably surprise Cullingford, who would expect a top rating for the action drama category.

Each child was asked to name his or her three favourite television programmes. Their choices were coded according to the categorisation of programme types. The following pattern of programme preferences emerged :

Category	No. of Votes	% of total vote
Crime/Detective	470	21.7
Children's serial	334	15.6
Serial Drama	250	11.5
Adult/Family Comedy	231	10.7
Children's comedy/entertainment	226	10.5
Adventure/Western/ Science Fiction	156	7.2
Cartoons	141	6.5
Music/Variety	86	4.0
Sport	74	3.4
Children's Information	67	3.1
Films	48	2.2
Panel/Quiz/Give-away	27	1.6
News/Information/Documentary	24	1.1
Not specified	18	0.8
Miscellaneous	4	0.2

The responses indicated that the children viewed a surprisingly wide range of programme types. In all 205 programme titles or types were mentioned.

The overall top twenty programmes for the children in the sample comprised seven children's programmes, six crime/detective series, two serial dramas, two adult/family comedies, one western series, one sports programme, and the film category, comprised of assorted choices. Crime/detective series were clear favourites with the boys, seven such series appearing in their top twenty programmes, and **Starsky and Hutch** and **Hawaii Five-O** heading their list. Girls favoured situation comedies and family and medical drama series, but three crime/detective series featured strongly in their top twenty list. **The Brady Bunch** was a clear favourite with the girls. There was only one home-produced programme in the overall top twenty selection, **The Riordans**.

The surprising element here is that children's serial drama achieved second place in the list of preferences, and first place in the top twenty breakdown. These were all foreign programmes, either in the RTE schedules or available on other channels. This indication contravenes Cullingford's conclusions that children are not disposed to watch programmes made specifically for them, but it corresponds to the general

conclusion of Hodge and Tripp that children will watch material which corresponds to their developmental stage.

The first choice category, crime/detection series, confirms the heavy preference for action drama noted by Cullingford.

The first seven programme types in the above ranking were drama or drama variants.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 15)

THE INTO REPORT

The CEC working group that undertook to prepare the report were astounded at the volume of and diversity of the existing research into the relationship of children with television. Over five thousand accounts of research had been published since the early 1950s, and more than six hundred books and articles had been published on the topic of television and aggression alone.

The Committee immediately set out to correct the general impression of adults, and presumably of their teacher members, that television was fundamentally and essentially a negative and damaging element in children's lives. The report devoted considerable space to summarising conventional effects perceptions.

They took the point made by Anne Phoenix that much of the research by media experts and developmental psychologists was based on boys, but that conclusions from the research are applied indiscriminately to boys and girls.

There were very few references in the report to Irish children. One reference, which probably expressed the views of working teachers, was that

> "....the plethora of children's television and wealth of choice is making television more and more indispensable in children's lives."

The report also made the point that the growing video industry, particularly in disadvantaged areas, might be explained in terms of escapist and surrogate power fantasy and that the

video might also be a pragmatic response to the devastating boredom of long-term unemployment.

There was a detailed discussion of the violence debate which concluded that television violence may not be as significant a factor in aggression as more tangible family contexts such as parental conflict, 'inappropriate discipline' and family neglect. No specifically Irish context was supplied for the violence discussion but the working party believed that the wishes of parents in this area should be taken seriously, and that the INTO should request the Broadcasting Commission to take steps to monitor and control the level of violence shown on our screens.

In a section on Television Images and the Cultivation of Social Attitudes, the report quoted a commentator, Ferguson, who in 1985 claimed that children's programmes such as the BBC's Blue Peter, which has a substantial audience in Ireland,

> "inhabit an 'established universe of discourse' which is predominantly Anglo-centric, often racist, sexist, royalist, pro-capitalist, ostensibly christian, and generally arguing that the best way to deal with social problems is through benevolence."

The report might have drawn a parallel between Blue Peter and the RTE programme Youngline, which also engaged in fundraising with a 'benevolence' perspective, on the lines of the Blue Peter model.

The continuity and presentation programme, Dempsey's Den, the report alleged, revealed some of the characteristics listed by Ferguson. The Den, although immensely popular with children, was typically male-oriented.

> "Zig and Zag are male and have acquired male voices. The presenter is also male. Perhaps it is not too late to consider rectifying the male/female imbalance during the scripting stages. Attempts should also be made to reduce the many stereotypical comments which regularly occur during the programme."

There may be some substance in the accusations of male-orientation. Other home-produced programming, from Daithi Lacha to Fortycoats, and including Bosco, could be accused of the same bias with considerable justification.

In a comment on the total spectrum of RTE programming,

the report comments that :

> "...RTE's programme output in general did not adequately reflect women's changing roles in Irish life."

The sex role debate has a much wider context than television programme and presentation content for Irish teachers. Sex role stereotyping and sexist expression in general reading material and in textbooks is a matter of intense current preoccupation in the profession.

As with violence, the report saw the Broadcasting Commission as the source of redress for viewers who felt offended or aggrieved by television representations of gender, class or nationality.

The report revealed serious concern about the effects of television viewing in the learning situation. Feedback from teachers suggested that children from disadvantaged areas had an intense addiction to television and video viewing arising from multi-channel programme availability, the proliferation of video outlets, and early morning and lunchtime viewing. Many homes had second television sets and viewing in children's bedrooms had become more common.

> "Teachers find it difficult to compete for attention against a background of thrilling and exhilarating imagery provided by fast-moving programmes, especially when children have been viewing television from early morning before coming to school."

In the classroom, the report stated, children were "switching off" in the absence of rapid movement and loud sound effects in the lesson content.

Some children ignored human speech to such an extent that

> ".....listening skills have to be taught to younger children as never before."

Teachers were also reporting that

> "....many children learn to be passive and to expect to get entertainment without any effort."

The report stated that many teachers believed that there was a marked deterioration in the quality of speech and the

level of language development among children; teachers were now spending much more time on speech training and teachers believed that speech therapists would have to be employed in the primary school system if the present trend were not reversed. The report conceded that it was not possible to attribute this trend to any single factor in the children's environment, but many teachers believed that television viewing, because it had replaced children's play and because it did not demand a response from the child, was a very significant factor in that it reduced the child's experience of using language.

Even if television is not the cause of the deterioration in language development, it could go some way towards providing the remedy. As we pointed out in other contexts, the absence of real life drama for children from the RTE schedules deprives Irish children of a rich potential source of language modelling.

The report suggested that television programme provision, particularly in the area of dramatised literature, can encourage children to read fiction by recreating the original environment of the characters. Oddly enough, considering the wealth of television adaptations of contemporary children's literature available, the report quoted the works of Charles Dickens as an example, mentioning **A Christmas Carol**, **Hard Times** and **Oliver Twist**. Children also enjoyed reading spin-off publications of programmes like **Bosco** and **Zig and Zag**.

The report also took account of the impressive volume of research which saw children as actively interpreting, selecting, processing and evaluating television material according to their stage of development and accepted the need for media education and for classroom work which would develop media literacy. Hodge and Tripp, we remember, regarded media literacy as extremely important in developing reliable modality judgements.

The report accepted that educational television had in-built difficulties such as the problem of lesson reinforcement. The report also recognised that the effective use of television in the classroom was difficult even for the most organised and resourceful teacher. Despite these difficulties there were few

areas in the educational spectrum where television could not make a valuable contribution. Educational broadcasting directed at primary students could be particularly useful in the area of Irish language and culture. There was general consensus, the report stated, that the establishment of an Irish language channel was essential for the future development of the Irish language.

The report concluded with a plea for a national debate on the relationship between children and television, for a major research project in this area, and for a vigorous campaign to establish a comprehensive Schools Broadcasting Service for Irish children.

(Footnotes to Chapter 2 : 16)

THE REYNOLDS SURVEY

Media usage by Irish teenagers was analysed in a Dublin City University M.A. thesis, presented in 1990, entitled **Patterns of Exposure to the Media of 12-17 year olds in Second-Level Schools in Ireland.**

The survey, carried out in 1985, elicited responses to a very comprehensive questionnaire. The sample consisted of 991 students, 508 girls and 483 boys in twenty schools selected on a country-wide basis. Twelve were secondary schools, six were VEC schools and two were community/comprehensive schools. The survey related to a number of areas of leisure use, which included television and video viewing. By 1985 multi-channel provision had extended to the whole country; the single-channel dimension was not significant.

Again, television emerged as the most-used medium in a wide range of media-related leisure options.

RTE 1 led in over-all station preference, with the ITV channel next and BBC 1 third. Working class respondents however, placed the ITV channel first, BBC 1 second and RTE 1 third. This viewing pattern conformed to British perceptions of television use.

Of the sample, 44% spent more than three hours daily

watching television during the week, but tended to spend more than four hours viewing on Saturday and Sunday.

50% of the sample spent more than 23 hours per week watching television, working class males being the heaviest viewers.

77% of the sample gave 'entertainment' as the reason for watching television. 13% said that they watched television 'to pass the time'.

The questionnaire asked respondents to name their two favourite programmes. From the data collected a list of the top ten favourite programmes was compiled. This was the ranking of choices:

1. Miami Vice
2. Top of the Pops
3. Dallas
4. Hill Street Blues
5. Sports Programmes
6. Grange Hill
7. Dynasty
8. The Young Ones
9. MT. USA
10. Coronation Street.

The preference mix breaks down into three adult soap operas, two crime/detective series, two popular music programmes, one black comedy series, **The Young Ones**, a children's serial and the sport programmes category, which invariably was represented by Match of the Day.

Miami Vice headed the selection because it was an established favourite with both boys and girls. Older girls liked **Top of the Pops**, **Dynasty** and **Coronation Street**. Boys preferred **Hill Street Blues** and the sports programmes.

Crime/detection drama in the action paradigm had a high preference rating, favourite programmes apart from **Miami Vice** being **Remington Steele**, **Hill Street Blues** and **The A Team**. The predominant response to violence in programming was 'I don't mind it.' 18% said 'it's not real'. 26 % said 'I like it." Quite a number of girls, however, indicated that they found violent programme content disturbing.

Music programmes had a significant presence in this selection, coinciding with the development of the musical video

presentation format. MT USA was an RTE programme presented by Vincent Hanley, which relayed American musical videos.

The preference for **Grange Hill**, a British school-based serial, suggested that Irish children would watch children's programmes if they felt that they were relevant to their lives; the sample was exclusively chosen from postprimary schools and the **Grange Hill** milieu was not significantly different in core situations and core environments to the typical Irish postprimary school.

Apart from **MT USA** the only other home produced programme which the children said they liked was **Glenroe**. **Glenroe** featured in the extraction of soap operas from the collected data. In the Quinn survey children in the sample gave a high preference rating to **The Riordans**.

Favourite soap operas according to the sample were **Glenroe**, **Coronation Street**, **Dallas**, **Dynasty**, **Falcon Crest**, **Emmerdale Farm**, which was set in Yorkshire and consciously modelled on **The Riordans**, and **Brookside**.

The reasons the children gave for liking soap operas were that they were 'realistic' (19%), 'interesting' (13%) 'exciting' (11%), and 'funny' (9%)

79% thought Glenroe 'realistic'; 24% thought **Dallas** 'realistic'. Miley in **Glenroe** had a high preference rating among favourite characters from soap operas, scoring 22%, while Dinny from the same programme scored 10%.

An opinion section in the questionnaire revealed that 82% of respondents thought that children should have their own programmes; yet there is only one children's programme in the top ten listing---**Grange Hill**.

Another surprising response, which contravened British and American research, was the high interest indicated in news and news comment programmes. 83% of respondents indicated that they watched the **News**, and 49% indicated that they watched **Today Tonight**. British and American research suggested a very low priority for news programmes in children's viewing preferences. The Quinn survey also indicated a high preference rating for news and information programmes among primary school children in 1976.

VIDEO PREFERENCES

The Reynolds survey included a section on video use. 24% of the respondents had videos in the home. 56% watched videos in houses other than their own. If these two per centages are combined the indications are that 80% of the sample watched videos. Heavy video usage was also suggested in the INTO report summarised above.

The named video preferences were grouped into content categories. The following preference rankings emerged :

1. Children's films 'such as Annie'.
2. Adult comedy (With an Over 15 or Over 18 rating).
3. Comedy
4. Westerns
5. Horror
6. Music, including pop videos.
7. Adult sex 'such as Emanuelle'
8. General--which usually featured current and recent cinema film releases.
9. War.
10. Adult general (with an Over 18 rating)

The high rate of viewing in houses other than the home suggested that video-watching was a peer-group activity. The content of the preference ranking indicated considerable precocity in viewing and suggested that parental or home control was less effective in the area of video watching than in the television viewing situation. Video viewing may be unsupervised; it may coincide with baby-sitting or the parents may be absent for the evening; in any event parents seemed to exert little authority in the area of video use. As the INTO report suggested there may be a second television set in the house, away from parental supervision; children may also view videos in their bedrooms.

Video use features a high degree of selection, as compared with the random provision of television.

The highest preference category, children's films, reflecting as it does this high degree of selectivity and personal discretion, contravenes the accepted conclusions of television research, in particular those of Cullingford, which suggested that children rarely watch material specifically created for them.

It did, however, support the general conclusion of Hodge and Tripp that children gravitate towards material which

corresponds to their developmental needs.

It also suggested, as did the high preference rating for **Grange Hill** in the television sector, that children will watch material appropriate to their stage of development if this material is well-resourced and of high quality as screen drama, as the children's films available on video invariably are.

The preference for children's films in video format suggests, as did the high viewing priority given to films in the Quinn survey, that Irish children like, and many children prefer, a closed narrative.

Rural boys, the survey suggests, were preoccupied with explicit adult sexual activity as presented in video drama. Girls also showed significant interest in the Adult Sex category, and girl viewers were the predominant grouping in the second category, Adult Comedy, which had a high level of sexually-orientated content, explicit and implicit.

The implied trend here could be described as depraved, prurient, voyeuristic or anarchic; the truth may have been, however, that teenagers were using videos to acquire vital life information denied to them by design and by default in the home and school environments. Rural Ireland has, traditionally, been notoriously sparse with this category of information. Girls who would have reservations about the content of the Adult Sex category would find the same content palatable if delivered in comedy format.

The presence of comedy in the list conformed to the general pattern of television programme preferences identified by Cullingford. The preference for Westerns is surprising as a teenager choice--one would have thought that this genre would have lost some of its appeal by 1985.

The preference for violence, as exemplified by the ratings of the Horror and War categories is undeniable; violent content would also feature the general and adult categories. The survey suggests that Horror video viewing incorporated associations of male machismo, but girls also transpired to be significant viewers of horror films.

The importance of popular music to this particular

generation of Irish teenagers was underlined by the responses to the television viewing segment and the video viewing segment.

APPENDICES

PREFACE

Appendices A, B, C and D summarise the drama provision, home originated and imported, home originated programming and the adult drama production output and culture in Telefis Eireann/RTE from 1962 to 1987. Programme details come mainly from the schedules, and supporting information and comment, as published in the RTV Guide and the RTE Guide.

Appendix A summarises home produced television drama production for children; Appendix B provides a history of home produced children's programming, Appendix C gives a detailed overview of imported children's drama, and Appendix D charts the evolution of the adult drama production culture in the station, giving particular attention to drama in which children had leading roles. Each appendix is organised on a year by year basis.

The four appendices combine to provide a comprehensive synthesis of children's programming and of programming which targeted children as part of the general audience over the period under review. The missing categories are imported informational programming and imported musical and variety programming, regarded as outside the scope of this thesis.

APPENDIX A

CHILDREN'S TV DRAMA. HOME PRODUCED. 1962--1987

Introduction

Appendix A summarises home produced television drama production for children from 1962 to 1967 on a year by year basis. The corporate and production environments which determined the characteristics of this provision are described and discussed in Chapter Two, and the provision is analysed to dramatic and developmental criteria in generic and thematic categories in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

The material in this appendix, together with the summary of home originated television drama for children from 1987 to date (1992) included in Chapter Five, constitutes the basis for a detailed history of Irish television drama for children. As we pointed out in our concluding chapter, this genre is substantially unrepresented in the only authoritative record we have of Irish television drama, Irish Television Drama. (Sheehan : 1987)

The provision outlined in this appendix will rarely be impressive in competitive or mass audience terms. Such as it was, however, it had an important role to fill---that of cultural corrective or oppositional source to the vast compendium of imported drama in the schedules, catalogued in Appendix C, and, outside the domestic schedules, to the more substantial and better resourced provision on BBC, on ITV, on Channel Four and on the satellite channels.

From our study of children's viewing preferences in Chapters One and Two it is obvious that there were two further categories of programming with which this poorly-resourced and fragile provision had to compete : adult programming on all available channels, and, over most of the past decade, screen drama available in video cassette format.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1962

Home-produced children's drama made an ambitious debut in the form of a weekly serial---Siopa an Bhreathnaigh. Episodes were twenty minutes in length. The first episode was transmitted on Monday, 2nd January, 1962, at 5.40 p.m.

The serial was unique in many respects. It was the first home-produced television drama. It was the first effort at home-produced serial drama, and the first venture by the station in the 'soap' genre. Although bi-lingual, it was primarily an Irish language serial, and, as such, was the first television drama material produced in the Irish language. It was the first effort at home-produced children's drama. It was the first effort at home-produced children's drama in the Irish language. On a wider spectrum, it must have been one of the few attempts up to 1962 to create bi-lingual drama. It was the first Irish attempt at urban television drama.

Edith Cusack explained how the serial originated in the Focus feature of the RTV Guide, October, 1962.

> "Last October, (October, 1961---planning stage) during the first drive to launch programmes for children, we decided that dramatic material for children should be attempted, despite the difficulties which a serial involves, especially for an infant station.
> Mr. Michael Barry, Controller of Programmes, thought it would be appropriate to introduce a language situation---and so Siopa an Bhreathnaigh was developed.
> We decided on a shop---the general grocer who is now fast disappearing---in a Dublin suburb .
> The shopkeeper and his wife were Irish speaking, but naturally spoke English to their customers.
> The situation is, despite what the cynics may say, a realistic one. I know of at least three shops owned and run by emigrés from Kerry....."

Niall Tóibin wrote all the scripts.

> "We were fortunate that Niall Tóibin agreed to write the script for us. Within days of the project being discussed, Niall, writing for the first time for television, had produced a script which was virtually ready for production..."(Cusack : 1962)

The producers for the series were Gerald Victory, Chloe Gibson, Michael Hayes, Peter Collinson and Louis Lentin. Of these producers Michael Hayes and Peter Collinson were Englishmen, unlikely to be familiar with Irish. Gerald Victory is a competent Irish speaker.

SOME THEMES

The programme note usually gave some indications of episode content: 'What happens when Father lends a hand with the housework?' 'Birthday Missiles', 'Anois Teacht an Earraigh', 'Top Twenty', 'Saoire Gan Stró', 'The New Cook General', 'All's Well That Ends Well'.

Siopa an Bhreathnaigh was a fictional shop in Dublin run by an Irish-speaking family, Na Breathnaigh. The shopkeeper was Brian Breathnach. His wife was Úna Bhreathnach. They spoke Irish to each other. Stan, played by indigenous Dubliner Brendan Cauldwell, was Brian's English partner. Muiris was the young son of the family. Norman was also a child character. Monique was a French-speaking customer. In a comment on the programme on its return in the Autumn, Leathshúil, who wrote the Gaelic column, Aeríocht, in the RTV Guide, said that there were frequently three languages in use in the programme.

Overall the approach would seem to have been light comedy. Gabriel Fallon, commenting on Siopa an Bhreathnaigh on 2nd February, 1962, in his review column in the RTV Guide, remarked that '**Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**'

> "...continues to provide lingual enlightenment with entertainment. Kevin Flood and Ronnie Masterton shine in their parts as Brian and Úna, but Brendan Cauldwell (Stan), in script and performance, bids fair to be the star of this particular programme."

This comment confirmed the comedy approach of the series, and underlined its pedagogic and linguistic objectives. It also indicated another feature of the programme---the main characters were adult. The predominance of adult actors and characters in home-produced children's drama is a continuing negative feature of Irish children's drama, revealed in current series such as **Deco** and the **Failte Road Cafe**. Adult overloading of

the cast was also a feature of Wanderly Wagon.

In the RTV Guide, March 30th, 1962, Elizabeth Leslie pleaded for programmes in one language or the other---she was confused by the bi-lingual approach and also thought it confusing for children.

Siopa an Bhreathnaigh returned for its second season in the new Autumn schedules on October 31st, 1962, with an abbreviated title---**Siopa**, and a new location for the serial, the Connemara Gaeltacht. Flann Ó Riain's cartoon character **Daithi Lacha** introduced each episode.

> **"Business wasn't good---customers migrated from the Liberties to the outer suburbs---the wilderness---and na Breathnaigh close down the shop.**
> **The Klondyke idea is a pipe-dream of Brian's. Adams is also enthusiastic. He thinks Cóilin Bhairbre's surname is Warbury...."** (Cusack : 1962)

The phonetic joke mentioned here is an adult joke, the subtlety of which would escape most children, even in the Gaeltacht.

The storyline reason for the change of location was convincing; it confirmed contemporary population shifts in Dublin.

The real reason for the migration to the West may have been pressure from language purists who wanted the Gaeltacht idiom represented. The new season featured Eoin Ó Súilleabháin as Cóilin Bhairbre, and had an over-all Klondyke theme; gold in the locality, which has turned out to be prophetic, as the recent controversy of gold-mining on the slopes of Croagh Patrick confirms.

The first episode was entitled An Signwriter. The main character, Brian Breathnach, the shopkeeper, had been retained, but the part was now played by Con Lehane. Cóilin Bhairbre, played by Eoin Ó Súilleabháin, seems to have been a local, and was probably the eponymous signwriter.

The content indicators in the programme notes for the the thirteen episodes that comprised the second season were as follows :" An Signwriter ", "Gold in Them Thar Hills" " Auntie Kit makes a clean sweep", " Schultz comes a cropper", " Flora and Fauna", "Cóilin On The Trail", "Exit Dr. Not-So-Greenhall", " On the Scent", " We're in Business", " Les Parfumiers", "Doctor's

Orders".

Episode 13 of **Siopa**, transmitted on January 23rd, 1962, was subtitled " Slán leis an Siopa". This was the last episode in the serial, which was replaced the following week by **Tír na nÓg**, a magazine and junior talent programme.

> A comment from critic Gabriel Fallon in the RTV Guide: "Siopa" I find---for the moment---less appealing than its predecessor.

OTHER HOME-PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1962

As well as **Siopa** and **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, two other home-produced ventures in children's drama had been transmitted during the year.

On Sunday, July 8th, the magazine programme, **Tír na nÓg**, included an abridged version of the operetta, **Peach Blossom**, set in Japan and presented by the pupils of the Presentation Convent of the Sacred Heart, Wexford. This was an early example of television making itself accessible to children throughout the country.

On Wednesday, October 3rd, 1962, we had what may well be the first home-produced children's play on Irish television. An operetta entitled **Amhrán na mBeach Fiáin**, performed by 9 and 10 year old students from St. Patrick's Primary School, Drumcondra, was presented as an item in a new magazine programme for young people, **Don Aos Óg**.

Amhrán na mBeach Fiáin---The Song of the Wild Bees---- was an original operetta in Irish composed by Dr. Stan O'Brien, who is quoted as teaching in St. Patrick's School.

The RTV Guide for the week beginning September 28th, 1962, has a display article on this production. The programme note announced :

> "The children will act out a drama concerning bees, wasps and flowers, the central plot of which is an attack on the Queen Bee and her subsequent rescue. Those playing villains in the piece will be readily identifiable by sinister black masks. Production is by Jim Fitzgerald, his first involving an all-children cast."

In the issue of the RTV Guide for the week beginning the 12th October, 1962, Gabriel Fallon in his weekly review column

remarked:

> **"This was one of the most delightful presentations I have seen from Telefis Eireann, simply yet artistically costumed, excellently lighted and set, and projected by its young artists with the unaffected artistry of childhood."**

DAITHI LACHA

Daithi Lacha had already made his appearance in the one-minute vocabulary programme, **Focal ar Fhocal**, and he had introduced each episode of **Siopa**. In the Autumn of 1962 the feature matured to a five-minute voice-over and graphics narrative which could be described as a crude cartoon.

The feature had some characteristics of drama; there was a minimal visual enaction of the storyline, and some characterisation through voice variation in the presentation of the dialogue, but the five-minute story was usually presented in strict third-person narrative form. Those who remember **Daithi Lacha** will invariably recall reader Pádhraig Ó Gaora's staccato "**arsa Daithi**" at the end of a piece of dialogue.

Drama, however, is enacted narrative, and we have obvious classification difficulties with the **Daithi Lacha** programme.

Daithi was a suburban, middle-class duckling who extended the functional and situational range of the Irish language. The basic production formula was flashcards and voice-over. Animation was minimal and mostly achieved by moving the camera. The programme idiom was simple and uncomplicated, and took account of the assimilation difficulties of children.

Daithi Lacha marked an important new development in communication in the Irish language---a conscious application of new audio-visual technology to this medium.

Daithi Lacha could be considered as a primitive form of animation drama, which might have evolved in a constructive production environment to a more viable product. As illustrated narrative **Daithi Lacha** was quite successful, and the programme became the first on RTE to produce a spin-off commodity---a print version of the programme content, published by An Gúm.

The importance of **Daithi Lacha** in the general context of children's programming was that the programme initiated, however primitively, the craft of screen animation in Ireland.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1963

There was no new venture in home-produced television drama for children in the course of the year. However, in **Céapars**, a crafts programme presented by Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin, and in **Daithi Lacha**, important skills in the area of animation and puppetry were emerging. This indicated an awareness at least of development potential in the animation area.

Awareness of drama as programming material was also implied by the transmission in the variety programmes of school plays. These were further evidence of an attitude that children's television should be accessible to Irish children in general, and that children, parents and teachers throughout the country were aware that they could get into the studio and use television as a showcase for talent.

Oisin i dTir na nOg was presented as a feature for St. Patrick's Week, 1963, in the **Tir na nOg** series, by the children of the Presentation Convent, George's Hill, Dublin. The producer of the programme was Don Bennets, an Australian producer who knew no Irish.

A.A. Milne's play, **The King's Breakfast**, also produced by Don Bennets, and introduced by Seoirse agus Beairtle, was performed by the children of the Royal Academy of Music and Drama on **Tir na nOg** on Wednesday, March 27th, 1963, at 5.30.p.m.

Doctor in Fairyland was performed by the children of the Holy Faith Convent, Killester on the same show on April 17th, 1963.

Eitne, a musical play, was presented on **Tir na nOg** in April, 1963, by the children of the Presentation Convent, George's Hill, Dublin.

The selection of schools in the Dublin area

demonstrated a limitation on access, and was an early indication that the metropolitan area would be proportionately over-represented in home-produced programming. Country children had to be accommodated, provided for and supervised during their stay in Dublin.

Scoláiri Scoil Gramadaí na mBráthar, Ard Mhacha, however, did get to the studio. They had a talented and enthusiastic teacher, Lorcán O Riain, still very active in Irish language drama. Their play, **An Coileach Orga**, was transmitted at 5.15 p.m, on Friday, October 18th, 1963. Studio production was by Chritopher Fitzsimon. An advance publicity note in the Seen and Heard Column in the April 26th, 1963 issue of the RTV Guide, tells us :

> **An Coileach Orga---The Golden Cockerel---is an adaptation of a Russian folktale. The play was written and produced by Larry Ryan, a Cashel-born teacher at the school. His Japanese-style presentation won the award for the best production of a new play at the recent Féile Drámaiochta na Scoileanna in Dublin.**

The programme, however, was not transmitted until October.

An Dreoilín, presented by Seoirse and Beairtle, was a folk play in the Mummer format on the wren theme for St. Stephen's Day, 1963.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1964.

There was an important new experiment in home-produced children's drama in 1964---- **Cearta Húdai** or Húdaí's Forge, a ten-part puppet drama series. The scriptwriter was Pádhraig O Néill, who had been a producer with Séamas Kavanagh in the Children's Radio Programmes Department.

The puppet-master and creator was Eugene Lambert, and the manipulators were Eugene's wife and children. The Lambert family and their puppets were destined to dominate the home-produced children's drama provision on Irish television for twenty years.

The voices for the characters, and incidental music, were provided by Cork-born actor Chris Curran.

The series was bilingual, the Irish content more substantial than the English. The following is the programme note that announced the 10-Part puppet series in 10 minute episodes, which would begin at 5.30 p.m., on Saturday, July 18th, 1964.

> **The first of a new puppet series set in the forge of Húdai, the blacksmith, who has a hard time coping with the antics of Micilin, the farrier, and Charlie, a friendly visiting horse.**

Cearta Húdai conformed to the requirements of drama as enacted narrative, in that it had a story, characterisation, dialogue, and enaction.

Eugene Lambert was already popular on stage and radio with his ventriloquist act, Finnegan. In the programme note Eugene mentioned that the 18" puppets used take 50 hours each to make.

Cearta Húdai concluded on Saturday, September 12th, 1964. The team were already working on an ambitious follow-up programme of the same genre, **Murphy agus a Chairde.**

Cearta Húdai proved that dramatic material for children could be provided cheaply. A dozen puppets could generate unlimited programme segments. Planners prefer material that can generate a serial or series. The programme format was a vehicle for bi-lingual or Irish material and thus could help meet the statutory language requirement. Puppets do not get better offers, or have demarcation problems.

OTHER HOME-PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1964

One school play, **Stailc sa Chistin**, was presented by a Co. Kilkenny school, Scoil Dhún Gharbháin, in the course of the year. The programme note describes the play as a "dráma grinn" and summarises it as follows : "Tá bean an tí amuigh, agus téann troscán agus uirlisí na cistineach ar stailc óna ngnáth-dhualgaisí."

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1965

MURPHY AGUS A CHAIRDE

Murphy Agus A Chairde was transmitted in 1965. The original idea, scriptwriter Pádhraig Ó Néill tells us, was approved by Maebh Ní Choinmhidhe and Aindrias ó Gallchóir.

The designers were Lona Moran, Jim O'Hare and Fidelma de Paor. Pádraic Ó Néill made the point that design is vital to puppet theatre, and he gave the designers credit for creating and maintaining the fairytale atmosphere and setting of the serial.

There were often ten puppets in an episode. When there were extra puppets to be manipulated, Eugene Lambert called on the help of his family. Sometimes all the Lambert children were involved in puppet manipulation.

Chris Curran, in addition to doing all the voices, also played the piano and, on occasion, the tin whistle. On one occasion, when Chris Curran fell ill, the show had to be recorded in the hospital where he was receiving treatment. Chris Curran was an excellent mimic of well-known personalities, and John Condon recalls that the production team were not averse to introducing political satire into the programme.

Page 12 of the RTV Guide, January 1st, 1965, contained the following note :

> Murphy Agus A Chairde, a fairytale series. A new fairytale series for children begins on Thursday with the debut on Telefis Eireann of Murphy, the Giant, and many new puppets, in Eugene Lambert's show, Murphy Agus A Chairde.
>
> Characters featured in the initial programme included:
>
> An Rí, máistir an tí.
> Mortimer, an crann feasa.
> Babe, an Chailleach.
> Séamas, garsún deamhúinte.

The first series was produced by Dónall Farmer. Later

producers would be Deirdre Friel, Pat Baker, and the current Head of Young People's Programmes (1991), John Condon.

The note mentioned that it took 50 hours to make a puppet and that there were seven or eight puppets in the show, with possibilities of additions later. Mai Lambert did the costumes, and three of the Lambert children---Judy, Eugene Junior, and Stephen---helped to manipulate the puppets. A major problem for the puppet-maker was the acquisition of the correct woods (lime, birch, obeice). Sometimes a wait of weeks was involved for the correct wood.

A note by Donall Farmer in the RTV Guide in March, 1965, gave the producer's impression of the show.

> By now most people are acquainted with Murphy and his friends. There is Murphy himself, goodnatured, but slow-moving and somewhat dimwitted. There is Seamus, the mischievous prince, Freddie, the third-class magician [whose magic rarely works] and George, the tempermental horse. And of course, there is Mortimer, the Tree of Knowledge, who relies for his knowledge on overhearing other people. He usually gets his information wrong in the retelling, anyway.
> But one of the most striking characters in the serial is not one of Murphy's friends at all. This is the witch, who continually annoys the poor old king by her magic, and her ability to turn herself into somebody else at a moment's notice. Of course, most of her magic lies in her broomstick, which is why the friends are always anxious to get their hands on it.
> No one can be blamed for believing that the puppets have a life of their own. In fact, a good deal of planning and hard work by mere humans goes into the programme.
> Pádraic Ó Néill's script calls for all the skills of Eugene Lambert and the members of his family who assist him in manipulating the puppets. Chris Curran speaks the parts, which is no mean feat when one considers that in any one episode there can be as many as six characters."

The second series, in the Autumn schedules, introduced a new character, Feemy, the Grey Witch.

There were now nine puppets in the show, according to the launch note, King, Fred, Murphy, Séamus, Babe, Bábóg, The Horse, The Jester, and The Grey Witch.

The serial was loosely based on a series of stories which Pádraig O Néill had written for Radio Eireann some years previously, underlining yet again the debt of early children's programming on television to radio. The serial was described as having a liberal smattering of Irish.

In the same issue of the RTV Guide, Leathshúil, the Irish language columnist, quoted what he considered to be a malicious statement by another critic whom he did not name :

> "Tá Murphy agus A Chairde i lár sraith nua eachtraí faoi láthair. Tá an tsraith ar cheann de na cláracha is suimúla do pháistí dar craoladh ón stáitsiún go dtí seo. Ach i gcruthúnas nach féidir gach duine a shásamh chonaic mé go ndúirt léirmheastóir eile tamall ó shoin gur gléas éafactach é chun Béarla a mhúineadh do pháistí na Gaeltachta.

The point made by the un-named critic---that Murphy agus a Chairde was an effective device for teaching Gaeltacht children English, is echoed by the wide-spread conviction today that the television set is a major English-language deseminator in Gaeltacht homes, to the extent that the current generation of Gaeltacht children have English as a first language. (c.f. M.A. research by Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, DCU, on the impact of television on Gaeltacht communities, in progress.)

In a profile article in the RTV GUIDE in Spring, 1966, Chris Curran made the following remarks about his participation in the programme

:

> "I never think of a voice when I'm reading the script. I have to see the puppet itself and it gives me a stimulus.....We have nine characters in all, and we all get quite a kick out of building the little things into characters."

Deirdre Friel directed the second batch of episodes. The concluding note seemed to suggest that it had been planned to end the serial with Episode 26, but in fact Murphy agus a Chairde returned on September 29th, 1965. Deirdre Friel also directed Murphy agus a Chairde in 1966. On January 30th, 1966, Murphy agus a Chairde changed to Sunday. On 17th April, 1966, the second season ended and the programme promised to be back after the

Summer holidays.

By Sunday, May 5th, 1968, there were 17 characters in Murphy agus a Chairde. All the voices were done by Chris Curran.

The following storylines are from the programme notes:

Murphy, a giant puppet, introduces his friends .

Murphy and an Ri try to recover an Prionnsa Séamas from the clutches of Babe, the witch.

Murphy rescues Séamas, but Babe vows revenge when her broomstick is stolen.

The Wizard meets the witch and tries to use his magic on her.

Getting Murphy and the Broomstick back safely to the Palace.

The King gets the Broom at last, but the Witch has a trick up her sleeve.

The jester arrives to entertain the King and his friends. Little do they know---!

Freddy and an old enemy compete for the job of the King's Jester.

Murphy is now a soldier, but is not too good at his job.

Seamus gets friendly with Mortimer, the tree.

More trouble for the king. Murphy is now in Babe's clutches.

Babe is now 'Queen Babe'!

Queen Babe decides to enlist a few servants.

Queen Babe commands her new subjects to amuse her.

One of Babe's spells goes wrong.

Babe decides to call in help, but her plea is answered in a strange way.

Murphy and Freddy the wizard look like walking into more trouble.

More fun with Murphy and friends.

Babe returns to her cottage with her niece, Bábóg, to

think up some more mischief.

It doesn't look as if Murphy will get out of the wood.

Babe is making another grreat effort to get control of the kingdom.

Seamas has not done too well in his efforts to capture Bábóg.

Murphy becomes a hero at last.

All the troubles in the palace are over, and everyone lives happily ever after. But they plan to have a big celebration next week.

Grave concern at the palace.

Friends and foes together for the last time.

A note by Pádhraig O Néill in the RTV Guide, June 14th, 1968, is in effect a concise history of the project. The concluding episode of the series would be the 132nd episode they had made.

OTHER DRAMA IN 1965

On St. Patrick's Day, 1965, (5.30--5.45 pm.) pupils of the primary school of Loch an Aortha, Carna, Co. na Gaillimhe, presented their version of Patrick Pearse's story about the boy who loved swallows, Eoinin na nEan, written and set in Rosmuc, a few miles east of the school.

The programme note reads :

Léiriú drámatúil ar scéilin álainn an Phiarsaigh ó pháisti scoile Loch an Aortha i gCarna.
Léirithóir : Pádhraig Mac Donncha, an múinteoir.

Aisteoiri Loch an Aortha again appeared on Christmas Day, 1966, at 6.01, with An Fear Siúil, Lady Gregory's miracle play translated into Irish by Pádhraig Mac Donncha.

CAST

The Travelling Man	:	Tomás O Flatharta
The Woman	:	Bairbre Ni Dhonncha
The Child	:	Treasa Ni Dhonncha.

Produced for Stage by Pádraic Mac Donncha
Produced for Television by Brian Mac Lochlainn.

These productions were interesting examples of the growth of the perception of the accessibility of the new medium. The Mac Donncha family and their friends were active in amateur dramatics in their Irish-speaking community forty miles west of Galway, and almost as far from Donnybrook as one could get. They felt that they could get their work on television, and they succeeded. Later Pat Môr Mac Donncha, the producer of the above plays, became presenter of a folk music programme on Telefis Eireann, Bring Down the Lamp.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1966

A note in the RTE Guide, April 1st, 1966, announced that a specially-commissioned play from the pen of Listowel schoolteacher, Bryan McMahon, would be broadcast on Telefis Eireann at 5.25. p.m. every Sunday in April. The plays were commissioned by Maebh Ni Choinmhidhe, Head of Children's Programmes. The four plays had schoolboys and schoolgirls for their heroes and heroines and were, from this perpspective, child-centred drama.

> "The action of each play takes place during the years leading up to the Easter Rising, and in Easter Week, 1916 itself, but we are shown the subtly-eddying backwaters of the period, rather than the rushing stream of historic events....Nevertheless, through the eyes of ordinary Irish people, we are given a glimpse of the feelings and forces which so strongly inspired the men and women who eventually found themselves taking a leading part in the affairs of the nation."

Bryan McMahon, who had lived through these events himself, is quoted as having described his plays as

> "human incidents set against a background of superhuman events".

The RTE Guide, April 1st, 1966, records that :

> The Bicycle Man is set in the early years of the century, when dedicated members of Conradh na Gaeilge visited the schools in remote country districts,

telling stories in Irish to the children in the hope that the language might not disappear---for Irish was not on the official course. Martin Dempsey plays one such "Fear an Rothair", an amusing companion as well as an inspired teacher, and 11-year-old Vincent MacThomáis has the part of Seán, the boy who comes under his spell, and whose enthusiasm spreads to the other boys and girls. Canice Lynch, from the Brendan Smith Academy of Acting, plays the part of Peadar, the son of one of the last Irish-speaking families in the district.

The children in the story learn eventually that "Fear an Rothair" has been a casualty of The Rising.

A Boy At The Train was transmitted on Easter Sunday, April 10th, 1966. 12-year-old Valentine Hickey, appeared as Donal,

"the son of a man who gave his life with the IRB, and the grandson of a proud old Fenian who is still living. Donal goes to the railway station every day in Easter Week to hear the news from Dublin---news which will have special implications for his uncle Séamas and indeed for the whole family."

The School On The Green was transmitted on Sunday, April 17th, 1966.

"Because her parents live in England, Rose spends her holidays at the Holy Word Convent overlooking St. Stephen's Green. Her admiration of Countess Markievich suddenly involves her in the events of Easter Week, 1916."

The part of Rose was played by Sinéad Cusack.

Children Of The Dream was transmitted on Sunday, April 24th, 1966.

"Children of the Dream takes place after the Rising, in Pádraic Pearse's cottage in Rosmuc in Co. Galway. The creations from Pearse's stories, such as Brid na nAmhrán and Eoinin na nEan, play their part in this charming drama, which is intended for younger children, and will be transmitted on the Sunday following the special children's holiday. Scenes for the play have been shot on location in Rosmuc.

