Children And Television:

A Case Study Of "You And Me"

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masterate in Education at Massey University

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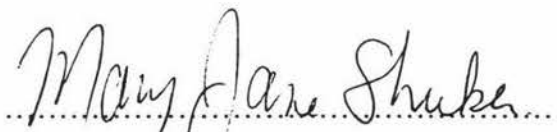
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is in the area of children and television.

Television viewing is an important but frequently overlooked aspect of pre-school children's socialisation. Contemporary research emphasises the relationship between children's cognitive development and their understanding of TV. This study argues that television viewing is an active cognitive transaction between the individual child, the programme, and the viewing environment.

This case study research examined twelve pre-school children's responses, and those of their parents, to the New Zealand educational programme **You And Me**, screened on TV3 during 1992-93. Qualitative methodologies were utilized, in the broad tradition of family ethnography.

The main aspects considered are attention to and comprehension of the programme; gender role socialisation; and language acquisition. It is argued that the role of parents is central to children's television viewing, especially through regulation and co-viewing.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is in the area of children and television. The purpose of the research was to examine pre-school children's responses, and those of their parents, to the New Zealand educational programme **You And Me**, screened on TV3 during 1992-93.

The significant role of television in the lives and socialisation of children has been thoroughly documented. A conservative calculation would place the number of published accounts at more than five thousand since the 1950s, when television was first introduced into the United States (Cashmore,1994). However, such studies have a significant shortcoming in terms of their definition of the child viewer. For example, in Palmer's (1986) study of Australian children and television, *The Lively Audience. A Study Of Children Around The TV Set*, her participants ranged in age between eight and twelve years. In Buckingham's (1993) book, *Children Talking Television,* the research is centrally concerned with the ways in which children aged between seven and twelve years of age talk about television. These two examples illustrate the common tendency to equate "children" with older children. There is little or no mention of pre-school children in this literature. A notable exception is the American research, concentrated on **Sesame Street**, concerning children's attention to and comprehension of television. (See, for example, Anderson and Levin, 1976; Bryant and Anderson, 1983; Hawkins et al., 1991; Rice et al., 1990.)

It has been estimated that pre-school children (ages two to five for the purposes of this research), watch an average of thirty hours of television per week (Comstock, 1993; Luke, 1990b; Van Evra, 1990). TV viewing, therefore, is an important area of socialisation that

needs to be addressed in relation to this age group. The literature review focuses on cognitive developmental aspects of TV viewing, in relation to pre-school children, rather than discuss the large body of research that has been done on children and television in general.

Media Research Paradigms

In the study of children and television a number of distinct theoretical paradigms are evident in the literature. Social learning theory was one of the first media research models used to explain television's impact on children. Much of the early work done in this area, initiated by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, pointed to observational learning and imitation of modelled behaviour as the critical components of television's impact. Bandura, together with his colleagues, conducted various experiments that indicated children do imitate aggressive acts they had seen being performed. The researchers found that exposure to adults performing acts of violence on a large Bobo-doll led children to perform those acts when left alone with the doll (Bandura, Ross, and Roll, 1963; Bandura and Walters, 1963). Although social learning theory has been much criticised, it has been the major theoretical influence on research concerned with the behavioural effects of television (Phoenix, 1987).

It was taken for granted that the child viewer was directly affected by television's audio and visual messages. This appeared to be a natural, rather than a methodologically manipulated, process and consequence. Theories were framed in terms of "stimulus" and "response", with effects going one way. Most research studies were directed towards isolating television variables, in particular violence, and their effects on children. Consequently, the idea of children's relationship with the television was seen as being one of passive dependency. According to Luke (1990a: 3) "the behaviorists construct of the human subject, in effect, precluded the conceptualization of the (viewer) 'respondent' as

an active, cognate, and skilled mediator of the omnipotent (TV) 'stimulus.' Hence, human agency was theoretically precluded. The viewer, conceptualized on the basis of a cause-effect rationality, could only be seen as a passive, cognitively and experientially blank target upon which media messages would inscribe effects." The experimental construct of the passive viewer held sway during the 1960s and well into the 1970s (Palmer, 1986).

Bandura's studies were carried out indirectly by surveys or experimentally in laboratories. The careful observation and description of children's viewing as it occurred in the home environment was neglected. Early theories about children's relationship to television were built on assumptions that reflected then current thinking rather than description and classification of actual examples of viewing behaviour (Palmer, 1986).

In contrast to a passive viewer posited by behaviorists, what audiences "do" with texts came to be labelled as the "uses and gratifications" approach to the mass media. Blumler and Katz (1974, cited in Livingston, 1990) proposed a "toolkit" model whereby audiences were wholly unconstrained in their reading of the text. This approach constructed an active viewer, one who watches television "mainly for reasons of entertainment or diversion, social utility and personal relationships, reality orientation or information seeking and personal identity and values" (Livingstone, 1990: 35). But while the "uses and gratifications" model could provide self-reports of perceived needs and viewing choices, it could not provide the clinical evidence in support of effects. By contrast, experimental research appeared to generate empirical evidence of direct, socially uncontaminated effects following TV exposure. However, a new theoretical paradigm developed alongside increasing criticism of the behaviourist-constructed passive viewer: cognitive mediation theory (Luke, 1987; 1990b; Palmer, 1986).

Much of the initial research on how children's cognitive development modifies or influences their understanding of television was done in the decade between the 1972 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Television and Social Behaviour and its 1982 update (Doubleday and Droege, 1993). Underpinning this research was a shift in focus away from studies of televised violence and aggressive behaviour to a broader range of possible viewer-television interactions. Also contributing to this new perspective were beliefs that children do not comprehend what is on television in the same way that adults do (Dorr, 1986; Noble, 1975).

The strongest challenge to the idea of the passive child viewer came from a series of laboratory studies of children's attention to the television screen, undertaken by Daniel Anderson and his colleagues in the United States. They had assumed, as most other researchers, that the TV commanded children's attention and they set out to investigate those attributes of the television programmes which "glued" children's attention to the television screen (Anderson and Lorch, 1983: 6). Their findings were different from what they expected. While they certainly found that some pictures were successful in keeping or even capturing children's attention, this influence was modified by sound cues happening at the same time. The child's attention to the TV set also depended on what other attractive activities were available close at hand. When there were things to play with, children would often share their attention between the toys and the television set. The authors stated in their conclusion that "A series of unexpected findings ... forced us to a fundamentally different perspective on young children's television viewing. Rather than being a reaction to the screen, we have come to see television viewing as an active cognitive transaction between the young viewer, the television and the viewing environment" (Anderson and Lorch, 1983: 6).

Although Anderson and his colleagues used the word "active" to describe children's television viewing, they were aware that their own research, based primarily on laboratory studies of children's attention to television, could not by itself give a comprehensive understanding of children's relationship with this medium. To be fully understood, they argued, children's viewing must be studied in relation to family background, neighbourhood, socioeconomic status, and children's social experiences away from the television set (Anderson and Bryant, 1983). In the following decade, there has been much criticism of the limitations of research that does not take into account the way people choose what to watch on TV, and the influences on viewing which derive from the social context, rather than just the act of viewing or the content of television programmes. (See, for example, Ang, 1989; Morley, 1980; 1986; 1991; 1992; Morley and Silverstone, 1990; Silverstone, 1990.)

The dominant approach, evident in recent work in the area of children and television, has been in an ethnographic mould, undertaken in naturalistic settings, where researchers enter the homes or schools to do their interviewing or observational field work. (See, for example, Anderson, Lorch, Field, Collins, and Nathan, 1986; Bell, 1991; Buckingham, 1993; Lealand, 1992; Lull, 1990; Morley, 1992; Palmer, 1986.) Research that does take into account the actual physical and social circumstances of viewing is more immediately relevant to the kinds of questions that are often raised about the role of television in children's lives (Palmer, 1986). This study uses such an ethnographic approach. Children were observed while viewing the educational programme **You And Me** in their homes and then it was discussed with them. The researcher was interested in how the children interacted with the programme and what aspects engaged their attention. The parents were also interviewed concerning their perception of **You And Me**, and investigated whether they watched/discussed the programme with their children.

New Zealand Television

It is important to situate the programme investigated here, **You And Me**, against the broader development of television in New Zealand, particularly children's educational television. It is over thirty years since the first scheduled television entertainment programme was aired in New Zealand. On Wednesday, June 1, 1960, NZBS - TV Channel Two, Auckland, screened **The Adventures of Robin Hood.** Over three decades later, **Robin Hood** is still with us, but in a new version, and so is the medium that some hoped would be a passing fad. From that first year, when a meagre 693 hours of programmes were offered to just under 5000 set owners (Ford, 1985), television has developed to the point where 99 per cent of New Zealand homes have TV and 72 per cent have a VCR (Trailers, 1991), and the three network channels (TV 1 and Channel 2, operated by Television New Zealand; and the private channel TV3) between them offer almost continuous programming.

Throughout its short history in New Zealand, television has been a political football, constantly subjected to restructuring, and the continued focus of debates over the respective merits of public and private ownership. Until 1989 it was firmly under government control, a State monopoly run by a corporation. Initially there was only one channel, with a second added in 1975. In the 1980s, pressure built up for a third, private channel to be established. As the Beatsons (1994: 175) observe, "between 1988 and 1991 things changed dramatically. As a result of the free market revolution inaugurated by the fourth Labour government and completed by National, the firm hands-on (government) approach of the past gave way to an equally determined hands-off policy." The Broadcasting Act of 1989 turned Television New Zealand into an State Owned Enterprise (SOE), required to run on business lines and show a profit. TV3, a privately owned channel, was established in 1989. Initially New Zealand owned, it was soon taken over by the Canadian company

Camwest. Sky, the country's first subscriber television company, also began in the 1990s, as did privately owned regional television companies, such as Christchurch's CTV.

A television licence fee (in 1993 this was $110, and created a revenue of $89.7 million) is channelled through New Zealand on Air, a government quango, to subsidise desirable programming. However, over 90 percent of television income is generated by commercial advertising or sponsorship. This makes the local television landscape a fiercely competitive one, with competition for viewers and advertisers. In this situation, children's programming is a vulnerable entity (Beatson and Beatson, 1994; Horrocks, 1995; Mahy, 1995; Zanker, 1990).

Children's Programmes

There are three types of children's programmes, which differ in target age group and/or programme intent: Saturday morning programmes (mostly animated), daytime educational, and prime-time children's programmes (Huston and Wright, 1983). Saturday morning and daytime educational programmes are targeted mainly for young children whereas prime-time children's programmes are designed for adolescent and family viewing as well. Educational programmes screened during the day differ from the other two groups in that they are designed primarily for the education and development of children rather than mainly for entertainment. The children's programmes screened after school contain a mixture of Saturday morning reruns, prime-time reruns, and educational programmes.

In 1985, Monitor, the broadcasting public watchdog that kept a close eye on TV programmes available for children, folded through lack of support. A year later the Royal Commission on Broadcasting, which invited submissions on children's viewing, reported that there were remarkably few submissions and those were mostly about TV violence. In

the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, they concluded that New Zealanders were largely satisfied with the present quality of children's television (O'Hare, 1988).

One important submission was from the Children's Television Foundation (CTF). The group was formed to ensure that children's TV in New Zealand would be protected. The CTF asked the government to supply special funding for children's basic television needs, resulting in children and other minority groups becoming the responsibility of New Zealand On Air (Mahy, 1995).

In 1988, anticipating the launching of TV3, Huntly Elliott, as head of Television New Zealand's (TVNZ) Children and Young Person's Department, stated that he did not expect a major decline in children's programming as a result of greater competition between TV channels. "I'm reasonably confident that the people who work in children's TV will do their utmost to see that doesn't happen. It's not an area you allow to fall apart with impunity" (Elliott; cited in O'Hare, 1988: 35). Unfortunately, though, when corners have to be cut in terms of budgets, children's programmes are seen as an easy option. Children are a programme planner's dream audience: they are heavy viewers of TV and they actually enjoy repeats - if only they had more money to spend as consumers they would be perfect. The fact is children have little direct impact on the marketplace and it is their lack of financial clout that has led to them often being poorly served by TV (Palmer, 1988).

This neglect is particularly evident in national contexts where television broadcasting is largely commercially driven. The United States exemplifies this situation, providing a useful comparison with the strong Government presence in New Zealand television. In the early 1980s, the United States Federal Communications Commission abolished children's TV programming guidelines, to let market forces determine what children could see. American toy manufacturers (a 12.5 billion dollar industry) moved in quickly to make

programme length commercials (Engelhardt, 1986). By 1987 there were more than forty shows specifically linked to toys and it became almost unthinkable to promote a new toy without a TV tie-in (O'Hare, 1988). According to Palmer (1988) children's shows with educational values nearly vanished from commercial television.

In 1990 the US Children's Television Act was passed. This required broadcasters to serve the education and information needs of children through programming, and they would be held accountable for their actions at five-yearly license reviews. A National Endowment for Children's Educational Television was established for funding purposes (Page, 1992). There was considerable optimism that this milestone legislation would reduce the negative content that was present in many children's programmes. However, not all researchers working in the area of children and television, were convinced that such regulation would work. Wartella argued that "if the 1990 Children's Television Act is to have any impact on children's programming it must be kept visibly in the public mind and continued public pressure on the networks and regulatory agencies must be maintained. I find it hard to believe, given the history of how mass media have programmed for child audiences and the recurring debates about media and youth, that the television industry will suddenly become more responsible toward child audiences as a result of the current law" (Wartella; cited in Page, 1992: 36).

The 1980s American experience shows the dangers inherent in leaving children's television programming to market forces, and provides a cautionary lesson for New Zealand. It is also relevant given that American-made television programmes are very popular with the New Zealand parents and children, attracting large audiences.

In New Zealand, during 1992-1993, on an average weekday, young viewers had a choice of some 23 cartoon/puppet/educational programmes. The majority of these were American

cartoons, including the popular **Transformers** and **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**. The few educational programmes available, which included the locally made **Play School** and **Sesame Street** from the U.S., were frequently repeats. Both these programmes screened on TVNZ; TV3 did not screen an educational children's programme, but simply ran several cartoons one after the other. It had been TVNZ's policy that commercials aimed at children must be clearly distinguishable from the programmes, but when TV3 screened **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** it allowed advertisers to place commercials featuring the turtle characters first up in a commercial break (Stirling, 1990; also personal observation). TVNZ followed suit, screening advertisements related to cartoon programmes such as **Batman**.

Educational programmes are distinctly different from commercial programmes for children. Wright and Huston (1983) state that educational programmes contain a cluster of features, which they term "reflection"; these features appear well suited to rehearse, repeat, or elaborate on content themes. The reflection cluster includes singing, long zooms, and moderate action levels. Singing, for example, often reviews the social context - Who are these people on the TV screen? How did they get there? What are their concerns? What are the issues discussed? Similarly, long zooms give the viewing audience contextual information. For instance, they tell the viewer where and under what conditions focal action is occurring and establish assumptions concerning the off-camera environment. Moderate levels of action and movement, at a level between the stationary talking head and the frantic chase, characterize those parts of the programme that are critically important in advancing the plot or conveying central information in educational programmes. Such programmes, too, contain high rates of child dialogue. Researchers have demonstrated that this feature helps to maintain children's attention (Anderson, Alwitt, Lorch and Levin, 1979). Educational programmes have much lower levels of pacing, frenetic activity, loud music, and sound effects in comparison to commercial programmes produced for children

(Wright and Huston, 1983). In summary, education programmes are designed to enhance children's development whereas commercial programmes are intended primarily to entertain.

Apart from restrictions on the type of content to be shown before 8:30 pm, the evening "watershed" viewing time, broadcasters decide what children watch and when. Their choices have drawn criticism because of their reliance on US programmes, the quantity of violence, and the lack of local content. Consequently, the production of children's educational programming is primarily regarded as a public service and not as a commercial proposition.

In the commercial 1990s, rating populations begin at age five. Accordingly, ratings do not acknowledge the existence of children under five, who provide no rewards for television companies. Children are a special audience, with their own distinctive needs and interests, and these must be met from other sources. In New Zealand, prior to the 1989 Broadcasting Act, broadcasting legislation had not included any provisions for direct educational television and what was screened included repeats of overseas education material, "or local equivalents produced in the spirit of the now supplanted 'public service' notions of broadcasting" (Lealand, 1992: 2). Providing quality, locally made educational programmes is regarded by broadcasters as a non-refundable cost. The funding of such programmes has become the responsibility of New Zealand On Air, and in 1992 they pledged over $6 million dollars to the private broadcaster TV3 to produce the educational pre-school programme, **You And Me**.

Interesting enough, educational programmes aimed at the pre-school audience have not, until 1990-91, prompted any research scrutiny, for example, testing their serviceability and effectiveness as a source of potential education value (Lealand, 1993). A pilot study in the

Wellington area established that research based on direct observations of the under five audience as they viewed television, was both instructive and valid (Morrell, Lealand, and Locke, 1991). Accordingly, this research used direct observations of children, and their parents in the home, to investigate the nature of their interaction with **You And Me**.

Summary

Television viewing is an important area of socialisation for pre-school children that needs investigation. In the general area of children and television there have been shifts in the dominant research paradigms, with the current emphasis being on how children's cognitive development modifies or influences their understanding of television. Children are not just passive viewers, they are active observers. Television viewing is now regarded as an active cognitive transaction between the individual, the television and the viewing environment. Currently, market considerations make children's programming a vulnerable entity, and its State support is regarded as a public service. Educational programmes are distinctly different from commercial programmes aimed at children. Educational programmes are designed to enhance children's development, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Only recently have educational programmes aimed at the New Zealand pre-school audience prompted any sustained investigation.

CHAPTER 2

CHILDREN AND TELEVISION: A SELECTIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

This case study of **You And Me** and its viewers is primarily concerned with the programme's relationship to children's cognitive processes, and the role of parents in the viewing process. Accordingly, this selective summary of the literature concentrates on work dealing with these aspects of children and television. Also included are gender role socialisation and acquisition of language, as they are particularly relevant to **You And Me**. Some aspects of this literature are expanded on in Chapter 6, in the discussion of children's responses to particular programme elements.

By the time children reach the age of eighteen, it is likely that they will have spent over two years in front of the television set, and they will have spent more hours watching television than they have in formal classroom instruction (Huston, Wright, Rice, Kerkman, and St. Peters, 1990). As the television set is an omnipresent part of virtually all New Zealand children's home environments from birth onwards, the pre-school years are a likely period for socialisation of television habits. Children's experiences with this medium, therefore, begin long before exposure to school or, in most cases, any socialisation agent other than the family. Infants, for example, respond to the sights and sounds of the television set. By the time they are in their second year of life, they react to characters and events on television by imitation, pointing, verbal labelling, and selective attention (Meltzoff, 1988).

Watching television need not require much from those who view it. Sitting in front of the screen, viewers can be stimulated, entertained, educated, or intrigued by what they see.

Viewers need not respond or interact with this material nor do they have to analyse it or criticise it. Viewers do not have to remember what they see and they do not have to even attend to it continuously. Frequently viewers engage in other activities simultaneously. The television set can simply provide continuous stimuli while it is on. On the other hand, persons watching television can analyse, interact with, attend to, remember, and criticise what they view. Recently, researchers working in the area of children and television have focused on what is partially or fully attended to, what is learned, what is remembered, what impressions are gleaned, and what images are formed. (See, for example, Anderson, Choi, and Lorch, 1987; Alexander, 1993; Bryant and Anderson, 1983; Clifford, Gunter, and McAleer, 1995; Gunter and McAleer, 1990; Messenger Davies, 1989; Pinon, Huston, and Wright, 1989; Rice, Huston, Truglio, and Wright, 1990; Van Evra, 1990.)

Such research is particularly important in relation to this age group because they are still in very active developmental stages. Van Evra (1990: xii) points out that child viewers' "attitudes, beliefs, and ideas about the world, as well as physical and social skills, are taking form; and they absorb information from everywhere". Therefore, when considering the huge amount of time children spend watching television, it becomes a disproportionately large potential informational and attitudinal source. Despite these points, mainstream researchers in cognitive development have rarely considered television viewing to be a significant part of a child's overall life experience (Anderson and Collins, 1988; Van Evra, 1990).

Cognitive Development And Children's Understanding of TV

According to Piagetian stage theory, pre-school children are in the preoperational stage of cognitive development (Piaget, 1968). Accordingly, their ability to comprehend television programmes is more limited because reasoning at this developmental stage is often binary, or black and white. The subtleties, ironies, and inconsistencies between appearance and

behaviour, deed and consequence are resolved in the direction of the most visually obvious interpretation. Children, too, have a higher degree of egocenteredness present that leads to taking in everything as part of the self. Their perception of television, therefore, is that it is "real" and characters are beings with whom one could interact. Likewise, there is less ability to take another's viewpoint perceptually or conceptually. Thus, those with a different perspective than one's own are less readily understood and there is high reliance on the most obvious cues for comprehension, which in the case of television are the visual elements and loud sound effects. Once children reach the concrete operational stage, around seven years of age, by approximately age nine they are able to comprehend general audience programming about as well as most adults. This is because children and adults employ the same basic schema to decode programmes (Comstock, 1991; Hodge and Tripp, 1986).

In recent years, however, contemporary developmental theory has shown that children are not so strongly tied into Piagetian stages. In terms of television, research suggests that there is a range and depth of comprehension somewhat greater than that implied by the earlier studies, and comprehension at younger ages beyond that predicted by Piagetian stage theory (Anderson and Collins, 1988; Flavell, 1992; Hodge and Tripp, 1986; Meadows, 1993; Phoenix, 1987). Currently, cognitive development is seen as following a number of independent parallel courses with specific domains. Development within a domain is seen as depending heavily on experiences that are relevant to that domain, with language the most obvious and long-recognised example (Flavell, 1992; Keil, 1984).

Bruner and Haste (1987) state that researchers have established the significance of collaborative activity in enhancing problem-solving ability. In exploring possible solutions, the role of language and interaction has been noted.

> What in fact happens in such interactions is that the child's own cognitive approach to the problem is challenged, either by peers directly or by parents or teachers "scaffolding" understanding through pacing of the problem-solving process. These observations have moved developmental psychologists to give much more weight to interaction with others, and to the use of language, in the growth of concepts, and the developing structure of mind. At the very least, the child's development must be mediated by, and stimulated by, interaction with others (Ibid.: 8).

It has been this increasing appreciation of social and linguistic processes that has fuelled a renewal of interest in Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective on development. Vygotsky viewed parents or teachers as occupying a didactic role, in contrast with Piaget-influenced ideology that advocated an enabling role for adults. This is illustrated by his "definition of intelligence as the capacity to learn from instruction" (Sutherland, 1992: 43). This means a parent or teacher should guide children in applying attention, concentrating and learning effectively. A parent or teacher will hereby "scaffold" children to competence in any skill, extending and challenging them to go beyond where they would otherwise have been. Vygotsky encapsulated this in one of his key concepts: the zone of proximal development. It is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

In comparison with Piaget, Vygotsky believed that a child's adaptation was more active and less deterministic. Vygotsky placed more emphasis on the role played by a child's culture and its system of symbols, as did Bruner (1986). A particular culture consists of its oral languages, sciences, books, diagrams, pictures, tools and so forth. Vygotsky and Bruner maintain that these systems can have a dynamic structuring effect on a child's learning and development, as they are not part of the mere "content" of the milieu, but rather part of the structure and of activity (Wood, 1988). Today, many of these elements have been combined simultaneously in the form of television (Sutherland, 1992).

Buckingham (1990a; 1993) argues that Vygotsky's work can provide an answer to the question of conceptual learning in media education, for example, how does this take place, and how can it be encouraged. "Media education is predominantly defined and organized in terms of notions such as 'media language', 'genre', 'representation', 'audience' and 'institution'" (Buckingham, 1993: 287). Vygotsky stated that the development of "higher mental functions" depended upon children's access to signs and therefore has social origins. He believed that through the use of language and communication children mediate their own thoughts, and therefore gain conscious, voluntary control over their own mental processes. Vygotsky felt that language and culture were intricately related hence language is the means of entry into a culture. "Interactions in a social context are the driving force for language development but with internalisation language serves as a means of conscious control and thought" (Smith, 1992a: 9-10).

Vygotsky, in his work on the development of conceptual understanding, distinguished between "spontaneous" and "scientific" concepts. Spontaneous concepts are developed mainly through children's own mental efforts, while scientific concepts are heavily influenced by parents or teachers, and arise through the process of teaching. Scientific concepts, which consist of social scientific concepts, are distinct from spontaneous concepts in two important ways.

> Firstly, they are characterized by a degree of distance from immediate experience: they involve an ability to generalize in systematic ways. Secondly, they involve self-reflection, or what Bruner (1986) terms 'metacognition' - that is, attention not merely to the object to which the concept refers, but also to the thought process itself (Buckingham, 1993: 288).

Buckingham (1993) states that one could consider children's existing comprehension of the media as a body of spontaneous concepts. He argues that as children develop these concepts will become more systematic and generalised. Media education, therefore, might

be seen as providing a body of scientific concepts which would enable children to think, and to use language, in particular, media language, in a more conscious and deliberate way. According to Buckingham (1990a), the aim of media education is to enable children not only to "read", or make sense of, media tests or empower them to write on their own media; it must also facilitate them to reflect systematically on the reading and writing processes themselves, to comprehend and to analyse their own activity as readers and writers.

Although Buckingham's (1993) discussion refers primarily to children aged seven to twelve, reflection and self-evaluation would appear to be crucial aspects of learning for all children in media education. "It is through shared reflection that students will be able to make their implicit 'spontaneous' knowledge about the media explicit, and then - with the aid of the teacher and of peers - to reformulate it in terms of broader 'scientific' concepts" (Buckingham, 1993: 287). Importantly, Vygotsky (1962: 83; cited in Buckingham, 1990a: 218) was against the "direct teaching" of concepts. He felt that it would result in "nothing but empty verbalism, a parrotlike repetition of words by the child". However, he did argue that children do need to be introduced to the terminology of scientific concepts. As children gradually take these on board, they come to use it as their own.

Another key Vygotskian notion that has been recently revived is the importance of context. In order to understand a specific example of a particular child's behaviour, the context that it took place in must be taken into account. For example, if a child is interpreting pictures in a book at home, the whole context of the reading situation must be looked at. For instance, Is a parent assisting the child? Is the television a distraction? Does the child's family own books? The specific context observed needs to be seen within the overall culture. Sutherland (1992) states for most children this is one that is dominated by television. "Here Vygotsky has a powerful message for the information processors in

particular: the total context in which the information is exchanged and understood needs to be taken into account" (Ibid.: 48).

Until recently, the major emphasis of Vygotsky's work has been the concept of the zone of proximal development. Bruner and Haste (1987) point out that this may be due to the fact that it is easily researchable. They state that developmental psychologists have not appreciated the wider social, cultural and historical dimensions of Vygotsky's theoretical perspective. Instead they translate "social" only into "interpersonal", not into "sociohistorical" or "culture". On the other hand, social psychologists have recognised many of the ideas implied in the "sociohistorical perspective" provided by Vygotsky's work, but have failed to cite Vygotsky, and moreover, have "omitted any analysis of processes of development which might take account of qualitative changes in the child's understanding" (Bruner and Haste, 1987: 10). For scholars from communications studies, psychology, and other related fields who have made the television viewing practices of children the focus of their research efforts, Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective on development has important implications, but his work is not referred to. A notable exception is Buckingham (1990a; 1990b; 1993).

In contemporary developmental theory, there has been relatively little emphasis on the growth of basic cognitive capacities, although Chi (1978; cited in Meadows, 1993: 60-61), for example, argues that the basic capacity to hold and manipulate knowledge in short term memory increases with development. Others, such as Sternberg (1985), have stated that this apparent increase is due to sophisticated representations which are based on experience that allows the child to organize his or her information, freeing up cognitive capacity. Meadows (1993: 62), however, states "it seems unlikely that the structure or the capacity of children's memory stores changes with development to any developmentally significant extent, though the efficiency with which memory capacity is used increases as

cognitive operations are executed more quickly, more effectively and more automatically". Thus, even the great increase in general speed of cognitive activity that is observed can often be attributed to the automatization that comes with experience. Some increase in speed, though, may be based (Case, 1984; cited in Meadows, 1993: 221-227) in neuro-physiological maturation.

In brief, contemporary theories of cognitive development heavily emphasize the role of experience in forming the knowledge base, in creating strategies and metacognition, and automatizing mental processes. The child, therefore, can be perceived as similar to an adult in cognitive potential except for his or her lacking of the rich and organized knowledge base, cognitive strategies, and repertoire of automated cognitive processes possessed by adults. Beyond two years of age, in most contemporary developmental theory, little role is given to purely maturational factors as being important for cognitive development (Anderson and Collins, 1988; Flavell, 1992; Meadows, 1993; Sunderland, 1992).

With regard to the influence of television, of three recent texts on cognitive development two do not mention television at all (Meadows, 1993; Mitchell, 1992), while Sunderland (1992) briefly discusses television as a specific context that needs to be seen within the overall culture. In his discussion, Sunderland (1992: 48) alludes to the powerful influence television has but simply asks the question that surely the theorist Vygotsky "would have considered TV to be an immensely powerful educational medium, if used constructively?" Today, considering the importance given to the role of experience by contemporary theory, the potential effects of television viewing on cognitive development are potentially powerful, but this issue is simply not addressed at all in most developmental texts (Anderson and Collins, 1988).