The series was produced by Christopher Fitzsimon.

IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

These plays were based on the ideological premise of commemorating, and consequently attributing primary national significance to the 1916 Easter Rising. Bryan McMahon regarded the historical background as a series of 'superhuman events'. In the summaries we can discern unquestioned assumptions on the value of the Irish language and Gaelic-centred folk culture as marks of nationhood, the rectitude of the Fenian stance, which was militant nationalism, the sublimation of blood-sacrifice, the supportive role of women in the separatist struggle, and, in the final play, an idealisation of Pearse's vision of Ireland---not free merely, but Gaelic as well.

Ideology as such does not negate dramatic validity. On the contrary it can be a powerful narrative dynamic and a force for thematic unity. The problem area is the accommodation of heavily-ideological dramatic material to a schemata of reality-contruction.

It could be argued that the value-system implicit in the commemoration programmes and in these plays has largely formed the ideological support base of the IRA campaign of violence since 1969. The contrary could also be argued. The discourse of militant separatism was active in 1966 and is still very much to the fore twenty-five years later. In this discourse the plays show a pronounced bias.

Generically, the plays constitute an overview of the historical genesis of the state which amounts to a national megamyth. The basic element of this megamyth is a nationhood the emblems of which are a dynamic Gaelic culture set in an independent state wrested from the colonial usurper through blood sacrifice in the militant separatism tradition.

Other dramatic genres such as the conventional Western are vehicles for national megamyths.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1967

The most significant contribution of the year to children's programming and to children's television drama was **Wanderly Wagon**, devised by producer Don Lenox. The puppets were made by Eugene Lambert and operated by the Lambert family.

So far, Eugene Lambert had contributed to and largely created three dramatic features to the children's schedules : **Cearta Húdai**, **Murphy agus a Chairde**, and the puppet **Fingle-Doodle**, the koala bear used by Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin in the art and crafts feature of the same name. Now Eugene Lambert himself, in the character of O'Brien, stepped in front of the cameras.

Wanderly Wagon was an ingenious vehicle for fantasy. It was a durable format of immense potential, relatively economical to operate, and would last for fourteen years.

The human characters throughout were almost exclusively adult, and mature adults at that, but the absence of child characters does not seem to have reduced its acceptability to its target audience. The puppets provided the attraction for the children.

Producers generally enjoyed working with the show, because the script called for challenging special effects and illusions which the producers had to create with negligible resources.

The trouble with a good idea and a durable format was that it tended to be retained indefinitely, thus deferring the emergence of other types of programming.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1968

Murphy agus a Chairde and Wanderly Wagon continued in production. Seán the Leprechaun was an acquired illustrated story series with minimal enaction, drawn by Northern Ireland artist Rowel Friers and read by Charles Witherspoon.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1969

BROGEEN FOLLOWS THE MAGIC TUNE

Patricia Lynch was Ireland'd most successful writer for children. Her whimsical tales such as **The Grey Goose of Kilnevin, Orla of the Burren, The Turfcutter's Donkey series** and the **Brogeen series** had been compulsive reading for Irish children for two generations.

The magic tune in question was stolen from the Fort of Sheen by Batt Kelly, a quarrelsome human fiddler whom Brogeen the Leprechaun had, in a moment of sympathetic weakness, allowed to shelter in the fort during a storm. Brogeen was banished from the fort until he captured the stolen tune and brought it safely back to the fairies.

The 12-part series went out on Saturdays, beginning on April 11th, 1969. Episodes were 20 minutes in length. The first episode is summarised as follows in the programme note :

> **Batt Kelly is the best fiddler in Ireland, but his tongue keeps getting him into trouble, and meeting Brogeen doesn't help matters.**

Voices were provided by Paddy Dunlea, Eamonn Keane, Aine Ni Mhuiri and Thomas Studley. Puppetry was by Eugene and Mai Lambert. The design was by husband and wife team Quentin and Jan Mitchell. Maebh Ni Choinmhidhe is credited with devising the programme. The producer was Colm O Briain.

The RTE Guide of May 16th, 1969, had a Make-Your-Own-Brogeen cut-out feature. Competitions were run and prizes were awarded in association with the programme. Patricia Lynch, in the course of the transmission the series, had been persuaded to write a new story for children, **The Road to the Sea**, which was published in the RTE Guide of May 23rd, 1969.

The **Seen and Heard** column, by Echo, in December, 1969, reported the sale of **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune** to Norwegian Television for Christmas transmission.

Actor/writer Frank Kelly, who adapted the series, had this to say in the RTE Guide, April 11th. 1969 :

Patricia Lynch's writing has succeeded again and again in entertaining children of a wide range in years. This, of course, is important in television, where we must try to reach the widest possible child audience.

Miss Lynch's characters embody all the ingredients of drama for the young. Good and evil get their just rewards, but there is no overt moralising in their stories. The interest of the child is held while it absorbs the lessons of life through a medium of exciting adventure.

The characters lend themselves ideally to the art of the puppetmaker. Some are ethereal, some are robust, and, as in all good fairytales, some are grotesque.

Miss Lynch does not shy away from the character contrasts which give colour to a child's story. She doesn't subject us to a Mary-Poppins-like sugar-coated meal of sugar."

In the article quoted above, adaptor Frank Kelly gives an apologia for the use of puppets in the programme.

"But if you're writing a television show for children, why use puppets ? Why not use real people ?"

I think the reason for using puppets in the nature of the child's imagination. The use of drama comes naturally and easily to children. By the time a child has begun to toddle up and down the kitchen at home it has begun to act out its fantasies.

Familiar objects around the house are endowed with personalities and used as properties and symbols in the child's spontaneous dramas. Major roles are played by woolly toys and dolls, and these objects seem to suit this phase in the development of the child's imagination, where humans, and particularly adult humans, would be intruders.

This must account for the peculiar fascination which the Punch and Judy show has always had for children.

Puppets have the necessary doll-like quality for a fairytale, where perspectives may require complete suspension of disbelief.....

LUIDIN MAC LU

This was a cartoon feature which started on Wednesday, Spetember 24th, 1969. The slot was 6.01 to 6.15 p.m., between the Angelus and the News.

In a note in the RTE Guide on December 15th, 1972, introducing the 1972 episodes, Eamonn de Buitléir gave some background information to the programme, incidentally illustrating the difficulties of the work.

> Lúidín Mac Lú is a leprechaun with a magic whistle. When he plays a tune he can banish monsters, break spells and rescue anybody in trouble.
>
> His friend Luichin, the white mouse, gives a helping hand, but sometimes even he gets into an awkward situation. However, none of the woodland creatures need fear, beacuse Lúidín is never too far away.
>
> A cartoon is difficult to make. It takes endless time and patience and grows only very slowly. One minute of what you see on the screen may have taken several days to film. Each movement that Lúidín makes must be animated frame by frame, and when you think that there are twentyfive frames in every second, that means a lot of animation.
>
> The first Lúidín series of 13 black and white cartoons was shown two years ago; this week we show four colour cartoons.
>
> Lúidín was made with young children in mind, and the choice of music is very deliberate. It is hoped that by using traditional Irish tunes with the medium of a cartoon will prove very attractive to children, who may otherwise not learn to enjoy their native music.
>
> The uileann pipes and the tin whistle are used in an imaginative way, and express the mood for each scene exactly. The conversation is very simple, and even if children do not understand the words, they will be able to follow the story.

Like the Lambert ventures, Lúidín Mac Lú was very much a cottage industry and family-based production. Eamonn de Buitléir was an accomplished musician. He belonged to Ceoltóiri Cualainn, a group with which composer Seán Ó Riada was closely associated. It is interesting to note that his 'subversive' intent was to interest children in traditional Irish music rather than in the Irish language. His other obsession, the Irish ecology, was also evident in the series.

<u>RI RA</u>

Ri Rá was a four-minute cartoon by Flann Ó Riain, the creator of Daithi Lacha. Ri Rá was transmitted on Fridays,

starting on September 26th, 1969, following the Angelus. The voices were by Dermot Crowley. The characters were Ri Rá, the King, Ruaille-Buaille, his servant, and a guitar-playing dog.

The publicity note for the programme launch in the RTE Guide of Saturday, 26th June, 1976, re-introduced

> ......Ri Rá, who, we think, will quickly become a good friend of small viewers. He is the creation of cartoonist Flann O Riain , [DOLL of the Irish Independent] and some of you may recall making his acquaintance some years ago. Ri Rá is a king, but a good-natured chap for all that. He is also a Gaelic speaker. Mrs. Ri Rá is a rather ineffectual woman, O Riain tells us, who understands Irish all right but speaks only English, and even that in a Telefis Eireann-type accent. Other personalities in the Royal Household are Ruaille Buaille, an odd-job man with a vaguely-malicious sense of humour, and a bilingual dog, Raic, who sounds as if he might be the power behind the throne.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1970

Wanderly Wagon, Lúidin Mac Lú and Ri Rá continued in transmission or got repeat showings. There were no new developments in home-produced children's drama, unless, on the premise that there was some element of rehearsal in the production, we include **Buachaill ar an Oileán**, an EBU programme in Irish scripted by Breandán O hEithir, which was a documentary on the every-day life of a boy on the Aran Islands.

In the drama context, **Slógadh, 1970** presented the winners of the Slógadh finals. Slógadh, just launched in 1970, was an Irish language activity and competition project for young people. At the 1992 Slógadh National Finals in Dundalk, where this writer was an adjudicator, over seven thousand primary and postprimary children, survivors from regional competitions, competed for the national awards. The competions included stage plays, musical drama, dance drama, mime, dramatised songs, variety presentations, song, music, dance and art.

Slógadh, the Oireachtas concerts and the Feis Ceoil winners concerts were continuing proof of the existence of a reservoir of young performing talent throughout the country, if RTE had wished to exploit this talent through the implementation of a dynamic drama policy which would cater for young people.

Seán the Leprechaun was repeated with a voice-over in Irish by Séamas Ó Tuama. Séamas Ó Tuama also read a number of stories with graphic backup in Irish during the year on **Fadó, Fadó**.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1971

Wanderly Wagon continued in the 1971 schedules. **Fadó, Fadó** was repeated in omnibus format, and there was an additional story programme in which Pádraigin Ni Mhaoileoin retold international folktales in Irish.

The only vaguely comparable precedents for real life drama that we have had so far were **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh, Siopa,** and the 1916 commemorative plays written by Bryan McMahon.

Siopa an Bhreathnaigh and **Siopa** were bi-lingual, with the assimilation difficulties implicit in bi-lingual drama in a mass-audience context. These series were not child-centred. They had a language-teaching intent.

The 1916 plays were well written and conscientiously presented from the points of view of the child characters involved, and form a substantial and interesting segment of the anthology of Irish children's television drama. They were, however, commissioned, written and produced from a formal ideological standpoint and reveal several ideological layers. As commemorative and historical drama they were removed in time from the actuality of Irish children's lives in 1966.

What we were still waiting for in 1971 was drama which reflected the reality of day-to-existence for Irish children as children; which reflected their environment, their language, their idiom, their phonetics, the situations in which they imagined

themselves; the characters of which were children rather than adults; where action predominated over talk; where the narrative and situations generated suspense and excitement; material which was free of the baggage of Section 17 and was not limited by a shoe-string budget.

In 1971 a model which achieved and set many of the norms for this type of drama emerged. It was a three-part adaptation of Walter Macken's children's novel, The Island of The Great Yellow Ox.

In the RTE Guide, 12th March, 1971, Liam Ó Murchú was interviewed for an introductory note:

> The ISLAND OF THE GREAT YELLOW OX, a 3-part film adaptation of Walter Macken's children's novel, starts on RTE Television on Monday. It's a joint RTE/BBC colour production and will be shown concurrently by the BBC,
>
> "It's such a splendid adventure story, it's a pity, I feel, that Walter Macken didn't write more stories like this for children. It was a natural for television."
>
> So says Liam Ó Murchú, Head of Irish Language and Children's Programmes in RTE Television.
>
> "The idea for this first joint production with the BBC had emerged in an EBU Children's Programme Committee meeting in Dublin in 1969 with Monica Simms, BBC's Head of Children's Programmes. In the event, she supplied the director (Marilynn Fox), who also adapted the script for the box, and a producer.
>
> We provided a cameraman, sound man, and designer, and if you like, marked our partner's card about the lie of the land, local knowledge and so on.
>
> "It worked like a bomb," he says, "though the crew was nearly "lifted out of it" by stormy seas, howling gales, and rain while filming around the Galway coast. There are always problems filming on location, but RTE floor manager Paddy McClintock carried on as though storms and misadventures of the elements were all part of the day's work."
>
> The Island of the Great Yellow Ox is an exciting story of a treasure hidden on a remote island off the west coast of Ireland. This is a solid gold idol, in the form of an ox, believed to have been hidden by the Druid, Cathbhach, who fled to the remote western island from the advance of Christianity. The secret is known only to Lady Agnes, a determined adventuress, who came upon some ancient papers in her husband's broken-down Big House.
>
> The young heroes are Conor and his young brother, Babó, fisherman's sons who are intrigued by the sight of Lady Agnes's gleaming motor-launch and,

> peeping through a porthole, surprise her studying her secret map. They run off, and, in play with new friends, George and Mary, visitors at the local hotel, are lauched on an unexpected adventure, being shipwrecked in their father's currach on a remote island.
>
> When the storm abates Lady Agnes comes ashore--it's the island of the Great Yellow Ox. Thinking that the youngsters, too, are on the trail of the treasure, Lady Agnes callously abandons them without food or boat, but by their own resourcefulness they survive, eventually locate the treasure, and in a gripping finish outwit their villainous captors.
>
> The seaside sequences were shot near Roundstone, Co. Galway; the "secret" cave scenes at Newgrange, whose megalithic souterrains provide an authentically ancient Druidical atmosphere of mystery and awe.

For RTE, the broadcast was an experimental colour transmission.

The adaptation featured a change in the character selection. The two visitors in the original text are brothers George and Edwin; in the televised version they became brother and sister, George and Mary.

Ultan Macken wrote an article for the RTE Guide on the screen realisation of his father's story on March 23rd, 1971.

> Watching the whole three programmes in glorious technicolour in the RTE studios last week I felt a little sad, for I thought how pleased my father would have been to see his "dreams on paper" become real for an hour and a half. How delighted he would have been to see the perfect creation by little Jimmy O'Toole of "Babó".

The book, he said, was written as a relief exercise after ten gruelling years spent on an historical trilogy.

> He began to form the idea for the story, and he drove all around Connemara looking for a suitable island site. He found one on the coast some miles from Clifden, and this island, off the coast of Renvyle, was the one he kept in his mind when he was working.

Flight of the Doves, Walter Macken's other book for children, did not in his son's opinion compare at all with the television adaptation of The Island of the Great Yellow Ox. He implies a lack of consultation with the family by the the makers

of Flight of the Doves. Marilynn Fox, the BBC producer of The Island of the Great Yellow Ox,

> came to visit my mother, my older brother Wally and myself, and discussed her idea with us before she began filming.
>
> She has more understanding of the essential Irishness of my father's stories than has the American director of Flight of the Doves, whose script is essentially stage-Irish.

Marilynn Fox spent some time in Ireland studying for her degree at Belfast University.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF MARTIN CLUXTON

This play, by Caoimhín Ó Marcaigh and Brian Mac Lochlainn, was transmitted in the week beginning Saturday, December 3rd, 1971. A Week in the Life of Martin Cluxton belongs to the category of plays perceived as adult, such as The Lost Hour, based on John McGahern's story, which are presented from the child's perspective, and feature children in main roles. (c.f. Appendix D : Drama Department Output).

FIRST CONFESSION

A Week in the Life of Martin Cluxton did not reach the top ten TAM ratings. First Confession, which went out the same week, did make the top ten, achieving a score of 69, compared with the top rating of 73 for The Anna McGoldrick Show.

This was a BBC television version by Nicholas Bethell of the short story by Frank O'Connor. There was a cast of four. The adults were Irish, the children British. The production failed to realise the potential of the original story. The screen story was severely abridged, leaving out such important and colourful characters as Jackie's and Nora's parents, and Mrs. Ryan, the pious old ogre who came into the school to prepare Jackie and his classmates for their first confession.

The high TAM rating for First Confession was an indication of public interest in this story, and also perhaps of children's interest, because the story featured in many school

anthologies. This interest supports the truth of Paddy Crosbie's remark about the obsession of Irish adults with children. However, considering the switch-off factors for Martin Cluxton, perhaps this remark should be modified to an obsession with unproblematic children.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1972

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox got a repeat showing in June.

Allio was a new magazine programme (The Good Ship Sails on the Alley-Alleyo---). It reported on youth activities, and also incorporated original stories backed by graphics, which were read by the presenters. Many of these stories were in Irish.

On one occasion at least there was an attempt at creative drama--the spontaneous development of a theme by children, culminating in an agreed version at the end which was then rehearsed and propped. This was a five-minute improvised play in Irish , Súil Amháin, a detective story. Súil Amháin, the Private Eye was represented simply by a full-screen eye. The plot source was a Russian folk-tale : Who Stole the Sun ? The children were from Scoil Bhride in Ranalagh, and the improvisation was devised and directed by Pádhraig O Giollagáin, this writer, and Aine O'Connor. The broadcast was a live transmission. As an indication of the shoe-string nature of the provision for children's programming, I recall that we got no fees or expenses for this production, but we were quite happy to make our contribution for studio experience and the gratifications of working with a talented group of children from an all-Irish school.

Wanderly Wagon was still in the schedules. The Lamberts also produced one of their occasional puppet dramas, Little Red Riding Hood, for presentation on Christmas Day.

Lúidin Mac Lú, Eamonn de Buitléir's cartoon, made four appearances in March, during the week including St. Patrick's Day, and some further appearances during the Christmas season.

For the **Telefis Scoile Gaeilge Shinsir** course, producer Brian Mac Lochlainn brought the Abbey Players into the studio to perform an abridged version of **Gunna Cam agus Slabhra Oir**, Seân O Tuama's history play in Irish on the theme of surrender and regrant. The play was one of the text options on the Leaving Certificate Honours course in Irish.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1973

Allio finished in April, 1973, and was replaced by a summer magazine, **Saoire Samhraidh**.

An abridged version of **Gerry**, an improvised drama about violence on a housing estate, performed by Ballyfermot Community Drama Workshop, appeared on **Tangents**, the evening magazine programme, in June, 1973.

> The following note appeared in the RTE Guide.
> **Gerry, an improvised drama about violence on a new housing estate, was created by the young members of the Ballyfermot Community Drama Workshop.**
>
> **On Wednesday's Tangents, John O'Donoghue will talk to the members of the Community Workshop about their ideas on violence in the home, in the school, on the street, which they portray in Gerry; about why their characters use their real names, and about the use of "strong" language in the different situations.**

Photographs with the programme note show the participants to be boys in the 12-15 age-group.

On December 27th, 1973, RTE broadcast a twenty-minute film, **Goldilocks and the Three Bears**, made by Eamonn O'Connor on location in Bunratty Castle and at Doonass on the River Shannon, with an all-Irish cast.

This was the first time that a home-made film effort had appeared in the children's schedules. Eamonn O'Connor was an independent producer; a significant number of home-produced contributions to the children's schedules have come and will continue to come from independent producers.

For the Christmas season , 1973, the Lambert Puppet Theatre prepared three shows. On Christmas Eve Bandecoote was transmitted. Hansel and Gretel went out on Christmas Day. Jack and the Beanstalk went out on December 28th.

Johnny Orfeo was a rock musical, scripted by Pádhraig Ó Giollagáin (this writer) and produced by Lelia Doolan and Colm Ó Briain, which was transmitted at 5.30 pm on St. Stephen's Day, 1973. It was a black and white production, and came into the schedules via the Variety Department.

Johnny Orfeo was an abbreviated version (50 minutes) of a full-length theatre production which had been staged in the Peacock Theatre the previous Autumn.

The story was a re-working of the legend of Orpheus, Johnny losing Euridyce to the dark underworld of drugs.

Jimmy Bartley played the lead role, with Terry Donnelly as Eurydice and John Lynch as Plunket (Pluto), backed by a troup of dancers led by Jessica Swift. Original music was composed and played by a then-popular group, Eyeless.

The script was totally in the Irish language. The play had had a successful and extended run in the Peacock. It invited audience participation, and the audience were frequently dancing in the aisles. The target audience was young people interested in rock music.

Modification for television consisted simply of abbreviating it to fit the available time-slot, and some changes of costume because the colours of the stage costumes were too light for television, even though it was black and white. The recording was done in studio.

Johnny Orfeo was up-to-the-minute in musical backing, lyrics and theme. It was a good example of successful application of the Irish language to new contemporary situations.

Like so many ideas with potential, it made one appearance and had no follow-up.

When I asked RTE for the video-tape of Johnny Orfeo in the early 1980s I was told that the tape had been scrubbed for re-use, and that no recording existed. This was a fate that most

black-and-white programming suffered----tapes were scrubbed as an economy measure, leaving the station archives acutely impoverished. The practice was a feature of most under-resourced stations, but it was an economy measure also used in larger organisations such as the BBC.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1974

A new series of **Wanderly Wagon** began in September, with scripts by Carolyn Swift and production by Joe O'Donnell.

There was a second film from independent producer Eamonn O'Connor, which used live actors to retell the story of **Little Red Riding Hood**.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears was another one-off production from the Lambert Puppet Theatre, directed by Joe O'Donnell, and screened at Easter, 1974.

BAILE BEAG

Baile Beag, a ten minute puppet series, made its pilot appearance in 1974. The programme made spasmodic appearances over the next decade or so. It was a bilingual programme. The puppets were not manipulated as were the Lambert puppets, but photographed in a sequence of stances and positions until the illusion of movement was achieved. There was a high level of enaction, much more than in **Daithi Lacha**, but what was ultimately involved was narration, not a total presentation of the narrative in the continuous present tense.

While fantasy was not excluded, **Baile Beag** differed from **Cearta Húdai**, **Murphy agus a Chairde**, **Wanderly Wagon**, and **Brogeen Follows the Magic Tune** in that the primary context was realistic; the series for the most part presented representations of real children, real adults, a normal village and conventional village life.

The creator of **Baile Beag** was Jimmy Quinn. There were a number of writers for the series, but the names most often

credited were Pádhraig Ó Siochrú and Tony Hickey. Pádhraig Ó Siochrú or Gráinne Ui Mhaitiú did the reading.

An article by Ruth Kelly, entitled **Happy Village**, appeared in the RTE Guide, December 9th, 1977, with a picture of the village of **Baile Beag**, containing Maura's shop, the Post Office, and one house.

> A happy hobby has become an even happier career for former RTE manager, Jimmy Quinn, inventor of an Baile Beag, the tiny village inhabited by puppets where only pleasant things happen.
> The toy town has two founding fathers, Jimmy and RTE colleague, Pádhraig Ó Siochrú (deputy chief sub. on the Nuacht desk) who does the bi-lingual script and the narration.
> Both men are happy as sandboys making the series. They are neighbours in Foxrock (four doors apart) and have families of four children almost exactly the same ages. There the resemblance ends. Jimmy is a technician. Pádhraig is a writer and a Gaelic scholar. The original idea was Jimmy's. The artistry of animation always appealed to him. In his little village and its happenings he found an escape from the pressures of executive life in RTE.
> "The sets were made from cornflake packs I got from a local grocer," he remembers.
> Now the model village, which resides in his specially fitted attic, is beautifully executed with everything in perfect miniature. Even the bells in the church tower are solid brass, and the chairs in the farmhouse kitchen real súgán rope.
> "The children are all involved. They keep an eye out for tiny accessories for the puppets. My wife makes their clothes, dresses them, and also sings the traditional Irish songs."
> Jimmy comes from Thurles in Tipperary. He was originally an engineer with the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, and came to RTE as a technician. He stayed with RTE for twenty years, ending his contract with a stint as manager of Ardmore studios, where he saw some animated films being made and learned a lot from them....Work pressures eventually led to a nervous breakdown, and Jimmy decided he'd had enough of the management scene. He turned to his hobby, confiding his thoughts on its future to his friend and colleague, Pádhraig Ó Siochrú.
> Together they planned the life-style of An Baile Beag as a puppet series, which they launched on RTE four years ago. [1974]It's success was assured. Thirty more episodes are on order for next year.
> "A lot of what happens is based on my old home-town. Many of the characters are called after members of my own family. I have an Auntie Moira, and she has a house just like the one in the set, and I have an

> Uncle Benny who owns a garage, like Benny in the series..."
> "I'm a Dublin-born Kerryman," laughed Pádhraig. "I grew up in a totally bi-lingual household. My father spoke no English and my mother refused to speak Irish..."

On the Children's Page of the RTE Guide, November 24th, 1978, Agnes Buttner wrote about The Smallest School in Ireland.

> On Friday, a very important person is expected in An Baile Beag. The new Cigire is coming to have a look at the school, and the teacher tells the children that on no account are they to be late. They should be neat and clean, too, because the school inspector might be very fussy.
> On the way to school Muiris and Martina meet a man whose car has broken down. They have a big problem in deciding what to do. If they say to help him they'll be late for school and the Cigire, and may be dirty as well. But Muiris knows that it is right to help someone along the way. It turns out well for Muiris, because the man is-----?

This is a typical storyline. Agnes Buttner gives us further background information about the series.

> The little dolls in An Baile Beag are about six inches high and all have wooden heads. Jimmy Quinn makes them himself. He also writes the stories and films the episodes. The dolls have Irish names like Seán, Liam, Jimin, Nuala, Mary, Sheila, and they get up to all sorts of divilment. In fact, they get into predicaments where they need repairs and Jimmy says he has a doll's hospital going at the same time, because the puppets must have constant attention.
> Jimmy uses real situations for some of his stories, and the doings of farmer Tomás and Garda Pat are based on people he knows. And, do you know, there is a Baile Beag in Dingle in County Kerry?

She went on to report that Baile Beag had been shown in Milan at a special children's programme festival.

STORYLINES

The following is a selection of storylines from the programme notes.

Safety First : An accident outside the school raises the question of making a pedestrian crossing.

Christmas Holiday : Jimmy is finding it hard to occupy his leisure hours during the off-

school days.

Safety on the Farm :	Following a minor accident on his tractor, Farmer Tomás accepts some good advice from Garda Pat about how to avoid further mishaps.
An Madra Atá ar Iarraidh :	Tá an madra ar iarraidh agus tá an liathróid ar iarraidh freisin. Caithfidh Muiris agus Jimin dhul ar chuartú chun iad a 'fháil.
Ag Péinteáil :	Tarlaionn rudai aisteacha i gcónái nuair a thugann Jimin agus Muiris lámh chúnta dá chéile.
Dornálaiocht :	Buachaill cathrach nó buachaill tiriúil, cioca is láidre ? Socróidh an cluiche an cheist seo do na daoine i mBaile Beag.
An Cáca Speisialta:	Is maith le madrai cácai, faoi mar a a fhaigheann na buachailli amach le h-uafás mór.
An Crann Cainteach :	Tarlaionn rudai aisteacha nuair a labhrann crann.
An Rása :	Téann Jimin agus Muiris ag iomaiocht le chéile chun a fháil amach cén buachaill is tapúla sa mBaile Beag, ach is féidir le rásaiocht bóthair a bheith contúirteach, mara fhaigheann ba buachailli amach.
Bonn Óir :	Tá ór faighte sa mBaile Beag, ach nuair a scrúdaionn Jimin é seo bionn ionadh air.
An Crann Draiochta:	Tá an crann sin arais aris. An t-am seo, tá sé ag dul ag siopadóireacht.
Imirt Chártai :	Taispeánann Muiris gur imreoir maith cártai é. Má bhreathnaionn tú air an tseachtain seo foghlaimeoidh tú cleas nó dó.
Briseadh Isteach i Scoil:	Cén fáth a mbeadh aon duine ag iarraidh briseadh isteach is scoil? Tá iontas ar an dá bhuachaill, ach tá fáth maith leis an uair seo.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1975

Teatime Tales and Twenty-Minute Tales were story-programmes backed by graphics. Tony Hickey was a frequent contributor of scripts. A range of well-known actors and actresses read old and new stories. To quote two examples, Marie Keane read the Kitty the Hare stories of Victor O'D. Power. Aine Ni Mhuiri read Eoinin na nEan, the Irish language story by Patrick Pearse. Some level of enaction may be presumed, but the programmes

were essentially past-tense narration.

Some of the activities of the activity/magazine programme, **Youngline**, related to drama. One annual dramatic feature was a Christmas film made by the production team for which young viewers were invited to submit scripts.

Wanderly Wagon continued. **Sean an Leipreachán**, narrated by Séamas O Tuama, got a another repeat showing.

An Choill Mhór was an imported story series, transmitted with a voice-over narration in Irish.

The Spinning Wheel was a puppet film based on an original children's story by Sinéad Bean De Valera. Michael Duffy and Trudi Kelly were the story tellers. Music was by Joan Anderson. Photography was by Brendan Maguire and the design by Quentin Mitchell. The Puppet Master was Eugene Lambert, assisted by the Lambert Puppeteers. The producer was Colin Lecky Thompson and the programme was a Lecky Enterprise Production. **The Spinning Wheel** was transmitted on St. Patrick's Day, 1975.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN

Irishmen and Irishwomen presented historical portraits in dramatic format. The programme was based on a book by Dublin writer Bernard Share. The series, according to the programme note, purported to highlight

> personalities who rarely made the pages of conventional history books but who all added colour to the texture of their times.

The commentary was delivered by well-known folk-singer Ronnie Drew of The Dubliners folk-group. The series portrayed significant incidents from the lives of the selected characters through the medium of actors and actresses. Programmes were usually fifteen minutes in length.

The notice in the new season programmes feature in the RTE Guide of September 16th, 1977 heralding a new series of **Irishmen and Irishwomen** commented :

> Nostalgia reigns supreme in fashion, furniture, literature and television. The requests for repeats of period drama prove it. Some of last season's programmes in the series Irishmen and Irishwomen can be seen at the moment, but the new run concerns far more serious and stylish productions.
> "We moved into a much bigger studio and we have

properly staged scenes with well-known actors taking the parts of the famous in informal situations," said producer Joe O'Donnell. "We're doing some of the more notorious ladies of history this time, like Margaret, Countess of Blessington, 'friend' of Lord Byron, Ellen Hanly, the Colleen Bawn, and Harriet Smithson, the girl from Ennis who married Berlioz."

A typical notice would be that which introduced the transmission of September 19th, 1977 :

CHEVALIER CHARLES WOGAN

Written by Bernard Share
Ronnie Drew tells the story of a remarkable 18th century adventurer who masterminded the escape of a beautiful Polish princess.

Charles Wogan : DEREK YOUNG
Princess Maria Clementina : MARION RICHARDSON

Design : Charles Self
Producer : Joe O'Donnell

Occasionally Ronnie Drew left the narrator's seat to participate as a character in the playlet. Once such character played by Ronnie Drew was Zozimus, the great Dublin ballad-maker of the 19th Century, described by Yeats as the last gleeman of the Liberties.

Irishmen and Irishwomen, essentially story drama, survived up to 1978 with many intervening repeats of series. The programme was children's drama by intent, at least, and it went out in the children's slot usually at 5.10. p.m. but the subject matter, approach and delivery were for a general if not an adult audience.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1976

The year's output included some initiatives in home-produced drama. One of these was the RTE Christmas Pantomime, **Cinderella**. The major roles were given to well-know musical performers, and the lesser roles to station personalities such as presenters and newsreaders.

An Axe, an Apple and a Buckskin Jacket was the intriguing title of an RTE produced cartoon which featured in the

Christmas programmes. The cartoon was based on a Dutch story and was drawn by Quentin Mitchell of the Design Department. This was a Christmas feature. Quentin Mitchell and his wife Jan had made many valuable contributions to children's programming over the years, Jan Mitchell providing the graphic backup to many of the story programmes.

Noah and the Animals was a short puppet film created and directed by independent producer Seamus Culhane with music by Michael Collins.

Ri Rá, Flann O Riain's cartoon, with voices by Peadar Lambe, returned to the schedules in the Summer of 1976. **Wanderly Wagon** had survived, in new series and frequent repeats, since 1967. Don Lenox had left. The programme received new impetus from his replacement producer, Joe O'Donnell. Carolyn Swift, Helen Quinn, Frank Kelly and Jonathon Selby were the regular writers for 1976.

The puppet version of **Hansel and Gretel** by the Lamberts got a repeat showing.

Ronnie Drew's series of television portraits, **Irishmen and Irishwomen**, continued.

AN SAOL AG DUL THART

An Saol ag Dul Thart, Aidan Hickey's cartoon animation series about life as seen by an old lady who sat all day in the window, **"pondering the magical, fantastical or simply impossible things she sees or thinks she sees"** (programme note, September 20th, 1978), got an experimental launch.

The five-minute bilingual programme, with repeats, appeared intermittently until 1979. Neasa Ni Annracháin of the Radio Eireann Players provided the voice of the old lady. Voices for other characters were provided by Barbara MacNamara and Cormac Duffy. Pat Hayes provided the electronic sound effects. The strong vocal back-up of three actors, combined with the electronic sound effects, was a vast resource improvement on previous animation efforts, which normally relied on one reader to provide the full range of voices and characterisation.

The series was humour driven, and was predominantly

fantasy, but any 'neighbourhood' drama environment, actuality or animation, will have a strong substratum of reality.

Over the years Aidan Hickey has acquired an international reputation as an animation artist, and is currently regarded as one of the most gifted animation artists in the busines, receiving third place in a recent international ranking. He would make many contributions to the RTE children's schedules.

A note in RTE Guide, September 15th, 1978, gave further details about An Saol Ag Dul Thart :

> On Wednesday afternoons, this animated series tells about a certain street in a certain town in Ireland. All day long a nice old lady sits at the window minding her neighbours' business. Very odd business most of it is indeed. Not that the old lady is surprised, mind you! There's Mr. McCuaig galloping by on a white horse, firing a six-gun; Mrs. O'Kelly disguising herself as a dustbin, and the giant Leprechaun. Then there's the case of that hoarding that blocked the old lady's view. The voice of the old lady is really that of Neasa Ni Annrachain, and the magical, fantastical and impossible noises are made by Barbara MacNamara and Cormac Duffy. It's written and animated by Aidan Hickey.

SOME STORYLINES FROM PROGRAMME NOTES

> "Does Mr. O'Sullivan know," asked the old lady, "that the bird building a nest on his roof is using a hammer and saw?"
>
> Tá Clann Ui Néill ag imeacht ar a laenta saoire, ach, an gcreideann tú, tá siad ag taisteal i ngluaisteán agus é bun ós cionn.
>
> Tá iasc gafa sa lion---ach beidh sé slán beo aris. Agus beidh sé ag siúl agus ag féachaint ar an dteilifis.
>
> Tá an tsráid agus an domhain mór i mbaol. Cé sábhálfaidh iad ? Telefón mór an laoch a dhéanann an gaisce!
>
> Tagann Leipreachán glic ag bagairt ar shiochán na sráide. Creideann sé go bhfuil a fhios ag daoine cá bhfuil a phróca óir.
>
> Buaileann fear uasal le cailleach agus é ar a bhealach abhaile tar éis lá leadránach a chaitheamh san oifig.

Inniu : Tá bua neamh-ghnáthach ag an mbó: roth stiúrtha agus inneall.

Inniu : scriosann comhlucht fógraíochta radharc breá ag bun an bhóthair. Ach ní fhanann sé ann ró-fhada.

Inniu : Comhcheilg, seift, cogar---cén fáth? Cé chuirfidh críoch leis an an bhfothrom uafásach atá ag teacht as an bpiano?

Cén fáth go bhfuil an bheirt sin ag screadail ar dhíon an tí? Níl le deánamh acu ach Cros Zebra a phéinteáil agus siúl anuas.

Seo an bealach mí-cheart le héalú ó scamall cairdiúil. Agus an bealach freisin chun críoch a chur len ár scéalta.

OTHER DRAMA

Yassu Corfu was a three-part drama-documentary of the day-to-day life of children on holiday on Corfu Island. The film-maker was David Shaw Smith, and the scriptwriter was Wesley Burrowes. David Shaw Smith was on the island to film nature-study material. The films were the prototypes for a later series, Sophie, and featured the Shaw Smith children.

This type of text raises questions of classification. The pure documentary employs the camera as a non-intrusive observer. When locations are preselected and children are directed to perform certain activities, and are rehearsed in such activities, a script is being enacted and the elements of drama assert themselves.

DRAMA ON TELEFIS SCOILE

From time to time Telefis Scoile programmes included drama material, home produced and imported, relevant to school texts.

The year's examples were readings from Shakespeare's Henry 1V by the Abbey players, and a short dramatisation in Donegal Irish of significant events in the life of Donegal Gaeltacht writer, Seosamh Mac Grianna.

HOME-PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1977

An Gairdin Alainn was an imported story programme series with graphics to which an Irish language narrative, written and spoken by Radio Eireann Players actor Breandán O Dúill, was added. Ri Rá also made a comeback.

Magic Mike Tales was a Wanderly Wagon spin-off, in which the puppet characters from the series introduced and presented imported animation stories.

There was a new and better-resourced series of Irishmen and Irishwomen, presented once again by Ronnie Drew and produced by Joe O'Donnell.

On January 8th, 1977, the 200th edition of Wanderly Wagon was transmitted. The programme had averaged about twenty episodes a year since 1967, but there had been several repeat showings.

SOPHIE'S SUMMER

Sophie's Summer, filmed by David Shaw Smith, was a 6-part drama series based on his 9-year-old daughter, Sophie.

The programmes were ten minutes in length. A programme note for the episode entitled Butterflies illustrated the programme approach.

> On a walk through the garden, Sophie and Bunny stop to look at the butterflies, so beautiful that they inspire Sophie to make some of her own.

The borders between drama and documentary become fused in a programme like Sophie. We seem to be watching an actuality record of a particular nine-year old girl, Sophie, amusing herself through the long, hot summer, in the environment of her Wicklow home and at her grandmother's house.

As the programme note for Butterflies illustrates, the events and locations were selected, not spontaneous, and a thematic and narrative unity had been imposed on them. The narrative is a construct, not a factual account. The narrative is enacted. We view the episode as an iconographic exercise; the Sophie we see is also a construct, a creative representation of Sophie Shaw Smith, and typical of many if not most nine-year old girls in a rural setting in fine Summer weather. With Sophie we

have crossed the border into drama. Drama, however, was not David Shaw Smith's objective; he describes his product as 'films'.

In many ways what David Shaw Smith achieved with Sophie was the unscripted drama which, it was hoped, might have evolved from the Shinrone series which Gunnar Ruggheimer initiated for Telefis Eireann in the early 1960s.

The following is an abbreviation of an article by columnist Ruth Kelly in the RTE Guide, August 5th, 1977.

> We were guests in the garden of the Shaw Smiths in Shankill. Our host, David, is one of Ireland's very few wild-life film-makers. He had just filmed a series of short films (5 minutes) on his smallest daughter, Sophie, aged nine. (It's currently running on RTE on Saturday afternoons.) He filmed Sophie during the long, hot summer of last year in her garden in the foothills of the Dublin mountains and at her grandmother's romantic meadow in Clifden in Connemara.
>
> There are seven episodes in the series. Each is a charming and delightful record of secret momnents in childhood, when the simple thhings like bees, flowers, butterflies, animals and toys are the all-consuming interest of a little girl at play. Her father has photographed her in colour. In the background are all the seasonable noises. The hum of the bees in the poppy-sprinkled meadow, the buzz of flies, the cropping of her pet pony, Angus, and the joyful barking of the dogs punctuate her own commentary as she chats to her woolly bunny about the red-hot pokers, the nasty flies ("Mummy says crushed ferns make them go away") and makes a crown of ferns for herself, Teddy and the pony.
>
> When the lazy days get boring, Sophie finds a tin trunk in Granny's attic. Granny is mummy's mother. She lives in a romantic converted coach-house on the Millington-Synge estate in Ashford, Co. Wicklow, where mummy grew up. The treasure chest is dragged out on to the lawn to the dog's delight. It yields Grandfather's silk topper and tails, in addition to other trophies, including beads, old evening gowns, pretty hats, specs and a Peruvian sash found by daddy on his film travels. Sophie dresses up and dances. A sort of soft shoe-shufle is suitable for the swallow-tails, but a Victorian lady would only stroll around the lawn in her beautiful dress and bonnet, with a parasol to keep the sun off and her dog on a silk ribbon lead. Rosie, the retriever, enjoys it all too.
>
> Besides being an imaginative child, Sophie is practical as well. She shows her unseen audience how to make the butterflies she finds in the garden from cardboard. She knows their names and their proper markings and colours....