Children's Television Viewing: Active Or Reactive?

In theoretical terms, Anderson and Lorch (1983) argue that a distinction can be made between television viewing as "reactive" or "active". The reactive view of watching television posits that paying attention to the screen is primarily passive in nature, especially for very young viewers. Viewing, therefore, is a reaction to the television screen. The audience pays attention to television because of its formal features, for example, pans, cuts, zooms, and sound effects. The direction of influence is from television to viewer and the role of the viewer in the process is minimized. Comprehension, in this case, is passive, fragmented, and virtually nonexistent.

On the other hand, the active approach posits that television viewing is an active process. Control of viewing, within this theoretical framework, is in the hands of the viewer and not entirely due to the medium's formal features. Similarly, comprehension progresses developmentally and it is also an active process with the viewing audience making judgments, inferences, and interpretations according to their own experience. While children, and in particular younger children, may fail to remember what they see on television, the most likely reason they forget is that they do not have the background information they need to understand what they are viewing. Moreover, they might not understand because they have had insufficient exposure to formal cinematic features such as montage, zooms, or cuts, and do not understand what they indicate. Nevertheless, as children progress developmentally, their experience of television increases as does their comprehension. Therefore, children's comprehension of what they view on television depends upon their inferential process and cognitive ability as well as their knowledge about the world (Anderson and Collins, 1988).

Nevertheless, there are a number of elements about television viewing that make it intrinsically somewhat passive. Although most viewing is active, passive exposure does

occur because children not only view what someone else has selected, but there is also some perceptual dependence and cognitive inertia (Comstock, 1991). The empirical literature on children's cognitive processing of television attests that within this frame a great deal of more or less autonomic activity takes place in monitoring the television screen. At the same time, however, those who have interviewed children extensively about their viewing testify to their interest in, thoughtfulness about, and insight into what they have seen (Buckingham, 1993; Palmer, 1986). They conclude that children are actively involved in their viewing. This conclusion, though, pertains primarily to programmes in which they are interested, that they choose or like to watch, and are largely able to comprehend.

For many adult programmes, however, Huston and colleagues (1990: 419) argue that young children's "viewing" remains largely passive as the content falls outside their range of comprehension and interest. Examples of such programmes are adult drama, prime-time non-comedy series, and news. Huston and her colleagues conclude that such largely passive viewing may occur frequently up to the age of seven. After this age increased cognitive abilities widen the range of what can be understood. Accordingly, the likelihood increases that children will be allowed to view on their own. The researchers do point out this does not mean this earlier viewing is entirely unrewarding. This is because while not maximally involving or always well understood, the attention of children to television in their very early years means that often they find what they do not comprehend on television passively entertaining. Consequently, the active aspects of viewing occur within a frame that varies greatly in degree of passivity.

In conclusion, children actively watch television and tend to understand what they watch; they do not just sit and stare vacantly. They look at and away from the television set with their viewing guided by the auditory cues that signal programme material they will enjoy

and understand. As Anderson and Collins (1988: 22) note, "Children's attention to television generally appears to be a rational rule-guided activity which acts in the service of comprehension and allows engagement in concurrent activities".

Children are active users of television - they adjust their attention on the basis of their interest and ability to comprehend the programme content. Children make active choices to view child audience programmes and the least demanding type of adult audience programmes (comedy) because these are understandable during the age period from three to seven. As children's comprehension abilities develop, they actively select programmes that fit those abilities. Hence, there are age changes in viewing (Huston et al., 1990). A significant aspect of this is the changing levels of attention children pay to television.

Attention To Television

Before reviewing the research on attention to television, it is necessary to state what is meant by the concept of attention. Anderson and Collins (1988) point out attention is not always directly observable since it refers to the direction and intensity of cognitive activities. Cognitive activities, nevertheless, usually involve selective processing of the external environment. Such processing does have observable manifestations in visual orienting and tactual exploration, but some of the unobservable aspects of attention must be inferred, for instance listening and intensity of processing. In relation to television research, inferences about attention are often based on recognition or recall, from secondary tasks administered concurrently with television viewing, from electrophysiological recordings, from self-ratings, and most common of all, from visual orientation towards the television screen, or looking.

Anderson and Levin's (1976) research, for example, contained the first formal descriptions of the development of visual attention to television based on direct

observations of children, aged 12 months to 4 years. An observer, viewing the videotape of a subject watching **Sesame Street**, pushed a key on a computer when the child appeared to be visually fixating on the television screen and released it when the child looked away. Their results indicated that from 12 months to 4 years of age there was a dramatic increase in attention to television. The younger children appeared to be more interested in playing with toys and interacting with their mothers than watching the television screen in the laboratory viewing room. On the other hand, older children appeared to deliberately watch television. They sat oriented towards the television, glancing up at the screen frequently even while playing with the toys available.

This finding was confirmed by subsequent research that showed that infants give minimal visual attention to the television set during infancy. For example, six-month-old babies will look at it sporadically (Hollenbeck and Slaby, 1979; Lemish and Rice, 1986). Visual attention increases between the ages of one and five. It reaches a maximum during the late elementary school years, and then declines during adulthood (Anderson et al., 1986).

This substantial increase in visual attention to the television screen, from infancy to 5 years of age, has been interpreted as reflecting an increase in comprehensibility (Anderson and Lorch, 1983). Rather than visual attention being attracted and maintained by salient non-content features such as visual change, Anderson and Lorch (1983) maintain that young children look at television because of their cognitive involvement with and active comprehension of the programme content. Consequently, comprehension should dramatically increase over the early childhood years as a result of increasing receptive language skills, an expanded base of world knowledge, and increased skills specific to interpreting television content. Young children watch or attend to television in many different ways and there are individual differences in the amount of attention that is paid to

the screen (Anderson et al., 1979). There are also very distinct "styles" of viewing (Bechtel et al., 1972).

The popular literature, using mostly anecdotal evidence and interviews with noted pediatricians and other experts, paints a mental image of a child who is seated in front of the television set, watching with a fixed gaze. Words such as "boob tube" or "idiot box" have been used to describe the TV set, while those who give it sustained attention have been called "zombies", "square eyes", "couch potatoes", and even "TV addicts". Titles of books such as the influential *The Plug-In Drug* (Winn, 1985) have been based on the assumption that children are passive receivers in their relationship with this medium. Winn argues that the young child's need for intellectual stimulation is able to be more satisfied when he or she can learn by manipulating, touching, and doing rather than just watching passively. Winn repeatedly suggests that children's attention is "controlled" by compelling formal features, including tight framing of television scenes, "contours that are evermoving", rapid scene changes, and overt movement. Thus Winn equates paying attention to television with passivity.

Behavioural descriptions of children's television viewing both in laboratory and home settings do not verify such populist views. Nevertheless, when watching television some degree of visual dependence is created. For example, Anderson et al. (1979) found that children exhibit what they call "attentional inertia". This phenomenon, which refers both to looking and not looking at the television screen, describes a pattern of attention in which the longer a person looks at the TV (or does not look), the more probable it becomes that the look will continue (or does not continue). This pattern is characteristic of individual viewers from an early age through to adulthood. Generally, Anderson and Collins (1988: 16) state the data reveal an increasing curve that is negatively accelerated and levels off after about 15 seconds. Anderson and Lorch (1983) have demonstrated that

the longer a look is in progress prior to a content boundary, i.e. when one programme ends and another begins, the more likely it is that the look will remain in progress after that content boundary. Otherwise, they state, content boundaries tend to make children stop looking at the television screen. Anderson and Lorch (1983) claim that attentional inertia therefore serves to maintain the viewer's attention across changes in content. Attentional inertia, consequently, may be indicative of increased cognitive engagement with the television content (Anderson, Choi, and Lorch, 1987).

It is important to note that children do give close, continuing attention to the television screen and that such attention is related to the type of programme. The data of Bechtel, Achelpohl, and Akers (1972) indicated that children are especially attentive to programming made for them. Argenta, Stoneman, and Brody in 1986, for example, showed pairs of preschool age children of the same sex animated cartoons, **Sesame Street**, and situation comedies. They found that visual attention was greatest for cartoons and least for situation comedies. They observed that social interaction was markedly decreased by cartoons; the other two types of programmes led to the children dividing their time between social interaction, toys, and viewing. The authors stated, "The image of children 'mesmerized' in front of the television set, forsaking social interaction and active involvement with their object environment, held true for only one type of programming, namely, cartoons" (Argenta, Stoneman, and Brody; cited in Comstock, 1991:34). Hence, when there is a close match between programme characteristics and viewer preferences, research findings indicate that child viewing is intense.

The findings on the whole, then, do not support the stereotype of the fixated young viewer. Researchers do make it abundantly clear, though, that the audiovisual cues of television are important in regard to whether or not the television screen will be attended

to, and some types of content in certain circumstances may indeed capture the attention of young viewers.

As already stated, there are numerous individual differences in viewing and attention to the television screen. First, children, notwithstanding attentional inertia and popular accounts, do not sit with their attention glued to the television screen for long periods of time. Anderson and Field (1983; cited in Anderson and Collins, 1988: 16) found that children generally look at and away from the television screen between one and two hundred times an hour. The majority of these looks lasted only several seconds in length while a few lasted as long as a minute. Moreover, these extended episodes of visual attention were not typical.

Second, children as well as adults are also likely to do other activities while viewing television. Lorch, Anderson and Levin (1979) experimentally tested the relationship between visual attention and comprehension of a TV programme. Seventy-two children, aged 5 years, watched a forty minute version of **Sesame Street**. Half the children viewed the programme with a variety of toys while the others viewed without toys. Following the programme, the children were tested for their comprehension of the material. The researchers found that although the visual attention to the television screen in the no-toys group was nearly twice that in the toy's group, there was no difference between the groups in comprehension. However, there was a significant correlation between comprehension and visual attention within the group of five-year- olds who watched with toys, suggesting that comprehension probably directed visual attention toward the television screen.

Provided children are able to play with toys while they watch TV, they are less likely to look at the television screen. On the other hand, if there are no toys available, the amount

of time they visually attend the screen increases. As well, children who watch television together in a group, tend to look at and away from the television screen at the same time (Anderson, Lorch, Smith, Bradford and Levin, 1981). Furthermore, young viewers also take cues from others in the vicinity of the set. In this respect, others are seen as informants or sources of validation regarding the audiovisual signals. When co-viewers turn away from the television screen or turn to an alternative stimulus, the probability of continued attention is decreased. For example, Anderson and his colleagues (Anderson et al., 1981) found that when children, aged three and five years, viewed television in groups of two or three, there was a tendency for the behaviour of any one child (attending or not attending to the screen, looking at an adjacent distracting audiovisual slide display, or becoming highly actively involved in viewing) to be followed by the other child or children doing the same thing.

Research indicates that visual attention is dependent upon programme content as well as its formal features. There have been several studies done to identify the formal elements that are most likely to attract children's attention. (See, for example, Alwitt, Anderson, Lorch, and Levin, 1980; Anderson and Levin, 1976; Bryant, Zillmann, and Brown, 1983; Calvert, Huston, Watkins, and Wright, 1982.) Factors that were likely to attract and/or maintain attention among young children include puppets; women and children; changes in character of level of audio; peculiar voices; movement; camera cuts; sound effects; laughter; applause; a single narrator; animals if they are colourful, active, and have comical features; rapid action; and high levels of violence. Males on the whole are higher in attentiveness, especially in relation to violence and animation. Factors that tend to cause inattention include adult male voices, extended zooms and pans, eye contact with the viewer, still shots, and characters that lack colour or are inactive.

Anderson and his colleagues (1979) also found that auditory cues were important in reorienting children's visual attention to the television screen, particularly when they were involved in other activities or their attention was diverted elsewhere while viewing. Research has revealed, too, that children as young as three monitor the audio track of a television programme, and if they are not looking at the television screen, they would shift their attention back to it when an auditory cue suggested something important was about to happen (Alwitt et al., 1980). Anderson, Lorch, Field, and Sanders (1981) suggest that there is evidence that children learn which auditory cues indicate interesting content on TV programme. They found that visually inattentive five year old children were more likely to look back at the television screen than inattentive three year old children at the same point in the programme.

The content of a programme likewise is important in determining visual attention to television. Humour, particularly in educational programmes, has been found to be an especially salient determinant of viewing (Signorielli, 1991). Bryant, Zillmann and Brown (1983) reported that children spent more time viewing programmes with appealing background music (faster tempos) than programmes with unappealing music (slower tempos) or no music at all. Thus appeal of particular content influences children's level of attention to the television screen.

Comprehension

As discussed, attention to television usually focuses upon if and how children watch the TV screen. Paying attention to the television, however, does not necessarily mean that a person understands what is viewed. Signorielli (1991) points out that research is hampered by the fact that tests of comprehension are decided by adults who are focusing upon what adults think children should and will understand. As a consequence such tasks may miss much of what children actually comprehend about the content that they watch on

television. However, there is an important developmental factor to keep in mind. Children's understanding or comprehension of television tends to become more adultlike as they progress up the developmental ladder (Wright et al., 1984).

A great deal of the early research on children's cognitive processing and comprehension of dramatic plots in television programming was carried out by Andrew Collins and his colleagues (Collins, 1983). He identified dramatic programmes as a sequence of scenes subordinated to a plot or narrative, conveying information both relevant and irrelevant to the programme that is explicitly or implicitly presented. Programme comprehension requires attention to and retention of explicitly portrayed relevant events that "go beyond on-screen events to grasp the relations among them" (Ibid.: 127).

Pattern of retention and inference change with development such that up to eight years of age, children remember few of the events and settings of typical television programmes. After this age, the ability to remember information, especially that which is central to the development of the story or important for the child's continued participation in the programme, improves dramatically through to adolescence. The recognition of developmental differences in children's understanding of television is important because it demonstrated that children "see" television differently from adults, and there is also variation with the child audience (Collins, 1983; Dorr, 1986; Sheppard, 1993).

Accurate sequencing and integration of television's content also improves with age. Pre-school viewers tend to recall isolated events rather than focusing on the plot. By the age of seven, younger children have developed preferences for programmes with plots and continuity rather than segmentation of content. Children, at this age, better recall such content, although the task can still be a difficult one for them (Dorr, 1986).

In addition to developmental differences in comprehension, programme complexity and the individual's background and experience also influence how children understand television's programming. John Wright and Aletha Huston (Huston and Wright, 1983; Wright and Huston, 1983), two researchers working in this area, have been prolific in documenting programme complexity by formal features and their effects on children's attention to and comprehension of the content on television. Their research has reported that although formal features influence all children's attention to television, developmental differences in their effects are not great. In terms of comprehension, formal features seem to function as an aid in children's selection of content to process and therefore also as an aid to comprehension. They found also that younger children do comprehend television content easier when the content is accompanied by salient features than when it is not. An older viewer's comprehension is less closely associated with feature salience, but developmental differences are overall relatively small (Wright et al., 1984).