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1978

The main developments in the course of the year were in the magazine/activity category. Youngline continued in production, and the absorption of all available funding by two new magazine/activity programmes, **Our Times** and **Let's Go**, precluded any new initiative in children's drama.

Children in the drama context were nevertheless the centre of attention. **The Spike**, an adut drama series about a public sector postprimary school, written by Patrick Gilligan (this writer) and produced by Noel O Briain and Brian Mac Lochlainn, was the most controversial contribution from the Drama Department during 1978, and the most controversial series in terms of protest and public debate in the history of RTE. **The Spike** is discussed in Appendix D : Drama Department Output (1978).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1979

There was a repeat showing of **The Spinning Wheel**, the puppet film based on the original story by Sinéad Bean De Valera. This, and a new series of **Wanderly Wagon**, a new season of **An Baile Beag**, and a one-off series from Northern Ireland, **Curious Eyes**, made up the home produced children's drama transmitted during the year.

We can hardly describe **Flight of the Doves**, the feature film version of Walter macken's second story for children, home-produced, but it was at least an adaptation of an Irish story for children; it was substantially shot in Ireland, and it used some Irish actors. The following is an extract for the entry for the film in Movies on TV.

> Great Britain, 1971. Ron Moody, Jack Wild, Stanley Holloway, Dorothy Maguire. Fun film for the kids as Ron Moody has a virtuoso role playing a detective of many disguises trying to track down two young orphans who have been given a large inheritance. Good Irish scenery, but the plot is slowed by some sentimental songs. Directed by Ralf Nelson. 105 minutes. [MOVIES ON TV---Bantam, 1982--83]

The Macken family, in particular journalist Ultan Macken, were very unhappy with this adaptation of Walter Macken's book, as Ultan Macken revealed in his comments on Island of the Great Yellow Ox.

The singer Dana, and sports broadcaster Brendan O'Reilly had substantial roles in the film. Flight of the Doves was transmitted on St. Patrick's Day, 1979.

CURIOUS EYES

Curious Eyes was a four-part series of short films in which, to quote the introductory note,

> "children from Northern Ireland and the Republic discover something of the time-honoured traditions and skills of their own environment".

The films were produced and directed by Neville Presho and photographed by Séamas Deasy, Robert Monks and Lewis McCleod. The first film, Music in the Wood, was about violin making.

> "The violin-maker plies his craft while Denise and her friends look on. Nearby a water-wheel drives the saw-mill, cutting planks for a stage for the coming musical festival. But on the night an instrument gets crushed......"

The second film, A Horse's Tail, dealt with traditional farming.

> "For Michael, Seán and John the white mare's strength is undisputed. For Joe, her owner, her true worth shows only when the tractor has broken down."

The third film, Obair an Lae, had an island theme.

> "Caroline, John and Eanna experience all the contrasts of the islanders' way of life, including thatching and curragh-making."

The final film, Young and Old, was set in the Belfast shipyards :

> "Tim and his grandfather, a retired ship-builder, are dwarfed by ships and giant cranes. Wandering off on his own, Tim discovered a world he had thought had long vanished".

YEAR OF THE CHILD

1979 was designated by UNESCO as The Year of the Child. There was a special presentation by RTE to mark the

designation, Day of the Child, and the Thursday Playdate slot scheduled a BBC drama production about an Irish itinerant child and her life, Katie, Year of the Child. The play, by Ian Cullen and John Norton, was the BBC's contribution to the Year of the Child.

It was transmitted by RTE on December 13th, 1979. The programme note reads :

> "Katie, the 14-year-old daughter of a travelling family camped by the roadside in Dublin, is left with the responsibility of caring for a large undisciplined family and an ailing mother, whilst her father goes to England to make his fortune."

The adult characters included itinerant adults, the landlord of a tinker pub, the landlord of a city pub, a social worker, a doctor, a Garda, and a nun, and representatives of the settled community. These parts were all played by Dublin-based Irish actors. The credit concludes with the footnote :

> The film also stars the sons and daughters of the travelling families of Dublin.

The part of Katie was played by Margaret Kelly, a young itinerant girl.

An article headed Katie's Year in the RTE Guiide, December 7th, 1979, includes the following :

> Katie Collins is fourteen. Her father is in England, her mother is sick, and there are nine younger Collinses. Rough on Kate. But she's an intelligent and capable girl, and maybe she'll make out. "We take Katie through her year," the makers tell us, " and see through her eyes, not only the problems particular to her, but those general to all travellers, a people out of context in time and place, an essentially rural people with a collection of skills which are not required in a metropolis approaching the twenty-first century. "
>
> It so happened that the circumstances of the making of the play produced a situation quite like what they are trying to portray. Margaret Kelly, the taveller girl who plays the title role, has a background quite like Katie's. In the play she's befriended by a social worker, Seán, through whom she comes to see the possibility of another way of life. In reality, we all

suddenly realised that we were in fact filling the role of the social worker. We were showing Margaret an alternative life-style---she is beginning to show some interest in literacy because for the first time she sees it being put to constant use. She has for the first time in her life met a number of women who have chosen not to have children. There is, I am sure, a career for her as an actress if she wants it. The question is---will she?

Itinerants are a marginalised in Irish society, and the object of a very real and bitter apartheid perpetrated by the settled community. Katie demonstrates the role drama can play in breaking down barriers and easing tensions between culturally-defined groups within a national entity.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1980

There were new seasons of Baile Beag and of Wanderly Wagon during 1980. Writers for Wanderly Wagon for the year included Jonathon Selby, Kevin Grattan, Martin Duffy, Tony Flaherty, Carolyn Swift, and Michael Judge.

On Christmas Eve, 1980, a Rock Nativity play was transmitted for general audiences.

The Magic Piano was a cartoon animation series featuring classical music. The series was drawn by Aidan Hickey. Each episode gave a comedy interpretation of a well-known classical piece.

Episode One was an interpretation of the William Tell Overture. It was broadcast on Saturday, October 12th, 1980, at 6.45 p.m..

The advance note in the RTE Guide of October 10th, 1980, commented :

> If you've ever hated piano lessons Professor Plinket E. Plonk may help you to finger it differently. He and his MAGIC PIANO are a couple of wacky but talented cartoon characters---he has a mop of carrot-red hair; the piano is Grand! It's not just magic either---it's

a magician. Every piece Plinket plays is about faraway places or fairytale characters, and every piece comes alive when the piano keys are touched. Plinket E. Plonk and his piano take off to the worlds of Hansel and Gretel, Scheherazade, William Tell and Peter and the Wolf.
Mind you, poor Plonk gets into a few scary scrapes. And a few honky ones, too. Imagine trying to find the right black notes with a mad goose grabbing you by the ears and hauling you off the stage. Piano and Plonk always get back in the end, though, for the applause. Your's, too! If you watch The Magic Piano on Sundays it's all from the pen and ink and brush of Aidan Hickey.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1981

LUG

The first episode of Lug, a five-minute animated series, appeared on the 5th of October, 1981. The script was by Bernard Share and the animation by Jimmy Quinn, creator of the Baile Beag puppets. The producer was Joe O'Donnell. The programme note described Lug as a new Monday to Friday animation series featuring the wonderful adventures of Lug an Locha---a magician who lived in a crannóg near the Burren in County Clare.

The programme note for Tuesday, 6th October, 1981, read :

> "Can Balor the Bad succeed in his campaign against the Queen of Quin ? She relies on one man to come to her aid every afternoon this week : Lug !"

A DOG'S TALE

There was a note on the programme in the Young Guide feature of the RTE Guide for December 18th, 1981, under a drawing of a boy at the gates of Trinity College.

> " A dog, especially a small dog, can get really tied up in a twist when he is chasing his tail. Look above! Trinity College, Dublin, lets visitors see its priceless manuscript, the Book of Kells, all of 1,100 years old. They have to be fussy; it's behind glass---not a hair of a dog is let near the place. But just say two proper mutts got in, a boy and his dog, and made such a mess of everything that they went spinning back in time, tangled up in all the whirls and curlicues of the beautiful book. Would they ever get

> out of it? And what would they find back there, when round towers were newer than space shuttles ? Only Aidan Hickey knows---he made this very unusual cartoon. Watch A Dog's Tale at 6.15 on Christmas Day.

ANOIS IS ARIS

Anois is Aris was a bright, brash Irish language tuition programme, directed at general audiences, with considerable dramatic content to illustrate language structures. The series was produced with considerable ingenuity by Tom McArdle. It was backed up by published material, and tutorial groups learning Irish from the series operated in a number of locations.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1982

There was a new season of **An Baile Beag** and a repeat showing of **Wanderly Wagon**. Production of new **Wanderly Wagon** programmes had ended with the Christmas feature of 1981.

O'DONOGHUE'S REVENGE

O'Donoghue's Revenge, a comparatively long single play for young people lasting 40 minutes, written by Carolyn Swift and produced by Michael Murphy, was transmitted at 6.30 p.m. on Monday, October 25th, 1982.

The play was performed by pupils from 5th and 6th classes of Killorglin Primary School in Kerry. The music was by the Chieftains and Shaun Davey. The programme note reads:

> Races, chases, ghosts and robbers. An exciting drama of a battle lost and won, based on fact, concerning what happened when a certain Sir Valentine, Crown Agent, was foolhardy enough to take over the land owned by the local chieftain, O'Donoghue.

An advance note in the RTE Guide of October 1st, 1982, ran as follows :

> By Lakes and Falls : news soon of something new in children's drama : Carolyn Swift's O'Donoghue's Revenge, filmed in Killarney, is the first fruit of the plan to make television plays for young people.

It's to go out on Monday, October 25th.

What seemed to be implied here was a plan to produce a series of plays similar to O'Donoghue's Revenge using the OBU and casts from schools and groups of young people throughout the country, and that there would be further plays to follow O'Donoghue's Revenge. This plan evolved in different terms to that implied by the transmission of O'Donoghue's Revenge.

The context of this plan was the Access Community Television project, of which producer Michael Murphy was in charge. This project encompassed documentaries and drama which would be made by local groups with technical assistance from RTE.

There was one further children's play in this series, Kevin's World, transmitted in the EBU drama exchange series, The Adventure Show, in 1984. The play was produced by Michael Murphy and filmed on location in Kilkenny, using a combination of professional actors and children from local schools.

Seven plays from the Access Community project materialised in 1986, but they were general audience plays performed by local amateur dramatic groups.

C.P AND QWIKSWITCH

C.P. And Qwikswitch was a cartoon animation series created by Aidan Hickey in association with RTE. Episodes were five minutes in length. The series was about two robots marooned on the planet Junkus Minor. C.P and Qwikswitch was the only example in the schedules so far of home produced science fiction.

The following advance note, headed Scrapes Among the Scrap, appeared in the issue of the RTE Guide, October 1st, 1982:

> These are two gentlemen robots, by name C.P. and Qwikswitch, which is also the name of the series of quickies starting Wednesday on RTE 1. Aidan Hickey, with a bit of help from RTE, brings live (anyway, animated) reports from the inhabitants of the planet Junkus Minor.
> After the Star Wars had ended the amount of wreckage floating about the place was unbelievable and a lot of it got shunted to the planet Junkus Minor. What nobody knew was that the planet Junkus Minor already had a population of two---these two! How they got there they wouldn't know. Their private opinion is that they created themselves. In any case, their main occupation is creating other things out of all the space junk to

> get themselves off the place. Not easy, but, as is plain from the look of them, they are pretty bright robots.

The programme note for the the epsisode transmitted at 5.55 pm on Wednesday, 23rd December, 1982, read :

> Taking compass readings from a clock, the confused pair set off again on their Odyssey to find the human company they crave as their birthright.

The programme note for episode the of Wednesday, Dec. 29th, read :

> Wheel tracks lead C-P to believe that they have discovered the airport. They settle down to wait for a plane.

THE LOST HOUR

The Lost Hour was adapted by Carlo Gebler from John McGahern's novel, The Leavetaking, and produced and directed by Seán Cotter. It went out at 9.45 pm on Sunday, January 10th, 1982. (c.f. Appendix D : Drama Department Output).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1983

There was another season of RTE's first venture into home produced science fiction, C.P. and Qwikswitch, Aidan Hickey's series of five-minute animation films. This programme would still be in the schedules in 1991. By then there would be a third regular character, and the programme would be called C.P., Qwikswitch and Stop.

Wanderly Wagon had come to an end, but, just as The Riordans begot Bracken and Bracken begot Glenroe, Wanderly Wagon begot its successor, Fortycoats.

FORTYCOATS

Fortycoats, a real-life Dublin street character, was the inspiration for Fran Dempsey's Fortycoats in Wanderly Wagon. Fortycoats now acquired his own programme, but the structure was different, the Fortycoats formula being six-part serial stories.

Fortycoats was a fantasy series. The other main characters were an erratic schoolgirl, Slightly Bonkers, played by Virginia Cole, and The Whirligig Witch, played by Laurie Morton. The first series went out in the Spring of 1983. The programme continued in the Autumn schedules. Helen Quinn was one of the scriptwriters.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1984

The dramatisation of the Walter Macken story, **Island of the Great Yellow Ox**, first transmitted in 1971, was given a repeat showing on St. Patrick's Day, 1984. The film version of **Flight of the Doves**, based on another children's story by the same author, was also repeated on the same date on RTE 2.

The Dandelion on the Dungheap was a short film made by John Lowe, of the National Film Society, with assistance from Bord Scannán Eireann.

The Ballinch Bowl was an hour-long drama made in Ireland by a German production company, WDR, which was transmitted on New Year's Eve, 1984, at 5.00 p.m. The writer was Jane McCullough, direction was by John Sitchel, and production by Lother Humburg. The background music was by the group Splinder and Maura Ronan. The theme, situation and the cast were all Irish. The cast included children. The programme note said :

> **The discovery of what seems to be a valuable early Christian chalice on their land creates considerable speculation in the home of a poor farming widow. Unfortunately, some dishonest citizens are also interested.**

This programme, like **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox** and **Flight of the Doves**, raises problems of classification. Ultimately we have to accept that it was a German product even if it was made from Irish materials.

The first season of **Fortycoats** was repeated, and the programme returned for a new season in the Autumn schedules.

At 9.15 pm. on New Year's Eve, RTE transmitted the Granada production, directed by Donal McWhinnie, of Frank O'Connor's **An Only Child**.

THE ADVENTURE SHOW

Transmissions continued in the **Access Community Television** project, made jointly by the Young People's and Features departments with the help of the Outside Broadcast Unit. Although not formally designated as an Access production, **Kevin's World**, RTE's contribution to the EBU children's adventure drama exchange project, **The Adventure Show**, would seem to be a follow-up of **O'Donoghue's Revenge**, and the second play in the abandoned plan to produce a continuing stream of children's drama using the Outside Broadcast Unit. Seven adventure stories were screened on RTE, starting with the station's own contribution, **Kevin's World.**

Kevin's World was scripted by Tony Flaherty and produced by Michael Murphy. The cast was a mixture of professional and amateur actors. Peter Dowling played Kevin, Aine Ni Mhuiri was the teacher, and Jimmy Bartley played Kevin's father. The other children in the play were a mixed group of boys and girls in the ten to twelve age-group from Kilkenny schools. The play was filmed on location in Kilkenny. The story is described as revolving around Kevin, a young dreamer with a Walter Mitty type of personality who finds himself entangled in a real-life adventure.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1985

O'Donoghue's Revenge, written by Carolyn Swift and first transmitted in 1983, and **Kevin's World**, written by Tony Flaherty and presented in the EBU presentation, **The Adventure Show**, were both repeated in the course of the year. These plays, we remember, were produced on the **Access Community Television** model by Michael Murphy.

STOWAWAY

Stowaway was a new EBU drama contribution, scripted and produced by Joe O'Donnell. **Stowaway** was listed by Helena Sheehan as a Drama Department production. I have no details of the Drama Department contribution. The play was produced by Joe O'Donnell on the lines of **Kevin's World** and **O'Donoghue's Revenge**,

using children from a country school as actors.

A SECOND OF JUNE

A Second Of June was a 40-minute drama documentary film which was transmitted on January 28th, 1985 on RTE 1, and repeated on June 2nd, 1985 on RTE 2 at 5.20. p.m. The programme note for June 2nd described the film as

> .....taking a frequently humorous look at the city of Dublin on the day of President Reagan's visit last year---a day spent by a young girl and boy whose circumstances and movements turn out to be curiously similar to those of characters in James Joyce's epic novel, Ullyses, evoking Dublin life 80 years before.

The film was produced and directed by Francis Stapleton, S.J. in association with RTE. Francis Stapleton was 22 years old and a Jesuit student. Graeme Cook, writing in the RTE Guide the week of the January transmission reported that the budget for A Second of June was £10,000. Some of this money came from RTE, and some from Bord Scannân Eireann, the Irish Film Board. CIE made an electric train available to the production team. The film was shot in six days. Among those involved were the Polish film editor, Kristoph Romanowski, a freelance cameraman Nick O'Neill, and Roger Doyle, who composed the music.

The camera follows the movements of a young girl and boy, teenagers, through the city of Dublin on the day of President Reagan's visit in 1984. Their itineries consciously mimic the long walk of Leopold Bloom in Joyce's Ullyses.

The boy, played by Dermot King, sells earrings on O'Connell Bridge, and the girl, played by Lisa Birthistle, works in a hamburger restaurant in Grafton Street. They travel independently on the new DART train. The boy plays video games. A funeral makes its way to Glasnevin Cemetery. Babies are born in Holles Street Hospital. A crowd protests on the street. In the background the radio follows the President's progress through the city. The two teenagers finally meet late in the evening and go to a singing pub.

Graeme Cook reported on the difficulties of tying a film to a specific actuality event. The tight security around President Reagan was one problem. The amateur actors had to be

ready to perform their lines and actions at the precise moment that the President's cavalcade passed. There was no possibility of controlling events, and no opportunity for a second take.

The film was first shown at the Cork film Festival. **A Second of June** is one of the few examples we have on our lists of home produced films for cinema. It was a relatively successful example of real-life drama for young people. The low production costs indicate that viable drama for young people could be made at acceptable costs.

DOIREANN AGUS DEAIDEO

Doireann agus Deaideo was a bought in story-programme to which a voice-over narration in Irish was added.

There were twelve ten-minute programmes, each relating to a particular month of the year. The basic text and graphics were by Joyce Whitby and the series was described in the credits as A Grasshopper Production. The Irish language translation and voice-over commentary were done by Pádhraig Ó Méalóid and Pádhraig Ó Siochrú. The following would be a typical programme note :

> **Deireadh Fómhair : Nuair atá deireadh na bliana ag teacht féachann Doireann agus Deaideo ar phlanndai ag fás taobh istigh, sa teach gloine. Itheann Lúlú an gabhar dána na bláthanna a bhi Mamai le fháil.**

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1986

We have referred elsewhere to to the drama inset, **Muintir na Móna**, in the preschool programme, **Dilin Ó Deamhas**, and to occasional drama inserts in Bosco.

Doireann agus Deaideo continued. The source programme was described as a Grasshopper production in association with Longman Video and Griffin Productions and Gabriel Rosenstock was credited with the Irish language version.

There were two series of **Baile Beag**. The first was in Irish. The same series was repeated later in the Spring with an English commentary.

There were two 25-minute shows from the **Lambert Puppet Theatre, The City Mouse and the Country Mouse, and The Devil's**

Bridge, which was a folktale about a ferryman and the Devil. The puppet plays were repertoire features of the **Lambert Puppet Theatre** in Monkstown, and were filmed in the theatre by Art Ó Briain.

Seán The Leprechaun also got a repeat showing.

Fortycoats and the Charm Bracelet, with Fran Dempsey as Fortycoats, Virginia Cole as Slightly Bonkers and Laurie Morton as The Whirligig Witch, was a six-part continuous story in 30-minute episodes written by Jonathon Selby. The producer was Gerard Stembridge. The genre was farce-fantasy.

ACCESS COMMUNITY DRAMA

The **Access Community Drama** programme transmitted seven plays in 1986. The plays had local producers and were directed for television by Michael Murphy.

The plays were **Fresh Salmon**, performed by the Olivian Players, Dublin; **The Changeling**, performed by Relays Productions, Ballinasloe; **Win Some, Lose Some** performed by Rush Dramatic Society; **There Has To Be a Reason**, performed by the Leixlip Theatre Group; **Moving On**, performed by the Moat Club, Naas; **Vandals**, performed by Everyman Productions, Sligo and **Emigrants**, performed by the Charlestown Little Theatre Group.

The **Access Community Drama** project was produced by the Features Department in collaboration with the Young People's Programmes Department, and was a follow-up to previous ventures in **Access Community Television**.

Although not intended as such, this excursion into drama was seen by Equity and the Society of Irish Playwrights and the RTE trade unions, in the context of the virtual collapse of television drama production other than serials, as an attempt to overcome the formidable production costs barrier of conventional television drama by replacing professional drama with amateur productions. The trade union protests resulted in the cancellation by management of a planned second series.

Three of the productions dealt with youth topics. **The Changeling**, by Relays Productions, Ballinasloe, was, to quote Helena Sheehan, " **a simple slice of everyday life for a young**

schoolgirl, whose mother's hospitalisation was interfering with her swimming practice". **There Has To Be A Reason** by the Leixlip Theatre Group was about a youth's suicide. **Vandals**, by Everyman Productions, Sligo, involved a deprived boy being sentenced for vandalism to community service in a city dump. Circumstances see him implicated in a protest about the building of a pub on an archaeological site. Questions are raised about commercial vandalism.

Helena Sheehan was not impressed with these productions, but conceded that they gave a unique perspective of Irish life which was unlikely to surface in professional television drama.

The cancellation of the second series was shortsighted. As might have been foreseen, it did not generate further professional drama. A more realistic appraisal would have seen the Access Community Drama as 'alternative' drama, as another variant of the genre. Gerard Stembridge would also explore further possibilities of 'alternative' television drama, dispensing with sets and eliminating or reducing scripting and others costs but he would be careful to use professional actors.

The type of drama signalled by the Access project may well have a future if local television becomes a reality in Ireland or cable systems develop which have local input as a significant component. Video technology continues to become more accessible and the small hand-held camera has already proved its worth in professional drama. Amateur stage drama groups are already using home video cameras to record their own productions for rehearsal purposes. It is possible to envisage a stage of development where the recording itself will become the object of competition, in the form of video drama competitions as elements of amateur drama festivals.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1987

Fortycoats had a strong presence throughout the year in new material and in repeat showings. There were two 6-part stories in the schedules, **Fortycoats and the the Seraphim Stone**

and **Fortycoats and the Xervak Mystery**. **Fortycoats** also got an opportunity to meet the real Santa Claus on location in Lapland in a special Christmas feature produced by Joe O'Donnell.

Muintir na Móna continued to feature in **Dilin O Deamhas**. Bosco was now showing animation stories created by Aidan Hickey-----**Bosco and the Bears; Bosco Hunts for Treasure; Bosco Goes Skiing; Bosco and the Genie** and so on.

There was a new series of **Baile Beag**, still created by Jimmy Quinn but now produced by an independent company in association with RTE, Quinn Productions.

The **Nothing To It** guidance series provided excellent drama with a real life context. Producer Gerard Stembridge had an experimental approach to drama which he has since applied in other programmes. In this particular series the dramatic element was very strong, overshadowing the guidance content. The three actors, Mikel Murfi, Veronica Coburn and Pauline McGlynn, who did all the characters, were gifted and versatile.

The programme probed situations and topics of concern to teenagers and young adults such as job-hunting, recreation, pop culture, computers, finance and social welfare in dramatic format. The main setting was a grotty bedsitter from which the trio emerged each morning to tackle a hostile world. Each playlet was followed by a discussion and studio analysis.

The series was evidence that many strategies which did not entail heavy expenditure were available to RTE, if there had been any corporate interest in relevant home-produced children's drama. As we end our twenty-five year review home produced drama for children has virtually become an underground activity, hidden away in programmes such as **Nothing To It, Bosco** and **Dilin O Deamhas**.

The Johnston Monster was filmed in Ireland by the Children's Film Foundation. It was a 50-minute feature film for children. The cast was predominantly Irish. The story centred on a legendary monster at the bottom of an Irish lake, inspired, perhaps, by newspaper stories of an incident where three priests, who were fishing in Lough Ree near Clonmacnoise, saw what they reported as a lake monster. There was a local legend that St.

Ciarán, the founder of the Clonmacnoise monastic settlement, bound up a predatory monster and banished him to the bottom of the lake.

The Children's Film Foundation was a an organisation funded by a levy on the British Film industry, set up to produce films for and of interest to children. The Foundation has a deep appreciation of children's film needs and has produced many excellent films, some of which have been transmitted by RTE. The Johnston Monster was the type of programme that might have materialised from home production sources if an enlightened children's drama policy operated in RTE or if there had been a vibrant domestic film industry.

APPENDIX B

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1962----1987

Introduction

In Appendix B we provide a detailed history of home produced children's programming over the period under review. This history illustrates the evolution of the children's and young people's programming culture on Telefis Eireann/RTE, the wide spread of programming which had to be provided within the budget allocation for children's programming, and the consequent shrinking of resources available for children's drama. Children's drama, as we saw, had little or no definition as a programme category; it was simply another form of children's programming, confined to the same resourcing structure as a crafts or story programme.

The programming detailed in this Appendix indicates the sort of representation Irish children got on television. This representation was substantial, but systematically formal and restricted; conventional programming, other than drama, places strict controls on child participants and rarely extended to the range of situations, environments, emotions, actions or language use yielded by adequately resourced drama.

In combination with Appendix A, Appendix B forms the basis of a comprehensive history of home produced programming on Telefis Eireann/RTE from 1962 to 1987. No such record exists at present.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1962

The following summarises the home produced programme titles in the children's schedules for the calendar year 1962.

The home produced drama programmes were **Siopa an**

Bhreathnaigh, it's sequel, **Siopa**, **Amhrán na mBeach Meala**, and, if we stretch the definition of drama a bit, **Daithi Lacha**. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1962**) This input was partly determined by the statutory necessity to have a 'language situation' in the schedule. As such it had an educational and ideological motivation.

Tales of Wonder were stories from Irish mythology and folklore, read by Eamonn Kelly, Seamas Ennis, Bryan McMahon and others. The story provision was augmented by the addition of **Once Upon a Time** in the Summer schedules. The storyteller was veteran Dublin actor, Jimmy O'Dea, who told 'traditional tales of the legendary past'.

The following random titles give us some idea of the nature and content of the story provision : **The Bridge of Feathers; The Magician and the Fisherman; Jack O'Moora and the King of Ireland's Son; An Fear a chur chun na Flaithis; Fionn and the Fianna; The Cat and the Splinter; The Three Wishes** (Jimmy O'Dea---June); **The Smallest King in Creation; The Barefooted Gander; Jack and His Comrades.**

Tom McDermott told some of these stories in Irish.

These stories were presented face-to-camera, without graphic back-up. We can presume some on degree of enaction in the telling, but we are dealing with primarily with related as against enacted narrative, with the past rather than the continuous present, with reported dialogue rather than enacted dialogue.

<u>VARIETY PROGRAMMES</u>

Children's Corner, Tir na nOg, and **Don Aos Og**, and **An Ceoltóir Sidhe** (presented by uilleann piper Séamas Ennis) were variety showcases for young performing talent. These shows regularly featured bi-lingual ventriloquist Seoirse O Baoill and his puppet, Beairtle and occasionally hosted children's drama. The presenter of **Children's Corner** was Belfast-born drama teacher, Audrey Meredith. The programme note on **Tir na nOg** states: **Young people introduce their own songs, games and dances.**

Other variety and musical programmes in the schedules were **Oireachtas an Aois Oig, Children's Concerts** and **The School**

Around the Corner.

The variety programmes made the new medium accessible to talented Irish children on a national scale, assuming that they could come to the studio in Dublin. Variety programming also gave Irish children a limited self-image--limited because for the most part participation in this type of programme was formal and did not reflect a full emotional range of expression.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Home-produced information programming was strongly represented by the the 10-minute tri-weekly programme, **At Home and Abroad**, an information and current affairs programme for young people presented by Seán Mac Réamoinn, and later in the year by Breandán O hEithir's **Muir agus Tír**, an Irish language information programme with a rural emphasis. These were magazine type programmes which used available film footage with a commentary by the presenter.

Focal ar Fhocal was a one-minute linguistic programme which launched Daithi Lacha, who later developed into a cartoon character. The programme note says : **Focal ar Fhocal--i gcomhluadar le Daithi Lacha agus a pheictiúiri.** Flann O Riain was the artist and presenter.

The general area of sport was catered for by the twice-weekly home-produced programme, **Sport and You**, the content of which was described as Junior Sport, presented in the early stages by the BBC's Phil Thompson, and later by former All-Ireland High Jump champion, Brendan O'Reilly, whose talents also included professional singing and acting.

Art and crafts were represented by Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin's **Let's Draw. Let's Draw**, as Maeve Conway confirmed in the RTV Guide, was a very successful programme with under-nines which picked up at least one international award. Producer John Condon, current Head of Young People's Programmes (1991) told me that the main thrust of the programme, the provision of elementary drawing skills, derived from his own frustrations in the area of drawing.

THE SCHOOL AROUND THE CORNER

The School Around The Corner had been a successful radio programme in the 1950s. It was one of a number of radio programmes, in the children's and adult schedules, which made a successful transition to television.

The programme opened with a signature song based on the title of the show. The participants, schoolchildren, were subjected to a personal interview, had to sing or recite, and to tell a funny story. There was also a **'What Is This ?'** distorted photograph competition, and the terrifying **Hard Word**, which was a spelling exercise.

In an RTV Guide interview Crosbie himself refuted a charge that he exploited children. "**I don't exploit children; I exploit adults' interest in children.**"

In the epilogue to his book Tales from the School Around the Corner (Mercier Press, 1979) he claims that **The School Around The Corner** was the very first programme recorded for Irish television, and he also claims that the programme was always at the top of the TAM ratings. He suggests that there was an audience of one million devotees for the programme.

The first edition of the televised version went out at 5.30 on Tuesday, 20th January, 1962. By Easter, 1963, 56 programmes had been made. The Outside Broadcast Unit made it possible for the show to travel all over the country; indeed **The School Around the Corner** was the first programme to use the Outside Broadcast Unit.

The acquisition of the Outside Broadcast Unit made television in general accessible to the country at large, although programming, in particular news, current affairs and chat-shows remained to a large extent Dublin-centred for the duration of the period under review. The hard-pressed OBU was also conscripted into drama production; **The Riordans**, which began transmissions in 1965, was recorded in its entirety by the Outside Broadcast Unit.

The School Around the Corner was a children's programme which had the ability to attract great numbers of adult viewers, mainly because it generated, and no doubt exploited, nostalgia for schooldays.

The School, like most of the other home-produced programmes for children, went on holidays for the summer months. It came back in the Autumn schedules on October 1st, in a new time-slot---7.00 p.m. on Sunday evenings. This placing effectively promoted **The School Around the Corner** to the status of an adult programme and to a prime-time slot in the schedules: as Jimmy O'Dea said about his own story-telling programme, **Once Upon A Time**, it appealed to all children, no matter what age they were.

A note in the RTV Guide in January, announcing the return of the series after the Christmas break, remarks that:

> ".....in the four weeks ending December 19th The School Around the Corner had a TAM rating of 78, which is the highest so far achieved by Telefis Eireann. The equivalences are 97,000 homes, or 345,000 people.

The programme won inclusion in a special hour-long feature in **Children's Television Around the World**, compiled by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in the USA. Two abridged episodes were shown around this time on the television station WCBC TV, New York. Graham Sennet, in a note in RTV Guide of 22nd February, 1963, mentions the intense international interest in the radio version of the series---referring to broadcasts in Finland, Moscow and Canada.

Producers for the show were James Plunkett and Bob Quinn.

There was no suggestion that it was an expensive programme to produce, although the station has always been extremely sensitive about the use of the Outside Broadcasts Unit.

The School Around the Corner showed what could be done within existing budgetary restrictions. It had a unique format, and was very much an indigenous cultural product and owed nothing to imported programming.

John Fiske (1984) lists commonality of discourses among the conditions for popularity of a television text ; Crosbie was obviously correct when he identified the interest of Irish people in children---and the production successfully conveyed the impression of a similar interest.

Fiske also states the popular text will be polysemic or capable of a wide variety of interpretations ; adults could

recall their own experiences as children, or look on as proxy parents.

Cultural homogeneity also facilitates popularity; very little transformational activity was needed by adults or children to assimilate the content.

Another requisite for a popular programme is a recognisable physical framework or stage which identifies location and environment and which functions as a generic identification of associated personnel : **Glenroe** provides such a stage, as does the **Late, Late Show**, the BBC programme, **East Enders** and most work-related drama series. **Fair City** did not provide such a stage, a factor which inhibited its popularity. The title, **Fair City**, suggests metropolitan landmarks; these are not provided to any significant degree in the text; the locations of the action are too vague and unspecific to evoke instant recognition or recollection, or to generate viewer expectations. **The School Around the Corner** had a recognisable framework---every viewer had been to primary school, or knew what school was like, and knew what to expect from the show.

The School Around the Corner created its own mythology; the strength of this mythology was confirmed by the revival of the show on RTE 1 in the 1990--1991 season, with Gerry Ryan as the schoolmaster, in the same Sunday evening time-slot. On Sunday, 24th March, 1991, according to data published in the RTE Guide, **The School Around the Corner** held the twentieth place in the TAM ratings, with an estimated audience of 480,000 viewers. The current version, however, is not presented by Young People's Programmes, but by the Variety Department.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1963

The School Around the Corner continued to dominate the schedule and the TAM ratings, having established itself as a programme of wide general audience appeal.

The story programmes, **Tales of Wonder** and **Once Upon a**

Time, also continued---story-telling was an uncomplicated and economic form of home production; it was also a format which could deliver material in Irish.

The variety and talent programmes were also there, continuing to widen the accessibility of television to Irish children, but this accessibility was tempered by budgetary constraints; children from the Dublin area were more likely to be asked to participate than country children. Relevant programme titles for the year were **Seoirse agus Beairtle**, **Tir na nOg**, and **Children's Special**.

Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin's **Let's Draw** was an access programme to which children submitted material. In **Céapars**, a development of **Let's Draw**, Bláithin introduced and demonstrated puppet-making, puppet operation, and some elementary puppet-drama.

Sport and You brought Irish children and young people who had sports talents or interests on to the screen. These, inevitably, were mostly boys. Raymond Boyle, writing about radio coverage of sport, comments :

> "Sport was a male dominated cultural activity in Ireland. Women were not encouraged to participate, and the media coverage given to camogie was scant in comparison to the resources devoted to male sports. Connotations of manliness were attached to both the written and spoken coverage given to sport." (Boyle, 1990: 40)

Raymond Boyle, in his Dublin City University M.A. thesis on Television, Sport and Nationhood, gives comprehensive treatment to the hero-cults, ideologies , and politics implicit in the Irish sport culture when the national television service was launched. Sport was a central plank in the Telefis Eireann programming from the beginning. Live All-Ireland finals were relayed as early as 1962.

At Home and Abroad continued, augmented by a 'native' Irish language information programme **Muir agus Tir**, presented by Breandán O hEithir, presumably directed at Gaeltacht children. **Daithi Lacha**, originally a presentation device, had how developed into a primitive cartoon feature.

Paddy Crosbie, from the successful base of **The School Around the Corner**, was able to get a new studio word-game with an

education bias into transmission---**Tug-O'-Words**.

The only initiative in children's drama in the course of the year, apart from the continuation of **Daithi Lacha**, was the presentation of six school plays, usually as items in variety programmes. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1963**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1964

Daithi Lacha had by now established himself as a national institution.

Variety and activity continued with **Paddy Bán O Broin sa Chathaoir**, **Séamas Ennis sa Chathaoir**, **Seoirse agus Beairtle**, **Junior Concert Hall** and **Cóisir Samhraidh**.

Paddy Crosbie's **Tug-O'-Words** was still in the schedules and a successful new quiz show for young people, **Mark Time**, was launched with versatile bi-lingual performer Chris Curran as question-master.

The first of the **Dublin Zoo** programmes, presented by Seoirse O Baoill, was transmitted. These became very popular in time, one edition at least achieving a top TAM rating.

Eamonn de Buitléir launched his career as a programme-maker in April with **Mise agus** Mo **Mhadra**. In partnership with Gerret Van Geldern he produced the first editions of a new bi-lingual nature programme, **Amuigh Faoi'n Spéir**, which, although not specifically a children's programme, attracted a large audience of young people, and was generally scheduled adjacent to the children's programme slot.

The School Around the Corner continued its highly successful progress.

Religion finally surfaced in the children's schedules in the form of **Their's is the Kingdom**---a discussion of scenes from the Bible conducted by Fr. Eamonn Gaynor.

Céapars and **Let's Draw** and **Sport and You** were retained.

Telefis Scoile was launched with a very effective physics series given by Dr. Frank Anderson, going out at 2 p.m. during school hours.

At Home and Abroad and **Muir agus Tir** were replaced by **Laugh and Learn**, a series of short imported films presented by Maire O'Sullivan.

Music in the Making was a fascinating series on musical instruments and related topics devised and presented by Dr. Brian Boydell of Trinity College.

Story-telling was still there in the form of **Once Upon a Time**, with Jimmy O'Dea, and **Long Ago In Ireland**, with Eamonn Kelly.

The year also saw the launch of **Teen Talk**, a teenage discussion programme chaired by Bunny Carr which went out at 7.05 p.m. This programme regularly achieved top TAM ratings.

A new language teaching programme, for adults but of intense interest and value to young viewers, was **Labhair Gaeilge Linn**, presented by Eoin O Súilleabháin, who had made his television debut as Cóilin Bhairbre in **Siopa**.

The drama contributions were the puppet series, **Cearta Húdai**, and a school play, **Stailc sa Chistin**. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1964**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1965

The music and variety programmes, **Séamas Ennis sa Chathaoir, Paidi Bán sa Chathaoir, Seoirse agus Beairtle, Junior Concert Hall** and **Cóisir Samhraidh** appeared in the course of the year.

Mark Time, Their's is the Kingdom, Teen Talk and **Amuigh Faoin Speir**, initiated in 1964, continued. **At Home and Abroad** made a comeback. **Laugh and Learn** and **Sport and You** were retained. **Let's Draw** and **Céapars** were still in the schedules.

The new programmes included an international youth interest magazine, presented by Seoirse and Beairtle, possibly an obligatory transmission because of the station's membership of the

European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

The School Around the Corner continued in transmission. In the course of the year Paddy Crosbie tried out another dimension of the same theme in **Back to School**, a nostalgia programme in which he "**introduced the pupils of the present to the pupils of the past**".

There was also a short Bible-centred religious feature of general interest, **Five to Six**, which discussed the history of salvation.

James White, Director of the National Gallery, presented an art programme, **Art is What ?**

In the drama area **Daithi Lacha** continued, and a new puppet drama feature, destined to have a long run---**Murphy agus a Chairde**, was launched on January 5th, 1965. Aisteoiri Loch an Aortha presented an Irish play in studio on St. Patrick's Day. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1965**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1966

The music and variety programmes, **Guth na nOg**, **Seoirse agus Beairtle**, and **Cóisir Samhraidh** continued, and there was a new showcase for musical talent, **Music Makers**.

The quiz programme, **Mark Time**, was retained. **Back to School** now alternated with **The School Around the Corner**. External to the children's schedule, but attracting young audiences were **Labhair Gaeilge Linn**, **Amuigh Faoin Spéir**, and **Teen Talk**.

The new programmes on the list were **Small World**, a current affairs programme, **Paddy's Playground**, an activity programme, **Fingledoodle**, a puppet feature, and the 1916 commemorative plays.

In **Small World** Seán Mac Réamoinn explained and discussed the significance of current events in Ireland and abroad. In the course of the year Seán mac Réamoinn also presented **At Home and Abroad**.

Paddy's Playground was a new venture by Paddy Crosbie and featured games and play. The big event in each programme was

the unravelling of the identity of a disguised personality. I recall that one such personality was Bunny Carr, famous as the presenter of **Quicksilver**, a quiz programme, and of **Teen Talk**.

Fingledoodle was a puppet, a koala bear created by Eugene Lambert for Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin, which spoke electronic gibberish. The programme format was a device for presentation of art and crafts and stories. Production was by Joe O'Donnell. The programme was suitable for children up to nine or ten, according to the programme note. Maeve Conway commented in the interview quoted in the 1962 review:

> ...... up to seven or so all children seem to enjoy it. But after that the puppet action and all that bores them. They feel that they're too grown-up for it, and go for the practical things Bláithin does....

Murphy agus a Chairde and **Daithi Lacha** continued in the schedules. The major effort in the children's drama category was the four-part 1916 commemoration series, scripted by Bryan McMahon. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1966**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1967

In the course of the year Maeve Conway moved to educational programming and Liam O Murchú became the head of a new section, Irish and Children's Programmes.

Mark Time, Small World, and **Let's Draw** continued in production. **Sport and You** became **Sports Club**. Brendan O'Reilly was the presenter.

The variety programme Guth na nOg attracted 1,250 entries for a musical talent competition in the course of the year. This exemplifies one of the aspects of access programming; processing of responses can be time-consuming and use up valuable resources.

The main preoccupation of Liam O Murchú during the year was the launching of **Buntús Cainte**. **Buntús Cainte** was a new language programme presented by Eoin O Súilleabháin with the help of **"mini-skirted girls"**, to quote Liam O Murchú. The mini-skirted girls would, it was hoped, convince viewers that there was no

incompatibility between use of Irish and being modern.

For some years the annual Abbey Pantomime in Irish had attracted large theatre audiences. One of the more successful pantomimes, **Fernando agus an Prionsa**, was televised during the year.

The Adventures of Two Boys was an information series about Dublin. The camera followed two boys around the city. They commented on landmarks and city activities.

In the Autumn Schedules of 1967 **Seán the Leprechaun** made his appearance. This cartoon series originated in Northern Ireland. Illustration was by the famous Northern Ireland cartoonist, Rowel Friers. Narration was by Charles Witherspoon, who has worked in recent years for Ulster Television.

The cameraman was Brendan Maguire; music was by Stanley Wylie, and the scriptwriter was Sheila St. Clair. **Seán the Leprechaun** was produced by Colin Lecky Thompson.

In later years an Irish language version, narrated by Séamas Ó Tuama, would be transmitted and repeated several times.

The Young Scientists' Exhibition, sponsored by Aer Lingus, featured science projects by hundreds of Irish children, and was usually held in the RDS, Ballsbridge. In 1967 the exhibition was the subject of a documentary programme.

In the drama category, **Daithi Lacha** and **Murphy agus a Chairde** were still in production. There was an important innovation in children's drama which resulted in a hybrid product derived from the blending of puppets and live actors, **Wanderly Wagon**. (c.f. Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1967).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1968

Home-produced children's television drama had a respectable representation in the continuing programmes, **Wanderly Wagon**, **Murphy agus a Chairde**, and **Seán the Leprechaun**. All of this material, however, was in the low-budget fantasy category. **Daithi Lacha** was out of the schedules.

Let's Draw, **Mark Time** and **Guth na nÓg** were retained.

Seoirse O Baoill had a new magazine programme, **Riddle Me This**, and young musical talent found an outlet in **Young People's Concerts**.

Religion had a slightly stronger emphasis. There were two discussion programmes in the schedules for the year, **People Are Asking**, and **Two Thousand Years After**, the theme of the latter being the Second Vatican Council.

There was also an EBU documentary series, **Europe at Work and Play**.

Triopal Treapal was an important new initiative in children's programming. It was a pre-school play and activity programme. There were over four hundred applications for the position of presenter. The job went eventually to Breffini Doyle, a young Montessori teacher. Her format was simple and successful; she brought a dozen toddlers into the studio and went through a routine of games, songs and stories with them lasting twenty minutes.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1969

Programmes still in production were **Triopal Treapal, Sports Club, Mark Time** and **Let's Draw.**

Fadó, Fadó was a new story programme, mainly in Irish. Stories, often new, backed by graphics, were read by Eitne Ni Loideáin, Jimmy Greally and others.

Let's Visit the Zoo, with Seoirse O Baoill and Terry Murphy, was a return of the very popular zoo series.

Motley was a new magazine programme for young people, presented by Tony McMahon and Tony Butler and produced by Colm O Briain.

Once Upon A Time And Now as Well was a story programme presented by Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin.

People Are Asking was a discussion programme for young people, chaired by Frank Delaney, then a news reader with RTE. **Dateline** was a new religious programme, presented by Fr. T.V. McInerney, O.P.

In addition to **Wanderly Wagon** and **Daithi Lacha** there were three new children's drama series in the schedules; **Brogeen**

Follows the Magic Tune was a puppet series; **Lúdin Mac Lú** and **Rí Rá** were cartoons. **Lúidín Mac Lú** and **Rí Rá** were in Irish. The puppets for **Brogeen** were made by Eugene Lambert. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1969**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1970

Wanderly Wagon, Lúidín Mac Lú and **Rí Rá** continued in transmission or got repeat showings. There were no new developments in home-produced children's drama, unless, on the premise that there was some element of rehearsal in the production, we include **Buachaill ar an Oileán**, an EBU programme in Irish scripted by Breandán Ó hEithir, which was a documentary on the every-day life of a boy on the Aran Islands.

In the drama context, **Slógadh, 1970** presented the winners of the Slógadh finals. **Slógadh** was an Irish language activity and competition project for young people which attracted thousands of entries every year. The contributions were often in dramatic format, and frequently involved a dramatic sketch or short play involving music and dance.

Slógadh, the **Oireachtas** concerts and the **Feis Ceoil** winners concerts were continuing proof of the existence of a reservoir of young performing talent throughout the country, if RTE had wished to exploit this talent through the implementation of a dynamic drama policy which would cater for young people.

Sports Club and **Once Upon a Time And Now as Well** were retained.

Teenage discussion continued with two programmes chaired by Andy O'Mahony, **If It's On Your Mind, Say It!** and **13,14,15**. These discussion programmes, however, did not achieve the success of **Teen Talk**. **I Ask...**, chaired by Frank Delaney, was a religious programme.

Seán the Leprechaun was repeated with a voice-over in Irish by Séamas Ó Tuama. Séamas Ó Tuama also read a number of stories in Irish during the year on **Fadó, Fadó**.

Imeall, a pop programme in Irish, heralded the advent

of Seán Bán Breathnach. **Imeall** was not an outstanding success, but SBB, as he came to be known, would prove to be the most creative and versatile ad lib broadcaster in Irish on radio and television that the country has produced.

Ditto was what was claimed to be the first fully-animated Irish-made colour cartoon. It was made by RTE, as a contribution to an EBU Children's Group competition. The topic was The Reproduction of Species, and the subject category was information, not drama. Production was by Jim Jones. The cartoon was drawn by Jan Mitchell of the RTE design department. The winner in the competition was the Canadian entry, which cost £33,000 to make. By comparison the money available for the production of **Ditto** was £2,000. **Ditto** was transmitted in the Christmas schedules in 1970.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1971

Wanderly Wagon, Sports Club and **If It's On Your Mind, Say It!** continued in the 1971 schedules.

Mol an Oige was a new talent and variety programme presented by Seoirse O Baoill. **Páisti ar Fud an Domhain** was an EBU documentary series also presented by Seoirse O Baoill.

Macalla, presented by Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin, was an environmental programme concentrating on archaeological remains. **Fadó, Fadó** was repeated in omnibus format, and there was an additional story programme in which Pádraigin Ni Mhaoileoin retold international folktales in Irish.

A significant inititiative in children's drama, in a co-production arrangement with the BBC, resulted in **The Island of the Great Yellow Ox** . (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1971**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1972

The Island of the Great Yellow Ox got a repeat showing in June.

Encounter was a new religious programme. An Dream Og was a variety and musical programme. Other new productions included Quiz Around the Clock, presented by Andy O'Mahony, which went out five evenings a week, a musical programme, Singalong, and a voice-over programme in Irish on imported films---An Domhain Seo Againne, read by Peadar Lambe and Diarmuid O Muirithe. Another documentary series was Childhood, The Enchanted Years. There was also a programme on play safety, It's Out!

Fadó, Fadó, Macalla, and Amuigh Faoin Spéir were still in production.

Slógadh was an Irish language talent movement for young people run by Gael Linn, which organised national and regional competitions each year. The competitions had generated thousands of variety acts and drama presentations over the years, and, with other festivals such as An Fhéile Náisiúnta Scoldrámaiochta were a continuing reminder of the pool of acting and other young talent available if RTE had wanted to produce original real-life drama for children.

Allio was a new magazine programme (The Good Ship Sails on the Alley-Alleyo!). It reported on youth activities, and also incorporated original stories backed by graphics, which were read by the presenters. Many of these stories were in Irish.

Wanderly Wagon was still in the schedules. The Lamberts also produced one of their occasional puppet dramas, Little Red Riding Hood, for presentation on Christmas Day.

Lúidin Mac Lú, Eamonn de Buitléir's cartoon, made four appearances in March, during the week including St. Patrick's Day, and some further appearances during the Christmas season.

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1973

Allio finished in April, 1973, and was replaced by a summer magazine, **Saoire Samhraidh**. **An Ghlúin Og** and **Aos Og** were music and talent programmes. The sing-along programme **All Join In** also returned.

The Sports Department acknowledged the existence of young people's sport by transmitting the **Leinster Colleges'** football final.

Quiz Around the Clock, Andy O'Mahony's five-day-a-week quiz, continued.

Road safety was the subject of **A Game of Chance**.

There was a new preschool programme, **Bábaró**, with a team of four presenters, Hilary Lynch, David Byrne, Pat Kenny and Breffni Doyle. This team would form the basis eventually of the **Bosco** presentation team. **Bábaró** was an English-language programme.

Drama may not have been impressive in quantity but there was an interesting variety of treatments and topics. An abridged version of **Gerry**, an improvised drama about violence on a housing estate, performed by Ballyfermot Community Drama Workshop, appeared on **Tangents**, the evening magazine programme, in June, 1973. On December 27th, 1973, RTE broadcast a twenty-minute film, **Goldilocks and the Three Bears**, made by Eamonn O'Connor on location in Bunratty Castle and at Doonass on the River Shannon. For the Christmas season, 1973, the Lambert Puppet Theatre prepared three shows. Johnny Orfeo was a rock musical in Irish. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1973**, for details of these programmes).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1974

Twenty-Minute Tales was a new story programme, employing a variety of readers with graphic back-up. The anchor-writer was Tony Hickey. There were also occasional individual story items such as **The Goldfish and the Egg**, a Dutch story read by **Pádraigin Ni Mhaoileoin**. The Irish version of Rowel Frier's

cartoon feature, **Seán an Leipreachán**, read by Séamas O Tuama, got yet another repeat.

An Ghlúin Og was a variety and talent programme. In addition, a series of programmes featuring the **Irish Youth Orchestra** provided an outlet for young Irish people interested in serious music.

Why Not Try---? was an art and crafts programme presented by Bláithin Ni Chnáimhin.

Windows was a new film-based information programme. The voice-over was provided by Pádhraig O Raghallaigh and Máire Chinsealach.

Thousands of Irish children attend residential Gaeltacht language courses every summer. **Fág an Bealach** was a documentary on the topic.

In addition to **Amuigh Faoin Spéir**, Eamonn de Buitléir had a new nature programme in transmission, **An Saol Beo**. There was also a conservation series on topics such as whitefronted geese, with voice-over commentary by Eoin O Súilleabháin and others, and a documentary programme on the River Lee, **Rhapsody of a River**.

The **Bábaró** preschool programme was repeated, in line with the perception that preschool programmes can withstand substantial repetition.

Sports Club was reintroduced, with Jim Carney and a lady presenter, Christine Fulcher.

There was a further series of **Wanderly Wagon**, a film version of **Little Red Riding Hood** by Eamonn O'Connor,a puppet production of **Goldilocks and the Three Bears** by the Lambert Puppet Theatre, and a new animation series which would survive for a number of years, **Baile Beag**. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1974**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1975

An Saol Beo, **To the Waters and the Wild**, and **Amuigh Faoin Spéir** were wild life features made and presented by Eamonn de Buitléir and Gerrit van Geldern. **An Saol Beo** was in colour, and

the 1975 series dealt with under-water life. Gerrit van Geldern's **To the Waters and the Wild** concentrated on the Mediterranean environment.

Eureka was a quiz programme for schoolchildren.

Why Not Try..?, which had been initiated the previous year, was a crafts and activity programme presented by Hilary Orpen and Anne-Marie McDonell in which children attempted handcrafts and cookery.

Teatime Tales and **Twenty-Minute Tales** were story-programmes backed by graphics. Tony Hickey was a frequent contributor of scripts. A range of well-known actors and actresses read old and new stories. To quote two examples, Marie Keane read the **Kitty the Hare** stories of Victor O'D. Power. These were ghost stories. Aine Ni Mhuiri read **Eoinin na nEan**, the Irish language story by Patrick Pearse.

Look Around and **Windows** were voice-over information programmes based mainly on imported film material shot by a syndicating agency, **Visinews**. The **Look Around** commentary was done by Pearse Hutchinson.

There were two general audience religious programmes in the schedules, **Compass** and **Omega Point**.

Sports Club continued in transmission.

YOUNGLINE

Youngline was the prototype for a sequence of successful magazine/activity programmes lasting up to the present-day Jo-Maxi, modelled, perhaps, on the BBC's **Blue Peter**.

These programmes had a group of young and talented presenters working together, who not only presented but performed and participated in the activities which made up the show. These shows were access programmes; they involved young people throughout the country and actively promoted phone-in and other responses to the presentations. Occasionally the programmes engaged in fund-raising for charity. The programmes were also a launching-pad for television talent; many of the presenters went on to present programmes of their own in later years.

The drama provision included further episodes of **Wanderly Wagon**, a puppet film, **The Spinning Wheel**, an imported

story series with a voice-over narration in Irish, **An Choill Bheo**, and a new history drama series, **Irishmen and Irishwomen**. (c.f. **Appendix C : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1975**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1976

Hilary Orpen and Eamonn Lawlor were the joint presenters of the youth magazine programme, **Youngline**, for the 1976 season.

Children at Worship was a new religious programme.

Sports Club, with Jim Carney, Brendan O'Reilly and Christine Fulcher, continued. A specific sports series for young people dealt with **The Skills of Hurling**.

Terry Murphy's Dublin Zoo Programme, **Animal Trails**, topped the TAM ratings in January, 1976, with a score of 75.

Eamonn de Buitléir's **An Saol Beo** concentrated on the home environment. Gerret Van Gelderen went much further afield in **To the Waters and the Wild**. The year saw him on the road to India. He also contributed a geography quiz programme, **Where Do You Think We Are?**

Norris Davidson provided a general audience documentary on Irish forests, **From Seed to Sawdust**, and **A World of Houses**, an early evening general audience programme by Mike Murphy and David Shaw Smith, looked at some famous Irish big houses.

Eureka, a science programme, was presented by Jim Fahy and Pat Casey.

Lookaround and **Windows** were retained, and there was an additional informational film programme presented by MÂire O'Sullivan.

There was also a musical talent programme, **Make Music**.

Story provision with graphic backup continued with **Storyroom** and **Teatime Tales**. Well-known personalities such as actress/comedienne Rosaleen Linehan read from a wide range of established children's literature. There were also original contributions. Tony Hickey was a frequent contributor. There was a **Storyroom Special** in the Christmas programmes.

Drama contributions were mainly in the animation

category, with an RTE cartoon feature, a puppet film, further transmissions of **Wanderly Wagon**, a return of **Ri Râ** and a new animation series by Aidan Hickey, **An Saol ag Dul Thart**. There was another **Irishmen and Irishwomen** series, and the station produced a Christmas pantomime, **Cinderella**. **Yassu Corfu** was a three-part drama-documentary about Irish children on holiday on Corfu Island. (c.f. Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1976).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1977

Eamonn de Buitléir produced yet another variant of his nature programmes under the title of **World of Wild Life** in 1977. Gerret Van Gelderen brought back **To the Waters and the Wild**, and there was a documentary on the white-fronted goose, a topic of interest at the time to Irish naturalists. **Dresden in Drumcollagher** was a documentary about an Irish pottery.

Ri Râ was back again in 1977; there was a further series of **Irishmen and Irishwomen**, and the **Yassu Corfu** formula was applied with greater success in **Sophie**, a series of seven short films about the Summer activities of a nine-yer-old girl in Wicklow. **An Gairdin Alainn** was an imported story-programme series with a voice-over in Irish. **Magic Mike Tales** was a Wanderly Wagon spin-off. (c.f. Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1977).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1978

The previous season of **Amuigh Faoi'n Aer** was repeated. **To The Waters And The Wild** was back in the schedules, There was a new story programme, **Storyroom**. **Seân the Leprechaun** and **Wanderly Wagon** got further repeat showings. **Wanderly Wagon** had a special Christmas programme. There was another season of Aidan Hickey's animation series, **An Saol Ag Dul Thart**. On **Telefis Scoile** there was a repeat showing, for the benefit of Leaving Certificate students, of Seân O Tuama's historical play on surrender and regrant, **Gunna Cam agus Slabhra Oir**.

MAGAZINE/ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES

The main programming developments in the course of the year were in the magazine/activity area. Youngline was already established. There were two new magazine/activity programmes, Our Times and Let's Go!

Our Times was described in the pre-transmission publicity as a 'cheerfully different programme for young people, by and about themselves.' Selected teenagers would present the programme. The production team preferred to describe it as a journal rather than a magazine.

> 'The kids make the programme themselves. They'll pick the records they want to hear and place them on the turntable themselves....they'll choose the books and the films they want to review.'

The presenters were from sixteen to eighteen. The programme was studio-based.

Let's Go was an activity programme directed by Margaret Gleeson which moved out of studio.

Youngline, presented by Hilary Orpen and Eamonn Lawlor, was a studio-based crafts/activity programme.

The three programmes marked an accelerating trend towards magazine-type programming provision for children.

SBB INA SHUI

The year saw the launch of a very successful pop music programme in Irish, SBB Ina Shui, which frequently made the published TAM ratings.

The success of this programme was due to the individuality and personality of Seán Bán Breathnach and the compatibility of his co-presenter, Gráinne Ui Mhaitiú.

Seán was recruited by Joe O'Donnell, who liked his manner of presentation of pop music on his radio show on Radio na Gaeltachta, following the incorporation of the radio programme into an episode of Wanderly Wagon. The title SBB Ina Shui was a catch-phrase Seán used on his Radio na Gaeltachta programme. Ultan Macken reported in the RTE Guide in 1979 that

> "Seán is very proud that, despite the fact that his show is conducted totally in Irish, it manages to attract audiences of half a million, and that it

regularly makes the Top Ten TAM ratings."

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1979

There were organisational and personnel changes in 1979. Liam Ó Murchú retired. Programmes in Irish did not have a specific department in the new structure; a new dpeartment, Young People's Programmes, was created and the Head of this Department was Con Bushe.

There was a new popular music programme in the early evening, **It's Only Rock And Roll**, and occasional concert broadcasts of groups such as the **Boomtown Rats**. **SBB Ina Shui** continued in the schedules.

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated by **An Pota Phádhraig**, a variety show presented by Seán Bán Breathnach, and by **I, Patrick**, a dramatised presentation of St. Patrick's Confession.

Amuigh Faoin Aer, **To The Waters And The Wild**, and the magazine/activity programmes **Our Times**, **Let's Go** and **Youngline** continued during 1979.

A Christmas programme for children was broadcast from the Gaeltacht, **San Nioclás i gConamara**.

The year saw the launch of the pilot editions of **Bosco**, the new preschool programme for under-fives, which would be a successful out-reach series fronted by a small box puppet created by Eugene Lambert. The programme mix would be stories, games, songs and elementary crafts. The programme would generate a number of spin-off enterprises. The first programme appeared on Monday, 4th June, 1979. The producer was Joe O'Donnell, and David Byrne, Marion Richardson, Paul Burton and Gráinne Ui Mhaitiú were the presenters. It was a morning broadcast, with a repeat of the same edition at 4 p.m. and it went out three days a week. **Bosco** occasionally hosted illustrated and animated story material.

Pat's Hat marked the arrival of personality Pat Ingoldsby to children's programmes. His basic format was to bring a group of children into studio and talk to them.

A new series of **Wanderly Wagon**, a new series of **Baile Beag**, and a short film series from Northern Ireland, **Curious Eyes**,

made up the indigenous drama contribution to the children's schedules in 1979. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1979**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1980

Animal Trails, the Dublin Zoo programme, **Amuigh Faoin Aer**, and **To The Waters And The Wild**, were in the schedules for 1980 as new programmes and as repeats.

Pat's Hat, the chat and activity programme with Pat Ingoldsby, also returned.

SBB Ina Shui, the Irish language pop music programme jointly presented by Seán Bán Breathnach and Gráinne 'gleoite' Ui Mhaitiú continued its successful course, getting into the top TAM ratings in January.

In **Year of the Princess**, the Princess who had been chosen to preside over the UNESCO-designated **Year of the Child** looked back over her term of office.

There For The Taking was the title of a documentary on the Young Scientist of the Year Exhibition.

Painting for Pleasure was a tutorial art programme conducted by John Fitzmaurice Mills.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Bosco, the new pre-school programme, had survived the pilot launch of the previous year, and was now firmly established in a five days a week schedule, with two transmissions daily, the evening transmission being a repeat of the morning programme.

A Future in Mind was a career guidance programme for young people which went out at 7.25 p.m.

An Fhéile Scoldrámaiochta was a report on the national finals of the Irish language drama competitions for schools. Hundreds of schools participated annually in these competitions, presenting every possible variety of children's drama. Many of the contributions were original plays written by teachers. Like the **Slógadh** competitions, this festival proved the interest of children in drama, and the reservoir of available performing

talent if the national television service decided on a sustained provision of home-produced real-life television drama for Irish children. The festival also proved that children's drama need not be expensive, and that it can have many viable formats.

ANYTHING GOES

The magazine/activity programmes, **Youngline** and **Let's Go** also continued, but **Our Times** had been subsumed into a new Saturday morning outreach programme, **Anything Goes**.

Anything Goes was the particular contribution of the new Head of Young People's Programmes, Con Bushe. It was a 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ hour Saturday morning amalgam of young people's television entertainment, which included a varied menu of home-produced items and imported features. The presentation was a group effort by three presenters.

Anything Goes was an out-reach programme which invited young people into the studio; it went out to country locations by direct on-screen link; material was also filmed during the week and presented on the programme. The home-originated material included sports coverage, nature items and popular music.

The importance of **Anything Goes** was that it was an access programme. Children who tried hard enough could get themselves mentioned in the programme, and with some extra effort could participate in it.

Out-reach programmes of this kind can develop a media self-image in children, and provide a limited range of role and linguistic models---limited because the performance of children in factual programmes tends to be formal and inhibited and limited by the nature of the contact with the programme, in contrast with drama, the modelling potential of which is practically unlimited.

There were new series of **Wanderly Wagon** and of **Baile Beag** during 1980, and a short cartoon series by Aidan Hickey, **The Magic Piano**. The schedules also included a **Rock Nativity** play for general audiences. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1980**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1981

The was an active repeat policy in 1981 for home produced children's programmes. There were repeats of the careers guidance series, **A Future in Mind**, of the previous **Wanderly Wagon** season, of **Once Upon a Time**, by Jimmy O'Dea, and of Jimmy O'Dea's Christmas stories. **Curious Eyes**, first broadcast on RTE1 in 1980, was repeated on RTE 2.

Anything Goes continued on Saturday mornings. **Youngline** and **Pat's Hat** were also in the 1981 schedules.

Live was an early evening rock music show. **SBB Ina Shui** provided similar fare through the medium of Irish.

By This I Live was a series of interviews directed at young people in which well-known personalities outlined their convictions.

In **Alive, Alive O!** John O'Donovan recounted the history of Dublin.

The preschool programme, **Bosco**, maintained the momentum created the previous year.

1982 was the **Year of the Disabled** and to mark the designation there were two special programmes, **Let Me Win**, which concentrated on sport for the disabled, and **It's The Same World**, an information programme for handicapped children and those involved in their care.

The Christmas schedules included **Christmas in My Father's Time**, a story programme of seasonal reminiscences from Eamonn Kelly, a Christmas quiz in the **To the Waters and the Wild** series, a seasonal variety programme, **Christmas in the Castle**, a carol programme entitled **Kilmore Carols**, and a special **Wanderly Wagon** edition.

For Christmas Day, 1981, there was a special cartoon feature entitled **A Dog's Tale**, drawn by Aidan Hickey and based on a theme from the Book of Kells. **Lug**, an animation series, appeared in the course of the year, and a new language tuition series directed at general audiences, but of interest to young people, **Anois is Aris**, was also transmitted. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1981**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1982

Anything Goes constituted the main element of weekend home produced programming for children. Bosco, with a heavy repeat pattern, continued in transmission. **Youngline** was also there for 1982, in a new season and as a repeat series. The **SBB** show went on tour with the OBU, recording programmes around the country. **Anois is Aris** continued in the general audience schedules.

Breakaway was a new seven-week Summer activity programme for 7-13 year-olds who, according to producer Joe O'Donnell, quoted in the the RTE Guide of July 16th, 1982, "often get left out of programme plans." The presenters were Aonghus McAnally and Nuala Hayes. **Breakaway** was an out-and-about programme. Typical activities were a fix-your-own-bike item, fishing trips, write your own song, football skills, a sandcastle competition, a gold-prospecting trip, beachcombing.

There were two new quiz programmes, **Colleges in Question**, for schools, and **Caoga**, a quiz programme in Irish. **New Move** was a discussion programme for the 16 to 23 age-group, chaired by Ferdia Mac Anna.

Death Toll was a road safety programme. Special reports of national events of interest to young people included the **Slógadh** finals, the national **Community Games**, and **Scor na nÓg**, a special promotion of GAA games for young players. **The Lie of the Land** was a documentary programme on the Irish landscape. **To The Waters and the Wild** was also in transmission in 1982.

C.P. and Qwikswitch, the first home-produced feature in the science fiction genre, appeared in 1982, and a play for children in the Access Community Drama format, O'Donoghue's Revenge. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children**, 1982).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES. 1983

1983 was the 21st Anniversary of the setting up of Telefis Eireann/RTE and a number of programmes were re-run under the umbrella title of **Archive 21**. It should be mentioned that archive material was not as substantial as it might have been. In

the first decade or so, due to limited resources, and lack of a forceful archive policy, video tapes were consistently wiped for re-use. The wipe-and-re-use economy measure was a feature of many relatively small television services throughout the world.

One programme for young people which was repeated in the Archive 21 slot was a documentary about the life on the road of a popular Irish circus family, The Duffys.

Another Archive 21 programme was **Seosamh Mac Grianna**, the biographical play on the Donegal Gaeltacht writer which Deirdre Friel had produced in the 1960s.

There were a number of other repeat programmes which were not listed as archive material.

One of these was **Ditto**, an early informational cartoon by Quentin Mitchell.

The two David Shaw Smith film series, **Yassu Corfu** and **Sophie**, were also repeated. **Yassu Corfu** looked at the island of Corfu through the eyes of three Irish children; Sophie, Melissa, and Emma. The **Sophie** films were about the summer activities of one of these children, Sophie, in the grounds of her Wicklow home and at her grandmother's house.

Irishmen and Irishwomen, the historical series featuring Ronnie Drew, and the station's own **Rock Nativity** were scheduled again in 1983, as was **Flight of the Doves**, the film version of Walter Macken's children's novel.

Con Bushe, Head of Young People's Programmes, indicated in The Irish Broadcasting Review (Bushe : 1983) that the targeted audience for **Anything Goes** was children from six to twelve. Children in the middle years

> have a tremendous appetite for information about the world; they love action roles and heroes [Spiderman]; and it is part of the "in-thing" to talk about them. Magazine programmes like Youngline and Anything Goes meet some of these needs.

In the article he described **Anything Goes** as a 3 hour Saturday morning programme designed to cover a wide range of children's interests and to provide opportunities for access and participation to young people. The title reflected the spirit of the programme; it changed and developed in accordance with what

its young audiences wanted.

The programme was in two parts. The first part was pre-recorded and was mainly for very young audiences, with songs, stories, cartoons and make-and-do activities. The second part was live. The most popular items were the sports quiz, the talent competition, the pop music items, "and, of course, The Pink Panther".

The **Anything Goes** team occasionally produced "specials". An **Anything Goes** special transmitted in May, 1983, was entitled **The Danny Keegan Story**, and dealt with the life a young Dubliner.

No TAM ratings were available for **Anything Goes**, but Con Bushe was confident that the programme was successful in both single and multi-channel areas.

Anything Goes, and variations of this Saturday morning programme, looked secure for the future because the principal producer of the show, Bob Collins, moved up the administrative ladder in the course of the year to become Assistant Controller of Programmes on RTE 1.

The **SBB Ina Shui** show, on tour in 1983, was described by Con Bushe as a

> "mad mixture of pop, rock and tradition i nGaeilge binn blasta, which had proved that the young audience can be reached through Irish, if the subject material is interesting and well presented".

Con Bushe was equally enthusiastic about **Youngline**, also in the 1983 schedules. This programme, like **Anything Goes**, catered for a wide age-span, from 6 to 15, and had items on adventure sports, how things work, children in hospital, an item described as the "dream machine", and an item in which children presented their own town to the viewers. **Youngline** had been very successful at fundraising. In 1980 the young audience raised £62,000 for Kampuchean refugees. In 1981 the figure was £72,000, which helped build a centre for autistic young people. In 1982 the **Youngline** audience provided six minibuses to bring travellers' children to school. **Youngline** also published a **Youngline Annual** which had proved commercially viable.

Con Bushe in this article also outlined some of the

thinking behind Bosco. Bosco was directed at children under the age of six.

> "We know that it helps this age-group to be presented with good models of language-use, to be shown constructive activities and to be given a desire to achieve. We know that they particularly like programmes with songs, rhythm, animation. We know that programmes for them need a special kind of pacing.

Not everyone would agree that Bosco invariably offered good models of language-use. Quite often there was excessive verbiage both by Bosco and the presenters; also presenters communicating with the puppet frequently resorted to a patronising type of 'baby-talk' which would not be acceptable in normal communication with 6-year-old children.

Bosco, despite this, was a popular programme. Cutbacks in 1981 led to the cancellation of the morning transmission, the cancellation generating, according to Con Bushe, a storm of protest. He estimated the potential stay-at-home preschool audience at half-a-million.

In the course of the year a short preschool play and activity programme in Irish, **Dilin O Deamhas**, was launched. **Dilin O Deamhas** was a follow-up to **Triopal Treapal** and **Bábaró**. The presenter was Róisin Ni Shé, well-known as harpist, singer and educator. **Dilin O Deamhas** had a regular puppet story feature, **Muintir na Móna**.

Viewfinder was an interesting media programme in which Tom McArdle reviewed the latest developments in video and film. The programme reflected increasing audience awareness of these media areas. This awareness was gaining pace as home video sets become more easily available. **Anything Goes** also had a video slot and engaged occasionally in home-made video production and presentation.

The Texaco Art Competition attracted several thousand entries from children throughout Ireland each year and the 1983 schedules included a report on the competition.

The Rubella Problem was a much-needed Health Information programme stressing the importance of adolescent girls being inoculated against Rubella. **Give Us The Chance** was a programme about mental handicap.

Nature series presented during the year included **To The Waters and the Wild** and **Island Wild Life**. **Some Great Irish Gardens** was an early-evening documentary series presented by Norris Davidson.

Pat's Hat, featuring Pat Ingoldsby, had become **Pat's Chat**, with the same presenter. **Eureka**, a quiz programme, continued during the year. Another quiz programme in which the competitors were youth clubs, **Top Club**, was launched in 1983. **Blood, Sweat and Tears** was described as a rock documentary.

There was another series of **C.P and Qwikswitch**. **Wanderly Wagon** had been subsisting on repeat showings. Its demise was finally acknowledged. It was replaced by **Fortycoats**, a series built around a favourite **Wanderly Wagon** character. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1983**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1984

Activities and information were the main themes of home produced programming during 1984. The magazine programmes **Anything Goes** and **Youngline** continued, as did **Top Club**, a quiz for youth clubs, and **Pat's Chat**. **Room Outside**, the general audience gardening programme, included a children's garden item. **Jobsuss** was a work preparation and general career guidance programme. **Painting Pictures** was a new art programme presented by Don Conroy, who would make a major contribution to nature and art programmes for children over the next few years.

There were a number of documentary features in the early evening schedules. **Dart** was a film which highlighted the dangers of playing near city railway lines, of particular relevance to Dublin where children played along railway embankments and threw stones at passing trains. **Annamakerrig** was a documentary on the resident writer's centre located in the former home of actor and director Tyrone Guthrie in County Monaghan. **SVD** told the story of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the work of that organisation for the poor. **Atlantean** was a general audience programme exploring the pre-Celtic cultural links between Ireland and North Africa, made by Bob Quinn.

The young people's schedules catered for a variety of musical tastes. **MT USA** was a popular show of general appeal featuring imported videos presented by Vincent Hanley. The programme **Video File** covered the same ground. There was a programme called **Superstars** on the list, and a feature on local bands, **Country Brass**. **Tip Tops** was a presentation of the better acts from the Tops of the Town variety competitions.

Dilin O Deamhas, the preschool programme in Irish for children attending all-Irish schools, Gaeltacht children and children in Irish-speaking families continued, making five appearances a week, including repeat showings. **Bosco**, a more substantial offering for the English-speaking preschool audience, remained in transmission, generating a healthy demand for the spin-off **Bosco** puppet replicas.

Island Wild Life was a nature series made by Eamonn de Buitléir. The other wild life programme, **To The Waters and the Wild**, which had a much wider frame of reference, also continued during the year.

The schedules included a new series of **Fortycoats**, a short film called **The Dandelion on the Dungheap**, and **The Ballinch Bowl**, a film for young people with an Irish theme, made in Ireland by a German production team. RTE also relayed an EBU drama series, **The Adventure Show**, which included an Irish contribution, **Kevin's World**. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1984**].

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1985

In his article for the Irish Broadcasting Review, 1983, Con Bushe referred to a real dilemma for "programme policy makers in RTE". To develop new programmes they must "cannibalize" good programmes already in existence. The example he quoted was the 1983 problem-centred programme, **New Moves**. The Young People's Department wanted to cater for viewers in the late teens and early twenties. This could only be done by suspending the transmission of **Youngline** and transferring the team and the **Youngline** resources to the new programme. Now **Youngline** itself has disappeared. It

was probably cannibalized by the late-night new discussion and youth culture programme for young people, **TV Gaga**.

TV Gaga aimed for the same audience as **New Moves**. It was screened unusually late, from 11.10 p.m. to 12.45 a.m., and was presented by Liam Mackey and Flo McSweeney. The programme had an abrasive texture because of the uninhibited character of the discussion; young people from problem categories were invited into the studio to air their views and they did so in their own forceful idiom.

The Enlightened Mind was a programme for discussion of religious topics. **Pat's Chat** was also a discussion programme where Pat Ingoldsby chatted with very young viewers in studio.

Like **Youngline**, when resources were available, the **Anything Goes** team made special feature programmes. One such programme, repeated separately a number of times, was **The Brandon Adventure**, an outing by the team to Mount Brandon in Kerry.

Top Club, a magazine programme for youth clubs which incorporated a quiz, achieved a top TAM rating in the course of the year.

There were a number of home produced documentaries in or adjacent to children's viewing time.

The Brendan Voyage was a documentary by Tim Severin of his successful voyage to America in a hide boat following the legendary course of St. Brendan the Navigator.

Oileán Eile was Muiris Mac Conghail's film about the Great Blasket.

Remembering Jimmy O'Dea was an archive programme about the celebrated Dublin actor and performer who died in the mid-1960s.

David Shaw Smith presented a film on the work of Kerry-based artist, **Pauline Bewick**.

There was a report by Pat Kenny of the work of the relief agency, **Concern**, in **Bangla Desh**.

The **Access Community Television** team continued to present its substantial series of locally-initiated information and discussion programmes.

A Home in the Green Land was a series about the

'Great Houses' of Ireland.

There For The Taking was a report on the Young Scientist of the Year competition.

The Habitats of Ireland was a nature programme. **The Seas Must Live** was a marine conservation documentary. **To The Waters and the Wild**, Gerret Van Geldern's nature programme, was also screened during the year.

Summerfest '85 reported on the Corrymeela Project, which was a community relations venture in Northern Ireland.

Such Sweet Compulsion, an EBU project component, was a new music programme for young musicians, produced by Joe O'Donnell. Young performers also featured in **Fleadh '84**, a report on the annual festival of Irish folk music, **Fleadh Ceoil**, and in **Slógadh '85**, a report on the finals of the Irish language talent competitions for young people. **Video File** continued to review popular music videos. **Joanne and Tequila Sunrise** was a popular music programme. **Roll VT**, the media programme, was also in the schedules, and ran a competition for home made videos.

Dilin O Deamhas and **Bosco** continued as repeats and as new series.

The year saw the transmission of **Stowaway**, a children's play by Joe O'Donnell produced in association with the EBU, a voice-over series in Irish, **Doireann agus Daideo**, and a forty-minute drama-documentary film, **A Second of June**. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1986

By 1986 the video cassette had come to dominate popular music presentation on television. Many of the popular music videos were promotional material, expensively and artistically produced and designed to achieve maximum impact within a three-minute span. The videos were often highly dramatic in character, relaying substantial visual and aural narratives and could with some accuracy be described as contemporary mini-operas. Most were imports. The programmes were directed at children and young adults.

The most popular video programme was Vincent Hanley's **MT. USA**, which featured occasionally in the top TAM ratings. The material was invariably American. Other video relay programmes were **Space Station Videos**, presented by Bryan Murray, **Visual Eyes**, a programme presented by Dave Fanning, and **Video File**, in which popular performers were interviewed by Dave Fanning, Marty Whelan and others. The presenters usually had high profiles as disc jockeys on Radio 2. **Chartspot** was another popular music programme.

Festival Rock was a live transmission of a concert in the National Stadium in Dublin.

Megamix was a live popular music programme transmitted incongruously from a Gothic church hall which was part of the Christ Church complex and presented by Flo McSweeney, one of the presenters on **TV Gaga**, and by Kevin Sharkey.

There were a number of discussion programmes, **Pat's Chat** catering for primary school children in an informal way, and **Borderline** and **TV Gaga**, with musical interludes, providing a platform for intense debate on hitherto taboo topics. **Talk It Over**, presented by Ciana Campbell, was a more intimate discussion programme which examined topics of concern to young people. **Face of the Earth** was a similar programme concentrating on environmental issues, presented by Ciana Campbell and David Cabot.

The discussion programmes and the music programmes confirm the station perception, articulated by Con Bushe, that home produced programming should at this stage cater for young people in the upper age brackets.

The magazine format was perceived as the best form of programming for the upper middle age-segment, roughly 9 to 15. In August there was a new programme, **Box Camera**, presented by Aonghus McAnally, Aine Lalor and Tony Murray. In the Autumn schedules this was replaced by **Off Yer Brush**, a youth programme presented by Brush Shiels, assisted by Veronica Coburn. The presenters of these programmes were versatile performers in many areas and took part energetically in the programme activities.

Anything Goes bifurcated into two different programmes, each catering for the different audiences identified by Con Bushe. The earlier programme catered for younger children

and became **Pajo's Junkbox**. Pajo, the presentation medium, was an outsize rat puppet. **Anything Goes** now concentrated on the upper age-bracket. Both programmes presented a wide range of imported features, cartoons, videos, series and films, interspaced with outreach items such as competitions and outside broadcasts.

Six programmes in a series called **Púirini** were transmitted. **Púirini** was an Irish language magazine produced by Deirdre Friel in association with an independent production company called Cocó Productions.

All of these programmes made television more accessible as a medium for young people, bringing television crews and personnel to schools, youth clubs and other venues of youth activity, and giving Irish young people considerable media experience and confidence.

Bosco and **Dilin O Deamhas** continued. Both programmes featured animation drama and story material backed by graphics. **Dilin O Deamhas** had a continuous puppet story feature, **Muintir na Móna. Muintir na Móna** was written by Gabriel Rosenstock. The puppets were made by Jimmy Quinn, who created **Baile Beag**. The characters included Móinin and Domhnaillin, their grandfather Dado, a fiddling spider and other creatures. The family were turf-cutters and the programme had a peat-bog environment.

Tábhacht an tSúgartha was an information programme for parents and directors of Irish-language preschool playgroups, which, like Irish-language primary schools, were proliferating in the 1980s.

Sport Aid was a fund-raising activity for Ethiopian famine relief in which many young people participated.

International Youth Knockout was an international outdoor game and activity series in which Ireland became involved in 1986. The programme was presented by Aonghus MacAnally.

Storyteller was a 12-part story series in which Eddie Lenihan in seanachai guise told his own version of Irish folktales.

Paint for Fun was an art programme presented by Don Conroy. Don Conroy also presented a 7-part Lenten story programme for children with his own graphics, **The Story of Jesus**.

Top Club, a programme for youth clubs featuring a quiz, achieved a top TAM rating in January, 1986.

The **Access Community Television** series presented a programme giving the views of handicapped people on their situation was presented in 1986.