One might expect that comprehensibility is an important factor in determining attention to television. Anderson, Lorch, Field, and Sanders (1981: 156), for example, found that "a major determinant of young children's visual attention to a television program is the degree to which they are able to comprehend it". In their research they found that children spent more time looking at "normal" segments of **Sesame Street** than segments where comprehensibility was reduced through using a foreign language (Greek) or by using backward speech, but whose formal features were indistinguishable from the original or "normal" segments. This work also revealed that randomly ordering the scenes within specific segments of **Sesame Street** had only a marginal effect on the children's visual attention.

The comprehensibility of programme content is one important determinant of young children's attention to television in research done in laboratory settings (Huston, Wright,

Rice, Kerkman and St. Peters, 1990). Clearly what can be comprehended is a joint function of programme content and the knowledge that the viewer brings to it. Consequently, developmental change in knowledge is a major reason for expecting age-related changes in viewing. Such knowledge can be conceptualised as a set of schemata derived from regularities and redundancies in an individual's experience (Anderson and Lorch, 1983). Schemata include expectancies about situations that permit the individual to anticipate and organize incoming information; they guide attention, influence memory, and generate inferences about content. TV programmes that contain repeated characters and settings across episodes lend themselves to schema formation: the regular viewer approaches a new episode with considerable information about the characters, likely actions, and probable events, together with their significance in context. Therefore, programme series with high redundancy across episodes are likely to be more comprehensible than those with low redundancy, particularly to young children who do not bring a large store of world knowledge to their television experience.

Anderson and Lorch (1983: 12) suggest that by the age of 2 1/2 children have developed a viewing schema. The dramatic increase in viewing evident at age 2 1/2 is consistent with theories of cognitive development which assert that between the ages of 2 and 3 there is a major transition from sensorimotor representation and knowledge to higher level preoperational or "iconic" representation, which is more symbolic and less immediate in nature. This cognitive growth finally enables the child to develop and apply comprehension schemas to television, and leads to the observed sharp increase in television viewing.

Monitoring

The act of viewing does not describe what transpires in children's experience of television as accurately as does the term monitoring. Viewing implies visual attention to what is happening on the television screen. Monitoring implies attention to audio, visual, and social cues as to whether or not a child decides to pay attention to the screen. Recently, research on children's mental activities that occur while they are watching TV affirm that "viewing" is descriptively inferior to "monitoring". (See, for example, Anderson and Lorch, 1983; Bryant, Zillmann, and Brown, 1983; Lorch, Anderson, and Levin, 1979.)

Comstock (1991) argues that despite the low level of involvement that typically characterizes the experience of television there is a great deal of mental activity that accompanies monitoring. Therefore children's television experience cannot be described as either active or passive without reference to what each term is intended to indicate. Comstock (1991) maintains that there is justification for both labels; no good rationale can be offered for giving either term precedence. He argues that the appropriate term depends on what aspect of the child's experience with TV is being described or emphasized. Comstock states that television viewing is typically passive in regard to involvement, but inherently active in regard to monitoring. Hence, the mental activity involved can be described in terms of stimulus features, viewer attributes, and situational circumstances.

Stimulus features can be divided into the following: content, format, and form. (See, for example, Calvert, Huston, Watkins, and Wright, 1982; Wright and Huston, 1983.) Content refers to topic or subject matter while format refers to character, genre, and length. Form includes the auditory, visual, and structural elements by which content is conveyed within a format, for example, the zoom, close-ups, accompanying music, and changes or maintenance of pace.

Comstock (1991) notes that in the abstract, content, format, and form are independent. However, in practice the three are often related within a cultural context or a specific medium. For example, format figures fundamentally in preferences, particularly in their genre-related aspects. Content, too, plays a modest role in television viewing. This is implied by the typically minute differences in audience size for different episodes of series (Barwise and Ehrenberg; cited in Comstock, 1991). Although clearly attention varies among formats (Bechtel et al., 1972), and by implication between different contents, the elements of form would be important in controlling attention to the screen. Consequently, form guides attention, and because format, contents, and form are intercorrelated, such features are almost certainly responsible for much of the attentional variation associated with differences in format and contents (Comstock, 1991).

Form to an important degree therefore governs monitoring. As a consequence of its varied elements, a child watching the television screen receives cues that indicate that continued viewing is desirable. Cues, too, can alert potential viewers that the content on the screen is worthy or not worthy of their attention. For example, music may indicate that something important is about to happen. It may also indicate whether a portrayal is more likely to please males or females thereby enhancing comprehension and readiness to attend the screen further. As well, language is associated with gender. This gives additional cues for children about gender roles of characters (Comstock, 1991).

Gender Role Socialisation

Socialisation is a social process in which people learn about their culture and acquire some of its values, beliefs, perspectives, and social norms. In other words, socialisation is the way in which an individual comes to adopt the behaviour and values of a group. This is an ongoing process throughout an individual's life span.

In our society, traditionally it has been parents, peers, schools, and churches that have played a major role in socialisation. Since the development of modern communications technologies, numerous studies have revealed that the mass media play a crucial role in the socialisation process both for children and adults (Morley, 1986; 1991; 1992; Rosenwasser, Lingenfelter, and Harrington, 1989; Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner, and Warth, 1989). Television may be the most influential medium for socialisation, especially in regard to children (Signorielli, 1991; 1993). As noted elsewhere, 99 per cent of New Zealand homes have TV, and television's visual nature makes it particularly appealing to young children. By the time a person reaches the age of 65 she or he may have spent more than nine full years watching television (Dorr, 1986).

Recent research has revealed that women are seen less often on the television than men, and in many cases may be considered as less important. When women are portrayed on the TV they are usually younger than the men; they are also more attractive, nurturing, seen in the context of romantic interests, home, and/or family (Durkin, 1985; Luke, 1990b; Van Evra, 1990). Women are also more likely than men to be married, and if they are married then they are not employed outside the home (Signorielli, 1993). Signorielli (1993) states that gender stereotyping over the past 10-15 years has been quite stable, traditional, conventional, and supportive of the status quo.

It is important to keep in mind that gender stereotyping on television is as damaging for boys and men as it is for girls and women. Luke (1990b) notes that in today's society most parents and teachers strive to encourage more assertiveness in girls and less aggressiveness in boys. Television, however, continues for the most part to cling to traditional stereotypes.

There have been several studies dealing with gender roles in relation to very young children. For example, Flerx, Fidler, and Rodgers in 1976 interviewed 76 children between the ages of three and five concerning their sex-role beliefs. The researchers subjected those aged four and five years to brief daily sessions over a week. (The subjects who were three years of age were thought to be too young.) The children were read picture books that were either stereotypic or non stereotypic in regard to sex roles. The researchers repeated the manipulation with another group of 46 children aged five years, with the addition of a non stereotypic film condition. They found that conventional sex-role beliefs were much more predominant at age four than at age three. Furthermore, the non stereotypic picture books were effective in reducing such beliefs. However, their findings indicated that the film was even more effective than the picture books in reducing conventional sex-role beliefs. These effects remained (although at a reduced level) after a week (Flerx, Fidler, and Rodgers; cited in Comstock, 1991: 160).

Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is a primary accomplishment of pre-school children. Between the ages of 1 1/2 and 6 years, children learn to comprehend more than 14,000 words (Templin, 1957; cited in Rice et al., 1990). This averages out to about nine new words per day. Rice and her colleagues state that the emerging lexicon serves as the basis for the development of linguistic skills. Furthermore, it has been found that pre-school vocabulary level is a good predictor of early reading ability and school achievement (Anderson, Hiebert, Schoot, and Wilkinson; cited in Rice et al., 1990). This may be because young children who know more words comprehend better than children with more limited vocabularies. Clearly children manage to acquire their large vocabulary without explicit tutoring, and this is evident by their absorbing new meanings for words as they come across them in conversational interactions. Accordingly, given young

children's ability to learn new words incidentally, television may be particularly well suited for the introduction of new word meanings (Rice et al., 1990).

Rice and Haight in 1986 found that the dialogue of characters on **Sesame Street** was adjusted to young children's comprehension levels in a similar manner to the way adults adjust their speech and language to young children in live interactions (Rice and Haight; cited in Rice et al., 1990). The dialogue included simple sentences, talk about the here and now, and repeated emphasis on key terms. The researchers stated that such speech is well suited to introducing word meanings to young children watching the programme. (They also noted that simplified dialogue was not found in children's cartoons nor in adult situation comedies.) Consequently, Rice and her colleagues suggested that **Sesame Street** is well suited to the vocabulary levels of pre-school children ranging in age from three to five and that they should be able to incorporate new words into their lexicon as a result of their viewing.

Rice et al. (1990) maintain that similar types of programmes can be effective vocabulary teachers for young viewers. This is because television allows for the introduction of familiar and novel words in a way that focuses young children's attention to the screen, with visual and verbal redundancies, and the potential or repeated experiences with the same material (Greenfield, 1984).

The Role Of Parents

The role of parents in relation to their children's television viewing is an important aspect of most general surveys of children and television. (See, for example, Buckingham, 1993: chapter 5; Gunter and McAleer, 1990: chapter 11; Luke, 1990b: chapters 5-7; Signorielli, 1991: chapter 6.) Discussion focuses on television's role in the general dynamics of family life, principally family viewing patterns, conflict over the choice of

programmes, and the question of regulating children's viewing. The following brief summary of this work is in no sense a comprehensive one, but serves to background the parent interviews that form part of this study.

To begin with, it is an obvious but often unacknowledged point that the television set tends to dominate the family lounge, becoming the focus of family leisure time. Frequently the furniture is arranged to face it so to provide the best line of sight to the television set. However, while this might suggest that television viewing is predominantly a family activity, many households now have more than one TV set, enabling individual viewing to be both isolated and different (in terms of programme choices) from other family members. (A Neilsen survey in 1990 showed that almost two-thirds of American homes have more than one set; cited Signorielli, 1991: 47.) Furthermore, the ownership of video cassette recorders has broken the hold exercised on viewing by television channel scheduling, as well as arguably undermining the channel's attempts to maintain "watershed" viewing times (as is the case in New Zealand).

As Morley (1992: 165) observes more generally of audience studies: "In the end, the study of patterns of media consumption must, of course, properly be located within an analysis of the varieties of the domestic settings and household types within which the activity is conducted." It is now clearly established that different family structures lead to different interactions between family members and TV. (For a summary of the literature on this, see Buckingham, 1993: chapter 5; Gunter and McAleer, 1990: 133-5.) An influential factor here is the physical space available to the household: "For families that have much space, and more TV's, viewers need not distract others in the home, since there is more domestic mobility. Consequently there may be less conflict and friction, since competing personal agendas and TV programme preferences can be worked out by moving to another part of the house" (Lull; cited in Morley, 1992: 165). As Buckingham (1993:

102) documents in considerable detail, clearly "the relationship between parents, children and television is almost invariably characterized by struggles for power and control ... family viewing is often a focus of considerable tension and anxiety".

The literature suggests that parental responses to their children's TV viewing fall broadly into four groups, related to different family structures and the social dynamics therein:

(1) A few parents ban their children's viewing entirely, and in extreme cases do not even have a set in the house. This attitude is frequently on religious grounds, to avoid TV's "polluting" influence, although it can also be based on a high culture perspective (e.g. television is generally low level entertainment).

(2) Those parents in whose homes the set is on continuously, even through mealtime, and children can view without interference until bedtime. An influential American study (Medrich, 1979; cited in Morley, 1992: 166) labeled these "constant TV households", claiming they represented over one-third of American inner city families. Medrich's concern was that "children living in constant TV households are always to some extent competing with TV, regardless of what they are doing. This may affect their lives in many ways that make the questions of what they watch of secondary importance" (Ibid.). The poor and less well-educated represented the majority of constant TV households.

(3) The rationing approach, where parents allow a certain viewing time, say one to two hours per weekday, with an increase on the weekend. This is the basis of most attempts to regulate children's TV viewing (Gunter and McAleer, 1990: chapter 11).

(4) Those parents who act as censors, checking out the programmes their children want to see, and who may also view and discuss programmes with them. However, while the

merits of children viewing with their parents are widely accepted, the practice is not widely adopted. Even more importantly, few parents actively discuss their children's TV viewing with them (Gunter and McAleer, 1990: 138). On the other hand, as Davis (1992) points out, this may be more a function of parents not knowing what to look for and what to say.

(For examples of different family viewing situations, particularly attitudes to the regulation of children's viewing, see Buckingham, 1993: chapter 5; Simpson,1987.)

Indeed, there is an obvious paradox between the parents' often expressed concern about their children's television viewing, and the strong evidence that most parents do not regulate viewing (Hodge and Tripp, 1986: 1). Gunter and McAleer (1990: 136-8) review some of the findings supporting this point, citing major survey-style studies undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s. Buckingham (1993: 108) covers similar ground, concluding that "however much parents may claim to control the amount or nature of their children's viewing, or otherwise to intervene in it, this happens much less in practice, particularly as children get older". Citing Wober et al.'s UK. Empirical study for the Independent Broadcasting Authority (1986), he also observes that even with the more likely regulation of younger children's viewing, the time children go to bed is the main determinant of how much they watch.

Writing in 1986, Hodge and Tripp suggested that the study of children's TV viewing needed to move beyond notions of parental control of the set. Number nine of their influential "ten theses on children and television" stated: "The family is not simply a site for countering the meanings of television, it is also active in determining what the meanings will be". They go on to observe: "Families need to think about and act upon the way in which they interact with their televisions, not simply try to control the quantity or kind of programme viewed when and by whom" (Hodge and Tripp, 1986: 218).

Subsequent research has been particularly concerned with exploring and charting this point. (See especially Buckingham, 1993.)

There has also emerged a body of very accessible writing primarily addressing parents, and offering extensive practical guidelines and advice - both soundly based in the research literature on how parents should relate to their children and television. (See, for example, Luke, 1990b; Messenger Davies, 1989.) By way of illustration, Luke elaborates a concept of "television literacy", involving the ability to analyse and evaluate what is seen and heard on TV: "Underlying these media literacy skills is the supposition that active and critical engagement with the medium's forms and content, with its hidden and explicit aims and messages, will enable the viewer to develop skills with which to choose programs selectively and interpret content critically. In the family context, this can be developed by discussing the selection of programs and by engaging in dialogue about personal preferences, values, and tastes" (Luke, 1990b: 87). She goes on to detail strategies for achieving such a dialogue between parents and children. In similar fashion, Davis (1992) provides concrete guidelines on how parents can discuss television with their children.

Phoenix (1987: 10) argues that the notion of the importance of high quality educative interaction between the parents and their children is one that implicitly underpins many programmes for the pre-school audience. She maintains, for example, it is evident that young viewers need to watch BBC's **Play School** with an adult in order to take full advantage of what is presented on the screen. She states that even if children under the age of five remember exactly how to do the art activity on the programme such as constructing an island from plasticine or a tree from cardboard, in most cases they need an adult's assistance to provide the materials and to help make the object. Obviously this needs to be done after the programme has finished otherwise the child's viewing will be disrupted. Similarly, requests for the young viewers to join in songs, games and

clapping that works well at early childhood education settings, where children are repeatedly encouraged to join in, are shown what to do and given as much time as they need to do it, do not work as well as part of programmes that are fifteen minutes long like BBC's **Play School**. An adult may be needed to facilitate the requested activity after the programme has finished (Greenfield, 1984). The time when pre-school programmes are scheduled usually ensures that the adults will be non-employed mothers or caregivers who are available to facilitate these activities.

In relation to children's television viewing, parents can, and do, have an important influence on how much and what children watch as well as how they use television. Parents can direct children's opportunities to practise what they have learned on television and their evaluative comments can influence their children's attitudes to programmes (Dorr, 1986; Greenfield, 1984). Still it is unrealistic to expect that most parents, even of younger children, will be able to spend much time watching television with their children. In addition households vary with respect to their rules about children and television viewing as well as their access to materials for making suggested items. In relation to this Phoenix (1987) suggests that it would be more satisfactory to make children's programmes independent of the need for adult help.

New Zealand Research On Children And Television

Considering the huge volume of research on children and television there are still relatively few New Zealand studies. Lealand (1992; 1995) points out that prior to doing his research a review of New Zealand research on pre-school children and television revealed that it had been almost twenty years in which no substantial study in this area had occurred. There have been a number of research studies done on the relationship between New Zealand children and television particularly in relation to the on-going debate over "TV violence", (see, for example, Bassett, 1989; 1990a; 1990b), but nothing on very

young children. In the early 1970s, Barney (1973) surveyed the television viewing habits of children aged 3, 4 and 5. He concluded that television had not taken over the lives of the children included in his questionnaire although this age group watched up to two hours of television a day. He maintained that:

> television both provides and restricts opportunities for the pre-schooler to learn to use his language. Perhaps if parents were more aware of the importance of practice in language usage, both the visual and auditory stimuli coming off the screen could be utilised to better effect. For greatest effectiveness this would involve appropriate programmes for joint parent-child viewing at a more convenient time during the day than the present 4.30-5.30 spot (Ibid.: 26).

Lealand (1992) used detailed observation to investigate the role television played in the lives of 35 Wellington pre-school children. In particular he was interested in what they learnt from programmes such as **Play School** and **Sesame Street**. The observation schedule used to record information was both quantitative (letter codes were used to generalise about attention levels over 10-15 minute intervals) and qualitative (a running commentary of all the activity and conversation that occurred during the period of observation). In terms of attention to television, Lealand's findings "suggest that children pay greater attention to the shorter duration, 'live' aspects of **Play School** rather than the faster-paced, more fragmented **Sesame Street**" (p.6). Furthermore, there was more response to the content of **Play School** in relation to enthusiasm, conversation generated between children and parents/caregivers, and the spontaneous response or mimicry of programme content. Lealand noted that children "tended to interact more frequently, joining in songs and movement significantly more often, with a greater amount of physical interaction" (p.6). As well, most of the parents or caregivers sat with their children for long periods while they watched television and discussed the programmes with them. In his research, though, Lealand was only able to visit each child once in his or her home.

Lealand's research was part of a project to develop a replacement for **Play School** (Morrell, Lealand and Lockie, 1991). The Morrell et al. project is significant for the purpose of this thesis, since it (indirectly) led to **You And Me**. One thousand, three hundred and sixty-nine New Zealand parents/caregivers offered opinions and suggestions on the shape of the new series. Over two thousand (2363) children under the age of five were represented by a parent/caregiver. This was done through questionnaires distributed through child-care centres, Kohanga Reo and Pacific Island language nests, and through the Barnardos Caregivers Association. As well, a number of interviews were done with parents and children at these centres. Furthermore, a short questionnaire was included in the February/March issue of *Little Treasures* parenting magazine, a New Zealand publication with an estimated readership of 200,000 (Meadowcroft, 1991). One thousand, three hundred questionnaires were returned from all parts of New Zealand; 47 per cent of these attached comments, some running to five or six pages of detailed explanations (Lealand, 1991).

All the parents who replied to the questionnaire offered a few key-words to describe what they thought was a good television programme for young children. Most of the respondents sought simplicity, fun, colour, and opportunities for their children to participate and learn. "Other requirements included:

> -music and singing
> -encouragement of creativity
> -realism (outings and everyday life)
> -a non-violent, gentle atmosphere
> -short duration
> -dance and movement
> -non-sexist gender mix
> -an appreciation of children's capabilities and understanding levels
> -a bicultural or multicultural emphasis
> -children participating
> -humour
> Most of all, a programme for preschoolers should be both educational and entertaining" (Lealand, 1991: 43).

The data gained from this research provided important information on different aspects of pre-school children's television; attitudes to existing programmes such as **Play School** and **Sesame Street**; whether or not parents/caregivers monitor their children's viewing habits; children's use of television and associated media; and attitudes to particular aspects of children's programming. Moreover, this information was matched to information from an associated consultation process. These included meetings with leading figures in the Maori community; policy makers and educators in the early childhood area; presenters and writers involved in children's television; and people directly involved in early childhood education such as the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Association and Play for Life. As well, a one-day workshop was held, in late 1990, to finalise the curriculum components of the proposed series, **Our House**, with participants from a wide set of interests (Lealand, 1992).

In relation to the multi-faceted research carried out for this project, Lealand (1992) stated that the direct observation of the 35 children in the Wellington city area produced by far the richest data. Furthermore, Lealand's (1991: 42) conclusions to this segment of the research have led him to suggest that it "was time the persistent myth of the 'plugged-in,' passive child viewer was challenged".

Lealand's research emphasized the observation of pre-school children's television viewing in the home environment. In 1995 Lealand published his research project, a longitudinal study of television and New Zealand pre-schoolers, funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, which extended the "detail and complexity of information resulting from the Wellington/Hutt Valley pilot" (1995: 6). The longitudinal study enabled "continuing observations across time and with a larger, more diverse group of children" (Ibid.: 6). His findings, alongside other studies, for example, Palmer (1986) and Noble and Duck (1986), are remarkably consistent in the picture they give of

children's relationships with television being more dynamic than passive. Furthermore, recent research (see, for example, Anderson and Collins, 1988; Berry and Asamen, 1993; Gunter and McAleer, 1990; Luke, 1990b; Shuker and Shuker, 1992; Van Evra, 1990) argues that television viewing is a necessary aspect of a child's cognitive and social development. The fact that children actively think about television indicates that television can be an effective tool for education.

Summary

Television plays an important role in the socialisation of children. Pre-school children spend a large amount of their time watching television, which provides a disproportionately large potential informational and attitudinal source. Surprisingly, in view of this, mainstream researchers in cognitive development have rarely considered television viewing to be a significant part of a child's overall life experience, while there has been little sustained New Zealand research on children and TV.

Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective on development has important implications for the field of children and television. Parental involvement, through guidance or interactional support, or "scaffolding", in play and play acting with their children while they watch television, is necessary to foster social and language development and cognitive abilities. Vygotsky also emphasises the importance of the total context in which the information is exchanged and comprehended.

Television information that is actually attended to, comprehended, and retained by child viewers is dependent upon a number of complex interacting factors. These include the child's developmental level, past experience with television, interest in and reasons for viewing, as well as programme content and format variables. Young viewers are more stimulus-bound and they are attracted by the salient features of television. However, they

are able to monitor some aspects of television input without utilising their full attention. Previous views may have been underestimated young children's level of comprehension of television information Recent research suggests that younger viewers have a basic understanding of much television information, although it is incomplete, frequently distorted, and, in many cases, subsequently largely forgotten.

Children are active viewers, and their processing of television information becomes more efficient as they get older. Although young viewers remember visual material better, they require verbal input to interpret it accurately. Children's comprehension of what they watch on television depends upon their inferential process and cognitive ability as well as their knowledge about the world.

Television continues to perpetuate traditional stereotypes. There have been several studies concerning gender roles and young children, which suggest that conventional sex-role beliefs are more predominant at age four than at age three.

There is ample evidence to support the view that television programming can facilitate language development in children, particularly young viewers. Television allows for the introduction of familiar and novel words in a way that focuses young children's attention to the screen, with visual and verbal redundancies, and the potential or repeated experiences with the same material.

In relation to children's television viewing, parents can, and do, have an important influence on how much and what children watch as well as how they use television. Parents can direct their children's opportunities to practice what they have learned on television and their evaluative comments can influence their children's attitudes to programmes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A necessary initial part of this research was to examine **You And Me** in terms of its original development, the philosophy of the programme, and some of its central features. For this part of the research, a case study approach was used. A case study is "a systematic investigation of a specific instance" (Nisbet and Watt, 1984: 74), and evidence is gathered by a variety of techniques (Dixon, Bouma, and Atkinson, 1987). The researcher utilised content analysis, programme publicity material, and interviews with the producer. This phase of the study is written up in Chapter 4.

Following this, an ethnographic study was undertaken to investigate:

1. pre-school children's responses to **You And Me**; for example, how they participated, and what engaged their attention, and
2. whether parents watch/discuss the programme with their children.

These research questions were examined using a qualitative research approach, which drew upon family ethnography (Lull, 1990). While the term ethnography is frequently used, there are conflicting claims about what count as examples of it. Moreover, the meaning of the term overlaps with several others, such as qualitative method, interpretative research, case study, participant observation, etc.; and these terms are not used in very precise ways (Hammersley, 1990). Wolcott (1988: 202; cited in Ely et al., 1991: 3), for example, found it "...useful to distinguish between anthropologically informed researchers who *do ethnography* and ... researchers who frequently *draw upon ethnographic approaches* in doing descriptive studies".

Since the term ethnography is not clearly defined in common usage, Ely et al. (1991) use qualitative research as the umbrella term. They state that the term "qualitative" has the broadest denotation and it highlights the primarily qualitative-as-descriptive nature of research within this paradigm. Furthermore, Ely et al. maintain that qualitative research is best defined by listing the characteristics of its methods, rather than by a single definition. The authors based these characteristics on Sherman and Webb, who analyzed what leading qualitative researchers in many disciplines had to say about their work. Sherman and Webb's analysis produced six common characteristics of qualitative research (Sherman and Webb, 1988: 5-8; cited in Ely et al., 1991: 4).

1. Events can only be understood adequately if they are seen in context. Qualitative researchers, therefore, immerse themselves in the setting.
2. The contexts of inquiry are natural, not contrived. Hence, nothing is taken for granted, or predefined.
3. Qualitative researchers want people who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their own perspectives both in words and other actions. Thus, qualitative research is an interactive process whereby the persons being studied teach the researcher about their lives.
4. Qualitative researchers are attentive to the experience as a whole, rather than separate variables. The aim of qualitative research is to comprehend experience as unified.
5. Qualitative methods are relevant to the above features. There is no one universal method.
6. For many qualitative researchers, the process includes appraisal about what was studied.

The researcher used this overview of qualitative research as the basis for this study.

Although most media consumption occurs in the home environment, few New Zealand media researchers have investigated this domestic setting (Lealand, 1992; 1995; Zwaga,

1994). The private dwelling is an intimate location. In New Zealand, where an emphasis is placed on privacy, the difficulties of invading the home environment to do social research has proven too daunting to most researchers. Naturalistic studies of media audiences in the home, therefore, have been rare. Lull (1990) argues that those studying the media are becoming more aware of the need to understand how families interpret and use the television in the home context. Therefore, this research used qualitative research, which drew upon family ethnography, to examine how young children, and their parents, interacted with the educational pre-school programme, **You And Me**.

Methodological Issues In Family Ethnography

Lull (1990) states that the ethnographer of family audience behaviour must be concerned with the following: (a) sampling, (b) observational techniques, (c) stages of data collection, and (d) organizing and presenting data. This study used these categories.

(a) Sampling

Twelve children and their parent(s) participated in this study. The parent involved was the mother, except in one case where both parents co-viewed. Because of time constraints, they were selected as an "opportunity sample", i.e. from those available to the researcher, rather than strictly randomly selected. The sample included a range of children chosen according to ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The children ranged in age from 22 months to 4 years, 11 months. There were eight females and four males. (See Chapter 5 for details of the children. Please note that the names of the children have been changed for reasons of confidentiality.) The observations were carried out during September, October, and November 1992, and January 1993.

(b) Observational And Interviewing Techniques

Hammersley (1990) notes that ethnographers sometimes use triangulation as a useful form of check on the validity of descriptive claims. Further, Mathison (1988: 13) maintains that "good research practice obligates the researcher to triangulate". Denzin (1979: 297) broadly defines triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena". There are four basic types of triangulation, but for the purpose of this research only methodological triangulation was used. Methodological triangulation refers to the usage of multiple methods to examine a social phenomenon. Denzin (1979) states that two forms can be noted: within-method triangulation and between-methods triangulation. Denzin maintains that the between-methods triangulation is more satisfying because it combines different methods to measure the same unit. "The rationale for this strategy is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (Ibid.: 308). Denzin argues, too, that by employing appropriate multiple methods the end result will be more valid research findings. Consequently, the nature of this research entailed using approaches derived from observational studies, and interviews using questionnaires (Edwards, Logue, and Russell, 1983; Hughes, 1980). These social science methods are used extensively in educational research (Denzin, 1970; McMillan and Schumacher, 1984).

Lull (1990) maintains that the most effective method for documenting the activities of family life is still written notes made by the observer. Taking notes in the presence of the children and their families was an awkward task, although the researcher tried to do it in a way that attracted minimum attention. The type of observation the researcher undertook was non-participant, in that she generally avoided talking with the children while they were viewing the programme, unless they directly addressed her. When questioned by the children, the researcher told them it was her "work" and they seemed to accept this.

The researcher used a continuous recording procedure, describing in detail all the activity and conversation that occurred during the period of observation. Seated in the viewing area, the researcher was able to take notes on the location in which the observations occurred, the time they occurred, the actions and activities that took place and the interpersonal interaction that accompanied the children and their parents' viewing of the programme. It was helpful to document conversations as they happened. However, it must be pointed out when doing ethnographic research, it is impossible for the researcher to observe and record all the activities that occur.

The natural breaks that occurred during the observational study gave the researcher time to take detailed notes about what transpired during the preceding minutes. Lull (1990) notes that reconstruction of the scene can be done more accurately when opportunities are created to take notes during the actual observational period. At first, some of the parents were sensitive to the researcher taking notes, and it was difficult to be unobtrusive during the start of the research. Towards the end of the observation period, the taking of notes became less troublesome.