The **Telefis Scoile** programme **Six Generations** was repeated in the general schedules. **Telefis Scoile** had been effectively inoperative since the mid-1970s when the Department of Education withdrew its funding.

The **Anois is Aris** series was repeated.

To The Waters and The Wild, and the zoo programme, **Animal Trails**, made up the nature programme provision.

There was a report on the **Young Scientists'** competition.

DEMPSEY'S DEN

This was a major innovation in the presentation of children's programmes, inspired by similar developments on other stations. **Dempsey's Den** was an umbrella presentation format; Ian Dempsey, 25 years of age, a disc jockey on Radio Two, introduced the children's programmes collectively and individually and had one or two specific items of his own such as **Happy Birthday** and **Video Time**.

The format was a powerful bonding factor for the child audience; they related to the presenter, wrote to him, sent him in drawings, phoned in, sang songs for him over the phone and stayed around to watch the programmes he introduced. He had occasional personalities in the studio with him, and invited children on phone-link to talk to these personalities.

Presentation and continuity assumed programme status in their own right. An incidental benefit for the child viewer was increased media sophistication; the presentation gave him considerable information about the programme, and the presenter's chatter also transmitted information about the workings of RTE.

Later, with the addition of puppets **Zig and Zag**, the continuity material became the main motivation for watching the programmes.

It wasn't all altruistic, however. The continuity also facilitated the promotion of spin-off programme products such as the **Anything Goes** annual or the **Bosco** puppet. In addition, the seemingly-innocuous "We'll take a break now!" precipitated a barrage of child-related advertising, mainly in the confectionery and soft drinks categories.

Con Bushe had this to say about home-produced children's programmes and advertising in his article in the Irish Broadcasting Review:

> Children and young people's programmes cannot be regarded by RTE as programmes that do not generate income. The popularity of programmes like Youngline, SBB Ina Shui and Bosco are is reflected in the TAM ratings and these programmes have their share of commercials. An analysis of the commercials shown indicates that the young audience (and their parents) are perceived as "markets" and advertising time is sold accordingly. The clutter of ads is particularly noticeable before Christmas and their insertion around programmes like Bosco and Wanderly Wagon show clearly that our behaviour towards our children is not always consistent with the ideals we cherish for them.

Fast Forward, an all-Ireland video competition, was evidence of a growing interest in home-made video production. The production groups often materialised from media studies classes in schools. Home-made videos frequently featured in the magazine programmes.

In January, 1986, **Newsline**, a weekly 17 minute news programme for children and young people, edited by journalist Andrew Kelly, was launched. The prototype was the BBC programme, John Craven's Newsround. The objective of the programme was to screen actuality items of interest to children and young people which did not surface in the main news bulletins.

Baile Beag, Dilin O Deamhas, Doireann agus Daideo, Fortycoats and **Seán the Leprechaun** featured in the schedules during the year. There were three shows from the Lambert Puppet Theatre, and seven plays by young amateur groups were trasmitted in the **Access Community Drama** project. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1986**).

HOME PRODUCED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES, 1987

Joe O'Donnell was now Head of Young People's Programmes. The year saw an entrenchment of existing programmes and several new ventures. There was also increased provision for upper age brackets in the young people's category and evidence of awareness of young people entering employment and of facets of young people's lives other than school.

The **Borderline** programme absorbed or 'cannibalized' **TV Gaga** and continued to provide an opinion forum and a showcase of young adult culture for viewers from 18 to 30. Ciana Campbell intensified her dialogue with teenagers and young adults in **Talk It Over** and Carolyn Fisher provided a similar service in a youth discussion programme, **Facts of Life.**

Framed and **Young View** were teenage opinion forums transmitted during 1987. For very young viewers there was **Pat's Chat** and **Pat's Pals.**

Nothing To It was a weekly programme for teenagers with Veronica Coburn, Pauline McGlynn and Mikel Murfi which probed the concerns of young school-leavers such as job-hunting, recreation, accommodation, computers, financial survival and so on in dramatic format. The basic setting in **Nothing To It** was a grotty bedsitter from which the trio emerged every morning to tackle a hostile world. Each playlet was followed by a discussion and studio analysis. The series was produced by Gerard Stembridge and Anne McCabe.

There was a specific report in the course of the year on the **IDA Student Enterprise Awards.**

The music programme provision also had a young adult emphasis. The major musical commitment of the year was **Megamix,** a presentation in live disco format. The pop video was now an established component of youth culture and the established video programmes, **Mt. USA** and **Visual Eyes** continued, augmented by new programmes **Video Time, Hotline Video Show** and **Finding Fax Future.**

The schedules also took account of the fact that many young viewers were interested in more serious types of music. **Such Sweet Compulsion** was an EBU series featuring young musicians with which Joe O'Donnell was involved. There was also a concert

programme, **Musicians of the Future**, and **Piano Plus**, a series of piano selections played by international concert pianist John O'Connor. **Tune In** was an excellent musicology programme in which Finnuala McSharry introduced and demonstrated a wide range of musical instruments.

The Saturday morning schedule was re-organised. **Pajo's Junkbox**, catering for younger viewers, was retained, but **Anything Goes**, directed at older children, was replaced by **Action Station Saturday**, described as an all-action, all-fun programme with cartoons, clips and competitions. The presenters were Mary Fitzgerald, Barry Lang, and Majella Nolan.

Off Yer Brush, the youth magazine conducted by presenters/performers Brush Shiels and Veronica Coburn continued with some success.

The popular history series **Six Generations**, originally transmitted on Telefis Scoile, was repeated.

Eureka was a schools quiz programme in Irish presented by Michael Davitt.

Zero was a general audience science-based information series on the model of **Tomorrow's World**.

Newsline, the 17-minute news programme which presented news of interest to children and young people not normally available from the news bulletins, continued.

The art and crafts programmes in the the schedules were **Paint for Fun**, with Don Conroy, and a new, versatile crafts programme, **How do You Do?**, with Mary Fitzgerald, which is still running. (1992)

Don Conroy seems to have been the only medium for religious programming for young people in 1986 and 1987. In 1987, in **The Promise**, a 7-part series, he described and painted seven scenes from the Old Testament. The programme note tells us that this was a Lenten series provided at the request of Religious Programmes producer, Fr. Billy Fitzgerald.

The year saw a continuation of **Bosco** and **Dilin O Deamhas**, and there was a series from Gaeltacht schools called **Ar Scoil**, described in the RTE Guide as

> **Sraith clÁracha le garsÚin i mbunscoileanna i gConamara. Curtha i lÁthair ag MÁirtin DÁibhi.**

Léiritheoir : Micheál O Conaola.

Máirtin Dáibhi and Micheál O Conaola were a Radio na Gaeltachta team. The Radio na Gaeltachta team also signalled their interest in television by the presentation of two features on curragh racing, **Ar na Maidi**, a report on Féile na gCurrach, and **The Jimmies of Inishmakenna**, a profile of a great curragh racing team. Currach competitions are a good example of the type of exciting indigenous material invariably ignored by conventional sports programming.

RTE contributed to the **International Youth Knockout** contests in 1987 and also reported on the **Community Games** in Mosney, Co. Meath.

There were two new story programmes. **Ten Minute Tales** was a new series of stories told by Eddie Linehan and others. Maureen Potter read four stories in the series. Many of the stories were original. The schedules also included **Aunt Poppy's Storytime**. Aunt Poppy was an American lady resident in Ireland, Jean Darling. Her programme had been popular on Radio Two, and some of the material had been published in book form.

Dempsey's Den entrenched itself as a permanent presentation format for afternoon programmes. Happy Birthday was a regular feature of the presentation schedule. Birthday greetings were sent to young viewers. A photograph of the named child was usually screened. On one occasion **The Den** went to hospital, and the presentation of programmes was done from a children's ward.

Nature programmes in the schedules were **To The Waters and the Wild**, **Eamonn de Buitléir's Ireland**, and another Eamonn De Buitléir programme, **Tar Amach Faoin Aer**. A new development was the sponsorship by HB Ice Cream of the Dublin Zoo programme, **Animal Trail**.

Fortycoats contributed two six-part drama series. There was a new series of **Baile Beag**. **The Johnston Monster**, a CFF film about a legendary monster at the bottom of an Irish lake, was also transmitted. (c.f. **Appendix A : Home Produced Drama for Children, 1987**).

APPENDIX C.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA :1962---1987

Introduction

Appendix C gives a detailed overview of imported children's drama for the period under review, and of imported drama peripheral to the children's schedules, and in other areas of the general schedules, of interest to or relevant to children. Scheduling of some categories followed erratic patterns. Feature films, for instance, were rarely scheduled in the children's programme band.

This appendix summarises the major component of the provision which is the subject of this thesis. The details, and supporting information and comment, come mainly from the schedules as published in the RTV Guide and the RTE Guide, but the appendix also draws on other sources such as the base literature where the drama is an adaptation, and on peripheral media literature.

We analyse this component in generic and thematic categories in Chapters Three, Four and Five and contrast it with the home produced component, for which it provided the immediate competition within the schedule. In terms of gratifications, enrichment, ideology and value loading, of dependable or skewed versions of reality, the schedule content in this appendix is representative of the more substantial and better resourced provision on BBC, on ITV, on Channel Four, on the satellite channels, and of screen drama available on video.

The wide range of themes, situations and treatments represented by the material in this appendix helps to identify the the categories missing from the domestic provision and as such the appendix forms an ideas reservoir for those concerned with the creation of children's drama.

The range of drama programmes catalogued impinge on the perception of television studies that television content is

myth in a metaphorical sense ; the actuality of schedule content suggests that television output is substantially myth in a formal sense : formal fantasy is clearly the the dominant category. The compilation in this appendix also illustrates the immense debt of screen drama to literature.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1962

Imported television drama in the children's schedules was almost exclusively in the series or serial format. Serialised adaptations of literary works formed the main category of imported programming in the children's schedules. The titles were **An Age of Kings** (based on Shakespeare's History Plays); **The History of Mr. Polly** (H. G.Wells); **Our Mutual Friend** (Charles Dickens); **The Last Chronicles of Barset** (Anthony Trollope); **Little Women,** and **Jo's Boys** (Louisa M. Alcott); **The Treasure Seekers** (E.M.Nesbitt); **The Moonstone** (Wilkie Collins) and **The Master of Ballintrae** (R. L. Stevenson).

The then current assumption that classical material of any type was appropriate reading or viewing material for children would seem to be confirmed by these selections. There is a further aspect. **The Age of Kings** had been produced by Michael Barry, Controller of Programmes, when he worked for the BBC.

The most enlightened acquisition, if our criterion is drama relevant to the actuality of children's lives, was probably E. Nesbitt's **The Treasure Seekers**. Although this was written in 1899 and set in late Victorian times, it was a child-centred serial, and quite successful as television drama.

The Treasure Seekers concerned the efforts of the Bastable children to raise money. John Rowe Townsend, writing about the whole series of Bastable novels, tells us:

> **The Bastables first try actually digging for treasure; then they try being detectives, selling poems, rescuing a princess, borrowing from a money-lender and answering an advertisement that says 'any lady or gentleman can easily earn two pounds a week in their spare time.' These various attempts either fail to**

> come off or else succeed in some quite different way from the one intended. (Townsend : 1965 : 103)

Series set in the American West and Mid-West were also a significant category in the first year of transmission. These were **Rin-Tin-Tin**, **Kit Carson**, **Buckskin**, **Annie Oakley** and **The Cisco Kid**. In the week beginning on Monday, July 9th, 1962, to pick a week at random, the children's slot featured, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, three Western series, **Buckskin**, **Annie Oakley**, and **The Cisco Kid**. Maeve Conway clearly believed that children were attracted by Westerns.

The animated drama series were Bom **the Little Drummer**, **Muffin the Mule**, **Heckle and Jeckle** and **The BBC Puppet Theatre**, which began with an episode called Wonky Ward and featured a set of characters called the **Crumpot Candles**. Cartoon features were in relatively short supply as yet. **Muffin the Mule** was British; **Heckle and Jeckle** was American; Bom **the Little Drummer** was a British product.

Imported information was quite strong, with a documentary in the schedules most weeks. There was also a regular information programme, **Eye to Eye**, a science programme, **Watch Mr. Wizard**, a history information programme, **You Are There**, and a French language feature, **Paulette Grise**.

In addition to **You are There**, there was a historical drama serial, **Three Golden Nobles**, set in Tudor times.

Adjacent to the children's schedules were a number of general audience programmes which children watched. These included Mr. Ed., a situation comedy about a talking horse, and two American school-based programmes, **Our Miss Brooks**, and **The Bronx Zoo**.

The Shirley Temple Storybook presented well-known international folktales such as **Rapunzel** and **Sleeping Beauty** in dramatised format. The former American child star was now a teenager and played lead roles in the dramatisations.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1963

The selection of imported drama in the schedules retained the characteristics noted for 1962. Dramatised classics predominated. These were mainly of BBC origin. The prevailing formats were the serial and series, demonstrating that the main strategy of schedule compilation, block seasonal bookings, had already been acquired by the programme planners. (Esslin : 1982)

This strategy also militated against home production. As pressure increased on the children's programmes department, the inclination to schedule 13-part and 26-part serials, and interminable animation series, strengthened.

Some of the series mentioned for 1962, **The Age of Kings, The Moonstone, The Master of Ballintrae** and **The Treasure Seekers**, were still in the schedules in the new year.

New titles were **The Splendid Spur**, a serial about the Cromwellian Wars, **St. Ives**, a serialised adaptation of the historical novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, serialisations of **Huckleberry Finn** and **Tom Sawyer**, representing American literature, and a film version of Swift's **Gulliver's Travels** as a Christmas Day presentation.

The literature selection, for the most part, had a heavy didactic emphasis. The bulk of it was historical drama.

The perception that some drama in the schedules should reflect the immediate reality of children's lives was obviously not a major concern of the programme planners in 1962 and 1963, but nevertheless such relevance was there.

Three serials were listed about which little information was given. These were **My Three Sons**, a serial featuring a horse, **Champion**, and a a Canadian serial, **The Boy Next Door**.

The magpies **Heckle and Jeckle** survived. There was a new animation feature, **Leave it to Beaver**. A new and important advent to the schedules was the **Hanna-Barbera** cartoon series. This was commodity television, produced in assembly-line environments and available in vast quantities at cheap rates. The **Hanna-Barbera** features would be followed in due course by the products of Warner

Brothers and the Disney Studios.

The commercial commodity aspect of this type of programming did not necessarily mean that it was of poor quality. On the contrary, it was produced in an intensely competitive environment and was highly market-orientated. It was an exploitation in the new and voracious medium of television of the demand already well established for comics in print media and for the cartoon feature in the cinema.

Bought-in programming for children would increasingly feature this type of international market-place package, which made for easy scheduling within strict budgetary limits, and which would further militate against increased budgetary allocation for home-produced children's programming.

The **Shirley Temple Storybook** was still in the schedules. **Annie Oakley, Kit Carson, The Cisco Kid** and **Rin-Tin-Tin** were retained. Situation comedies on the fringe were **Mr. Ed.** and **Bachelor Father.**

The schedules also included a major anthology series, **Children's TV Around the World**, produced by an American institute, The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. **The School Around The Corner** was the Irish contribution to this series. (c.f. **Appendix B, 1962**).

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1964

The shortness of the list reflected the apparent decision to cut back on imported material

My Friend Flicka, Champion, and **Rin-Tin-Tin** were animal stories, indicating a perception that children were interested in this type of programme. **My Friend Flicka** was about the relationship between a boy and a half-wild filly. The series was based on a book by Mary O'Hara.

The **Hanna-Barbera** cartoons were there in strength, and the block-purchase of cartoon packages now extended to **Disneyland.** In addition to cartoons the **Disneyland** package included information and drama films.

The 'classical' genre had almost disappeared from the

imported drama list. There was, however, the **Katy** series, based on the books of Susan Coolidge, first published in 1872. **Katy** would prove a popular programme with Irish children. On one occasion at least the programme featured in the TAM ratings.

There was a new cowboy serial, **Tombstone Territory.**

Another new acquisition was **Our Gang**, a highly successful 'neighbourhood' series in America.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1965

Dramatised literary classics reasserted themselves after a year's absence. **Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Alice in Wonderland**, and **The Wild Stallion** were cinema films which were transmitted on Sunday afternoon. **The Old Curiosity Shop** was a serialisation of the Dickens novel.

Circus Boy was an adventure series. Western genre series which were retained were in the schedules were **Rin-Tin-Tin** and **Tombstone Territory. The Shirley Temple Storybook** series was also retained.

Endless supplies of **Popeye, Huckleberry Hound**, and other **Hanna-Barbera** and **Disney** and **Warner Brothers** cartoon packages were available for painless and cheap programming. An occasional Polish cartoon also featured in the schedules.

New commodity series such as **Flipper**, a series featuring a dolphin , were coming on stream.

Underwater film techniques would add a new adventure genre to the selection, represented in 1965 by **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea.**

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1966

The cartoon packages **Disneyland, Huckleberry Hound, Magilla Gorilla, Animaland** and **Felix the Cat** dominated the imported drama segment. There was also a puppet feature, **Gumby.**

Lassie, the collie dog, made her first appearance, and would remain in the schedules in a variety of manifestations up to the present day. A general audience safari-type programme,

Daktari, was also scheduled.

Hurricane was a film set in the West Indies. There was a ten-episode version of **The Oddyssey**.

Science fiction, reflecting increased interest in this genre, was represented by **The Stranger**, a science fiction serial for children, and the underwater drama series, **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**.

The films of **Charlie Chaplin** were also listed.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1967

Lassie, **Circus Boy**, and **Kip and David**, introduced the previous year, continued in the schedules.

New variants of the Western made their appearance, with **Daniel Boone**, a frontier series, and **Boots and Saddles**, based on a US Fifth Cavalry regiment.

The Three Stooges represented film comedy.

General audience programmes of interest to young people were **Batman**, and **The Monkees**, a comedy based on a pop-group of the Beatle variety.

Cartoon packages continued to proliferate. The latest large-volume arrival was **The Flintstones**. The schedules also featured **Magilla Gorilla**, **Animaland**, **Melotoons**, **Disneyland**, **Cartoon Time**, **Warner Cartoons**, and **Felix the Cat**, as well as regular ad hoc cartoon inserts.

In the 1950s Hollywood refugees from the McCarthyite witch-hunt began to settle in England and to write for local television series. One such series was **The Adventures of Robin Hood**. It now appeared in the RTE schedules. 143 episodes of this serial were made for ITV between 1956 and 1960. The catchy signature tune "**Robin Hood, Robin Hood, riding through the glen**" became a top-selling record, dominating the Top Twenty charts throughout 1956. This was a programme made for children which had achieved a large general audience in Britain.

Another variant of the same theme, **The King's Outlaw**, was also listed.

A new source for children's drama had been discovered-

--Australia. The schedules featured three Australian serials : **The Magic Boomerang**, a cartoon series, **The Terrific Adventures of the Terrible Ten**, in the 'gang' genre, and **Adventures of the Seaspray**, a swashbuckling serial set in the South Pacific.

A new adventure series was listed, **Captain Zeppos**. There was also an adventure travelogue, **William and Peter in Tangier**.

'Classical' material had a strong representation, with **Lorna Doone**, **David Copperfield**, **The Count of Monte Cristo**, **Robinson Crusoe** and a repeat of **An Age of Kings**. **The Count of Monte Cristo**, like the **Adventures of Robin Hood**, was an ITV production. It was a low-budget adventure series. Its leading actor, George Dolenz, is described in The ITV Encylopaedia of Adventure (Rogers, 1988) as "**having more buckle than swash.**"

The acquisition of **Camberwick Green** indicated an awareness of the preschool audience.

Snow White on Water, described as a "Ski Spectacular", was an imaginative reworking of the well-known folktale.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1968

The list of cartoon packages expanded considerably in 1968. In addition to the continuing presence of **Popeye**, **The Funny Company**, **Felix the Cat**, **Disneyland**, and **The Flintstones**, the schedules included **Precious Pup and the Hill Billy Bears**, **Quickdraw McGraw**, **Bozo the Clown** and **Honky Von Tonk**.

Cartoons from Europe were also scheduled. Poland contributed a range of individual cartoons, and two series, **The Adventures of the Blue Knight** and **Lolek and Bolek**. **The Saga of Noggin the Nog** came from Denmark. **Belle and Sebastian**, a series about a boy and a giant dog, came from Switzerland.

The notable features of the imported drama lists were the new preschool programmes, **Trumpton**, **The Magic Roundabout** and **Ivor the Engine**. **Filopat and Patofil** and **Pogleswood** also belonged to this category. **Tales of the River Bank** was a series in which voice-over dialogue was appended to the filmed activities of familiar riverside fauna, creating characterisation and narrative.

There were further series of The Adventures of Robin Hood, The Adventures of the Seaspray, Captain Zeppos, The Monkees and Daniel Boone.

The list also included some interesting new serials from British television, such as The Flower of Gloster, the historical drama, The Flight of the Heron and Orlando. The Flower of Gloster was a canal barge story, The Flight of the Heron had a Scottish setting and dealt with the Jacobean rebellion, and Orlando centred on Orlando O'Connor, described as a "lovable rogue," the friend of teenagers Steve and Jenny who had inherited a private detective agency from their uncle. The locations for the series were in London's dockland.

Other drama series listed were Circus Everywhere, based on circus life, Maja, set in India, about a boy and his elephant, The War of the Roses, a BBC historical series, and The Legend of Mark Twain, a dramatisation of the American writer's life story.

The Emperor's New Clothes and A Thousand and One Nights appeared in the Christmas schedules. There were also comedy films throughout the year featuring Laurel and Hardy, Abbot and Costello and Buster Keaton.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1969

There was a heavy diet of cartoon packages, reflecting the ever-increasing supply of this kind of material on the international market. The most volumnious new packages were Woody Woodpecker, Bugs Bunny, Top Cat, The Roadrunner Show and Mr. Magoo. Other new packages were The Adventures of Little Joe, Swifty and Shorty, and Magicadabra. Quickdraw McGraw, Bozo the Clown, The Flintstones and Disneyland were also in the schedules.

Some extensive series featuring animals, which would remain in the schedules for decades rather than years, were introducing and establishing themselves. Skippy, set in a nature reserve in Australia, featured a kangaroo. Gentle Ben, an American series, featured a bear. Daktari was an African wild life series of general appeal. Tales of the River Bank was an intriguing

series about familiar smaller fauna who were filmed in actuality and given human voice-over characterisation. **Maya**, about a boy and his elephant, and **The Wild Stallion** series were retained.

Joe, about a boy who helps out in his father's café, was nearer the experience of most child viewers.

Devil in the Fog was a period serial about a company of itinerant actors, based on a book by Leon Garfield. Other drama series with the theme of travel were **Traveller's Tales**, and **Stories of Tuktu**, about Eskimo life.

There were further seasons of **The Adventures of Robin Hood**, **Orlando** and **Daniel Boone**, and, in the preschool category, of **The Magic Roundabout** and **Filopat and Patofil**.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1970

Cartoon package titles for the year included **The Magic Pencil**, **The Inhabitants of the the Chiming Clock**, a Polish series, **Magoo and Friends**, **Paulus the Woodgnome**, **Belle, Sebastian and the Horses**, **Plupp and His Friends**, **Bozo the Clown**, **Noveltoons**, **Modern Madcap**, **The Roadrunner Show**, **Disneyland**, **Top Cat**, **The Contents of the Hat**, **HR Fluffenstuff**, **The Magic Boomerang** and **The Bugs Bunny Show**. There were also a number of umbrella titles such as **Comedy Time** for random cartoon presentations.

Further programme blocks of **Flipper**, **Skippy**, **Robin Hood** and **Gentle Ben** were acquired. **Tarzan**, about the white jungle vigilante who had a special relationship with animals because he had been reared by apes, was a new acquisition. There was also a new Australian marine adventure series in the schedules, **Barrier Reef**. **Big Top** was a variation of the circus theme.

Robin Hood and **Orlando** were ITV productions. The year saw two further acquisitions from the same source, **Catweazle** and **Ivanhoe**.

Catweazle had been acquired with remarkable speed; it had only been launched in England in 1970. **Catweazle** was a witty children's fantasy about an eleventh-century wizard, who, attempting to discover the secret of flight, accidentally propelled himself through time into the twentieth century. The

series won the Writers' Guild Award of 1971 for the best children's television drama script. Twenty-six episodes in all were made in colour for London Weekend Television.

Loosely based on the novel by Sir Walter Scott, **Ivanhoe** exploited the same territory as Robin Hood. Ivanhoe was an avenging knight who defended the people against the tyranny of usurper King John. The part was played by a then relatively unknown Richard Moore. Thirty-nine half-hour episodes were made in 1958 and 1959.

Hereward the Wake, an adaptation of the novel by Charles Kingsley, was yet another venture into British folk-history. Hereward the Wake was a Saxon prince who resisted the occupation of William the Conqueror. The serialisation had 16 episodes, filling the slot at a stroke for almost four months.

Another exposition of early British history in the schedules was a serialisation of Shakespeare's **MacBeth.**

Also listed was an interesting film feature, **The Sky is Blue**, about a boy and a kite, and a season of **Shirley Temple** films.

Folklore was represented by the **Legend of the Juggler** and **The Arabian Nights.**

On the fringe of children's programmes there were a number of cowboy series, including **The Legend of Jesse James**, and the science fiction epic, **Star Trek.**

The overwhelming characteristic of the imported drama provision for the year was that it was fantasy material. Representation of the contemporary actuality of children's lives was almost totally absent.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1971

Cartoon packages retained from the previous year included **Mr. Magoo, Paulus the Woodgnome, Bozo the Clown, Disneyland, Top Cat, HR Fluffenstuff,** and **The Bugs Bunny Show. Popeye** returned in 1971. New cartoon features in the schedules were **The Pink Panther Show, The Magic Ball, Dan, Smoky the Bear,** and **Porky the Pig. Michaela** was a cartoon feature from Yugoslavia.

One cartoon series which proved very popular, achieving top TAM ratings on a number of occasions, was **The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle**, based on stories about a doctor who could communicate with animals by Hugh Lofting.

Animation features, puppet and cartoon, for preschool and younger viewers included **Tobby and Tim**, **Hattytown**, **Chigley**, **Clangers**, **The Wind in the Willows**, **Ponny and Sonny**, and **The Magic Roundabout**.

The Railway Children, by E. Nesbitt, was as an excellent children's drama serial located in a country railway station in Yorkshire which presented and solved a mystery story through the medium of trains.

Sweden proved a new programme source, supplying **Pippi Longstocking**. Canadian-based series were also appearing in the schedules. One of these was these was **Hudson Bay**.

Flipper and **Barrier Reef** continued to provide marine adventure. **Skippy**, **The Big Top**, **Tarzan** and the Lassie adventure, **The Hills of Home**, were, effectively, animal-centred series.

Blake was an aviation adventure series from Australia.

Drama based on English classical literature reasserted itself with a five-part serialisation of **Romeo and Juliet**, a school examinations text, with **Kidnapped**, an adaptation of the novel by R.L. Stevenson, with a repeat of **Little Women**, and with two adaptations of works by Mark Twain, **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** and **The One Million Dollar Banknote**.

Adaptations of Scott's **Kenilworth** and George Eliot's **The Mill on the Floss** were offered outside the children's schedules.

Benjamin Brittain's opera for children, **The Golden Vanity**, was also shown.

Film series included a **Shirley Temple** season, a **Marx Brothers** season, and **Old Time Comedy**, a selection of silent films.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1972

Cartoon packages made a comparatively short list for the year. **Disneyland, The Porky Pig Show, Smoky the Bear, The Bugs Bunny Show, The Hair Bear Bunch** and **Calimero** made up the bulk of the cartoon provision. New titles in the schedules were **Professor Balthazar**, a series from Yugoslavia, and **Peebles and Bam Bam**, a **Flintstones** derivative.

The Magic Roundabout, Chigley, Ponny and Sonny, and **Trumpton** were retained for younger age-groups.

A possible reason for the relative scarcity of imported animation drama is that there was no available schedule space for it. Literature-based drama was in plentiful supply; dramatisations that were selected included **Little Women, The Black Tulip, A Tale of Two Cities, Last of the Mohicans, Dombey and Son, King Solomon's Mines, Around the World in Eighty Days, Omar Khayyam, Black Beauty, A Dog of Flanders**, based on a novel by Ouida, and the BBC adaptation of contemporary writer Nina Bawden's novel, **A Handful of Thieves**, about boys whose attempts at good deeds get them into deep trouble.

This last title was a rare injection of contemporary real life drama for children. **Black Beauty**, the dramatisation of Anna Sewell's story about a horse, proved a popular and enduring programme.

Adventure drama was also in plentiful supply, with a sea adventure series, **The Rovers**, from Australia, **Rainbow Country**, a 26 part Canadian series, **The Borderers**, historical adventure set on the Scottish border in the mid-sixteenth century, **Lancers**, and **Daniel Boone**, two Western series, **The Big Top**, a circus story, **Primus**, underwater adventure, **Daktari**, safari park adventure, **Flipper**, marine adventure, **Star Trek**, science fiction, and **Elephant Boy**, a variant of the Maja theme.

Aimed at general audiences were two popular series, one based on trains, **Casey Jones**, and a cowboy series, **Gunsmoke**.

Pippi Longstocking, the Swedish serial, was retained for a further season. There was a new teen trauma series, **Getting Together**.

Musicals included **The Chocolate Soldier**, an operetta with Nelson Eddy; **Hans Brinkler and the Magic Skates**, and, in general audience time, **Anna and the King**.

Christmas features included **The Red Balloon** and **The Musicians of Bremen**.

Laurel and Hardy provided film comedy, and **Old Time Comedy** presented silent films.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1973

The imported animation drama titles for the year included **Hunting Gorilla**, **Lolek and Bolek**, **The Magic Roundabout**, **Woody Woodpecker**, **The Jetsons**, **Hattystown**, **The Magic Pencil**, **The Wonderful Stories of Professor Ketzel**, **Disneyland**, **Loony Tunes**, **Merrie Melodies**, **Professor Balthazar**, **Peebles and Bam Bam**, **Casper the Friendly Ghost**, **Hector's House**, **Kiri the Clown**, **Magic Elephant**, **Babar**, and **Pipet**. **Tony and the Tick Tock Dragon** was an animation film for Christmas. The schedules also included Polish and Hungarian cartoons.

Serial drama included an adaptation of Leon Garfield's novel, **Smith**, set in eighteenth century London. Smith was a twelve-year-old pickpocket from the area around St. Paul's Cathedral. His trade brought him in contact with a blind magistrate, and an unlikely crime-fighting partnership evolved.

There was another season of **Black Beauty**, and a film version of **Tom Brown's Schooldays**.

Tom Brown's Schooldays, written by Thomas Hughes, was set in Rugby School in the early nineteenth century. Tom, to quote John Rowe Townsend, exemplified a muscular Christianity. The novel, despite its shortcomings, has been credited with patenting the British public school system, and the credo that team sports build individual character and team spirit.

Wuthering Heights was in the schedules because the basic novel was a Leaving Certificate text.

The schedules also included **I and My Dog**, a mime series from Czechoslovakia; **The Limping Boy**, a school story from Hungary, and **George**, a Swiss story about a boy and his St. Bernard

dog.

There were no significant innovations in the adventure category. Seasons of **Primus**, **Gentle Ben**, **Daktari**, **Tarzan**, **Flipper**, **Star Trek**, **Daniel Boone**, **Dusty's Trail**, and **Elephant Boy** were scheduled in the course of the year. **The Big Valley** was a new Western series. **The Over-The-Hill-Gang** featured ex-Texas Rangers who re-convened as geriatrics to go on the trail once more. There was also a regular Western slot at 6.06 p.m. on Saturdays, **The Saturday Western.**

Films included **Abbot and Costello** titles, silent comedy, and, in the Christmas season, **The Boy and the Ball**, **A Christmas Carol**, **Robin Hood**, the Shirley Temple film, **Dimples**, and **A New Year Fairy Tale.**

Early evening programmes attracting young audiences were **I Love Lucy**, **I Dream of Jeannie**, **The Waltons**, and **The Partridge Family.**

The educational programme **Sesame Street** was also scheduled during the year.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1974

A basic core of cartoon packages was carried over from the previous year, among which were **The Woody Woodpecker Show**, **Disneyland**, **Felix the Cat**, **Kiri the Clown**, **Deputy Dawg**, **Babar**, **Professor Kitzel**, and **Pipet**. For the preschool audience there was **Hector's House**, and the puppet animation series, **The Magic Roundabout**. Polish and Yugoslavian cartoons, and some Finnish cartoons, were also listed in 1974.

Studs the Astronaut, **Bagpuss**, **Yogi's Gang**, **Tabitha and Adam and the Clown Family**, and the MGM series, **Tom and Jerry**, were new listings. A new cartoon genre asserted itself---animation versions or developments of established situation comedies, serials and films originally made as 'actuality' productions. Examples were **Wait Till Tour Father Comes Home**, **Jeannie**, **Lassie's Rescue Rangers**, and **Round The World In Eighty Days.**

Dramatisations of literary work were in plentiful supply throughout 1974. **Misty**, based on a popular children's story

by Marguerite Henry, centred on two boys who tried to tame a wild pony. **My Friend Flicka**, based on the novel by Mary O'Hara, had a similar theme and was back in the schedules. **Pollyanna** was a six-part dramatisation of Eleanor N. Porter's story of a cheerful girl who changes people's attitudes by her optimistic outlook on life. **The Pathfinder** was a serial based on the novel by James Fennimore Cooper. There was another season of **Black Beauty**, a development of the story by Anna Sewell. **A Little Princess** was an adaptation of the children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, in which Sara, a rich and privileged pupil in an exclusive girls' school, is suddenly found to be poor and is demoted to the role of servant. **The Fortunes of Nigel** was a dramatisation of a novel by Sir Walter Scott. The works of R.L. Stevenson were the source of **The Adventures of Long John Silver** and **Black Arrow**. **Pride and Prejudice**, a school text, was scheduled for the benefit of examination students. A film version of **Alice Through the Looking Glass was** shown. **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**, based on a children's story by Ian Fleming, was also shown. The script of this film was by Raold Dahl. An unusual treatment of a literary text was the version of the Daniel Defoe story described as **Robinson Crusoe on Ice** and presented in the visual idiom of the ice-rink.

The most popular series in the lists for 1974 was **The Little House on the Prairie**, the saga of a post-Civil War Wisconsin family who trekked to Kansas to start a new life as prairie homesteaders. **Little House on the Prairie** was based on the autobiographical stories of Laura Ingalls Wilder. This programme regularly reached the top TAM ratings.

Imported general drama for children was in short supply over the year, the only significant contribution being **The Little Rascals**, a derivative of the **Our Gang** series.

In the adventure category the animal-centred series, **Tarzan**, **Elephant Boy** and **Gentle Ben** were retained. A new Australian series also focussing on animals was **Woobinda**, about a vet in the outback. **Born Free**, a bush-based series concentrating on the implications of taming lion cubs, was a general audience early evening programme.

There was also a new underwater adventure series, **Men**

of the Sea, and another variant of marine adventure, The Beachcombers, which had a salvage theme.

Circus was a new Big Top series.

On the fringe of the children's programmes slot were Star Trek, Dusty's Trail, and Bonanza, starring Michael Landon, which had a gold-rush theme; an island series, Castaway, and a series based on the adventures of film stuntsmen, Thrillseekers.

Also marginal to the children's programmes slot were the general audience drama series The Waltons, The Partridge Family, a situation comedy, Needles and Pins, and Apple's Way, a rural series.

In addition to Old Time Comedy and the Shirley Temple films, a number of films of interest to young audiences were scheduled for holiday transmission, mostly in the Christmas schedules. In 1974 these included the musicals, Kismet, which had an Arabian Nights theme, the Beatles film, A Hard Day's Night, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, an early Andrew Lloyd Weber musical, and West Side Story.

Other holiday films and and programmes were The Trouble With Angels, a convent school story, And Now Miguela, about a shepherd and his son, Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Aesop's Fables, Gipsy Gold, and Pulcinella.

Sesame Street, providing drama entertainment rather than instruction, had entrenched itself in the schedules and would remain for the rest of the period under review.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1975

The cartoon packages Bugs Bunny, Disneyland, Tom and Jerry, The Pink Panther, Bagpuss, Babar, Professor Kitzel, Calimero, Felix the Cat, Deputy Dawg, and Lolek and Bolek were retained on the schedules for another year. Tales of the River Bank, using reality film footage with dramatised voice-over, was also retained.

Sesame Street was scheduled again and in addition another Children's Television Workshop series, The Electric Company. This basic education programme taught elementary reading

skills through a combination of educational methods and entertainment.

Clutch Cargo, **Dr. Seuss on the Loose**, **The Banana Splits** and **Mr. Men** were new cartoon additions. The **Dr. Seuss** series had educational content related to reading skills. **These Are The Days** was an animation family-based series, on the pattern of **Wait Till Your Father Gets Home**. Enid Blyton's **Noddy**, relatively rare in the schedules since the early 1960s, made a return in 1975 under the title of **Noddy and Friends**. There were occasional French cartoons, and a version of the French language animation comic series, **Asterix and Cleopatra**. There were also some Czech cartoons and occasional single presentations such as **The Ball With White Dots**.

There was a further Disney package, **Disney's Wonderful World of Colour**, which was mainly informational.

The Little House on the Prairie and **The Little Rascals** continued. There were several new actuality drama series.

Seven Little Australians was based on the book of the same name by Ethel Turner. The seven were the children of stern horse-whipping father Captain Woolcott, six of them by his first wife who has died, and the seventh by his new girl-wife. The stories concerned the strategies by which the children coped with their domineering father.

The Secret Garden was a dramatisation of the children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, who wrote **The Little Princess**, screened the previous year. The story, considered by many to be one of the best ever written for children, is about a proud and spoilt girl, Mary Lennox, who is forced to live with her recluse uncle on the Yorkshire moors. She discovers a derelict walled garden which, with the help of a local boy, Dickon, she restores to fertility and beauty, reforming her personality in the process. In the course of this work she restores her hypochondriac invalid cousin Colin to happiness and health.

Heidi, based on the juvenile classic by Johanna Spyri, enacted the story of the happy little girl who lived with her grandfather in frugal rural comfort on the slopes of the Swiss Alps. Because the abrasive grandfather was at odds with his Alpine

village everybody conspired to take Heidi away from him. **Heidi** featured regularly in the TAM ratings.

Ballet Shoes, an adaptation of the novel by Noel Streatfield, was about the agony and the ecstasy of a girl who wanted to become a ballerina.

Follyfoot, location of a series of stories by Monica Dickens, was a farm where abandoned and injured horses were restored to health. Other features and series about horses were **My Brother Talks to Horses** and **Secret Pony**. **Salty** was a series centred on a sealion. On the fringe of children's programmes there was **Francis and His Talking Mule**, a comedy programme on the lines of Mr. Ed.

The Brady Bunch was a family-centred series which had been popular on American television.

Chinese Puzzle was a BBC adventure series for young people.

The Merchant of Venice, **Murder in the Cathedral**, and **Lord of the Flies**, also in the schedules in 1975, were school examination texts. Film versions of **The Hunchback of Notre Dame** and of **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** were transmitted.

There were further **Old Time Comedy** series and more **Shirley Temple** films.

Familiar titles in the adventure category were **The Beachcombers**, **Circus**, **Elephant Boy**, **F Troop**, **Born Free**, **Tarzan** and **Bonanza**.

Sierra was a new American park ranger serial with an ecological motivation. **Treasure of the Dutch** was a marine adventure.

Science fiction found expression in **Lost in Space** and in **The Boy With Green Hair**.

When Things were Rotten was a send-up by Mel Brooks of historical drama. **The Ghost and Mrs. Muir**, **Apple's Way** and **Hogg's Back** were other series in or adjacent to the children's schedules.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1976

Cartoon series listed for 1976 included **The Pink Panther Show, Six Bears and a Clown, Dr. Seuss, Lolek and Bolek, The Tom and Jerry Show, Rexie the Dog, The Banana Splits, Animal Marvels, The Great Grape Ape** and **Yogi Bear.**

The Wonderful World of Disney included animation and actuality material. The most significant Disney feature of the year was **Fantasia**, a visual evocation through cartoon animation of well-known classical orchestral music pieces from Bach to Stravinsky, played by the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The schedules for the year included **Polish, Finnish** and **Czech** cartoons.

Animation series for smaller children included **Noddy and Friends, The Magic Roundabout, The Wombles** and **Paddington Bear.**

Sesame Street, the main appeal of which lay in its animation segments, was retained for another year.

Ballet Shoes, Follyfoot, The Secret Garden, The Little House in the Prairie and **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** continued in the schedules. **Thunder**, a series about a stallion, got a repeat showing.