Any observation has problems associated with it. It is difficult to obtain observations that are objective and unbiased as the objectivity of the observer depends to some extent on the behaviour that is being observed. Observations, too, are sensitive to context. In other words, it is always possible to argue against any particular observation by discussing other particulars about the situation. Furthermore, observations are always incomplete. This occurs because what the researcher includes in the observation is selective. Observers are in the position where they can only index what the behaviour of the subjects might mean (Hughes, 1980; McMillan and Schumacher, 1984). By observing in the home context, the researcher was able to record and interpret the children's feelings and actions as they occurred in a familiar environment. The presence of a stranger, except in

the case of three of the children, in their living room, possibly modified the behaviour of the children being observed, but this effect appeared to be minimal.

(c) Stages Of Data Collection

The length of the observation period for each child was decided by two factors. First, the running time of the programme, **You And Me**, was 24 minutes long. Second, the programme is aired five days a week, Monday to Friday. The researcher decided to observe each child over five consecutive days. It was felt that this time unit was sufficiently long to understand the nature of the child's viewing and to insure that the behaviours observed were not staged for the researcher's benefit, thereby "obscuring valid identification of concepts and relationships" (Lull, 1990: 178).

It was necessary to establish rapport with both the parents and children before and during the observation period, to ensure the gathering of valid information. The privacy of the home and the small number of subjects involved in this research may have made the researcher's presence more conspicuous that in other settings. However, a researcher who is accepted into the family system can provide "camera-like views of the movements, conversations and interactions" (Lewis, 1959; cited in Lull, 1990: 178).

Lull (1990) describes three stages that occur when an ethnographer studies a family in their home environment, and these were followed in this study. First, relevant information is collected and recorded. Second, this information is expanded upon. The last stage entailed assessing the validity of the research findings.

The first stage occurred during the first couple of days of the observation. During this stage, the researcher recorded family histories (i.e., date of birth of the child, number of children in the family, and so forth), and descriptions of the physical environment where

the child viewed the programme. It was a good idea to note the physical aspects of the environment right away as their appearance is more striking to the researcher at first, rather than later when she became accustomed to her surroundings.

In the first day or two of observation, families began to reveal personal information with little or no stimulation on the part of the researcher. This helped to make the situation more relaxed and the researcher was able to join in the conversations before and after the observation period without specific reference to the objectives of the study.

During the second stage, the individual families' routines, behaviours during viewing of **You And Me**, and more detailed personal information was accessible to the researcher. The researcher felt that the interpersonal relationships between the family members that occurred were part of the normal routine.

In this second stage, Lull argues that the researcher must maintain rapport with the family while at the same time be the objective observer-reporter. This was particularly important as the children were interviewed after each episode. The interview questionnaires were directly related to the objectives of the programme **You And Me** (See Appendix 1 for details of the children's and parents' interview questionnaires). The questionnaire used was semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews follow a question schedule that covers all essential information, but are phrased in such a way to allow for individual answers. This gave the researcher the option to follow up on any of the answers stated to get the respondents to clarify the replies given. One of the reasons for using this method of interviewing is that the researcher was dealing with pre-school children, who although unable to read and write, were able to answer questions.

It must be recognised, however, that when an adult interviews a child, the relationship is not an equal one. Both enter "the interaction with well-developed knowledge of the norms and expectations tied to the social roles of adult and child and of what status relationships between these two roles ought to be like." (Hatch, 1990: 253). It was very important, therefore, to take time to establish a personal relationship with the child. This was done by visiting and getting to know the child before she/he was observed watching **You And Me**. Furthermore the interviewing took place in the secure surroundings of the child's home in which she/he would have felt more comfortable.

Another problem encountered when interviewing young children is their frequently held perception that there are "correct" answers to the questions asked. Hatch (1990) maintains that such a perception leads children not to reflect on and reveal their own perspectives but rather to play a kind of guessing game. Consequently the researcher tried hard not to reinforce the children's answers with evaluative terms like "Good", or "That's right". Edwards et al. (1983) state that young children talk much more fluently and honestly when the interviewer merely gives them total attention and replies, "Hum", or "I see". Children then grasp that the researcher is not looking for a particular correct answer.

Young children (from 2 to about 7) are at a stage of cognitive development described by Piaget (1968) as preoperational. There are several characteristics of preoperational thought which may limit children's ability to respond in the same way one might expect older informants to respond. This includes such characteristics as egocentrism (the inability to take another's point of view), complexive thinking (the stringing together of ideas that have no unifying concept), and decentering (the inability to consider more than one aspect of a situation at one time) (Hatch, 1990). Despite the criticisms directed at Piaget's view of egocentrism which suggest that children are considerably more competent than had previously been supposed (Donaldson, 1978; Smith, 1992b), it is very important to

phrase questions simply for this age group. Hatch (1990) has found that young children have real difficulties understanding or explaining the points of view of others while being interviewed. Therefore, in the questionnaire, the researcher avoided hypothetical questions and asked short, clear questions.

Complexive thinking, as noted above, is associated with preoperational thought. Young children in interactions with their peers can demonstrate complexive patterns of response. They can build on their own ideas or those of their friends in interesting, if not logical (in the adult sense), kinds of ways. It was important for the researcher to be aware of this phenomenon and to monitor its effects on interview data (Hatch, 1990).

The young child's inability to decenter (to attend to more than one attribute at a time) is a third cognitive characteristic that may influence one's data. "For many children, once a particular attribute is selected, it becomes difficult for them to attend at something else" (Hatch, 1990: 258-259). In light of this information, the researcher tried to go as slowly as possible during the interviews to provide children with the necessary time for reflection. It was helpful, too, to restate the children's responses in question form as this often encouraged them to elaborate.

The majority of the children's interviews were tape-recorded with a radio microphone and then transcribed in full for analysis. In the case of the youngest children, the tape recorder and microphone proved too inhibitory, and they were more forthcoming when their responses were noted in writing. Each daily viewing session and subsequent discussion with the child took approximately an hour.

According to Lull (1990) the third stage of data-gathering responsibilities, in ethnographic research, involves validity and reliability checks on specific observations. In the present

study, a check for validity occurred after the last observation period was completed. The parents were interviewed on the final day, following the child's interview, and this was recorded and transcribed. Lull (1990) states that these interviews are unlike other interviews in social research since by this time an unusual degree of rapport has been established between the researcher and the family. Parents were willing to comment at length about their feelings regarding the questions raised by the researcher. They were also happy to report their beliefs and opinions concerning their children's viewing habits in relation to **You And Me** as well as other programmes they watched.

One of the difficulties of using an ethnographic approach is the reliability of the observer's analysis. The selection of significant actions or comments has to be made by the researcher, hence what is seen as unimportant will not be recorded nor included in the final report. Wilson (1984) notes that reliability in science lies in the requirement that another researcher, following the same methods with the same group, will obtain the same results. However, ethnography is not a method in the "sense of fixed rules of procedure which can be written down and followed exactly by another observer" (Wilson, 1984: 31). The approach is much more elastic and flexible than the orthodox understanding of reliability. The aim is the investigation of "naturally occurring" behaviour, hence the researcher is necessarily unique in what she/he has chosen to record, and in the interpretation of her/his findings (Hammersley, 1990: 57). The replication of an ethnographic study done in order to check the researcher's findings is therefore extremely difficult. Wilson (1984: 31-32) argues "there are principles of good ethnographic method [...] but they are not as precise and hence open to inspection as perhaps those of other methods are". This approach to ethnography reflects that: "those who work within the naturalistic paradigm operate from a set of axioms that hold realities to be multiple and shifting, that take for granted a simultaneous mutual shaping of knower and known, and that see all inquiry, including the empirical, as being inevitably value-bound" (Ely et al., 1991: 2).

(d) Organization And Presentation Of Data

At the conclusion of the research period there were different forms of raw data. Written materials included the notes taken by the researcher during the observation period. (See Appendix 2: Observation Samples.) As well, there were written transcripts made from the tape recordings of the interviews done with both the children and their parents. (See Appendix 3: Interview Samples.) Using this information, the researcher organised and wrote a summary of the main findings.

As the amount of data was considerable, the researcher carefully reviewed it for themes to be explored in the analysis. The researcher then rearranged the bits of data into sub-headings and used samples of conversation, descriptions of behaviours observed, and interaction patterns to illustrate conceptual focal points. (See Appendix 4: Highlighted Extracts From Ani's Mother's Interview. These samples of conversation were used to support the main findings of the investigation. The process of selection was straightforward; these were representative of common responses to the semi-structured questionnaire.) Such information helped the researcher demonstrate the internal validity of the areas that were developed theoretically.

Ethical Concerns

Participation in this research was voluntary and those persons who agreed to participate had the right to withdraw if they wished. As this research involved pre-school children as subjects, consent was obtained from the parents. (See Appendix 5: Consent Form.) It must be noted, too, that caution was exercised when discussing the results of the research with parents, since evaluative statements may carry unintended weight.

The researcher did discuss with the parents and their children the main objective of the research and the results of the investigation. The data collected were treated as

confidential, the tapes were destroyed, and the names of the subjects will remain anonymous.

Summary

This programme case study falls under the umbrella term of qualitative research, drawing primarily upon family ethnography and approaches derived from observational studies. The type of observation undertaken was non-participant. A continuous recording procedure was used to detail all the activity and conversation that occurred during the viewing of **You And Me**. The children were interviewed after each episode, while the parents were interviewed on the final observation day. All interviews used a semi-structured questionnaire, and were tape-recorded and transcribed.

CHAPTER 4

YOU AND ME

This chapter discusses **You And Me** in terms of the initial development of the programme, its basic philosophy, and some of the programme's central features. The discussion includes background information, programme philosophy and aims, the role of the presenter, mode of address, how teaching and learning is promoted, language, ethnic implications, gender role socialisation, support for parents, and programme format.

(1) Background

You And Me was granted funding late in 1991, by New Zealand On Air: $6.1 million dollars over five years (Kirton, 1992a; 1992b). This allocation represented a very significant commitment to pre-school children's educational programming in New Zealand. **You And Me** was essentially the replacement programme for **Play School**, which was based on the British programme of the same name and was first televised in New Zealand in 1969. In 1988 Television New Zealand decided to stop making **Play School**, however, they continued to screen repeats of the programme until early 1994. The continued appearance of the programme was a "left-over from New Zealand television's previous role as a public broadcaster" (Lealand, 1992: 2). In early 1991, Television New Zealand stated its intention to devise a new early childhood educational programme to replace the long-running **Play School**, which was coming to the end of another repeat cycle.

The Children's and Young Person's Programmes Department of Television New Zealand, based in Christchurch, "initiated a project which was designed to 'assess the needs and viewing habits' of the likely clientele, to ensure that future work would be based on an

updated understanding of their requirements and preferences" (Lealand, 1992: 3). The project was headed by experienced children's television producer, Janine Morrell. New Zealand On Air supplied a grant of $108,000, which provided an extended period of programme development, consultation and research. In March 1991, Morrell, Dr. Geoff Lealand and Colleen Lockie submitted their proposal to New Zealand On Air. It consisted of several large reports: pilot scripts for the first week of a new children's programme called **Our House**; the consultation process, which included information gathering and curriculum; and an indepth explanation of the research phrase of the project (Lealand, 1992).

In September 1991, New Zealand On Air announced that the funding available for pre-school programming was granted to a rival proposal **You And Me**, a series to be produced by Kid's TV (KTV) for the the private broadcaster TV3. Kids TV managing director Rex Simpson, along with Julie Weatherall, children's author Trish Gibben, and ex-**Play School** presenter Pauline Cooper came up with the concept of **You And Me**. They decided that the programme would work along the serious/quality tradition of **Play School.** However, there would be some major differences: the programme would use a single presenter compared to the team/toys combination of **Play School**, and the set would be a "real home" instead of the "pretend world" of **Play School**. Furthermore, the programme would be self-consciously New Zealand based. Children would be filmed doing things in their community, for example, visiting maraes and bush; and Maori would flow seamlessly throughout the show's dialogue. Only one major early childhood programme could be accepted for funding, and New Zealand On Air preferred this vision of what a New Zealand child's reality could or should be (Huggett, 1992).

You And Me is aimed at the pre-school audience, in particular ages 2 to 5. Twenty-four minutes long, and commercial free, it screened twice a day in 1993 - at 8:30 in the morning

and 2:35 in the afternoons. When the programme first started broadcasting, in July 1992, it screened in the afternoon only. This effectively cut out viewing for children who attended an early childhood education programme during that time, unless, of course, the parent(s) taped the programme. Another problem was TV3's broadcast reach. In 1992 TV3 had approximately 86 per cent penetration of New Zealand households (Lealand, 1992; in addition, in late November 1992, TV3's broadcast reached the Gisborne area. In August 1993, some areas surrounding Wellington were able to tune into TV3 for the first time). Although TV3's management did plan to further extend broadcast reach, in the meantime some pre-school viewers had their viewing opportunities restricted by such budgetary decisions.

It is worth noting that **You And Me** faced the problem of weaning young viewers away from the repeats of **Play School**, which was familiar to them, on Channel 2. With TV3 having won the only major funding available for a local children's programme, Channel 2 was forced to continue with repeats of **Play School**. Of the twelve children observed for this research, only two watched **You And Me** regularly (Duncan and Gemma). Five of the children had not previously seen the programme (Ani, Cory, Emily, Hazel and Isabelle). The other five had seen the programme when it was first televised, but preferred **Play School** (Beth, Finn, Jade, Sean, and Molly). As Lealand (1992) points out, it is obviously easier for both parents and children to respond to the familiar, i.e., **Play School**.

(2) Programme Philosophy and Aims

The programme planning for **You And Me** is built up from the child-centred values that are the touchstone for the programme's decisions. Building programme content around defined values are seen as supporting and amplifying the experiences of children attending early childhood centres and helping those at home to enjoy similar experiences.

This represents a shift in emphasis from previous educational pre-school television's thematic and conceptual approach, for example "teaching" colours, shapes, numbers, letters, the days of the week, the different seasons, and isolated words in Maori. **You And Me** is based on values and "having a go" attitude instead of emphasising literacy or numeracy skills. By utilizing a rich language base in English and Maori, the producers hope to enhance the skills necessary for later progress in reading and mathematics.

You And Me, unlike **Play School**, is organized around multiple themes rather than a single theme. Each theme is approached in a variety of ways, through video clips, singing, stories, and finger plays. Although the programme does contain a similar range of sequences, these tend not to be linked by a common theme or idea. Instead, the aim of **You and Me** is to help a child grow with skills and understanding for everyday activities and relationships. Ideas such as colours and numbers are included in the programme as an integral part of the entertainment and experience, but they arise naturally in the rich language base used. The focus is a sense of belonging, respecting the natural world, loving one's self and others, not on ideas.

The following values were developed by a team working with the executive producer Rex Simpson. This checklist is for the writers/directors of the programme.

"**You And Me** aims:
*To be FUN!
*To include lots of humour, rhythm, songs and music.
*To be child-centred; to show a child's eye view of the world.
*To be highly interactive, actively involving the viewer as much as possible. Be aware of visual "hooks" that could be included: e.g. at the beach, looking for a particular kind of shell, starfish, or such like.
*To offer a rich language base.
*To include Maori spoken in natural, everyday settings.
*To reflect the multicultural nature of our society; to be culturally sensitive; to show differences in a positive way.
*To avoid sexist stereotypes.
*To give time for reflection and repetition.
*To include disabled children where possible in everyday scenes.

*To be safety conscious, i.e., don't show children near river or sea without an adult in sight; kids in the sun should have hats and/or faces with sun block; no balls on the footpath with kids chasing them; if a bath is being run, an older brother or sister or adult checking the hot water; no toddlers unattended in the bath.
*To help visually impaired children, remember that clear primary colours are picked up best by them, e.g. on clothes.
*To foster viewer attitudes of self confidence and "having a go"; not to present a "perfect" world.
*To show good "ordinary" parenting role modes.
*To value a child's input, whether with words, drawing, painting, "writing", helping, etc.
*To encourage creativity and fantasy from the commonplace.
*To be welcome and comfortable, celebrating the richness of everyday life.
Remember, children don't need to understand everything. They don't "learn" by formal teaching but by immersion, demonstration, expectation, being given a chance to try things, repetition, approximation and appreciation. We want **You And Me** to offer them visual and aural richness and stimulus. **Let's do the best we can for our kids**!"
(Weatherall, 1991).

(3) The Role of the Presenter

You and Me was initially presented by Pauline Cooper, a pakeha woman in her forties, with just enough grey in her hair to do a successful impression of a mother/aunt/adult friend figure. Pauline's face has a kindly lived-in look and her clothes suggest "at least a part-time earth mother" (Huggett, 1992: 58). She has six children of her own and she comes from a family of eight. Her main message is "blemishes are okay"; acceptance of our own and other's failings, and accepting good things as well as bad. "**Play School** was always smiley and good-times and happiness. I felt that it wasn't real. With this programme I want intimacy, not a huge fantasy. I think you can talk about very real things - things like being frightened or feeling unhappy - without actually frightening the kids or making them feel unhappy" (Cooper; cited in Huggett, 1992: 58).

This portrayal of a mother/adult friend figure is a departure from other presenters of NZ children's programmes, who tend toward the older brother or sister figure (On TVNZ there were young adult presenters, Jason Gunn and Fiona Anderson, to introduce **Play School** and **The Cartoon Company**, respectively).

You And Me is a 24-minute fiction that is not to be confused with or substituted for life out in the "real" world. Similarly, Pauline, Julie Weatherall states, is not a stand in for mum or dad (Weatherall; cited in Huggett, 1992). Yet, as Huggett (1992) argues, television is very good at canonising presenters and confusing fiction and reality. So while **You And Me** does not subject its viewers to any commercial pressures (the deal with NZ On Air specified that the programme is run without any advertisements), Huggett suggests that it will sell a presenter and a way of life that is unattainable for many of its viewers - a near perfect parent figure with a belief in the power of fun and respect for all cultures: a programme that encourages children to celebrate everyday life, regardless of the children's quality of life.

The producer of **You And Me,** Julie Weatherall, stated that one of the objectives of the programme was to eliminate the need for children to view with their parents. The show is aimed particularly at socially disadvantaged children and it is assumed that these parents do not co-view with their children. (This information was gained during a personal conversation with Julie Weatherall.) Pauline's role on the programme is to engage the viewing audience by "giving things a go", which would usually be the parent/caregiver's role.

(4) Mode Of Address

The producers have used established techniques that work well with young viewers such as the direct address used by Pauline. Speaking directly to the camera, she asks the viewers questions and waits to "hear" their replies. In this mode of address, the viewer is clearly expected to answer aloud, and is rewarded by Pauline for the correct response.

In the video clips, showing children doing activities, for example, playing "dress up", narration functions more as a form of commentary, providing a minimal degree of

explanation. Pauline usually introduces the clip, and if there is any talking this is done by the persons participating in it. Music accompanies the visuals when there is no talking. The videos tend to use older children, and they are used to introduce the viewer to the lives of children and adults. The children, if adults are present, are more likely to be shown helping the adults rather than merely following adults' instructions. This attempt to show the world through the eyes of children is reinforced by the fact that the camera is often positioned at the child's height rather than the adult's, and by the camera shots from the child's point of view. If there is any voice over, this is done by children.

(5) Language

One of the aims of **You And Me** is to offer its viewers a rich language base to enhance and extend their growing use and pleasure in words. The team behind the programme maintain that language is one of the fundamental sources of identity, independence, self-esteem and humour for the young viewers. These scriptwriters are experienced television workers and they are also qualified educators with decades of experience in early childhood education. (See Appendix 6: The Programme Developers.)

English is the main language of **You And Me,** with Maori woven seamlessly throughout each programme. The programme does not claim to "teach" Maori nor is it directed specifically at Maori-speaking children. **You And Me**'s aim is to build children's understanding and awareness of the Maori language. The producers feel that acknowledging and integrating Maori language and culture into every aspect of **You And Me** is to every child's advantage. Moreover, it can be used to reinforce correct pronunciation and assist in the acquiring of basic knowledge of the Maori language. **You And Me** can attune the viewers to "hear" spoken Maori so that they can become familiar with the sound and cadence of the language.

Early childhood care and education programmes throughout New Zealand are conducted in English, but introduce Maori words and phrases. An exception is Te Kohanga Reo where Maori is the only spoken language. The programme, **You And Me**, reflects this trend and hopes to expand that knowledge base through the Maori modules, use of songs, and the spoken words without translations or subtitles. It is assumed that this use of the language will create a positive and comfortable attitude toward Maori language and culture. Hineani Melbourne, consultant for **You And Me**, stated: "The sense we try to get across in **You And Me** is that Maori language and culture is good -- it's fun, it's exciting, let's explore and enjoy it together. Maori is beautiful. It is part of me, part of my world, come and join in and let's celebrate" (Weatherall, 1991). Nonetheless, there have been criticisms that there is too much Maori in the programme. Others maintain there is not enough, or that it was inappropriate (Huggett, 1992).

Pauline Cooper, the single presenter on the programme, uses Maori phrases and words with good pronunciation for a non-speaker of Maori. The people behind the programme have worked hard to ensure the standard of Maori is good, used mostly in phrases, and a natural part of the presentation (Weatherall, 1991).

Other languages, particularly those of the Pacific Islands, have been introduced in subsequent programmes. **You And Me** attempts to show these languages in their natural setting, for example, Samoan children singing or talking together in their home-based or language nest environment. This is part of language enrichment and gives a wider world view for the viewing audience.

The executive producer of **You And Me**, Rex Simpson, stated in 1991 that one of the reasons for the emphasis on Maori language and culture on the show was to

> expand the awareness of children and to make them aware of the rich cultural mix that makes up Aotearoa, New Zealand. There are two important aspects that have influenced the series. The first is the increasing number of Maori and Polynesian children. By the year 2010 it is estimated that two in five children will be Maori and this has implications to the type of programmes we serve up. The second aspect is the increasing reliance of low income families on television as the primary source of entertainment and information. Survey findings show that as New Zealand grows poorer, the importance of local children's television grows. We would be less than responsible if we failed to address the changing information and entertainment needs of children who are very vulnerable to the messages received from television and other visual media (New Zealand On Air, 1991: 1-2).

For Maori speaking children the use Maori in the programme provides a wide range of experiences, extends their language skills, and promotes positive role models.

On **You And Me**, Pauline uses a mixture of both languages on the word or sentence level. This switching from one language into another at the constituent or sentence boundary is called code switching. This refers to alternating between one language and another among bilinguals. It is a normal consequence of the natural contact of languages in multilingual societies (Dulay el al., 1982: 119). Dopke (1992) notes that code switching is often taken as evidence that one is <u>not</u> overburdened by the simultaneous acquisition of two languages. Dulay et al (1982: 114-115) state that code switching is an "active, creative process of incorporating material from both a bilingual's languages into communicative acts. It involves the rapid and momentary shifting from one language into another. This alternation may occur many times within a single conversation and is not uncommon within single sentences."

On the other hand, Dopke (1992: 55) argues that for a young child "strict separation of the two languages allows the child to process both languages separately. This is believed to be a prerequisite for the acquisition of two independent language systems." Similarly, Appel and Muysken (1987) maintain the children should separate their two languages not only formally, but also functionally. It is significant that most bilingual children generally

follow the one person-one language strategy. Accordingly, Appel and Muysken emphasize that the best way to foster sound bilingual development is to follow a one person - one language strategy as much as possible. This will ensure that children will have fewer problems in separating the two systems formally, and they will learn more easily which language is appropriate in which situation. In relation to this argument, there have been suggestions that Pauline should only speak English and the programme should introduce a permanent presenter whose role would be to speak Maori.

(6) Ethnic Implications

On **You And Me** there have been many video clips that show Maori or Pacific Island children, and their parents doing various activities. For example, on one programme a Maori family walk to a local park to feed bread to the ducks. Gorn, Goldbery, and Kanungo (1976) found such inserts, on the programme **Sesame Street**, portraying children from different ethnic backgrounds increased the willingness of pre-school children to play with such peers. This should also enhance Maori or Pacific Island children's acceptance of their own ethnicity. As **You And Me** is aimed at the socio-disadvantaged viewing audience this would be advantageous.

(7) Gender Role Socialisation

There are issues that must be raised regarding the possible impact to gender role socialisation. Pauline is a middle-aged mother who is married and stays at home. She lives in a comfortable suburban house instead of an inner city flat or rural home. Pauline is a homemaker, and she is supported by her partner, who is assumed to be a white collar, middle management employed man. The partner's salary supports a large family. Pauline talks about her "real" family consisting of six children. The ideas of family, home and homemaking are based on assumptions of middle class status. Luke (1990b: 32) states that since young children "tend to assign a strong reality factor to TV's verbal and visual

messages, they can develop a sense of inferiority about their home, family and lifestyle if they appear to them as not quite matching the screen utopia". Television, like the real world, does not adequately acknowledge the importance of homemaking and raising children. Pauline, like other women on TV who stay at home, has less status than other women's characters who have a career (Signorielli, 1993).

The combination of the above points has implications for **You And Me**. On one programme, by way of illustration, the plumber who came to fix Pauline's dripping tap, in her kitchen, was a male. One could argue this depicts "real" life. However, nontraditional portrayals on the programme, for example, female plumbers, would be a positive move as it is directed at children aged 2 to 5. As the literature suggests, conventional sex-role beliefs are more predominant at age four than age three (Comstock, 1991: 160; Durkin, 1985). Hence, nontraditional sex-role stereotypes need to depicted. The ironic thing is, of course, is that Pauline is an actor and does work!

(8) Support For Parents

The programme, although child-centred, aims to provide positive role models and support for parents inextricably threaded through every item (Children's Unit form TV3, 1991). The team behind **You And Me** trust parents watching the programme will gain an understanding of child development, learn about health issues, for example, immunisation, and provide ideas that encourage healthy attitudes such as eating well and exercising. They also want to give parents a sense of self-respect by emphasising the importance of their parenting role. The programme also hopes to give parents reassurance that their fears, worries, frustrations are shared by other parents (New Zealand On Air, 1991).

(9) Programme Format: An Outline

In over 200 episodes broadcasted by 1993, **You And Me** has established rituals such as the opening segment, and the personalized greeting and song from Pauline to make a personal connection with the viewer. The format of the programme is based on an understanding of children's experiences in early childhood centres, such as kindergarten, playcentre, and/or childcare. (The model for **Play School** was based, in particular, on a kindergarten model). The viewer comes to Pauline's home, is greeted, settles into an activity, starts to branch out, joins in groups, and has language and musical experiences. There are also standard props and features; these include a dresser with its drawers full of surprises, the puppets, a book corner for story time, the photo album, picture board on the wall, video clips showing the outside world, and special guests. Towards the end of the day (programme) the child is asked to reflect on what she/he has done, tidy up and go home. In summary, the general pattern is one that should be familiar to the majority of New Zealand children. A more detailed description is as follows:

1. Opening segment. The lively theme tune "You And Me" is sung while graphics of the puppets dressed in bright clothes, their house, the sun and a rainbow introduce the programme. Following this are video clips of young children having fun doing various activities in the indoor and outdoor environment. There is a clever mixture of real images with cartoon-like images and special effects, for example, a rainbow curving itself around people and things, birds pecking at children, squiggly lines coming out a boy's clapping hands to denote sound - all in eye-catching colours.

2. Greeting. The single female presenter of **You And Me**, Pauline Cooper, personally greets the viewer and sings "It's our Time". She then introduces the theme of the day, for example, a visitor on the programme, pets, a range of activities, and so on.

3. Choice of an activity. Pauline introduces an activity based on the value being explored. On one programme, for example, Pauline was discussing different facial expressions that the viewer could have on his/her face. She showed individual pictures which included a happy face, a sad face, and a surprised expression. She then asked the audience if they could make the facial expressions that she had shown. This provides a means for self expression which is also ideal for follow-up by the parents.

4. Another activity which may or may not be related to the first one such as songs, rhythm, or musical activities. This usually includes physical activity in which the child is invited to join in by Pauline. The emphasis is on "giving things a go". These activities are important in that they provide for the emotional release of the child, as well as an appreciation and enjoyment of music and movement. Also included in this is the creative response of the child and his/her movement to music.

5. Participation in group activities like songs, morning talks or morning tea, or a "journey" or adventure. This is usually done through a video clip as a way into the outside world. Older children often appear in video clips of activities such as singing and dancing. The producer of the programme, Julie Weatherall, suggested that "seeing older children as role models was quite a good compromise" (Meadowcroft, 1993: 50). (This was in response to criticism of why more young children did not appear on the programme. Weatherall stated, "Children do like seeing other children on television but the problem is that television production can be very stressful for young children. As we are making television for children, I'm reluctant to put some of them through a gruelling experience to do it!" (Weatherall; cited in Meadowcroft, 1993: 50).

6. Puppets. The puppet segments (two during the programme) are there to provide breaks in the show between perhaps an activity and the story section of the programme. They also

provide a break from Pauline. These somewhat moral segments show the puppets working together to solve their own problems. The puppets consist of an extended family: mother, father, brother, sister, baby and nana.

7. Further activities that may involve more structured risk taking, or additional strenuous physical exertion, as the viewer is now secure in the environment. Pauline frequently asks the children if they would like to join in: "Are you waving?" "Would you like to jump with me?" The emphasis is on "giving things a go".

8. A quiet time to calm down physically and mentally. This is the time for imagination and daydreaming through a story. The story is important for the children's extension of their vocabulary and for the enjoyment of rich, rhythmic word patterns.