Robinson Crusoe appeared yet again, this time as a 13-part serial. **The Swiss Family Robinson**, a reworking of the Robinson Crusoe theme from the novel by Johann Wyss, told the tale of a 19th century family who left their Swiss home for New Guinea and were shipwrecked en route, ending up on an idyllic island. In the Christmas schedules there was a special episode, **The Swiss Family Robinson at Christmas.**

Another island-based series in the schedules was **The Lost Island**, an Australian adventure series.

The Georgian House was a 7-part mystery series.

Another mystery series with a complex psychic context was **Tom's Midnight Garden**, an adaptation of the children's novel by Phillipa Pearce, published in 1958. **Tom's Midnight Garden** is a clever blend of fantasy and reality. Tom goes to stay with his uncle and aunt and their housekeeper, old Mrs. Bartholomnew. At

midnight the grandfather clock in the hall strikes thirteen, and Tom finds his way into a beautiful Victorian garden, which belongs to the house but only in the past. Tom, during his midnight visitations, becomes acquainted, and plays, with Hatty, a late Victorian girl who belongs to the house. As the story closes Tom discovers that old Mrs. Bartholomnew is Hatty, and that night after night she has been dreaming him into her memories of the past. John Rowe Townsend comments :

> "If I were asked to name a single masterpiece of English children's literature since the last war.....it would be this outstandingly beautiful and absorbing book." (Townsend : 1965 : 247)

The staple adventure series **Circus**, **Born Free**, **Bonanza**, **Tarzan**, **Robin Hood**, **F. Troop** and the nature reserve series **Sierra**, were all in the schedules during 1976.

There were two new western series, **Wagon Train** and **Heroes of the Prairie**.

Arthur of the Britons was a HTV colour production. 24 episodes were made in 1972 and 1973. The series was filmed in Gloucestershire. The series was based on historical premises and portrayed Arthur as a Celt, a Welshman, who with a small group of associates made regular sorties against the invading Saxons. Chivalry, Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table had no part in the story.

The Long Chase was an adventure serial in 13 parts. Also listed was **The Great Airship Adventure**, and **Lost in Space**, a science fiction saga. On the fringe of children's programmes was the action series **Gemini Man**.

Massa Peter was a Danish drama series for children, based on a slave theme.

General drama series on the list included **Little Rascals**, the **Our Gang** derivative, **The Brady Bunch**, **Robert**, a Swedish story, and **Benny and Marie**, which dealt with teen trauma.

Story programmes and features included the BBC **Jackanory** series, a version of **Hansel and Gretel**, a BBC version of **The King and the Proud Princess**, **Ukiliq**, an Eskimo story, a story called **The Terracota Horse**, **The Prince and the Pauper**, **Jack Frost**, **Rudolf the Rednosed Reindeer**, a Christmas feature, and, also in

the Christmas schedules, **The Tales of Beatrix Potter**, a ballet choreographed by Frederick Ashton.

Feature films in or adjacent to the children's programme slot included literature-based films such as **David Copperfield** and the musical **Oliver**, based on the works by Dickens, **Jane Eyre**, adapted from the novel by Charlotte Bronte, **The Little Match Girl**, based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen, and **The Wizard of Oz**, a musical dramatisation of the American children's novel by L. Frank Baum, which, according to Edward Wagenknecht, quoted by John Rowe Townsend, was

> **"the first distinctive attempt to create a fairyland out of American materials."** (Townsend : 1965 : 109)

Tall ship adventure on the high seas was a popular film theme; the 1976 selection included **Barbary Coast**, **Pirates of Monterey**, and **The Secret of Purple Reef**.

The Black Shield of Falworth, starring Tony Curtis, was a medieval adventure.

Indian-centred Wild West films included **Chief Crazy Horse** and **Last of the Comanches**.

Drama on film involving children included **Three for the Road**, an American film about a father who takes to the highway with his two young sons when his wife dies. **The Magnet** was a boy's science fiction story.

In addition to **Oliver** and **The Wizard of Oz** there was an Elvis Presley musical comedy, **Tickle Me**.

Finally there were **Shirley Temple**, **Laurel and Hardy** and **Abbot and Costello** seasons.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1977

The gratifications of **Sesame Street**, retained for 1977, were primarily entertainment gratifications, derivative of the dramatic content of the programmes. The cognitive component of **Sesame Street** was quite restricted for the average Irish child, the objective being to familiarise the child viewer with the alphabet and numbers between one and twenty.

The anchor character of the programme was a green cloth puppet frog, Kermit, who interacted with a range of other puppet characters, and with the human presenters. These puppets were created by Jim Henson who, exploiting their success in Sesame Street, now developed and extended them as an independent character group, **The Muppets**, with general audience appeal. The **Muppets** appeared in the RTE schedules in 1977.

The **Muppets** operated on an interactive strategy; a famous personality from the world of entertainment entered the world of the **Muppets** for an hour and a show evolved from the conviction of the **Muppet** characters that they could do better than the eminent personality in his or her own area of expertise.

The remark of Edward Wagenknecht about **The Wizard of Oz** could be recalled here; the genius of Jim Henson, like that of L. Frank Baum, created a fairyland out of American materials.

Established cartoon packages such as **The Pink Panther Show, The Banana Split, Top Cat, Tom and Jerry, The Woody Woodpecker Show, Barpapa, The Great Grape Ape, The Roadrunner Show, The Wonderful World of Disney, The Flintstones, The Bugs Bunny Show,** and **Lolek and Bolek** were back in the schedules. **The Wombles** was a puppet series directed at preschool children.

Scoobydoo, and **Scoobydoo, Where Are You?**, based on a giant but nervous ghostbusting Great Dane, was a substantial new cartoon addition to the repertoire.

The Last of the Mohicans, an animation version of James Fennimore Cooper's pioneering novel, was also in the schedules.

Other new cartoon features and series were **Barpapa, The Last of the Indians, Jack and the Beanstalk, The Adventures of Robin Hoodnik, Dixieland Droopy** and **Mumbley--Dog Detective.**

Some of the literature-based drama serials of the previous year carried over into 1977. These included **Little House on the Prairie, Black Beauty, Seven Little Australians,** and **Robinson Crusoe.** New literature-based titles which appeared in 1977 were **Lorna Doone**, an adaptation of the historical novel by R.D Blackamore, **Our Mutual Friend**, a seven-part dramatisation of the Dickens novel, and **Kizzy**, from **The Didakai** by Rumer Godden,

which had a gipsy theme. The Hans Christian Andersen story, **The Little Mermaid**, was read by actor Richard Carpenter.

Dramatisations of postprimary examination texts which appeared in the course of 1977 were **The Merchant of Venice, King Lear, The Tempest, Wuthering Heights** and the film version of Ernest Hemingway's novel, **The Old Man and the Sea**, which starred Spenser Tracy.

Children of the Stone was a new science fiction series; **Operation Patch** was an historical drama set against the background of the Napoleonic wars; **The Doubledeckers** was a British series featuring a group of young people who used an abandoned double-decker bus as a clubhouse. **You Can Come to Visit My Place** was a Greek story. **Ticko** was a Swedish serial. Another title listed was **Grandad's Kaisa.**

Series and serials which continued in the schedules from the previous year were **The Brady Bunch, George**, the Swiss serial about about a boy and his St. Bernard dog, and the Danish serial, **Massa Peter.**

The Northern Lights had a folklore theme. Another series of Jackanory, the BBC story programme, was transmitted.

Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em, a British situation comedy, was scheduled for general audiences but attracted many child viewers who liked to imitate the feckless Frank, the character created by Michael Crawford. Also on the fringe of the children's programme slot were the general audience series, **The Waltons, The Beverly Hillbillies, Hogg's Back** and **The Monroes. My World and Welcome To It**, an early evening programme, was based on the writings of American humorist James Thurber.

Adventure series for 1977 included new seasons of **Tarzan, Me and My Chimp** and **Sierra**. New adventure serials were **Sam and the River** and **The Lost Islands.**

Two new series for children, in the 'sleuthing' genre, which would have many repeats and regularly feature in the top TAM ratings, made their appearance during the year. These were **The Nancy Drew Mysteries** and **The Hardy Boys Mysteries**. The Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys books, written by a team of writers, had been popular in the United States since the 1930s, catering

respectively for girl readers and boy readers. The two television series were sold as a package and were usually shown in tandem.

Film packages included **Laurel and Hardy** films, **Abbot and Costello** films, and **Old Time Comedy Time**.

Feature films listed were **Kitty and the Red Shoes, Esa of Kannisar**, a Finnish film, **The Railway Children**, an excellent film version of the E. Nesbit story, **Summer on Miracle Island, Rocket to the Moon**, an adaptation of the H.G. Wells story, **Blackbeard the Pirate, An Elephant Called Slowly**, a sequel to **Born Free, The Mudlark**, about an orphan boy who smuggles himself into Windsor Castle to meet Queen Victoria, **Oliver Twist, Lassie's Great Advemture, Call of the Wild**, a 1935 version of the Jack London classic, starring Clark Gable, and **Ramsbottom Rides Again**, a British western set in the Canadian Rockies starring Arthur Askey.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1978

Sesame Street had become a standard component of children's programming. The Christmas schedules featured a seasonal **Sesame Street Christmas Special**. The programme's off-shoot, **The Muppet Show**, was also retained for 1978.

Emu, a British hand-operated voiceless bird-puppet with a propensity to snap at people, also appeared in the schedules in the course of the year.

The Bugs Bunny, Pink Panther and **Woody Woodpecker** Shows were all retained, as well as **Tom and Jerry, The Banana Splits, Top Cat, Scooby Doo**, and **The Roadrunner Show**.

Also shown were the **Noddy** series, **Barpapa** and **Jeremy. The Adventures of Dr. Doolittle**, brought back to the schedules, achieved seventh place in the TAM ratings. New programmes were **Animated Classics**, and **The Ghostbusters**.

Miscellaneous titles in the animation sector were **Fun Factory, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Mouse on the Mayflower, Chilly Willy, Mother Goose, Peter and the Wolf, Fables of the Green Forest, The Unicorn in the Garden, Little Drummer Boy, The Puppy Who Wanted a Boy**, and **That Girl. The Fourth King** was an

animation feature for Christmas.

Science fiction was in generous supply throughout the year. In addition to the animation series **The Bearcats** and **Flash Gordon**, there was **Star Trek**, **Logan's Run**, set in 2319 AD, **Blake's Run**, **The Invisible Man**, and **Gemini Man**.

There were a number of serials and features based on published fiction.

Robinson Crusoe on Mars was a science fiction film in which a spaceman suffers the same predicament on Mars as Defoe's hero.

Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm was an adaptation of the book by Kate Douglas Wiggin. It told the story of ten-year-old Rebecca, who, because of the poverty of her family, went to live on a farm in Maine with her two waspish spinster aunts.

All Creatures Great and Small was a general audience series, based on the autobiographical writings of vet James Herriot, and set in the Yorkshire dales.

Rob Roy was a 1954 Walt Disney live action film version of the novel by Sir Walter Scott.

Jane Eyre was a film adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's novel.

The adaptation of Anthony Trollope's **The Pallisers** got a repeat showing.

Adaptations of work and derivatives of work by Robert Louis Stevenson transmitted during the year included **Black Arrow**, **Return to Treasure Island**, a four-part BBC version of **Treasure Island** and **The Master of Ballintrae**.

The writings of Charles Dickens were represented by **Oliver Twist**, and by a BBC serialisation of **Hard Times**, which was a postprimary examination text. A serialisation of **The Mayor of Casterbridge**, based on the novel by Thomas Hardy and an Honours English option in the Leaving Certificate, was also shown.

As a comment on the ideological context of children's programming, the note in Movies On TV on the 1948 film version of **Oliver Twist**, in which Alec Guinness played Fagin, states that the film wasn't allowed into the U.S. until most of the Fagin profile close-ups were cut out, because of the alleged anti-Semitic

overtones of the Guinness performance.

Midnight is a Place was a 13-episode STV serial, based on a children's novel by Joan Aiken.

There was, as we might expect, another season of **Black Beauty**.

The Emperor's New Clothes was a version of the Hans Christian Andersen story. **The Little Match Girl**, a Walt Disney actuality film of Anderson's story, was in the Christmas schedules for 1978. The Danny Kaye film, **Hans Christian Anderson**, was also shown during the year.

Return to Oz was a derivative of the L. Frank Baum story. Baum wrote fourteen **Oz** books, none entitled **Return to Oz**. After his death in 1919 twenty-six further **Oz** books were written, mainly by children's writer Ruth Plumly Thomson. Among Baum's works was a play called The Queen of Killarney.

Television adaptations of modern English writing for children got a strong showing. There was a **Just William** series, based on the **William** stories of Richmal Crompton. **Thursday's Child**, by Noel Streatfield, dramatised by the BBC in 6 parts, was a foundling story. **The Eagle of the Ninth**, based on the book by Rosemary Sutcliff, was set in Roman Britain. The radio dramatisation of this novel had been repeated a number of times on the BBC Children's Hour. Rosemary Sutcliff appreciated the value as a story source of Irish mythology, writing the Hound of Ulster, about Cú Chullain, and The High Deeds of Finn McCool.

The Nancy Drew Mysteries and **The Hardy Boys Mysteries**, based on books by Carolyn Keene and others, were shown again in 1978. The **Nancy Drew Mysteries** on one occasion achieved a fifth place position in the TAM ratings.

Another series based on published fiction which achieved the ninth place in the TAM rating was **The Famous Five**, a dramatisation of books of the same name written in the 1940s by Enid Blyton. The **Famous Five** series was made in 1977-78.

Other drama series were **Lord Tramp**, an STV comedy series, and **The Brady Bunch**.

STV also contributed adventure series to the schedules. **The Flockton Flyer** featured a railway family.

Freewheelers, a thirteen part series, centred on the thrills and spills of skateboards.

There were two adventure series from New Zealand, **Hunter's Gold**, and **The Mad Dog Gang**, about city children in the countryside.

Other adventure series were the 6-part **Clifton House Mystery**, **Little Vic**, about a boy and a race horse, **Heno's Island**, **Park Ranger**, and **The Runaways**.

Skippy made a return, and there was a new outdoor American series, **Grizzly Adams**.

Bonnie Prince Charlie, a Christmas programme, provided historical adventure in a Scottish setting. **Sula** took viewers further north, to the outer Hebrides.

Films of interest to young viewers transmitted during the year included **Only Angels Have Wings**, **Morgan the Pirate**, **Tom Thumb**, **Lassie : The Road Back**, **The Boy and the Pirates**, **Marooned**, **The Cossacks**, **The Plainsmen**, and a number of romantic films featuring **Tammy**, an American country girl.

Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, based on the children's story by Roald Dahl and destined to become a ritual Christmas offering, made its first appearance in 1978.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1979

The imported animation provision featured a number of programmes based on literature in 1979. In addition to **Noddy** and **The Adventures of Dr. Doolittle**, there was a 4-part BBC version of **Pinnochio**, a story about a wooden puppet who comes to life, derived from the 1883 classic of Carlo Collodi. An animated version of Cyrano de Bergerac, the romantic verse play by Edmond Rostand about the long-nosed soldier, and Roxanne, the lady with whom he was obsessed, but too shy to communicate with, was also scheduled. Walt Disney's 1953 version of **Peter Pan**, the boy who did not want to grow up, based on the play by J.M. Barrie, was transmitted, as well as an animation version of E.B. White's story of the little pig who was saved from the frying-pan by the genius of a spider, **Charlotte's Web**.

Stingray and **Battle of the Planets** were animation science fiction programmes. **Stingray** was a halfhour puppet series made for ITV featuring an atomic submarine which cruised the oceans of the world defending mankind from underwater enemies.

The established packages, **Sesame Street, The Muppet Show, Woody Woodpecker, The Pink Panther Show, The Flintstones, Popeye, Fables of the Green Forest,** the Disney programmes, **The Wonderful World of Colour,** and **The Wonderful World of Disney, Scoobydoo, Tom and Jerry, The Hair Bear Bunch** and **Yogi Bear,** were also scheduled in 1979.

Mumphie was a new puppet series. Other new series in 1989 were **The C.B. Bears, Jeremy and Barpapa,** and **Inch High Private Eye.**

Christmas attracted placement of animation programmes such as **The Year Without Santa Claus, the Great Santa Claus Caper, Rudolf the Red-Nose Reindeer,** and **The Little Drummer Boy. Easter Bunny is Coming to Town** was scheduled for Easter.

Miscellaneous features were an animation version of **Davy Crockett, The Puppy's Great Adventure, Dinky Dog, the Biggest Dog in the World, Homer and the Wacky Doughnut Machine, Here Comes Peter Cottontail, Totarka,** a folktale, **Secret Squirrel** and **The All-Star Laff Olympics.**

In addition to **Sesame Street,** a new educational programme, **Vision On,** appeared in the schedules in 1979. **Vision On** was a BBC series relying mainly on animation content and directed at hearing-impaired viewers.

The Brady Bunch was retained in the schedules.

Dramatisations of popular children's books presented in 1979 included **The Phoenix and the Carpet,** a BBC adaptation of the novel by E. Nesbit, and **Worzel Gummidge,** an STV drama series for children adapted from the **Worzel Gummidge** books of Barbara Euphan Todd by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall.

Worzel, the unpredictable friend of two farm children, John and Susan, was a walking talking scarecrow with a turnip head who had an uncertain relationship with a flighty fairground doll, Aunt Sally, and who lived in terror of his creator, The Crowman. This humour-driven series was ITV's most successful

programme for children.

Children of the New Forest, a 5-part BBC serialisation of Captain Marryat's novel, was set against the background of the Cromwellian wars. The four children of a Cavalier who has been killed fighting for the beleaguered king hide in the New Forest disguised as a forester's grandchildren to escape detection by the Roundheads, who are intent on wiping out the whole family.

There were further seasons or repeats of the **Famous Five** series; of **Smith**, the 8-part dramatisation of the Leon Garfield novel; of **Kizzi**, the 6-part BBC series based on **The Didakoi** of Rumor Godden; of **Just William**; of **Black Beauty**; of **Tom Sawyer**; of **Black Arrow**; of **Kidnapped**; of **The Hardy Boys**; of **Little House on the Prairie**; of **Ivanhoe**; of **Midnight is a Place**; of **The Count of Monte Cristo**; of **The Eagle of the Ninth**.

Of this selection **The Little House on the Prairie**, **The Famous Five** and **Black Arrow** achieved placements in the top TAM ratings, **Little House on the Prairie** on one occasion being listed in first place.

Another literary derivative was **Amahl and the Night Visitors**.

Dramatisations of postprimary examination texts transmitted during the year included **Henry 1V**, **Romeo and Juliet**, **Julius Caesar**, **MacBeth**, **King Lear**, **Hard Times**, **Wuthering Heights**, and **Persuasion**.

There were a number of series with historical or pseudo-historical backgrounds. These included **The Moon Stallion**, a BBC drama involving Arthurian and modern times, **Boy Dominic**, an STV series set in the 1820s, and **Dick Turpin**, an LWT adventure series substantially at odds with historical actuality. There was also **The Hill of the Red Fox**, a 6-part BBC series set in Scotland, **The Flight of the Heron**, a Jacobean story, and **The Ravelled Thread**, a 6-part series set against the background of the American Civil War.

Boy Dominic was listed at third place in the TAM ratings on one occasion during the year.

Animal-centred adventures included familiar titles such as **Tarzan**, **Lassie**, **Grizzly Adams**, and **Maya**. **Jana of the**

Jungle was a new series. Young Ramsey, a series from Australia, featured the work of a vet. **Wingca Colt** was also listed.

Adventure series retained in the schedules included **Freewheelers**, **The Beachcombers** and **Bailey's Bird**. Both **The Beachcombers** and **Bailey's Bird** featured at least once in the TAM ratings.

New adventure series were **Switch**, a crime series, **Sam**, a 13-part Granada series written by John Finch, **Chopper**, a series based on helicopter rescue stories, and **Space 1999**, a science fiction saga. Adventure with a psychic dimension included **The Ghosts of Motley Hall**, and **Who Spooked Rodney?**, a story for Halloween. **South Riding** was a Yorkshire TV series in thirteen parts.

On the fringe of the children's programmes slot there were regular action/adventure packages for general audiences which, in 1979, included **The Invisible Man**, **Gemini Man**, **Return of Saint**, **Man From Atlantis**, **Daktari**, **Star Trek**, **The Virginian**, **Sexton Blake**, **The Six Million Dollar Man**, **Dick Barton--Special Agent**, **The Incredible Hulk** and **CHIPS**. **CHIPS**, a traffic police series set in California, regularly achieved top TAM ratings.

Special Christmas features included the Disney production of **Snow White**, a musical film, **The Fourth King**, **Hansel and Gretel** and **The Ice Show**.

The film provision included **Charlie Chaplin** and **Abbot and Costello** packages, the Disney versions of **Alice in Wonderland** and **The Swiss Family Robinson**, **Captain Horatio Hornblower**, based on the seafaring novel by C.S. Forster, and **Ring of Bright Water**, describing Gavin Maxwell's experience with the otters Mijbil and Edal on the Scottish Highlands seaboard. **Swallows and Amazons**, adapted from the books of Arthur Ransome, dealt with children in outdoor situations, such as sailing and camping, and was set in the Lake District and in East Anglia. The 1962 film, **The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm**, retold a number of the stories of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, as well as sketching their biography. There was a **Lassie** film on the list, an **Oz** film, **Journey Back to Oz**, and, for the Christmas schedules, Roald Dahl's **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**. Films with musical content included

Summer Holiday, which starred Cliff Richard, and Clambake, an Elvis Presley film.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1980

The animation selections for 1980 were, for the most part, familiar repertoire packages like The Pink Panther, The Flintstones, Bugs Bunny, Mr. Magoo, Scoobydoo, The Grape Ape Show, Hong Kong Phooey, The All-New Popeye Show, and Disney packages. There was a sprinkling of other titles such as Jenny, Superskunk, Secret Squirrel, The Bubbles, and The Catanooga Cats. Dastardly and Muttley and The Perils of Penelope Pitstop were an exploitation of the chase theme. Mumphie, and The Muppets, were the main puppet contributions. Among the special animation features were Puss-in-Boots, Tales of Beatrix Potter, The Magic Flute and an animation derivative of H.W. Longfellow's poem, Hiawatha.

A number of literature-based live action series, serials and feature films serial got repeat showings. These included Smith, Huckleberry Finn and Friends, Tom Brown's Schooldays, The History of Mr. Polly, Kidnapped, Pollyanna, The Little House on the Prairie, The Swiss Family Robinson, Ivanhoe and Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. The most successful repeat was that of the Katy series, based on the books of Susan Coolidge. One of the episodes in this series reached first place in the TAM ratings.

The Family Jewels was a Little House on the Prairie spin-off. Sanders of the River was a film based on stories by Edgar Wallace. The Secret Life of Walter Mitty was an adaptation of the famous short story by James Thurber.

The Further Adventures of Oliver Twist was a new 13-part serial. The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, from the Narnia books of C. S. Lewis, appeared as a two-part dramatisation. Films based on the works of Jules Verne were transmitted as a special series, The World of Jules Verne. The Little House Years was a recapitulatory series culled from The Little House on the Prairie. The Dancing Princesses was a dramatisation of a folktale

collected by the Brothers Grimm.

The film version of **Little Lord Fauntleroy** was also in the schedules. Harvey Darton, an authority on children's literature quoted by John Rowe Townsend, wrote in 1958 that the source book, by Frances Hodgson Burnett, who had also written **A Little Princess** and **The Secret Garden**,

> "ran through England like a sickly fever. Nine editions were published in as many months, and the odious little prig in the lace collar is not dead yet." (Darton : 1958)

Not only that; the book, according to Brian Doyle in his note on the author in The Who's Who of Children's Literature created a reluctant generation of boys with long curls and put them into velvet suits with lace collars.

The reading public had it right. Cedric Errol, the little New York messenger boy who became Lord Fauntleroy, was neither odious nor a prig, but a strong character in the face of provocation and injustice and a force for reconciliation through quiet insistence. **Little Lord Fauntleroy** was a classic of the rags-to-riches genre.

The Best of Families was an historical series which charted the story of three families in eighteenth century America. **The Voyage of Charles Darwin** described the journeys of the man who evolved the theory of evolution. **Matt and Jenny** was set in mid-nineteenth century England, as was **Mr. Quilp**, a film starring Anthony Newley about a shopkeeper and his difficulties with moneylenders around 1840. **The First Churchills** was a 13-part serial about the girlhood of Winston Churchill's American mother.

Some of the series were closer to the actuality of children's lives. **The Skating Ring** was about a boy with a speech defect. **Ritter's Cove** dealt with the search for a little girl who had gone missing. **It's A Mile From Here** was the story of a self-willed boy.

The Brady Bunch and **Freewheelers** continued in the schedules. **Catweazle** got a repeat showing. **Children of Fire Mountain** was a New Zealand series. **The Time Tunnel**, which had a science fiction theme, **The Feathered Serpent**, a serial about the Aztecs, **Rogues' Rock**, a 6-part serial, **Jamie**, about a magic carpet

and a junkshop, and a story called **The Rocking-Chair Rebellion** were also listed.

Dramatisations of school texts transmitted during the year included **Julius Casear, As You Like It, King Lear** and **The Tempest.**

Animal-centred series and features included **Grizzly Adams, Circus, Young Ramsey, Daktari, B.J. and the Bear, The Little Ark, The Moon Stallion, Thunder,** also about a wild stallion, **Misty,** about two young children who try to tame a wild pony, **Zebra in the Kitchen,** in which a boy releases animals from a zoo, and **A Horse in the House.**

Science fiction series, and series involving science-premised transformations included **Blake's Seven, Flash Gordon, The Incredible Hulk, The Six Million Dollar Man, Spiderwoman** and **The Brothers Lionheart.** Magical transformations were the forte of **Boy Merlin.**

The themes of justice, crime and investigation were represented by **Dick Turpin, Batman, Mammerman's After You, Dick Barton--Special Agent, The Partners, CHIPS,** and **Holmes and Yo-yo.**

Mystery Island represented island adventure. **The Adventures of Niko** also appeared in the schedules.

Early evening Western series like **The Virginian, The Big Valley, The Road West** and **How the West Was Won** kept the Wild West alive as an entertainment genre. **Jessy Becomes an Indian** was another programme in this context.

Musical drama included an animated version of **The Magic Flute, Anna and the King, The Sound of Music,** a ballet version of **Sleeping Beauty, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Oliver, The Greatest Show On Earth, HMS Pinafore,** and **Hans Christian Anderson.**

The special season of Jules Verne films included **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea** and **Around the World in Eighty Days.**

The film list for 1980 also included **Shirley Temple** films, **Harold Lloyd** and **Abbot and Costello** comedies, a film featuring **Flipper,** a **Lassie** film, a school-based film called **Mulligan's Stew,** and, for Christmas, **Santa Claus,** and **The Adventures of Sinbad.**

Educational programmes using dramatic content included

Sesame Street, The Electric Company, and a BBC art and crafts programme presented by Tony Hart, Take Hart.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1981

As the 1980s progressed, the output of animation programmes increased in volume and variety because new animation and graphic techniques, many of them computer-based, were becoming available; the volume of output was also stimulated by the existence of new markets created by the proliferation of satellite, cable and conventional television channels. Japan had also entered the animation market.

A substantial component of this new production was in the science fiction genre. In 1981 Battle Star Galactica, Jason of Ski Command and Super Seven were scheduled, in addition to the familiar Battle of the Planets.

The fringe programmes featured the standard quota of science fiction and science-premised live action programmes: The Bionic Woman, The Six Million Dollar Man, Million Dollar Memory, The Incredible Hulk and Buck Rogers in 25th Century. In a lighter vein there was Mork and Mindy. The children's schedules included The Time Tunnel and Catweazle. Close Encounters of a Third Kind, a popular science fiction film, was also scheduled in 1981.

The list of published animation titles was shorter than that of the previous year, but this could be deceptive; Anything Goes incorporated considerable animation material which was not always detailed in the programme notes.

Bugs Bunny, Popeye, Tom and Jerry, Yogi Bear, Scoobydoo, H. R. Puffenstuff, some Disney programmes and The Muppet Show were part of the general provision. New titles included Dennis the Menace and Mattie the Gooseboy. Around the World in 80 Days, a version of the Jules Verne novel, was presented in animation format and there was an Al Capp creation, The New Schmoo. Emmet Otter's Jugband Christmas was a seasonal contribution.

There were further blocks of Sesame Street and The Electric Company. Storybook International was a HTV story

programme.

The **Shirley Temple** films had been a staple element of programming since the 1960s. **Laurel and Hardy** films and **The Three Stooges** films were also scheduled in 1981. Short comedy films were presented under a new umbrella title, **The Hilarious Hundred.**

Other films which by now we have come to recognise as annual placements, usually at Christmas, were **Oliver, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,** and **The Wizard of Oz.** At Christmas we can usually expect an Arabian Nights title and a Hans Christian Andersen title. These, respectively, for 1981, were **The Thief of Bagdad** and **The Fir Tree.**

Other Christmas films for 1981 were **The Olden Days Coat, A Christmas Memory,** based on the work of Truman Capote, **The Slipper and The Rose,** a musical variant of the Cinderella story, and **The Great Race,** a slapstick comedy about a New-York-to-Paris road race.

The films listed also included **The Contest Kid and the Big Prize, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Knights of the Round Table** and the musical, **Calamity Jane.**

Animal-centred stories included **Daktari, B.J. and the Bear, Me and the Chimp, Born Free** and **Lassie** and **Black Beauty. No More, My Lady** was a stray dog story. **The Peppermint Pig,** a 5-part serial, centred on an intelligent pig. The schedules also featured imported documentaries about animals and wild life: **Sheepdogs in New Zealand, Octopus Hunt, Horses Galore,** and **The Wild Prairie.**

The Old Curiosity Shop, dramatised by William Trevor, was transmitted in 13 parts, and in addition a 6-part dramatisation of **David Copperfield.** There were further seasons, or repeats, of **Huckleberry Finn and Friends, The Hardy Boys Mysteries, The Nancy Drew Mysteries, The Little House on the Prairie** and **The Secret Garden.** The Shirley Temple version of **Heidi** was transmitted. **Pride and Prejudice** was scheduled for the benefit of examination students. A BBC serialisation of **The Enchanted Castle,** a story by E. Nesbit set in Tudor times, was shown for the first time.

There were a number of real-life dramas relevant to

children. **The Yearling**, a film, featured a crippled boy on a farm. **I Don't Know Who I Am**, another film, examined the dilemma created by adopted children who want to know who their natural parents are. **Mom and Dad Can't Hear Me** explored the difficulties of a girl with deaf parents.

Different Strokes, an American family comedy series, in which a wealthy white family adopts Negro children, dealt lightly with the race relations theme. **Joey and Red Hawk**, a 5-part story of a Red Indian boy and a white community, explored the same topic. **Star Bird and Sweet William** dealt with the interface between modern and traditional life on an Indian reservation. **A Little Silver Trumpet** was a BBC seaside drama. The 13-part serial, **The White Stone**, featured two hyper-imaginative children. **Brandon Chase**, an STV serial also in 13 parts, told the story of three boys who ran away to live in the woods.

Conventional neighbourhood drama continued in the schedules with **The Brady Bunch**, **The Little Rascals**, and **Curly and his Gang**.

In the adventure category, **Maya**, **Ritter's Cove**, **The Adventures of Niko** and **Circus** were scheduled again. There was a new **Famous Five** series, one episode of which reached second place in the TAM ratings. **Smuggler** was an action/adventure series. **Lost in the Wild** was set in the Australian outback in the 1870s. **Salvage** was a marine drama series. **Against the Wind** was a 13-part general audience historical series which featured Irish convicts sent to penal colonies in Australia in the 19th century. Also listed was a 4-part serial, **Pepi the Egyptian**, an 8-part serial, **The Legend of King Arthur**, and a BBC serial, **Doom Castle**, which was set in Jacobean times.

The Western genre continued to be represented by **The Virginian**, **The Road West**, **The Big Valley** and **Camp Wilderness**.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1982

In 1982 the extensive list of recurring cartoon programmes had shrunk to **The Woody Woodpecker Show**, **The Pink Panther Show**, **The Roadrunner Show** and **The All-new Popeye Show**. The

Wonderful World of Disney was still there, and a new Disney package, **Mickey and Donald**, had arrived. The **Magoo** series was also a frequent placement. Of this short list, **The All-new Popeye Show** reached first place in the TAM ratings in the course of the year.

Animated literature derivatives included **Cyrano de Bergerac** and **The Remarkable Rocket**, a version of the children's story by Oscar Wilde. Animation programmes with a musical emphasis included **The Carnival of Animals** and **The Nutcracker**.

The Great Santa Claus Caper, **Racoons at Christmas**, and **The Night the Animals Talked** appeared in the Christmas programmes, and other animation features and series presented throughout the year included **Jack and Beanstalk**, **The Pied Piper of Hamelin**, **Willie McBean and the Magic Machine**, **Shinbone Alley**, **Robin Hoodnik**, **Spook Billy**, **The Smurphs**, **Noddy** and **The New Schmoo**. **Sesame Street** remained in the schedules. **Hammy Hamster** was a story programme which used real hamsters and other animals with voice-over characterisation.

Films transmitted at Christmas were mainly literature derivatives, and included **Treasure Island**, **Gulliver's Travels**, **The Little Mermaid**, **Robinson Crusoe**, **Quo Vadis**, and **The Three Musketeers**. Other films shown at Christmas were **Storm Boy**, about a boy and his father in the Australian outback; **Benji**, the story of a dog who saved two children from kidnappers; **The Sea Chase**, a sea story of modern times; **Nativity**, the Christmas story, with Grace Kelly; **Where The Lilies Bloom**, about four orphaned children in North Carolina who keep the news of their father's death from their neighbours for months to avoid being taken into care; and two musicals, **The Sound of Music** and **Marco**.

Films based on works by Charles Dickens were presented under the title of **A Short Dickens Season**. Another literary derivative in the schedules was **Baron Munchausen**, a film version of the Baron's famous pseudo-autobiographical collection of tall tales.

The schedules also included **The Incredible Rocky Mountain Race** and films featuring **Laurel and Hardy**, **Abbot and Costello** and **Charlie Chaplin**. Other short comedy films were transmitted in the **Hilarious Hundred** slot. **Valley of the Eagles**

was a film based on the stolen formula theme, substantially set in Lapland. The list also included **The Fisherman's Son.**

The science fiction programmes of the previous year, **Star Trek, Buck Rogers in the 25th Century, Flash Gordon,** and **Battle of the Planets** were retained. **Return of Captain Nemo** was a new addition. Live action science fiction included **Planet of the Apes,** a serial derivative of Pierre Boullé's science fiction story, **Monkey Planet; The Powers of Matthew Star,** a science fiction series exploring psychic powers, and **Wonderwoman,** an adventure series with a science premise.

The bulk of the literature-based series were familiar titles, **Ivanhoe, Little Women, Little Lord Fauntleroy, Black Beauty, Tom Sawyer,** the **Nancy Drew** and the **Hardy Boys** stories, and **The Famous Five.**

There was a new Enid Blyton story, **Island of Adventure,** which was based on the adventures of four teenagers on holiday. **The Ghost of Thomas Kempe,** based on the book by Penelope Lively, was a humorous ghost story. Thomas Kempe was a short-tempered sorcerer and apothecary whose spirit had been bottled up inside a house for three and a half centuries until renovation workers unwittingly released him to plague the modern occupants of his house as well as the local village.

Five Weeks in a Balloon was based on a Jules Verne adventure story. **Little House---A New Beginning** was a continuation of the **Little House on the Prairie** saga. **The Tale of Two Cities** was an 8-part BBC dramatisation of the story by Dickens. **The Talisman** was a 9-part dramatisation of Sir Walter Scott's novel. **Pride and Prejudice** and **Persuasion** were two Jane Austen postprimary examination texts.

Book Adventures was a comprehensive title for dramatisations of well-known stories.

There was a substantial range of interesting drama in the schedules from a variety of sources.

Huskies Never Freeze was a Swedish story involving a boy and Huskie dogs. **Flame Trees of Thika** was a 7-part serial set in Kenya. **I Can Jump Puddles** was an Australian story. **Jenny and Me** had an Appalachian setting. **The Flying Kiwi,** a New Zealand series

in 26 parts, featured a 1929 plane. **Tal Hobz**, a programme set in Malta, exploited the theme of a milkman's horse which was really a race-horse.

Fr. Murphy, made by Michael Landon who had produced **The Little House on the Prairie**, was about a priest and orphans. As in The **Little House on the Prairie**, Landon played the lead role himself. This programme in the course of its run would reach the top TAM ratings on a number of occasions. **The Great Gilly Hopkins** was another series on the orphan theme, dealing with the pressures on a runaway orphan.

There were a number of series dealing with the real-life contexts of children. **Melinda's Blind** told how a young car crash victim adjusted to her predicament. **Dear Loving Heart** explored the theme of high school romance. **Going Along** examined the peer pressure phenomenon. In **One of a Kind**, ten-year-old Lizzie helps her mother run a seaside snack stand. **The Gymnast** was about a young girl who wants to be a gymnast. **All the Green Years**, in 6 parts, was a nostalgia series about the growing-up of two boys. **The Trouble With Mother** dealt with the parent-child relationship.

One of the Boys featured a young-at-heart grandad. This programme reached first place in the TAM ratings in the course of the year. **Mandy's Grandmother** was also in the lists.

Silver Spoons was an American family comedy series which focussed on a rich boy in a poor family.

Fame was series based in the New York High School for the Performing Arts, in which talented students learn that upward mobility in the performing arts involves sweat and tears and frequent disillusionment.

Programmes which got new seasons or repeat showings in 1982 included **Different Strokes**, **Pipi Longstocking**, and **Jennie**, which was about Winston Churchill's American mother. In the adventure drama category for 1982, there were repeats or new seasons of **Robin Hood**, **Salvage**, **Lassie**, **Tarzan**, **The Big Valley**, **Secret Valley** and **Maya**.

Falcon Island was a 13-part Australian adventure series. Another treatment of the island theme, in a different

setting, the Artic, was Island in the Snow. The Undersea Adventures of Pickle and Bill was a marine under-water adventure series. Drake's Venture was a high seas adventure drama.

The Magician featured a modern Robin Hood who used his skills as a master magician in the interests of justice. Mr. Merlin was a modern series featuring a reincarnation of the Arthurian wizard.

The House on the Hill was an STV series.

Bring 'em Back Alive was a big game series based on the exploits of hunter Frank Buck.

Adventure with a religious context was provided by Greatest Heroes of the Bible. The Rebel Slave was set against the background of the American Civil War.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1983

The basic list of major cartoon packages remained small in 1983. Of the Disney products Mickey and Donald was now the most popular series, achieving a place in the published TAM ratings during the year. Tom and Jerry, Woody Woodpecker, Scoobydoo, and The Pink Panther Show were the other basic packages. The Pink Panther, Con Bushe suggested in The Irish Broadcasting Review, was a favourite segment of the Saturday morning magazine programme, Anything Goes.

Heckle and Jeckle, Mighty Mouse, Matt the Gooseboy, Hammy Hamster, Noddy, Oum The White Dolphin, Little Lulu, Adventures of a Pencil, The Smurphs, The Kwickie Koala Show, and Pugwash were regular placements throughout the year.

Programmes from the Puppy series included The Puppy's Amazing Rescue and The Puppy Goes to the Circus. Dinky Dog was a four-part animation story. Once Upon A Time was an animation story series. The Man From Button Willow was an animation film. Karelian Tales was an animation series from Finland.

Fraggle Rock was a puppet series created by Jim Henson who had made The Muppets and the puppets in Sesame Street. Buttonville was also a puppet series. There was a special feature in the schedules on the Big Bird character from Sesame Street, Big

Bird in China. The **Sesame Street** series also continued in the schedules.

The World of the Jungle Book was an animation version of the stories of Rudyard Kipling, featuring Mowgli, the jungle boy who had been reared by wolves, and Shere Khan, the tiger. Kipling's **Just So Stories**, also in the schedules, was a collection of tales with titles such as **How The Elephant Got His Trunk**, **The Camel's Hump** and **The Butterfly That Stamped**.

An excellent animation of George Orwell's allegorical fable, **Animal Farm**, was scheduled for the benefit of Leaving Certificate students.

Animation series included in the science fiction provision were **Bearcats**, **Valley of the Dinosaurs**, **Battle of the Planets**, **Wizards and Warriors**, and **Battlestar Galactica**. **ET and Friends** had a gremlin theme. Other science fiction series were **Omni--the New Frontier**, **Star Trek**, **Voyagers**, and **The Martian Chronicles**.

Seasonal animation shows included **Daffy Duck's Easter Show**, and, at Christmas, **The Wind in the Willows**, and **Santa Claus**. There was a **Nativity** play in the Christmas schedules. **Rudolf's Swinging New Year** was another seasonal contribution.

Films scheduled for Christmas were mostly familiar titles----**Pinnochio**, **The Little Drummer Boy**, **The Thief of Bagdad**, **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**, **The Black Stallion**, **Nestor, the Christmas Donkey**, **Benji**, **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**, **Yellow Submarine** and **The Year Without Santa Claus**.

Little House On the Prairie--A New Beginning, a further series based on the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder, proved as popular as previous series, achieving a third place in the TAM ratings in the course of the year. **The Famous Five** and **Just William** were also in the schedules.

Nicholas Nickleby, based on the novel by Charles Dickens, was a new title. Another adaptation of a Dickens novel was the 12-part **Great Expectations**. A 9-part version of R.M. Ballintyne's classic island story, **Coral Island**, was also scheduled for the first time. **The Enchanted Castle**, based on the E. Nesbit story, returned to the schedules. **Gulliver in Lilliput**

appeared in four parts, and there was a further transmission of **The Talisman.**

American literature was represented by a **Huckleberry Finn** series and a dramatisation of another work by Mark Twain, **The Notorious Jumping Frog.** Dramatisations of two stories by O. Henry were transmitted, **Gifts of Love** and **The Revenge of Red Chief.**

In addition to the animation version of **Animal Farm,** there were transmissions of **The Merchant of Venice** and of **Hard Times** for the benefit of postprimary students.

Father Murphy, about a priest and orphans, topped the TAM ratings on one occasion during the year. Other retained or repeated series included **Vice Versa,** operating on a complicated formula through which a father becomes his schoolboy son's double, suffering all the trauma of being a boy again. **Silver Spoons** also centred on a father/boy relationship, the son being rich and the father poor. **A Little Silver Trumpet** was a 5-part BBC serial in a seaside setting. **Different Strokes,** about adopted negro children in a white family, and **Rascal Dazzle,** a compilation from **Little Rascal** programmes, were also scheduled.

From Australia came **The Patchwork Hero; Soup and Me,** which evolved around an Australian Huckleberry Finn type, and **Come Midnight Monday,** an Australian railway drama. **Sea Urchins** was a 4-part New Zealand series about four boys and a dinghy. **Strawberry Ice** was a Canadian production. **Fame,** the series based in a New York school for the performing arts, was retained.

Evan's Corner depicted the world of an 8-year-old boy. **The Kid From Nowhere,** a documentary programme, featured a Downes syndrome boy. **Andy Robson** was a work-focussed series set in a mining community. There were three series based on sport, **Champs,** which had a baseball theme, **Break-point,** about tennis, and **Jockey School,** a 6-part BBC series set in a training stable about apprentice jockeys and their world.

Adventure series in the schedules reflected a wide variety of locations and themes. **The Flame Trees of Thika,** set in Kenya, was repeated. **Journey to Survival** centred on six teenagers on a wilderness survival project. **The Beachcombers** was about Pacific salvage. **Hawksmoor** was an historical series about a Welsh

Robin Hood. **Tales of the Golden Monkey** was an aviation series featuring a pilot and his dog in a South Pacific setting. **Beau Geste** was an 8-part serialisation of Percival Wren's stories about two brothers in the French Foreign Legion. **Cowboy in Africa** was a big game ranch series. **The Young Pioneers** featured young settlers in the Dakota of the 1870s. **May-Day, May-Day,** dealt with sea rescue.

Other titles in the adventure category were the 26-part **Secret Valley, Pandemonium, Frosty's Winter, The Incredible Detective** and **Mystery on Fire Island. Under the Mountain** was a series from New Zealand. Biblical adventure continued with **Great Heroes of the Bible.**

The Powers of Matthew Star was retained and there was a new 6-part serial with occult connotations, **The Haunting of Jessie Palmer. Into the Labyrinth** had a back-in-time theme.

The **Jackanory Playhouse** presented dramatised fairytales. **Romanian Folktales** was a series of folklore dramatisations. **Great Sporting Legends** was a documentary series on sporting heroes.

In family viewing time there was a substantial miscellany of programmes which would attract young people's interest. In 1983 these included action programmes such as **Tarzan, The Fall Guy, CHIPS, Gemini Man, The Man from UNCLE** and **Wonder Woman.** Programmes in the Western tradition were **Dusty's Trail, The Man from Shiloh, The Over the Hill Gang** and the serial version of **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers.**

There were also situation comedy and family based series such as **Apple's Way, Paper Moon, Thomas and Sarah, Only When I Laugh, The Sullivans, My Favourite Martian** and **L for Lester,** a driving school comedy. **The Mannions of America** was the saga of an Irish-American family.

Musical films included **Going Coconuts,** based on the popular singing family, The Osmonds; **West Side Story; Swan Lake** and **The Tapdance Kid,** which featured a precocious young dancer.

In addition to the Christmas provision there were films featuring **Harold Lloyd** and **The Three Stooges;** action films such as **Breakheart Pass** and **Barbary Coast;** Stanley Kramer's spoof

on film chases, **It's a Mad, Mad World; Tarka the Otter**, an adaptation of the classic nature story by Henry Williamson; an historical film, **The Scarlet Pimpernel**, based on the novel by Baroness Orczy and **The Phenomenon of Benji**, one of a series of films about an intelligent dog. Other films listed were **The Mountain King's Son, It Isn't Easy Being a Teenage Millionaire, Little Nazka Fights the Great Dragon King**, and **Freddy**, which appeared in the Christmas schedules.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA. 1984

THE ADVENTURE SHOW

This was an EBU children's adventure drama exchange project. RTE's contribution was Kevin's World, a play by Anthony Flaherty. (c.f. Appendix A : Home Produced Children's Drama : 1984).

Seven adventure stories were screened on RTE, starting with the station's own contribution, **Kevin's World**. There was a specific introduction to each programme in the series by presenter Barry Lang. To facilitate transcultural assimilation and eliminate the need to know a foreign language there was a heavy reliance on visual content and dialogue in the mother tongue was kept to a minimum. The contributing countries were not confined to the EBU membership.

The Norwegian story, **Escape**, featured a ten-year-old deaf boy who befriended a runaway thief. They set out together to escape---one from the law and the other from over-protective parents.

Danny's Egg was set in Australia. In this story Danny rescued an emu egg from a marauding iguana. His efforts to keep the egg safe led him through some hair-raising adventures.

The Bell was set in a small Spanish village. A local legend told of a church bell which lay at the bottom of a lake. The children of the village decided to recover the bell.

The Belgian story was **Simon and Sarah**, who were two children taken into care and sent to different foster homes where

both were unhappy. They ran away, and had to cope with pursuing search parties, thunderstorms and river floods.

The Stone Collector was a Swedish story about a lonely boy, Peter, who found it difficult to make friends, but his interesting collection of stones proved the answer to his problem.

In the final story, **Joost**, from Holland, the boy of that name coped humorously and mischievously with the predicament of being at a Summer camp where it never stopped raining for the whole duration of his stay.

The Adventure Show was excellent children's television, made from a developmental perspective which took account of children's needs, concerns and living contexts. A measure of the success of the series on RTE was the fact that **The Adventure Show** reached 8th place in the TAM ratings in October, 1984.

OTHER IMPORTED DRAMA, 1984

A new addition to the animation lists, **The Jokebook**, a Hanna Barbera package of cartoon gags, reached second place in the TAM ratings in the course of the year. The Jim Henson puppet series, **Fraggle Rock**, also reached the top TAM ratings.

Familiar titles in the 1984 schedules were **The Wonderful World of Disney, Mickey and Donald, Scoobydoo, Scooby and Scrappy Doo, The Smurphs, Tom and Jerry, Heckle and Jeckle, Bugs Bunny, Dr. Doolittle**, various **Puppy** adventures, and an annual placement, **Easter Bunny is Coming To Town**. Other miscellaneous animation programmes included **Sunshine Porcupine, Shirt Tales, Casper the Friendly Ghost, Atom Ant, The Bisketts**, and **Looney Xmas Tales**.

Animal Farm, Around the World in 80 Days, The Adventures of Dr. Doolittle and **The Ugly Duckling** were animation programmes of literary derivation. Animation derivatives of musical compositions included **The Nutcracker** and **The Magic Flute**.

The Hoarder was an animation fantasy about a greedy blue jay who went too far. The animation artist was Evelyn Lambert.

Mr. T. was a derivative of the popular live action

series **The A Team,** Mr. T. being the muscle man of that investigative commando group. **The A Team** featured in the general audience schedules.

The science fiction provision included liberal supplies of **Battlestar Galactica, Flash Gordon** and **Buck Rogers in the 25th Century.** Also scheduled were **Once Upon a Time in Space** and a five-part serial, **The Majestic Warrior.** Well-known science fiction writer Ray Bradbury was the author of the **The Invisible Boy,** an adaptation of which appeared in 1984.

Christmas films included **The Nativity** with Grace Kelly, **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,** and **The Slipper and the Rose.**

There was an unusually heavy representation of the novels of Charles Dickens in 1984, with serial adaptations of **Great Expectations, Our Mutual Friend, Dombey and Son** and **The Old Curiosity Shop.** The work of R.L. Stevenson was represented by **The Master of Ballintrae** and **Treasure Island** and that of Jules Verne by **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** and an animation version of **Around the World in 80 Days,** already mentioned. Other familiar titles were **The Count of Monte Cristo, Heidi, Huckleberry Finn, Black Beauty, Just William,** and the series based on writings of James Heriot, **All Creatures Great and Small.** The film of Frederick Ashton's ballet version of the **Tales of Beatrix Potter** was also a regular placement. Of this list, **Heidi** reached a place in the top TAM ratings in the course of the year.

Bulldog Drummond, based on the stories of the English writer Saki, or H.H. Munro, was a new arrival. Another new title was **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes,** from the writings of Arthur Conan Doyle. The 6-part BBC adaptation of John Masefield's **Box of Delights** was also scheduled.

The emergent pattern was that of a powerful injection of Victorian, late Victorian and Edwardian literary perceptions with associated political, social and moral values, into the RTE young people's schedules for 1984.

American literature had a much weaker representation. Apart from the ritual inclusion of **Huckleberry Finn,** there was a repeat of the O. Henry story, **The Revenge of Red Chief** and a new

series of programmes based on the picaresque Broadway tales of **Damon Runyon. Dear Enemy** was a serialisation of the 1915 sequel by American writer Jean Webster to her Daddy-Long-Legs orphan story. **The Alongquin Trilogy** was a Canadian series.

A Traveller in Time was a 5-part BBC adaptation of Alison Utley's story of a young girl who stepped from the present back into Tudor times and became involved in contemporary intrigues.

The Witches and the Grinning God was a 6-part TVS dramatisation of a story by Monica Edwards, set in the Romney Marsh country. **The Watersprite and Susan** was a ghost story.

Dramatisations of postprimary examination texts in 1984 included **Animal Farm, The Old Man and the Sea, Hamlet,** the William Conrad novel, **Lord Jim, Great Expectations** and a 5-part serialisation of **Pride and Prejudice.**

The adventure category included **Robin of Sherwood** and **Owain, Prince of Wales,** a Sianel 4 serial about a 15th century Welsh prince and his resistance of the English.

The Doonbolt Chase, Christopher Columbus, The Ghost of Cape Horn, Jason and the Argonauts, and **The Golden Voyage of Sinbad** were high seas adventure titles. Island adventure was represented by **Mystery Island**, the 13-part Australian series **The Castaways**, and, in a different setting, by **Island in the Snow,** which was an Artic adventure. The long-running **Beachcombers** continued in the schedules.

Adventure with a big-game context included **Tarzan, Cowboy In Africa,** and **Elephant Boy. Bomba the Jungle Boy** was an New Zealand series, and **Skippy** featured the adventures of a kangaroo in an Australian national park. Other wild-life adventure series were **My Friend the Dolphin,** and **The White Heron,** a drama about a girl's dilemma as to whether she should help the hunter of a white heron or frustrate his quest. There was a further series of **Zoo Vet.**

The Wild West and the American Mid-West lingered on with **The Man from Shiloh, Davy Crockett, The Over the Hill Gang** and **Grizzly Adams. The Northwest Mounted Police** was a hybrid version of the Western and the police story.

Automen was a police series. **Knight Rider** belonged to the same category. **The Man from UNCLE** was an action series set the spectrum of global espionage and intrigue. **Dick Tracy** was a 15-part sleuth series.

Closer to everyday reality was **Code Red**, a series which featured the work of a fire brigade. **Anthony** was a story about a country boy in a city.

Child-centred adventure series included **Mystery of Castle House** and **Run, Rebecca, Run**. **The Little Convict** was an Australian film.

There were two imported programmes which reflected the lives of handicapped children. **Letty** was a child detective confined to a wheelchair, who, despite her handicap, managed to solve such mysteries as materialised in her limited environment. **Clown White** was a drama series for the deaf.

Aeronautical adventure was represented by **The Great Balloon Adventure** and by **Blue Thunder**, a drama series featuring helicopters.

Series which featured in the previous year's schedules were **Little Rascals**, **Pandemonium** and **Soup and Me**. **The Edison Twins** was a new series.

Fame, **Apple's Way**, **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers**, **The Waltons** and **My Favourite Martian** continued as early evening general audience programmes. New additions in 1984 were **We Got It Maid**, about two old bachelors who acquired a maid, **The Happy Apple**, a comedy series written by Keith Waterhouse, and **The Smith Family**.

Drama with a folklore base included **The Magic Ring**, **Sleeping Beauty**, a Canadian story called **The Man, the Snake and the Fox**, and **Bavarian Folklore**. **Eighteen Foot People** and **Baron Munchausen** could also be assigned to this category.

The Penny Box, about a boy, his great-aunt, and a mysterious box; **The Orphans**; **The Snowman**, about a little little boy and a snowman, and **Rainbow**, a Canadian drama series about growing up, presented some real life contexts for child viewers. In **300 Miles For Stephanie** a father engages in long-distance running to win remission for his dying daughter.

The general film provision included short films featuring **Charlie Chaplin**, **Three Stooges** films, and a film series called **Rainbow Classics**. A major fantasy adventure in the lists was **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, starring Harrison Ford in the role of militant archaeologist Indiana Jones. Other films listed were **The Great Race**, **Clara** and **Louisiana Story**.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1985

Animation drama demonstrated that it could be a credible medium for literature derivatives in 1985. The schedules included animation versions of two novels by Charles Dickens, **Nicholas Nickleby** and **The Pickwick Papers**, and an impressive version of George Eliot's Silas Marner, created by animator Alison de Vere. **Silas Marner** was a Leaving Certificate text. **Beware the Jabberwocky** was based on a text by Lewis Carroll. There were repeats of **The Voyages of Dr. Doolittle**, **Around the World in 80 Days** and **The Wind in the Willows**, a version of the **Pied Piper of Hamelin**, and the Disney interpretation of **Cinderella**.

Sesame Street, **Fraggle Rock**, **The World of Disney**, **Mickey and Donald**, **Bugs Bunny**, and **Scoobydoo and Scrappy Doo**, with **The Smurphs** and **Shirt Tales**, continued to form the core of the animation provision. There were new Easter features, **Daffy Duck's Easter Show** and **The First Easter Rabbit**, and a major new arrival, **Here Comes Garfield**, about a cynical, self-indulgent cat. **The Puppy's Further Adventures** was an 8-part series.

Other new titles were **Heathcliff and Dingbat**, **Monchichis**, **Best Horse--Wendy at the Rodeo**, **Alvin and the Chipmunks** and a preschool puppet series, **Cockleshell Bay**.

One of the better production agencies concerned with screen drama for children is The Children's Film Foundation. The Children's Film Foundation is a trust funded by the British film industry with the specific objective of producing films and film series which meet children's viewing needs. The RTE schedules for 1985 contained two CFF titles, **Hijack!** about three children on a yacht, and **On The Run**.

Other films directed at young people were **Benji**, **The**

Battle of Eric's Pond, and a story centred on a leprechaun, All The Money In The World. Star of India and Fire in the Stone were films involving pursuit of precious stones. Goodbye Mr. Chips was a film version of the famous school story by James Hilton. The Hatfields and the McCoys dealt with two feuding families in the American West. Marco Polo had a travel theme. There were seasons of Three Stooges films and of early silent comedies.

Superman 1 and Superman 2 were live action stories based on the all-American comic strip cosmic vigilante who incorporated America's vision of itself. These films were basically science fiction, created with amazing technical ingenuity. The script for Superman 2 was written by Mario Puzo.

The general science fiction provision included Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, Flight of the Dreyfus, The Children's Story, Star Trek, Ullyses 31---Oddyssey in Space, and The Invisible Men, a 6-part BBC adaptation of the story by H.G. Wells.

The work of William Shakespeare was represented by a special Shakespearian season, in addition to broadcasts of The Tempest and King Lear for the benefit of students. The schedules included a five-part adaptation of Wuthering Heights, also a school text. Other adaptations of classical literature included A Tale of Two Cities, The Master of Ballintrae and Huckleberry Finn. A Traveller in Time, The Famous Five and The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes were repeated. The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes was an excellent series of 20 hour-long episodes made for ITV in 1984 and 1985. The Captains and the Kings was a 9 hour serial about Irish emigration to the United States, based on the story by popular novelist Taylor Caldwell. There was also a programme called Book Adventures.

The long-running general drama series, The Edison Twins, Silver Spoons and Different Strokes continued. There were several features and series dealing with real-life contexts.

Roundabout dealt with the relationship between an old man and a boy.

The World According To Nicholas showed how a child whose parents were divorced coped with the break-up of his family.

Cougar was an adventure story about a boy in charge

of a farm threatened by a cougar.

Silence was a drama depicting the trauma of a deaf boy who had lost his parents.

The Flaxton Boys was a Yorkshire Television series set in the moors and centred on a boy and his mother.

George Goes to Hospital dealt with the problem of hospitalisation of children.

Counting Sheep featured an ill little girl.

One's a Heifer was a Canadian story about a boy and stray calves.

The Boy Who Liked Deer was another animal-centred story.

Stig of the Dump was a Thames TV series featuring Stig, a boy who lived in a house assembled from and furnished with junk-yard materials.

In The Fur Coat Club some little girls got locked up in a shop for the night.

If I'm Lost, How Come I found You? was a film about a boy and his delinquent aunt.

In The Huntsman, a Canadian boy collected lost golf balls and sold them back to the players.

Mr. Gimme was the story of a greedy boy.

Letty was a series featuring a girl sleuth confined to a wheelchair, but the primary objective of the series was to highlight some of the problems of handicapped children, and possible solutions to these problems.

General audience investigative action series were The A Team, Automen, Charlie Chan and Dick Tracy.

Story programmes included The Voyage of Oddysseus, The Gold Ring, The Boy Who Turned Yellow, Cat, a Canadian Indian story, The Grasshopper and the Ant, The Black Stork, which was a Soviet story, and a puppet version of Thumbelina.

Some Gilbert and Sullivan operettas featured in the schedules for 1985. You Musn't Believe All This was a musical interpretation of themes from the stories of Charles Dickens. The ballet, Sleeping Beauty, danced by the Kirov Ballet Company, was also transmitted and there was an animation version of The

Carnival of Animals.

Fame and **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers** were retained. **Highway to Heaven** presented Michael Landon, producer and main character actor of **The Little House on the Prairie** and the **Father Murphy** series in a new role as a humanised angel who, to win re-entry to heaven, must do good on earth.

Adventure series included **Moonfleet**, a smuggling saga set in the 18th century; **Children's Island**, where the boat evacuating children to safety in wartime is torpedoed, leaving them stranded without adults on a desert island, **The Castaways**, another island theme, **Sea Urchins**, the New Zealand series featuring Maori boys and a dinghy, **Children of Fire Mountain**, a thirteen part series, also from New Zealand, and **Spenser Pilots**, an aeronautical series. **Skippy** and **Elephant Boy** provided animal-centred adventure.

Tarzan, Wonderwoman, The Fall Guy, Robin of Sherwood, and **Bring 'em Back Alive**, the big game hunting series, were scheduled again. **Hopalong Cassidy, Cade's County,** and **Alias Smith and Jones** were Western series.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1986

New arrivals in the animation category were **The Plasticines**, a puppet series using plasticine puppets, **Supergran** and **Superted**. **Superted**, a Welsh-originated series eventually acquired by **Hanna-Barbera**, would in 1989 be scheduled as an Irish language programme, with a cast of well-known actors doing the voice-over track. The Irish version of **Superted** was produced by Donall Farmer.

More titles had science fiction themes. The lists included **Space Ghost and Dino Boy, Robotman and Friends, Skywhales, Little Orbit the Astrodog** and space sagas such as **Heman and the Masters of the Universe**. The animation feature **Space Stars** achieved a top TAMs rating.

The Muppets and **Fraggle Rock** were scheduled for 1986, but their parent programme **Sesame Street** was absent from the lists for the first time since 1971. Instead there was a new 13-part

Australian preschool programme, Kaboodle.

Another series, vesions of which had appeared before, was Dr. Seuss, a programme designed to improve reading skills. Dr. Seuss was the pseudonym for Theodor Seuss Geisel, an American cartoonist and advertising copywriter who turned to writing and illustrating children's books aimed at helping children to read. He devised a very effective system, telling substantial stories with a very limited word-range, many of his texts having a vocabulary of less than two hundred different words, and he became one of the richest writers in America in the process.

Animation programmes exploiting popular films or television series included The Lone Ranger, Mr. T. and Around The World in 80 Days.

Programmes with a ghost theme included Scoobydoo and The Real Ghostbusters.

Continuing titles were Cockleshell Bay, The Blinkins, The Snorks, The Gummi Bears, The Monchichis, The Smurfs, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Shirt Tales, The Great Grape Ape and Mickey and Donald. Strawberry Shortcake, Bambinger, Herself the Elf, Maya the Bee, The Get-Along Gang and Dragon's Lair were also in the schedules.

Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy, Abbot and Costello and The Three Stooges provided a generous allocation of film comedy throughout 1986. Silent comedy was provided in the Comedy Capers slot.

The comedy in the Chaplin film, Work, had a serious message about the boredom of factory work routines.

Films with particular appeal for young viewers were Benji, Zat and the Alien Prince, Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, and Superman 2. Day of the Triffids was a science fiction story based on the novel by John Wyndham. The Flame and the Arrow was set in medieval times. The Corsican Brothers was a 1941 film about Siamese twins severed at birth but still joined by a unique mental bond. The work of Alexandre Dumas provided inspiration for two films on the list, The Son of Monte Cristo and The Man in the Iron Mask.

John Wyndham was also the author of the stories

adapted to create the **Chocky** children's science fiction series, made for Thames Television. There were three 6-part stories in 30-minute episodes, **Chocky**, **Chocky's Children**, and **Chocky's Challenge**. Chocky was a female alien lifeform from another galaxy who made herself visible when she chose to do so to schoolboy Thomas Gore. The boy's parents were extremely worried about the boy's sanity until they too become involved in the boy's strange experience. The second series brought in outside interests, including the police, who suspected the existence of the extra-terrestrial visitor. In the third series Chocky taught Thomas and his friend Albertine how to build the world's first cosmic energy collector, but the inevitable malignant outsiders were also interested in the project.

Alf was another extra-terrestrial; he lived with a conventional American family who hid him from the inquisitive world. The humour in **Alf**, as in **Mork and Mindy**, derived from the attempts of the alien to understand contemporary American behaviour, but, unlike Mork, Alf did not have a representative human form. Alf was an interactive puppet relating to the human characters in the series.

Inner Space. a science fiction film, was a reversal of the cosmic travel theme; the voyager and his capsule spaceship in this case were reduced to minuscule size and sent regularly to travel through living human bodies in the interests of science. This work became humdrum, until an accident happened and the voyager was unable to exit from the human carrier of the day.

Starman, Space Oddyssey, Heman and the Masters of the Universe and **My Favourite Martian** were other programmes in the science fiction genre or with a science fiction premise.

Mark Twain's work got considerable attention in 1986. There was a **Mark Twain Season**, a series of **Huckleberry Finn and Friends**, and **Robbers and Rascals**, a series involving characters and situations from Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

There was a heavy presence of material derived from late 19th century literature. **The Prisoner of Zenda**, a film version of the novel by Anthony Hope, had got several showings over the years. **The Courage of Black Beauty** was based on the Anna

Sewell classic. **The Railway Children** came from the same period. There was also a screen version of **Charley's Aunt**, the famous play about strategic transvestitism by Brandon Thomas first staged in 1892. From the earlier half of the century came the base texts of **Coral Island** and **Jane Eyre**.

Programmes with more modern contexts were **Just William**, **The Famous Five**, **The Hardy Boys Mysteries**, **The Nancy Drew Mysteries**, and **Follyfoot**, based on the books by Monica Dickens about a farm where young people looked after neglected horses.

MacBeth and **The Merchant of Venice** were shown for the benefit of students. There were a number of programmes in the schedules which gave the biographical contexts of writers. These included **The Brontes of Haworth**, **Dickens of London**, and **Helen Keller**.

Animal-centred adventure included **Born Free**, **Elephant Boy**, **Skippy**, **Grizzly Adams**, **Zoom the White Dolphin** and **Bring 'em Back Alive**. **In Falcon Territory** was set in Iceland, and concerned two young brothers who go camping with their eccentric uncle. **One by One** featured a zoo vet.

The Voyage of the Mimi involved underwater exploration and contact with submarine life. Underwater adventure was also the theme of **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**. **Blacke's Magic** was a story about a ghost ship. **Butterfly Island** and **The Beachcombers** continued in the schedules.

Tightrope to Terror, an exemplary thriller for young people, featured two sisters trapped in a runaway overhead trolley-car in the Alps. **Silver** was about a boy injured in a car crash who acquired special fantasy powers from his injury. **One Hour to Zero** was a children's thriller set in the vicinity of a nuclear power station in Wales. **Wild Boy** told of a boy who, as an infant, had crawled safely out of an plane which had just crashed and survived on his own. **The Hostages** was a children's thriller evolving from a situation where escaped convicts take over a farm.

The A Team continued to provide commando-type adventure.

Historical and pseudo-historical drama was represented

by **The Campbells**, an STV 22-part series filmed in Canada which told the story of a Scottish emigrant family in the uncharted territory of Canada in the 1830s. **The Campbells** was a good example of foundation mythology. **Boy Dominic** was a 13-part Yorkshire Television series set in the England of 1820. Also scheduled were **Arthur and the Square Knights of the Round Table** and **Robin of Sherwood**.

Early evening situation comedies and family dramas included **Sons and Daughters, The Sullivans, The People's Court, Highway to Heaven, Get Smart, Hart to Hart, Bilko, The Cosby Show,** and **The Wrong Arm of the Law. Head of Class** was an American high school series.

Titles with a real-life context which had appeared previously were **The Flaxton Boys, South Riding, The Paper Lads, Diff'rent Strokes, The Edison Twins** and **Silver Spoons. Silver Spoons** achieved a top TAM rating in 1986. **Brother To The Ox,** the Yorkshire Television series about farm life, was also repeated.

Tom Grattan's War was the story of a 13-year-old boy during the 1914--1918 war. In **Seal Morning** a young girl reared a baby seal. **Dodger, Bonzo and the Rest** told of the fight of the inmates to save a threatened Children's Home. **On Your Tod--at 18** was a Thames TV series about a boy whom circumstances forced to live on his own. **Sweetwater** was the story of a 9-year-old orphan. **A Different Kind of Winning** was a children's drama series with a skateboard theme. **Someone in the Kitchen with Jamie** had a baseball context. Also listed was **The Secret World of Polly Flint,** an adaptation in six parts by Central Television of Helen Cresswell's psychic fantasy for children, evolving around Polly and her awareness of the lost village of Grimstone which 'had slipped the nets of time'.

The folklore provision included **The Night The Animals Talked,** an animation nativity play, a story version of **Homer's Ullyses, European Folktales, In the Forest of Owls, Jackanory Playhouse, Fairie Tale Theatre,** which featured the young American actress, Tatum O'Neal, and an Indian tale, **The Prince and the Demons.** Also scheduled was a special programme called **The Storyteller,** in which Jim Henson, creator of the **Sesame Street**

puppets, The Muppets and Fraggle Rock, demonstrated the use of fantasy technology to tell a story, The Luck Child.

Western series in the schedules included The Cisco Kid, Alias Smith and Jones, The Man from the Alamo, Mohawk, Cade County, and, in the same genre, The Adventures of Zorro, which featured a masked Mexican crusader.

IMPORTED CHILDREN'S DRAMA, 1987

Many familiar cartoon packages disappeared from the schedules in the mid-1980s, to be replaced by new and less memorable products such as, in the 1987 list, Dr. Snuggles, The Smurfs, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Ludwig, Bristleship, and the Funky Phantom. The old favourites who made the schedules were The Flintstone Kids and Yogi Bear.

Bears, apart from Yogi, had a strong presence, with The Gummi Bears, The Butter Bears, and The Berenstein Bears, who were based on characters in books by Stan and Jan Berenstein. Mice also asserted themselves, with a twelve-part series, Adventures of a Mouse, and Mouse on a Motorcycle. Snoopy, the dog from the Charlie Brown series, featured in Snoopy Comes Home. Peter-No-Tail was a Swedish story about a cat.

New animation features which were establishing themselves in the schedules in 1987 were Cockleshell Bay, Superted, Supergran, Spiderman and The Real Ghostbusters.

There were only two animations of literary texts, Gulliver's Travels and the Thames TV 13-part adaptation of Wind in the Willows.

Mr. T., the 6-part derivative of the A Team live action series, got another repeat. Hugo the Hippo was an animation series in 26 parts.

Specific features included a French animation of Puss in Boots, the Walt Disney Cinderella film and a further Disney programme, Mickey's Christmas Carol. The Muppets got a repeat showing. The Buford Files and the Galloping Ghost, Ziggy's Gig and Paw Paws were new additions. The Man Who Planted Trees was an artistic presentation of an environment fable.

Major animation series in the science fiction category included **Starman, Defenders of the Earth, He-Man and She-Ra** and **Once Upon a Time : Space**.

There were several science fiction films in the schedules. The most popular was **Supergirl**, which reached the top TAM ratings. **The Glitter Ball** was a Children's Film Foundation production. Other films were **The Cat From Outer Space and The Boy Who Turned Yellow**. The schedules also featured **Star Trek, Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World, Space Stars** and **A Hitch in Time**.

The Children's Film Foundation also produced **Sammy's Super T-Shirt**. Other films directed at young viewers included **One Hour To Zero**, a children's film set in Wales in the vicinity of a nuclear power station; **The 'Copter Kids; The Red Balloon**, about a balloon with a mind of its own; **Herbie Rides Again**, about a Volkswagen Beetle car which also had a mind of its own; **Indiana Jones**, about a swashbuckling archaeologist; **Captain Blood**, and **Davy Crockett and the River Pirates**.

There was the usual liberal provision of films featuring **Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy and Abbot and Costello**.

I Dream of Jeannie was a film biography of song-writer Stephen Foster. **I'm Looking To You** was a film with songs and music about children in time of war. **Elvis** was a film about the popular singer. The Judy Garland film, **The Wizard of Oz**, was repeated.

Other films listed included **The Camerons, Chucklewood Easter, Hide and Seek**, and **Jumbo**.

Films based on published fiction included **The Moonspinners**, from the book by Mary Stewart, set in the Greek islands and the Agean Sea, and the controversial Disney version of **Mary Poppins**, from the children's book about a prim nanny with magical powers by the Australian writer, Pamela Lyndon Travers. Her early work was published in The Irish Statesman by George Russell (AE).

The critical controversy centred on the fidelity of the film to the book. However, this was a general debate among American educationists about the adaptation of books for cinema, of which Disney was the main focus. Whatever one's view on the

fidelity of the adaptation to the original text, it would have to be conceded that the film generated massive new markets for the whole range of Mary Poppins books.

The **Red Pony** was a 1949 film version of John Steinbeck's story of a boy and a colt.

Hayley Mills starred as the girl who spreads happiness in the adaptation for screen of **Pollyanna**, by Eleanor N. Porter.

Another literary text adapted for screen was **Rip Van Winkle**, by Washington Irving.

The work of Dickens was represented by three films, **A Christmas Carol**, **Oliver Twist** and **David Copperfield**, and by a serial version of **Bleak House**.

Film versions of James Fennimore Cooper's **The Deerslayer**, of **Tom Brown's Schooldays** by Thomas Hughes, and of **Black Beauty** by Anna Sewell were also transmitted.

Serial versions of popular children's fiction which were repeated in 1987 included **The Nancy Drew Mysteries**, **The Hardy Boys Mysteries**, **The Secret Garden** and a 26-part serialisation of the **Swiss Family Robinson**.

Versions of school texts scheduled included **Pride and Prejudice**, **King Lear**, **MacBeth**, **Julius Caesar** and **Romeo and Juliet**.

Drama with a real life context for young people included several new titles. **Saturdee** was an Australian children's series based on the writings of Norman Lindsay about growing up in Australia. **The Stray** was a story involving children, a school bus and a zoo. **Soupman** featured a teenage gang. **Joni Jones** was a film in the Welsh language, with English subtitles, about the experiences of a young boy in Wales during the Second World War. **My Mum's a Courgette** was about a mother who embarrassed her children by taking a job as a promotions model in a store. **The Kids of Degrassi Street** was a 13 part mixed-race neighbourhood children's series set in Toronto. **Grandpa's Day** dealt with the relationship between a little girl and her grandfather.

The Cosby Show was a popular situation comedy involving a black doctor and his family. **Double Trouble** featured 16 year-old twins. **Valerie** was a situation comedy based on the problems of a mother with three teenage boys whose father, an

airline pilot, was continually away from home. **Boys' Town** was the 1938 film which starred Spenser Tracy as Father Flanagan and Mickey Rooney as the dilinquent boy determined to disprove Father Flanagan's motto that there was no such thing as a bad boy. **War Between the Classes** was an American school series. **Alf**, introduced the previous year, featured an alien from another planet in a conventional American home.

There were also some new adventure titles. **BMX Bandits** was an Australian series centred on bicycle acrobatics. **Space Riders** featured motorcycling. **Henry's Leg** was a 6-part series about a boy who collected junk. **Danger Bay** was a Canadian marine adventure series set in Vancouver. **Kodean** was based on the work of the Alaska State police.

The Wake of the Red Witch and **Return of The Antelope**, a 13 part Granada series were period stories of high seas adventure.

Series which were repeated were **The A Team**, **Boy Dominic**, the 8 parts Yorkshire Television adventure story set in 1820, **Butterfly Island**, **Adventures of Captain Fabian**, and **Tom Grattan's War**.

Animal centred stories included **The Littlest Hobo**, the story of a wandering dog; **The Zoo Robber**; **Zoom the White Dolphin**; **Crin Blanc**, which means white mane, a series about a wild stallion set in the south of France; **The Goose Field** and a film called **The Red Deer**.

The Chisholms was a 15-part series about an American pioneering family. **Kit Carson** also appeared in the 1987 schedules. Other early evening series for general viewing were **Get Smart**, **Highway to Heaven**, **Grizzly Adams** and **Rock School**.

Story provision included a Granada series, **Once Upon A Time**; an animation series, **European Fairytales**; a series from Canada, **Tales from a Toyshop**, in which the stories were read by Peter Ustinov, and several individual features among which were **The Story of the Carol**, **My Little Prince**, **The Frog King**, **Hansel and Gretel**, **The River of Giants**, **Rapunzel**, **Rapunzel**, and **The Moonstone Gem**, which was a puppet fairytale. There was also a programme called **The Snow White Children's Special**.

Historical drama was represented by The Four Musketeers, Peter the Great, and a serial, Crossbow, which centred on the Swiss hero, William Tell.

In addition to the ghost story material in the animation category there was a Christmas feature called The Phantom Tree-House, the 7-part Nobody's House, and A Christmas Carol.

APPENDIX D

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1962---1987

Introduction

Appendix D sketches the growth of a drama production culture in Telefis Eireann/RTE, paying particular attention to drama in which children had leading roles. Helena Sheehan, in Irish Television Drama, has charted the history of the Drama Department and the plays, series and serials which formed the Drama Department output from 1962 to 1987, analysing this material within the framework of Irish social and media history over the same period, and dealing extensively with images of Irish life, structural and organisational developments and conflict, and with the controversies generated by programmes and corporate and political decisions.

Our study perceives the Drama Department as the site of drama production culture in the station, and as the only available source of viable children's drama. The purpose of this appendix is to establish the existence of skills and personnel , to demonstrate that the Department could and did use children successfully in drama, to mark the evolution of certain phases such as theatre-derived drama, Irish language drama and strategies such as the co-production perspective, and to show on a year by year basis, that the Drama Department had very little involvement in the creation of children's drama in the years under review.

There is no evidence that the Drama Department formally rejected a role in the creation of children's television drama, or that the Children's Department ever demanded that the Drama Department contribute this provision. The evidence is to the contrary; the Department responded to any request made for participation in the production of children's programmes, making producers and technical personnel available. The omission we

advert to is a corporate omission; structures were not created and resources were not made available which would allow the focus and location of drama production culture within the organisation to engage in the creation of children's television drama. The consequence of this corporate omission, we argue, was the disenfranchisement of Irish children in television drama on the home station.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1962

Plays transmitted in the first year included **Thirst**, by Myles na Goplaleen; **The Well of the Saints**, by J.M. Synge; **Come Back**, by Brian and Veronica Cleeve, **Moby Dick Rehearsed**, and **Our Representative Will Call**, both by **Orson Welles**; **The Little Father** by Laurence Houseman, in five parts; **Hello Out There** by William Saroyan; the **Everyman** morality play; **Oliver of Ireland** by Frank Darcy; **The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet** by George Bernard Shaw; Ibsen's play, **Public Enemy**; **The Bomb**, by James Douglas; **The Moon Shines on Kylnamoe** by Seân O'Casey; **Heart to Heart** by Terence Rattigan, and **A Matter of Conscience** by Eugene McCabe.

The most obvious feature was the predominance of adaptations of stage plays. Television drama in most countries tended to depend on theatre not just for scripts, but also for personnel. As Helena Sheehan points out in **Irish Television Drama**, Hilton Edwards, Head of Drama, and producers Shelagh Richards, Chloe Gibson, Jim Fitzgerald and Micheâl O hAodha all had strong theatre backgrounds. She notes that most of the producers, directors, writers, actors and designers were drawn from the world of Irish theatre, and that they brought styles, structures and skills which had been evolved by the theatrical profession with them. The prevailing production methods in television at this time, she says, tended to favour a style of drama very close to that of theatre, the main form of dramatic production being the studio-based single play.

In the first years of production, the children's

programmes schedules also featured a number of televised stage plays. As the decade progressed this type of production vanished from the schedules.

Despite this dependence on the stage, original writing for television did emerge in the first year through the production and transmission of work by Brian and Veronica Cleeve, James Douglas, and Eugene McCabe, and more significantly in relation to this work, in **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh**, which was commissioned by the Children's Department.

Another significant feature was the substantial presence of drama with a religious or moral theme---**The Little Father**, the pageant **Oliver**, and the **Everyman Play**, which was put on as material for Lenten meditation. **The Well of the Saints** also had a strong moral tone, and **A Matter of Conscience** was about a parish priest pleading for a tolerant attitude to itinerants.

This religious and moralistic content may have been a conscious or subconscious reaction to the intense public debate which emphasised the demoralising potential of television drama, and a conscious or subconscious effort to reassure viewers and pressure groups that television drama could be a vehicle for Christian values.

> "From Church pulpits, from Oireachtas debates, from GAA meetings, from Knights of Columbanus seminars, came worries and warnings about the effects of television, which was basically seen as an agent of erroneous ideas and alien values. These sorts of apprehensions were enhanced by the radical character of British television at the time. Denunciations of the 'kitchen sink drama' on ITV as sordid and immoral were central to the tone of the debate. (Sheehan : 1987)

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1963

In the course of the year the following plays and serials were produced : **The Liar** by MicheáL Mac Liammóir, **The Glass Murder** by Denis Johnston, **The Paddy Pedlar** by M.J. Molloy, **Enquiry At Lisieux** by Marcelle Maurette, **The Long Sorrow** by Thomas

Coffey, **The Weaver's Grave** by Séamus O'Kelly, **Down at Flannery's**, a rural serial by Carolyn Swift, **An Apple a Day**, by Jules Romain and Micheál Mac Lianmhóir, **The Devil a Saint Would Be** by Louis D'Alton and Carolyn Swift, **The Workhouse Ward**, by Lady Gregory, **In The Train** by Frank O'Connor, **Purgatory** by W.B. Yeats, **The Old Ladies** by Hugh Walpole, **Carrie** by James Douglas and Wesley Burrowes, **A Walk On The Water** by Hugh Leonard, **Dr. Korczak And The Children** by Erwin Sylvanus, and **She Stoops To Conquer** by Oliver Goldsmith.

The Drama Department output was still heavily dependent on theatre, but there was some evolution towards television drama as compared with stage drama. The religious note was still pronounced. There was more formal television drama in the schedules. Writers who had a professional concept of the television medium, such as Hugh Leonard, Wesley Burrowes, James Douglas, and Carolyn Swift were contributing material specially written for television.

Down at Flannerys was the next attempt at a rural serial, if we accept that **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh** was the first attempt. The initiative came from the new Controller of Programmes, Gunnar Ruggheimer, who was anxious to get a long-running rural serial under way. He would eventually succeed with **The Riordans**. The themes of **Down at Flannery's**, listed by Helena Sheehan, involved romances, returned Yanks, concerts, feiseanna, disputes over land and local politics.

An extraordinary experiment, also initiated by Gunnar Ruggheimer, was the **Shinrone** series, in which the OBU recorded the ordinary lives of the people of the village of Shinrone in Co. Offaly. The intention, according to Helena Sheehan, was to produce unscripted drama. As such it failed. Television can be a successful vehicle for unscripted drama in the sense that a news item or sporting event can achieve dramatic status, but the dynamics of enacted narrative will be operative. The humdrum existence of of the villagers of Shinrone did not generate riveting drama.

However, **Down at Flannery's** and **Shinrone** convinced Telefis Eireann that "there was an enduring public interest in

ordinary lives." (Sheehan : 1987 : 122)

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1964

Jim Fitzgerald replaced Hilton Edwards as Head of Drama. Jim's frenetic energy resulted in substantially-increased output by the Drama Department over the year. The change did not mean that stage plays were abandoned. Well-known stage plays and stage presentations in the schedules were **In The Shadow of the Glen, Them, The Importance of Being Oscar, The Bear, The Man of Destiny, Anyone Can Rob a Bank, All the King's Horses, I Must Be Talking To My Friends, The Moon in the Yellow River,** and **You Never Can Tell.**

According to Helena Sheehan, the change signified

> "a more explicit commitment to drama that would reflect social change and stimulate a coming to grips with it." (Sheehan : 1985: 103)

This attitude was best reflected in **Tolka Row,** a new domestic serial in an urban setting, Ireland's answer to Coronation Street. Tolka Row was also a derivative of stage, in that it was a development of Maura Laverty's 1951 play about the life of the Nolan family following their move from a Liberties tenement to a North City housing estate. This urban migration theme was also a context in **Siopa an Bhreathnaigh.**

The main significance in our context was that **Tolka Row** marked a major commitment to television as a dramatic medium in its own right. The schedule underlined the cultivation of new writers such as James Douglas, Michael Judge, Brian Friel and Eugene McCabe. The serial format was also gaining acceptance. Children's drama would follow the same serial pattern.

Jim Fitzgerald did not see it as his brief to provide children's drama any more than Hilton Edwards did. The Drama Department was totally caught up in its own angst, and it was now more apparent than ever that children's television drama, if there was any awareness of it at all as a genre, must materialise within the budgetary and production confines of the Children's Programmes Department.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1965

The new Controller of Programmes, Gunnar Ruggheimer, made his mark by setting up **The Riordans**, to provide a rural serial and counterbalance **Tolka Row** in the schedules.

Serial drama now dominated the Drama Department output and absorbed most of the resources. It also absorbed almost all the available new writing talent. Writing specifically for television was at this stage a well-established native craft.

Chloe Gibson took over from Jim Fitzgerald as Head of Drama. Like her predecessors her predilection was stage drama. Again, Chloe Gibson did not concern herself with the provision of children's drama.

Irish language drama was represented by two strong contributions, **An Triail**, by Mairéad ni Ghráda, an adaptation of a play staged in the Damer Theatre which had won a favourable notice from Harold Hobson of the The Sunday Times, and **Saighdiúirí**, about soldiers in the Irish-speaking battalion in Renmore Barracks in Galway, written by Domhnall Mac Amhlaigh.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1966

The serials continued, **Tolka Row** running into problems and **The Riordans** establishing itself with some strength. The Department also got out an eight-episode adaptation of **The Real Charlotte**, by Somerville and Ross, the eight-part 1916 series, **Insurrection**, and a six-part dramatisation of Irish history, **The Long Winter**.

The unique feature was the enthusiasm and energy with which the Drama Department took on the task of commemorating 1916. Its contribution constituted the bulk of the station's commemorative effort. The mystifying feature was the extent to which the creators of this drama accepted the underlying ideology.

The commemorative drama was probably a response to political nudging. The message may be that the Drama Department, given a definite directive from top management, backed up by resources, could produce a credible volume of drama. The missing

factor over the years may have been strong leadership, and unequivocal directives at a high level.

As in 1965 there were plays in Irish, **Cúirt an Mheán Oiche**, an adaptation of the Brian Merriman poem, and **An Fear Faire**, by Pádhraig O Siochrú.

Chloe Gibson courageously put Samuel Beckett on the home screen, with **Beginning to End**.

An interesting arrival to television drama was Circuit Court judge Rex Mackay, with a play based on legal records, **The Siege of the Widow Wilkins**.

With **The Riordans** and **Tolka Row** in full spate, in addition to the commemorative and historical series and **The Real Charlotte**, the serial and the series were now the dominant home production formats.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1967

Theatre drama continued to have its attractions for the Drama Department. Adaptations of stage plays transmitted during the year included **Candida**, **Shadow of a Gunman**, **The Dreaming Dust**, **The Physicists**, **The Far Off Hills**, **Happy Days**, **Happy as Larry**, and **Charley's Aunt**.

The ideological and historical premises of the State continued to be examined in the six episodes of **The Republican Brotherhood**, and in **The Fenians**. The theme of land-hunger was the focus of **Land**, an eight-part adaptation of stories by Liam O'Flaherty.

The logic of mini-skirted **Buntús Cainte** was applied in a new thriller series in Irish, **O Dúill**.

Breakdown by Eugene McCabe extended the range of Irish television drama by looking at the hitherto unexamined world of Irish business, and Dr. Maurice Davin-Power brought down-and-outs on to the screen in **Shadows in the Sun**. Dublin bed-sit life featured in the 6-part **Me and My Friend** by Fergus Linehan.

Irish television was moving tentatively towards a reflection of the real world.

In contrast, home-produced children's drama was careering towards fantasy.

Me and My Friend, featuring Maureen Potter and Rosaleen Linehan, was also an attempt to establish situation comedy.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1968

Stage drama was still with us in substantial quantities, **Brecht**, **Ibsen**, **Frisch**, **Brendan Behan**, **Shaw** and **T.C.Murray** getting representation in the course of the year. The serial format held ground. In addition to **The Riordans** and **Tolka Row**, there was a new serial thriller in Irish by Eoin Ó Súilleabháin, **A hAon is a hAon, Sin a hAon**.

Despite commitments to the serials and to stage drama, Chloe Gibson managed to extend the range of home-produced television drama content by the inclusion of plays such as **The Last Eleven**, by Jack White, about the Protestant minority in the Republic, and **A Case of Teamwork**, by Norman Smythe, set in a factory.

Joe O'Donnell, who would make a major contribution to children's programmes in later years, dealt with another phenomenon of contemporary life, **The Dress Dance**. An intriguing title in the list was **Flight into Danger**, an early work by Arthur Hailey (his first teleplay) which was directed by Tom McGrath.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1969

Tolka Row had wound up in 1968 and was now replaced by David Hayes' urban serial, **Southside**, set in Cork to make the point that urban life was not confined to Dublin.

There was also an interesting courtroom series, **Justice at Large**, by Rex Mackey.

A new reservoir of dramatic material had been

discovered---the prose work of contempory Irish authors---yielding adaptations of stories by Michael McLaverty, Frank O'Connor, Walter Macken, Patrick Boyle and Donagh McDonagh.

The Drama Department, in an informational role, also brought out a five-part series by Carolyn Swift, Laurence Ryan and Raymond Williams, **Looking at Drama**. One of the sessions dealt with the value of drama to children. Demonstrating children's drama in practice were Lorcan Ó Riain and his pupils. A former group from this school had presented **An Coileach Órga** on Telefis Eireann in 1963. (c.f. Appendix C, 1963)

Adaptations of stage plays included **The Canterville Ghost** and **Lady Windemere's Fan** by Oscar Wilde, Jean Anouilh's **Antigone**, and Brian Friel's **The Loves of Cass Maguire**.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1970

Stage plays were still with us, Chloe Gibson seemingly having a backlog of theatre drama that she wished to get through. **Over the Bridge**, one of the plays on the lists, reminded viewers of the existence and reality of Northern Ireland. The only reminder we have had of the Northern community in children's programming has been **Seán the Leprechaun**.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1971

The Drama Department once again took on extra chores. The First Dáil was re-enacted in **The Treaty Debates**, the statutory cultural commitment was met to some extent by the presentation of extracts from Irish literature, and the Department, in league with the Features section, produced a comedy series, **What the Butler Missed**.

There were only three examples of stage-originated drama in the course of the year. One Irish language play annually year seemed to have become mandatory.

Norman Smythe added some new workplace environments

and themes to the content range, and the station had another stab at the elusive permanent urban or suburban serial, with **Partners in Practice**.

The Department was functioning less as a theatre, and was gradually coming to terms, as Helena Sheehan suggests, with the temper of the times.

If **A Week in The Life of Martin Cluxton** was an example of this new realism its immediacy was diluted somewhat by its format.

This play, by Caoimhin O Marcaigh and Brian Mac Lochlainn, was transmitted in the week beginning Saturday, December 3rd, 1971. It went out at 10 p.m., which indicated that it was perceived as adult drama.

The programme note said :

> **Released from a Reform School after one and a half years, Martin Cluxton returns into a society now alien to him, and difficult to adjust to.**

The play was an attempt to point out, in dramatic terms, the grave inadequacies of the Reformatory system.

The transmission was delayed for a year after the programme was made because of the imminent publication of the Kennedy Report on reformatories and custodial care for young people.

A Week in the Life of Martin Cluxton belongs to the category of plays perceived as adult, such as The Lost Hour, based on John McGahern's story, which are presented from the child's perspective, and feature children in main roles.

The content of the play was more complex than the programme note indicated. Martin McLoone analysed the play in some detail in his study of **Strumpet City** in **Television and Irish Society**. Martin Cluxton has been sent to Glenmulkan (Letterfrack), for "**robbing from cars.**" The background to the play was that of the city boy transferred to a harsh rural regime for punishment, and now returned to a harsh and unwelcoming city environment. It was a vehicle for all sorts of partisan rhetoric, spoken by a variety of characters direct to camera.

"**By including the rural discourse,**" says McLoone, "**Martin Cluxton** comes closer to the reality of contemporary

Ireland." (McLoone : 1984)

A Week in the Life of Martin Cluxton reflected the actual and potential reality of the lives of many Irish children. Oliver Twist, which dealt with similar themes in a Victorian setting, would find a ready place in any children's schedule. What takes Martin Cluxton out of the category of children's drama is probably the focus of the play---the rhetoric and other content was too complex for child viewers, and its mode of delivery off-putting.

A dynamic Children's and Young People's Drama Department, if one existed, would come up with a version of the Martin Cluxton story without any loss of accessibility for the young viewer, or any reduction in its impact.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1972

Drama Department output showed a considerable reduction over the previous year. Irish language drama got a generous proportion of this meagre provision. It would seem that the new Head of Drama, Donal Farmer, was trying to get through a backlog of individual plays.

Drama can materialise in other programme formats. The most relevant and popular drama during the year under review was provided at negligible cost by the **Ballymagash** team in the satirical review programme, **Hall's Pictorial Weekly**.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1973

Dubliner Heno Magee's I'm Getting Out Of This Kip gave a much-needed stimulus of raw realism to Irish television drama in 1973. Eugene McCabe's trilogy, **Cancer**, was a major and enduring contribution. If **The Cap Fits** was a relatively successful venture into revue-type comedy. Tom Murphy and John Arden were new and important arrivals. The stage still proved a fertile source of content, but at least it was the contemporary stage.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1974

Drama Department output continued to contract. The provision concentrated on European stage drama, with plays by **Fritz Hochwalder, Alexei Arbuzov, Agust Strindberg, Jean Anouilh, Garcia Lorca** and **Bertold Brecht**. There were also adaptations of contemporary Irish fiction, notably that of **Brian Friel, Frank O'Connor** and **Mary Lavin**. The adaptation of **Mr. Sing, My Heart's Delight**, a child-centred short story by Brian Friel, won an international award for Brian Mac Lochlainn.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1975

Donall Farmer's stint as Head of Drama concluded. He was replaced by Michael Garvey. Michael Garvey's policy was to encourage contemporary Irish authors. As well as **The Riordans**, the year's selection featured work by Edna O'Brien, Liam O Flaithearta, Michael Judge, Joe O'Donnell, John Boyd, David Hayes, Desmond Forrestal, Iris Grant, Kevin Grattan and Criostóir O Floinn.

Liam O Flaithearta's **Teangbháil** was probably the best production of this selection. The contribution by David Hayes was a ten-part serial, **Up In The World**.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1976

The selection featured only one single play, by Fr. Desmond Forrestal, about Nano Nagle, **Nano**.

The resources for the year were devoted to two series, **Victims**, a trilogy on Northern Ireland by Eugene McCabe, and **Kilmore House**, an eight-part family saga stretching over several generations for which seven scriptwriters were listed.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1977

The year's output comprised a season of **The Riordans**; a satirical comedy series **Time Now, Mr. T.**, featuring Niall Tóibin; a production by Brian Mac Lochlainn of **The Plough and the**

Stars; Eagla, a play in Irish by Liam Mac Uistin; **Briarsville Forever**, a play by Kevin Grattan; **Crystal and Fox**, a play by Brian Friel, and two strong and controversial plays which had originated in theatre, **The White House** by Tom Murphy, and **King of the Castle**, by Eugene McCabe.

<u>DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1978</u>

There were three non-serial presentations in the course of the year, **Deeply Regretted By...**, a play by Maeve Binchy, **The Tailor And Ansty**, an adaptation of the controversial book about a Cork seanachai by Eric Cross, and **The Heart's a Wonder**, a musical version of Synge's Playboy of the Western World.

The Riordans was still in production, but the format had been changed from the half-hour weekly serial programme to a one-hour theme-centred series which still retained continuity.

Teems of Times was a 10-episode television drama biography of the Behan family, written by Dominic Behan and produced by Louis Lentin.

The Last of Summer was a 4-part dramatisation of Kate O'Brien's novel.

The Burke Enigma was a well-resourced six-part serial about a Dublin family engaged in criminal activities and the pattern of their conflict with a Garda officer, played by Ray McAnally. It was written by Michael Feeney Callan.

<u>THE SPIKE</u>

The Spike, written by Patrick Gilligan (this writer) and produced by Noel O Briain and Brian Mac Lochlainn, was the most controversial contribution from the Drama Department during 1978, and the most controversial series in terms of protest and public debate in the history of RTE. Transmission was suspended after Episode 5 of a 10-part series.

It was commissioned and produced as an adult series, unmodified in any sense for a juvenile audience, and, in our context, belongs to the category of adult drama featuring children. To quote from Helena Sheehan, it was shot in Ringsend

Technical Institute, with classes actually in session, and cast with pupils from Ringsend and Ballymun, "giving it an authenticity which blurred the line between fact and fiction." The Spike, however, did not concentrate exclusively on the post-primary category; public sector education extended to adult and community education, and some of the programmes dealt with these topics. The series also dealt with the wider social contexts of the students, including home backgrounds.

The main perspective of the series saw public sector post-primary education as it operated in the 1970s as a dumping-ground for problematic educational material, perpetuating class distinction because the removal of these children from the private postprimary schools allowed the private schools, unhindered by troublesome students, to achieve the kind of results that would allow their students to progress into the professions and into third level.

The opening scenes of the series, retold in story form in the Mercier Press publication, The Spike, gives some idea of the educational milieu The Spike portrayed in the segments that related to the postprimary function of the school.

> 'The Spike is a bastard school!' was aerosolled on the gatepost. The Acting Principal's Anglia pinked out between the prefabs. He abandoned it and hurried through the murk of scruffy teenagers to the front door. On it was chalked 'O'Mahony is a sucking pig!'
>
> A girl spun against him out of the hall crush. The intimate impact of her flesh registered on his face. Davis, who had pushed her, whooped with understanding. O'Mahony's knuckles whitened but the girl reacted first, the shorthand book she threw creasing the lout's smirk into an expletive.
>
> 'Get to your classrooms!' He spoke quietly. It would be a long day.
>
> In the staffroom teachers read their newspapers half-seeing; morning lethargy stifled their talk.
>
> 'The bell went! Five minutes ago!'
>
> They sidled out in dull hostility. A parent, still bridling at an insulting absent-note, lay in ambush as the foot of the stairs. He went into the office. Sheila late. It was a war. Everyone the enemy. He though of last night. His wife too.
>
> He harangued parents in the hallway. There was no reception room and he hated having them in the office. Outside the gate the Department official paid off the taxi and stood on the pavement, piecing his officiousness together....
>
> 'Mrs. Greene, isn't it?'

'I've brung her back, Mr. O'Mahony. I didn't know she was absent. Swear to God I didn't!'

'She's been out three weeks!"

'You could have wrote!'

'I did. Every three days!'

'She burnt the letters. Her daddy is away. I don't know what to do with her. You've me heart broke, you have,' she whined, turning to her daughter. Sally Greene rocked nonchalantly on her platforms, plopping gum-bubbles. Mrs. Greene's face warped tearfully.

'I'll deal with her later. Go to your class, Sally!'

The girl thumbed a roll of pound notes out of her skirt-band and passed them to her mother. The Greenes had a street stall. Then again the girl might have been playing the ships.

The bell exploded for the morning break and the hall became a swim of jostling bodies.

'The heat in the prefabs is only half-on. We don't have to teach below 59 degrees,' accused Gregory, the shop steward of the teachers' union.

'Find Boyle!'

'Mr. O'Mahony, I'm Tommy Byrne's mother. The Guards took him.'

A water-bomb plummeted from the top landing to the feet of the Department official. He focussed on the office door, noting that someone, probably an aggrieved teacher, had scrawled 'Acting' before 'Principal'.

'Sir, Mr. Carolan hasn't been in all morning.'

'Mr. O'Mahony, you wrote to me about Jean!'

The bell ended the break with a nerve-wracking jangle. O'Mahony stormed into the staffroom.

'For Christ's sake!'

Gregory shoved the architect's drawings at him.

'We're not happy about staffroom accommodation in the new school, Jer!'

'Talk to me after class!'

Ross hung back. Ross had postgraduate qualifications. He was mad, but he had sense enough to hurt.

'You should be in your class Mr. Ross!'

'The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction. William Blake, Jerome. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. But you wouldn't know about it, would you?'

He'd get Ross. Sooner than later. Mad or not. Teachers muttered in malevolent huddles in the passages. Bannon, woodwork, lugged up a pupil with a bleeding thumb.

'He switched on the bandsaw without my permission!'

'You weren't in the room, were you? Take him up to the hospital!'

Mrs. Noonan held the red-haired girl by the hair.

'She actually spat in the soup. I want her banned from my kitchen!'

The intercom crackled.

'Repeating---Mr. O'Mahony is wanted in the office!'
(Gilligan : The Spike : Mercier Press : 1978)

O'Mahony had been a woodwork and building construction instructor. His recent appointment as Acting Principal was ' a urination exercise on the graduates.' The Board of Management didn't want somebody with ideas. O'Mahony wouldn't rock the boat. Eventually they would make a safe permanent appointment--somebody who would maintain the status quo.

The extract conjures a picture of an insecure Acting Principal who does not have the support of his colleagues, a decrepit school environment, a severely disadvantaged student body and catchment area, ambivalent and conniving parents, and a Department of Education forced by fiscal cutbacks to welsh on the provision of a new school.

Despite the greyness of the prose rendition the scenes themselves were produced in a humorous visual idiom. The humour contributed to the controversy. The issues involved were serious, and the humour seemed to trivialise these issues.

The controversy has been well-documented, in particular by Helena Sheehan in Irish Television Drama. Looking back now, in the context of the evolution of RTE, it was clear that it was out of character with RTE drama provision up to that time. To quote again from Helena Sheehan, "the question remains as to whether it would have been taken off if controversial matters had been raised with greater subtlety and sophistication, if the script-writing had been more adept, if production standards had been higher. On balance, there is still reason to believe that the pressure to do would have been there, no matter how impressively it had been done, due to its explicit treatment of human sexuality, its unflattering picture of the education system, and its oppositional stance to the exercise of power by both church and state."

With hindsight, some of this speculation can be framed in different terms. One Drama Department decision in the scripting context may have contributed to the subsequent controversy. The series had been planned for transmission in half-hour episodes. The eventual decision to transmit the series in one-hour episodes resulted in a heavier concentration of themes, issues, situations and motifs in the one-hour episodes; it is difficult to image a

series in half-hour segments generating the nation-wide debate, acrimony, and indeed venom which the series eventually generated. A half-hour format would, I think, have diluted the impact of The Spike. This does not mean that the one-hour format was a production error.

I would argue that production standards and achievements, within the very low DPC allocation of £5,000 per episode, or £50,000 for the whole series, were quite high. The Spike production also handled the many relatively untrained young participants in the series extremely well. The seven episodes of Strumpet City, transmitted in 1980, cost £1 million, and the six episodes of The Year of the French, transmitted in 1981, cost £2 million.

I would not agree with Helena Sheehan that there was 'an explicit treatment of human sexuality' in the text. The treatment of sexuality raised no problems for anyone in the production or in RTE until the episodes were transmitted. The context to which Dr. Sheehan seems to be referring here is the nude model situation in Episode 5; the shooting of this scene, by her own admission, was 'extremely cautious and restrained.' The sexuality context was far less significant than that in much of the adult imported provision on RTE and in programming on available foreign channels.

What emerged from the Spike experience, however, was confirmation of the uncanny refraction by segments of the Irish audience of material perceived to have sexual connotations; it was tolerable if transmitted in an imported programme, even on one transmitted by RTE, but grossly offensive and unacceptable if it materialised on home produced drama. This refraction was and is so pronounced that it merits specific study.

I would not agree, as Helena Sheehan seems to suggest, that there was a pronounced oppositional stance to the exercise of power both by church and state. Church and State were extremely hostile to the programme, as Dr. Sheehan records in detail; the alleged anti-church and anti-State rhetoric quoted by Dr.Sheehan in support of her argument came from one of the episodes that was not transmitted. This aspect points to another

refraction of the Irish mind, phrased in other terms by sociologist Micheál Mac Gréil of Maynooth College in his comments on The Spike; articulation of social problems, and The Spike adverted to a wide range of social problems, is perceived as hostile criticism of the establishment.

Neither would I agree that The Spike was an unflattering picture of public sector education. Most of the criticism of the programme came from the private educational sector; educators in the public postprimary sector were generally supportive. This is a quote from O'Mahony when the Department official attacks him in Episode One over the poor results in the Summer examinations; 65% failed to get certificates:

"Cigire, our students when they come here can't read or write or add. They have no, what you would call, hand-and-eye skills. The homes offers no support. In those circumstances the pass rate of 35% is nothing short of miraculous, and my teachers deserve the highest credit for this achievement. Especially in the deplorable conditions your Department provides for us...." [Gilligan : 1978 : 10]

This was the thrust of the whole series: that The Spike, despite the deplorable conditions, did magnificent work.

One important factor, not adverted to in the debate was the continuing growth of Irish parent interest in educational matters since the provision of free postprimary education. Potential models of subversive behaviour in schools were alarming, and would inevitably generate protest. The programme also had a satirical and humorous perspective, as we have noted, which may have appeared to trivialise the sincere convictions of many people in this area.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that The Spike was only a television programme, and a fictional one at that. The discourses articulated by reaction to The Spike existed independently of the programme. The main discourse may well have been one of social change---those benefiting from the status quo, a component of which was the educational structure, may have been consciously or unconsciously closing ranks and preparing for much more vital future conflicts such as the referenda on divorce and

abortion.

The public sector school was seen by its writer primarily as a dramatic location or frame that could be the focus of many facets of human experience, engaging with each other and generating conflict and dramatic tension. The adult and community education dimension provided storyline potential far in excess of that which would be generated by a private sector school.

The intent of the series, had it been allowed to continue, was to evolve from the negative pattern of the first programmes to a positive picture; the new school which would replace the Spike would be a model school. The untransmitted tenth episode set up this situation.

The Spike, in audience terms, was immensely successful, and, because it was perceived as being subversive, immensely successful with young viewers. It indicated a demand that might have been satisfied to some extent by an active Young People's Drama Department in RTE----it might have followed the pattern of **Grange Hill** or **Fame**---although, on the premises of the recorded content, it would probably have been an amalgamation of those two formats.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1979

The Riordans had a final season of one-hour loosely connected programmes to end its fourteen-year run. Fifteen single plays were transmitted. Harold Pinter, Neil Jordan, Alun Owen, Jim Sheridan, Eugene McCabe and Thomas Kilroy were among the writers.

Most of the plays went out in a presentation slot called Thursday Playdate, which also scheduled imported material. Harold Pinter wrote the script for **Langrishe Go Down**, based on a novel by Aidan Higgins. Four of the plays on the list were produced by Pat O'Connor. Louis Lentin, Head of Drama, had assembled a writing and production team of unusual talent.

Jim Sheridan broke into a new social environment and problem area with **Mobile Homes**. Eugene McCabe gave a new perspective of Irish small-town life in **Roma**, a play about the

down-and=out, Benny, and his love for Maria, the daughter of the Italian owner of the Roma fish and chip shop.

Some of the Thursday Playdate scripts were published by the Drama Department via the Turoe Press. In his introduction to the Roma script, dated September, 1979, Louis Lentin gave his own perspective of television drama.

> I have long been convinced that the most effective television plays are the slice-of-life variety...the best plays....are contemporary, and use the intimate form of the television medium to deal with extremely human situations........Television is the wrong medium for the leisurely evocation of atmosphere. It is also wrong for whimsy, fantasy and artifice. It is absolutely right for realism. It is the extreme performing medium for subtlety---at best you can perceive the thought behind the moment; the texture of life under a magnifying glass. It can be used to present a story in strong, simple terms to a large audience. It is a medium where word and image can and should complement, but where the image must be instantly recognisable. It owes little to the feature film and less to the theatre. Used well it can provide the extra dimension to the facts of current affairs programmes. It takes over where they leave off, and is certainly more memorable.

He goes on to express the hope that Thursday Playdate will achieve for Irish audiences what the ABC Armchair Theatre achieved in England in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Home produced drama for children had largely shunned realism and had expressed itself almost exclusively in fantasy.

Louis Lentin must have realised that his aspirations for Irish television drama had little hope of realisation in the practical context of RTE; he resigned as Head of Drama that year. Indigenous television drama as envisaged by Louis Lentin, and reflected by the year's provision on Thursday Playdate was about to be disenfranchised.

With Langrishe Go Down RTE moved into a phase of acrimonious and expensive co-productions. The talent mobilised by Louis Lentin had international aspirations.

The co-production strategy was a means of acquiring resources. A marketing perspective had also asserted itself in the station--that home produced television drama outside co-production arrangements should be viable in the international market. The

perceived initial market, in most cases, was the new British service, Channel Four.

These new perspectives, if applied, would mean the concentration of available resources into fewer productions, and the substitution of market relevance for local significance in the texts. In the context of operative production structures in RTE, development of a global market commodity could only be at the expense of locally-focussed drama.

Implicit in the co-production and marketing perspectives was the entrepreneurial element of risk. If the new strategies failed, the station, having abandoned the continuity in drama production for the home audience which it had built up since 1962, would be left without any home produced drama other than long-running serials, which, if they attracted substantial home audiences, were financially viable because they could attract long-term advertising arrangements.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1980

The first fruits of the policy of heavy resourcing for showcase drama of international market viability was **Strumpet City**, Hugh leonard's adaptation for television of the historical novel by James Plunkett which dealt with the human consequences of the bitter worker-employer confrontation in Dublin between 1907 and 1914.

The producer of **Strumpet City** was Tony Barry, who was also the new Head of Drama. The seven-part serial cost about a million pounds to make. It was an immensely successful venture both as television drama and as a market commodity, achieving sales in over fifty countries. The production exploited the star system by using actors Peter O'Toole and Peter Ustinov for cameo roles.

The strength of **Strumpet City**, however, derived, not from the generous resourcing or from the use of internationally renowned actors, but from the commitment of the Irish cast and production team to the task of making the content meaningful to the contemporary Irish audience.

The year also saw the launch of **Bracken**. The Riordans, created by James Douglas in 1965, had ended as a television series in 1979 but continued for another six years as a radio serial. **Bracken**, written by Wesley Burrowes and produced by Noel Ó Briain, was a derivative of **The Riordans**, but it was a new drama series in two six-hour seasons, marked by different structures and production techniques, not a new soap opera. Pat Barry, introduced as a character to **The Riordans** by contributor Patrick Gilligan, and played by Gabriel Byrne who went on to achieve international star status, returned in the first episode of the new series to the sheep-rearing parish of Bracken to take over the run-down 35-acre home farm. His neighbours were Miley Byrne and Miley's father, Dinny, and their lives were overshadowed by self-made land-baron, Ned Daly, played by Niall Tóibin. **Bracken**, to quote Helena Sheehan, was in a realm "nearer to that of **Dallas** and **Dynasty** than the early days of **The Riordans**." The old Riordan format and content was, however, what the people of Ireland wanted, and which, with some modification, they would eventually get in a further metamorphosis of the parent serial which would be called Glenroe.

1980 was the centenary of the birth of Seán O'Casey, The event was commemorated by the transmission of **The Silver Tassie**, produced by Brian Mac Lochlainn, and a 13-part television biography of the playwright, based on his writings, **Seán**, which was produced by Louis Lentin.

Airc, by Gabriel Rosenstock, and **An Taoille Tuile**, an adaptation of a story by Máirtin Ó Cadhain, gave a relatively strong representation to Irish language drama.

There were nine other plays in the schedules, the most memorable of which were probably **Assault on a Citadel**, by Seán Walsh, and **Teresa's Wedding**, by William Trevor.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1981

The consequences of the heavy investment in **Strumpet City** and other projects quickly became apparent. The 1980 series of **Bracken** was repeated---for the first time since 1963 there was

no new popular serial material in the home produced drama list. New Drama Department output for the year was less than twelve hours.

This was made up a 4-part adaptation of Kate O'Brien's story, **The Anteroom**, two plays by Dublin journalist, Barbara McKeown, a play be Jennifer Johnston, and plays by Eugene McCabe, Lee Gallagher, Michael Feeney Callan and Martin Duffy.

For the moment, the faith and trust of RTE as an organisation seemed to be in the co-production arrangement, which would generate the extra resources needed for high quality Irish television drama both from co-production contracts and market sales. However, both the co-production partners and the market would influence the content and idiom of the co-production product. What was at risk was home produced television drama focussing on Irish themes for Irish audiences.

The intense debate about the role and future of Irish television drama which would develop over the next few years would divide into propositions for a locally-focussed drama and propositions for a market-focussed drama, with arguments also, but no consensus, that the station could have both types of drama at the same time.

Children's drama, never having been a concern of the Drama Department, but more a catacombs movement inside the organisation, would be totally ignored in this debate.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1982

Niall McCarthy was the new Head of Drama. There was a final six episodes of **Bracken**, but two of the leading characters, Dinny and Miley Byrne, would move out of Bracken to the new location of **Glenroe**. **Glenroe** would be a new serial following the general pattern of the early Riordans and would appear in 1983.

There were two original plays for television from the the Drama Department in the course of the year, **The Dreamers**, by Seán Walsh, and **Choosing**, by Maureen Donegan. The other three productions were literature derivatives.

THE YEAR OF THE FRENCH

The Year of the French was an historical series in six episodes, based on events at the close of 1798 rising, when French forces under General Humbert landed in Mayo to help local insurgents. The series was an adaptation by Eugene McCabe of the novel by American writer Thomas Flanagan. It was directed by Michael Garvey. It was a co-production involving RTE, Channel 4 and FR3, a French station.

The Year of the French had a massive budget of £2 million. By contrast the above-the-line allocation for the ten hour-long episodes of The Spike four years earlier had been £50,000, or £5,000 an episode.

The Year of the French got prime time showing and extremely critical reaction. The series was repeated in three episodes over Christmas, 1982, at 5.05 on RTE 2. While it was probably scheduled as an ordinary repeat rather than a children's programme it may have found its true niche. To quote Helena Sheehan :

> There was little to take it too far from the level of pre-adolescent boys, mad on battle scenes and not yet interested in pre-adolescent sex. But then if that were the intended audience, they could have done without the politics, the poetry and the romance altogether.

Far more successful, because it could explore a narrower canvas in greater depth, was The Ballroom of Romance, an RTE/BBC co-production of William Trevor's short story, which was directed by Pat O'Connor. Trevor in The Ballroom of Romance encapsulated an archetypal image of emigration-stricken rural society in the middle decades of this century---the tawdry dance-hall as the only gleam of relief in the dreary landscape of the week for those who stayed behind to work unyielding land or mind self-centred parents.

The channelling of scarce funds into co-productions, while improving the general quality of the product, meant in practice a severe curtailment of home-produced drama, and the effective redundancy of most domestic writers of television drama, and of actors, producers and other practitioners in this medium. It also created a mentality in the station that the only effective

drama was expensive drama.

As a policy it introduced a commercial outlook into RTE; drama should be marketable overseas. In the event, while Drama Department output did achieve overseas markets, the receipts were low, and hardly compensated for the the virtual destruction of home-produced television drama. The internal debate in RTE during the 1980s would be on this issue; co-productions versus home-market drama, with the additional conflict area of the in-house serial versus other forms of drama.

The station serial won out, because viewers wanted to watch it, and costs could be retrieved through advertising. The casualty was the single play, but this development is not peculiar to RTE; the single play virtually disappeared from the international repertoire in favour of the serial, series and mini-series.

A peculiar off-shoot of the confusion and paranoia about drama in RTE at this time was the Access Drama project referred to above. This project was a perfectly legitimate venture in Access Community Television but would come to be seen by vested interests in home produced drama as a conspiracy to replace the professionally-produced product with a cheap amateur substitute.

THE LOST HOUR

The Lost Hour was adapted by Carlo Gebler from John McGahern's novel, **The Leavetaking**, and produced and directed by Seán Cotter. It went out at 9.45 pm on Sunday, January 10th, 1982. The play was presented from the perspective of the boy, Patrick Moran, played by Tom Murphy, and proved what RTE might have achieved if it set out seriously to produce real-life drama for children.

The narrative dealt with the trauma of the boy and his family as his mother endured the final ravages of cancer.

The play raises the question of the treatment of traumatic themes such as the death of a family member in children's drama. The imported drama category (c.f. **Appendix C**) catalogues many treatments of traumatic themes.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1983

In line with Niall McCarthy's impressive new title of Head of Drama and Major Productions, the spate of co-productions continued in 1983.

Co-productions transmitted during the year which involved RTE and Channel 4 were **The Irish RM**, a serial adaptation of the Somerville and Ross novel; **Caught in a Free State**, a 4-part series about German prisoners of war in Ireland during World War Two, written by Brian Lynch, and **Night in Tunisia**, a Neil Jordan story filmed by Pat O'Connor mostly in Bettystown.

There were two co-productions involving the BBC: the Molly Keane story, **Good Behaviour**, adapted by Hugh Leonard, and a William Trevor story, **One of Ourselves**, made by the production team of **The Ballroom of Romance**. **One of Ourselves** centred on the painful transition out of adolescence into young adulthood of fifteen-year-old John Joe Dempsey in a small Irish town, his fantasies continually conflicting with the pressures to conform to the narrow mores of the community.

Roses from Dublin was a 6-part mini-series made by RTE and a French consortium about a French photographer who, on an assignment in Ireland, fell in love with a Kerry colleen. Helena Sheehan saw **Roses From Dublin** as a Franco-Irish replica of **The Irish RM**, creating a new variant of stage-Irishism from a French perspective.

Outside the co-production arrangements there were two single plays, **The Key**, an adaptation by Carlo Gebler of John McGahern's short story, which could be described as a sequel to **The Lost Hour**, and **Still Love**, a play by Dublin journalist Barbara McKeown.

Glenroe replaced Bracken, and was a derivative of that programme. **Glenroe** would respond successfully to the demand indicated by the success of **The Riordans**. It would be of a different texture to **The Riordans**, usually operating on a twelve-scenes-per-episode formula as against six for the original **Riordans** programme. This would result in a faster pace.

Like **The Riordans**, **Glenroe** would capture, not only the rural audience, but the urban audience, most of the urban viewers

having strong rural connections.

The reverse phenomenon has relevance to urban serials. Urban serials need a strong provincial and rural dimension to achieve country-wide popularity. Most viewers throughout Ireland have some links with, or experience of, Dublin, yet this connection is substantially under-represented in the current urban serial, **Fair City**, and landmark locations with which rural viewers might identify are systematically absent.

Glenroe would now become the major production commitment of the Drama Department.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1984

The Drama Department transmitted one station-originated play in 1984, **Painted Out**, by Tom McIntyre. **Glenroe** continued to establish itself as a popular Sunday evening serial.

Playwright John B. Keane scripted a six-episode series, **Tales of Kilnavarna**.

Leave It To Mrs. O'Brien, a new 13-part series by Angela McFadden, achieved the elusive objective of overseas sales, despite the critical opprobrium with which it was received at home.

Love Stories of Ireland was produced in a co-production arrangement with Channel 4. The adaptations included **Lovers of the Lake**, from Sean O'Faoláin's story of illicit love against the background of a Lough Derg pilgrimage, **Access to the Children**, based on a story by William Trevor, **The Eagles and the Trumpets**, from the story by James Plunkett, and **A Painful Case**, adapted from a story by James Joyce.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1985

The Price was the most controversial of the co-productions so far. The initiative came from Channel Four, who acted through a production company. The script was by Peter Ransley, who had never been to Ireland. The story, in six episodes, concerned the abduction by an IRA breakaway group of a

British businessman's wife and daughter in Wicklow and their enforced captivity until a ransom is paid. The series got negative audience and critical reaction. In the co-produced text the British cultural perception dominated, presenting what Irish viewers and critics perceived as distorted reality. RTE felt it necessary to warn viewers before the commencement of Episode Five that the programme contained violent scenes which were not suitable for children. This was one of the rare expressions of concern for Irish children by the Drama Department in the twentyfive years under review.

Inside was a series set in a prison, written by Joe Dunlop, Noel O Briain and others. The motivation here was to provide an urban serial, the perception being that prison could be a microcosm of urban life, in particular of its problematic aspects. It was also felt that prison series could be done effectively in studio. **Inside** did not satisfy the demand for an urban drama, if such a demand existed. Prison drama must succeed as prison drama. The consensus was that **Inside** failed, because Irish audiences, prisoners of 1980s reality, wanted escapism, which **Glenroe**, gathering momentum in 1985, gave them.

Raic, from an original television script by Antaine O Flaithearta, who wrote **Kevin's World**, was produced by Noel O Brian and may well be the most successful television play in Irish so far. **Raic**, a strong metaphor for the characters in the play, meaning flotsam and floating wreckage, depicted a Connemara coastal community in 1942, where the war something that happened on the wireless.

The Department also produced Hugh Leonard's **A Life**, **Summer Lightning**, Derek Mahon's adaptation of Ivan Turgenev's **First Love**, and **Spring Cleaning** by Ann Barret.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT, 1986

The new Head of Drama was Noel O Briain. The Department got out the annual quota of **Glenroe** programmes, and a further series of the clerical situation comedy, **Leave It Mrs. O'Brien**. The only other item was a reproduction of the stage

version of Athol Fugard's prison play on the apartheid theme, **The Island**, which was presented in Dublin in 1986.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT OUTPUT. 1987

Home produced drama would achieve a resurgence, severely constricted by resources, in 1988 and 1989 under Noel O Briain's direction, but the transmitted output of the Drama Department for 1987 was confined to **Glenroe** and **Leave It To Mrs. O'Brien** and an obscure 4-part series with a supernatural context, **Fear of the the Dark**, produced in a co-production arrangement with the Dublin-based Strongbow Productions in association with Channel 4.

Behind the scenes the main preoccupation of the Drama Department was the evolution of proposals for a long-running urban serial, which would eventually materialise as **Fair City**.

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