9. A selection of an activity that reinforces or spins off from something in the story.

10. A favourite or familiar activity before the end of the programme. This could be related to songs and music making.

11. Pauline's tidy-up time. She reviews or sums up the day by recounting experiences or repeating something new to help reinforce the theme for the day.

12. Pauline tells the viewers the she is looking forward to "seeing" them the next day. She gives a personal good-bye with praise and thanks for joining in. To finish she sings the "Good-bye song".

Summary

You And Me is an interactive, bicultural educational programme that reflects the experiences of New Zealand children and their families. It is the first series for this age group initiated and developed in New Zealand. Pauline is the lone presenter and her role is to encourage the viewing audience to "give things a go". Pauline directly addresses the viewing audience to introduce a wide range of experiences and people. The format allows for rituals and repetition, as well as changes of pace and flexibility. Language, interactions and activities are aimed to provide extension for the two to three-year -old child, and enrichment for the four to five -year-old. The programme is multilevel and provides opportunities for children at differing levels of cognitive development, to enjoy, react and learn from differing segments of **You And Me**. It also aims to offer parents support and ideas for enjoying everyday activities with their young children.

Postscript

This study and the above comments apply to the programmes that were aired in 1992-1993. There have been changes since. After presenting **You And Me** for over a year, Pauline Cooper resigned in 1993 to take up a new job. She was appointed national co-ordinator for the Plunket Society's Parents as First Teachers pilot programme. Suzy Cato was hired as her replacement (September, 1993). There have also been changes in producers. Mary Phillips replaced Julie Weatherall, and in 1995 Lorraine Issacs took over that position.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS: REGULATION AND CO-VIEWING

This chapter provides a detailed account of the children who participated in this study, and their domestic setting. There are two major emphases: the parent(s) regulation of the child's TV viewing, and the nature of co-viewing, the interaction between the child viewer(s) and their parents and siblings. Also considered are the parents' view of **You and Me,** especially in comparison to the more familiar **Play School**. These individual child studies give a richer picture of the variables affecting each child's reaction/behaviour to the programme, which is considered in Chapter 6. This consideration led to the inclusion of this material here, rather than relegating it to an appendix (as is usually the case).

(1) Beth

The first child studied, Beth, was a 4 year, 4 month old Pakeha female. She was an only child and her father worked full-time and her mother part-time. They lived in their own home in an ex-state housing area. The child attended a private kindergarten three mornings a week. Beth was an articulate, outgoing child, with a well-developed vocabulary, who was tall for her age and energetic. The researcher was known to Beth so she was comfortable conversing with her.

Beth had watched **You And Me** previously. When it first screened in July 1992 she viewed a few programmes. However Beth still preferred **Play School** and she watched it rather than **You And Me**, which was on at the same time.

Beth's family owned two televisions; one was situated in the family lounge and the other was in the parents' bedroom. There was a video recorder attached to the TV in the lounge. Beth watched **You And Me** in the family lounge, which was a very long, sunny room. The room was divided into two areas. One section was a play area for Beth while the television was located in the other half. The furniture was arranged so that the television set dominated the family lounge. The literature suggests that children like to sit close to the TV screen. Beth had a special rocking chair in which she sat to view the TV. This was placed relatively close to the front of the television; it was then moved against the wall when she was finished.

As noted in the literature review, parental responses to their children's TV viewing fall broadly into four groups, related to different family structures and the social dynamics therein. Beth's family fits into the fourth category: those parents who act as censors, checking out the programmes their children want to see, and who may also view and discuss programmes with them (Gunter and McAleer, 1990). When the researcher asked Beth's mother how often she watched TV with her child, she replied:

> Well, I don't always watch it with her, like if she is watching **Play School** or something like that. But if it is something I haven't watched before, I'll watch it and if I know it's good well then I can leave her to watch it. But if it is something that she wants to watch that I haven't seen before then I will sit and watch it and see what it's like.

In relation to the regulation of children's viewing habits, it must be noted that an individual's family's involvement in institutions outside the home, particularly school and work, is a potentially important influence on children's television use. Parents' employment and children's day-care and school experiences, for example, determine the scheduling and amount of time that is spend at home. As most television viewing occurs

in the home, these features of people's lives may affect when and how often television is used (Pinon, Huston, and Wright, 1989). In Beth's case, her mother stated:

> She watches morning TV sometimes, but not very often. I don't let her. Sort of, I regulate it to the afternoon because of like in the mornings, you know, like if they are just going to sit there glued to it while they are eating breakfast. I don't like that as you can never get anything done with them. They are too busy.

Beth also attended pre-school three mornings a week, and her mother worked on Mondays so this would influence the times that she was available to watch TV in the home.

Children often watch television with parents and siblings; consequently the age and preferences of those individuals are likely to affect the programmes that are chosen. Older members of a family, including older children, exercise more power over the selection of programmes than younger children (Lull, 1990). When Beth's mother was asked if she would encourage her daughter to watch **You And Me,** she replied:

A. (Answer) "Well, seems as how you mentioned it, this week I did. Well I sort of did when it came on but, um, sort of sometimes, we, um. Oh there is a question later on about that anyway."
Q. (Question) "Keep going, it's alright we can do it later."
A. "Yeah, she tends to still prefer **Play School**. She is very big on **Play School** and that screens at 2:30 at the same time."
Q. "That's right."
A. "So she quite often prefers to watch **Play School** and she will say to me if she thinks of it she will say, oh can we tape **You And Me**, you know, and she will watch that because she really likes that. She likes both of them but she likes **Play School** best."
Q. "Which one do you prefer?"
A. "Well, I quite like **Play School**." (Laughed)

Parental encouragement to view certain programmes is important. Pinon, Huston, and Wright (1989) found that this was the only family characteristic associated with high viewing in regard to the educational programme **Sesame Street**.

It was also inevitable that parents would make a comparison between **You And Me** and **Play School** during the parent interviews. **Play School** was familiar to both parents and children. It is also important to note that many of the parents themselves watched **Play School** when they were children. For example, Beth's mother said:

> Um. I like the toys in **Play School**. You know, they have the toys sort of there every day. They do things with the toys and dressing up with the toys and playing with the toys. And they sort of incorporate them into different themes as well and it sort of just. I don't know, I think it encourages her to sort of pretend, sort of play. [On **You And Me**] this is Pauline's house and really you say hello to Pauline sort of thing. You know, it's good but I like, I like the toys.

Beth enjoyed watching **You And Me** but it was obvious that her mother preferred **Play School**.

(2) Ani

The second child, Ani, was a Maori female, 4 years, 11 months old. She was the youngest of four children and her mother was widowed. Her mother worked part-time. Ani attended a private pre-school five mornings a week. The family lived in their own home, a large four bedroom house, on a street where all the homes were privately owned and well looked after.

Ani was a gregarious child who was small for her age. The researcher knew Ani before undertaking this study. Consequently Ani was happy to engage verbally with the researcher. This was illustrated during the first observation on September 15, 1992:

Ani's mother was working so her caregiver picked her up from pre-school and brought her home. As soon as they got in the door Ani turned on the TV. (The caregiver, who was known to the researcher, did not watch the programme with Ani. Instead she started to do the housework). First, Ani sat on the couch beside her cat. She then chased the cat into the kitchen, came back and sat on the big couch. She began to watch the programme at 2:37. Ani then came and sat near the researcher on the couch. She told the researcher, "This such a big chair. It's mine and mommy's." On **You And Me**, Pauline says, "I got a parcel in the mail". Ani turned her attention to the programme and replied, "A parcel". She then asked the researcher, "Let's play pass the parcel". The researcher answered, "I can't as I have to write this". Ani responded, "I will play it anyway". She got off the couch, went to her small table, pulled it into another position and then once again focused her attention on the TV programme. She sat on her knees, by her table, in front of the TV screen.

The television in Ani's house was situated in the family lounge. The family owned one television set and they had a video recorder. The television, placed against one of the walls, dominated the family lounge. The furniture was arranged to face it so to provide the best line of sight to the television set.

Ani's mother used the rationing approach in response to her children's TV viewing, the basis of most attempts to regulate children's TV viewing. This entails allowing certain viewing times, for example one to two hours per weekday, with an increase on the weekend. The following discussion illustrated this:

Q. (Question) "Generally, what other programmes do your children watch?"
A. (Answer) "That's a good one." (Laughed) "Umm...The after school ones. Some of them."
Q. "Right."
A. "Do I have to specify them?"
Q. "No you don't."
A. "Friday night is our TV night as a family. **Dinosaurs, The Wonder Years**, and **Quantum Leap, The Simpsons.** What else do you watch Sarah?" (Asked her eldest

daughter who is standing nearby, preparing a snack. She answered, "**Three PM. The Bugs Bunny Show, Tiny Toots.** Ani loves **Tiny Toots.**")

Q. "So lots of different programmes."

When the researcher asked Ani's mother how often she watched TV with her children she replied, "Once a week we watch those Friday night schedules". In reply to the question did she regulate her children's viewing habits, she stated:

> Yes, I will check stuff. I might not watch it but I will have a glance at it and see what it is they are watching. If it is something I don't like, I have been told that **Transformers** is back on....So we will see what the content of it's like. I have not done that yet, it is only come back on. But I banned it last time. It was too violent.

This focus on regulation is consistent with St. Peters et al. (1991) findings that parent control is usually conceptualized as regulation or prohibition. However, parents may also encourage and guide television use. They found that parents who encourage viewing particular programmes at particular times are not simply pro-television; instead, they maintain, these parents appear to be thoughtful and careful about their children's viewing. These parents usually encourage child-appropriate viewing that may be beneficial and they co-view general audience programmes with their children more frequently than parents who do not encourage television viewing.

When the researcher asked Ani's mother if she would encourage her daughter to watch **You And Me**, she answered, "Not while **Play School's** on." She went on to say, "I think if it didn't clash with **Play School**, yes. But while it is clashing, no. I don't know. I would like to see more of them [**You And Me**]."

Q. (Question) "You have got a video. Would you ever video it?"

A. (Answer) "Yes, probably."

Q. "So that would be the way to get around it."

A. "Yeah. But it needs more New Zealand content."
Q. "That's what it is supposed to be, a New Zealand programme."
A. "I did not see much New Zealand culture content. You know, like the choices of the songs."

St. Peters et al. (1991) also found that programme content was the most frequent reason for both encouragement and restriction, even for pre-school children. They argue that parents are more apt to encourage viewing because they see positive value in the content rather than the time of day the programme is scheduled. Furthermore, they are more likely to prohibit viewing on the basis of the content than to put time restrictions on children. Parents were found to value educational shows and specials prepared for children. This was evident from the parent interview with Ani's mother.

A. (Answer) "I think the wild life programmes are really good."
Q. (Question) "They are excellent, aren't they?"
A. "Yeah."
Q. "Would you call that educational? That's really my next question."
A. "Yeah, I like the educational stuff, the wild life. I used to watch a lot of documentaries but I haven't had much time lately."
Q. "That's what it is time, isn't it?"
A. "I liked watching them very much. I encourage the kids to watch the wild life programmes. They usually enjoy them. Those sorts of things."

When asked what would Ani's mother like **You And Me** to do for her child she replied:

> I think, you know, exposure to experiences that the children aren't going to get that are city based. Well, if they are farm based children, the city experiences they will only get occasionally. Umm, farm based experiences for the city children, the rural things. These experiences can be brought into their homes. And, okay, it is second hand but it broadens their world and knowledge of the world....And I miss the dates and things like that **Play School** does. I remember the day of the week and things like that which establish patterns. Because that is all used right through the Infant rooms [at school] and the kids have got that exposure from TV. That's an activity they do in the mornings at new entrants.

As already suggested, **You And Me** faced the problem when it first screened of weaning viewers away from repeats of **Play School**, which was familiar to them, on Channel 2. Another problem was to make the programme appealing to the parents as well as the children, as it is usually the parents who decide for children of this age group what they will watch on the TV (St.Peters et al., 1991).

(3) Cory

The third subject, Cory, was a 3 year, 4 month old Pakeha male. His mother was a single parent and she worked part-time from home. He was the youngest of two children. They owned a small three bedroom house in an ex-state housing subdivision. Cory attended the local kindergarten's afternoon introductory programme.

Cory was not known to the researcher beforehand, so he tended to be reasonably quiet at the beginning of the observation period. As the week progressed, however, Cory's sunny disposition emerged and he became more verbal. The researcher visited the family prior to starting the observation to become acquainted with Cory and his mother. This proved to be helpful in aiding Cory to be more comfortable with a stranger in his house.

Cory's family owned one television set and this was situated in the family lounge. All the furniture in the relatively small room was arranged facing the TV screen. The room was quite crowded. The family did not own a video recorder although they were hoping to purchase one in the near future.

Cory had not seen **You And Me** previously. During the first observation, September 21, 1992, this was commented on. Cory sat on the floor, in front of the TV screen, colouring in his book. When the programme began, he continued to colour while watching it.

M (Mum) "Put your colouring away and sit up and watch the programme." (Mum sat in her comfortable chair which directly faced the TV screen. She kept herself busy knitting while watching **You And Me**.)
C (Cory) "I've seen this before."
M. "No, you haven't."
C. "You're right, I've not seen this before."

Cory's mother regulated her children's TV viewing. She censored the programmes that her children watched; she viewed and discussed the programmes with them.

A. (Answer) "I watch TV with him whenever I happen to be sitting here and the TV happens to be on."
Q. (Question) "Fair enough. Now I happen to notice that you just turned **Sesame Street** off. Are there any other programmes that you don't allow him to watch?"
A. "Not really. There are certain times when I don't have the TV on and there is not really much you can't watch during the daytime. But I try to make sure that he doesn't watch too much."

Cory's mother was present during the entire observation period and she constantly interacted with her child, discussing what was occurring on the programme. The following dialogue illustrates this:

After the first puppet segment, on September 24, 1992, Pauline stated that she was going to pretend to be different modes of transportation. She asked the audience to guess what she was pretending to be. First Pauline pretended to be a train.
M. (Mum) "Oh, that's a hard one."
C. (Cory) "It's a train." (Pauline then made the noise of a plane and zoomed around her lounge.)
C. "A plane."
M. "Are you sure it's not a helicopter?"
C. "Yeah." (Next Pauline pretended to be driving a car.)

C. "She is on a car bus." (Cory directed this statement to the researcher and she answered, "That's right". After asking the audience if they guessed correctly, Pauline pretended to be riding a horse.)

M. "I think she is riding a car."

C. "No she's not."

M. "What is she riding on then?"

C. "A horse. She is riding on a horse." (Following this, Pauline rode on a bike.)

C. "She is riding a bike." (During this segment, Cory leaned on his special chair that he watched TV from. It was situated next to the television set. The TV was placed against a corner wall and the chair was beside it against the other wall. Cory tilted it so that he had better access to the TV screen. His mother asked him not to tilt the chair. Cory responded to this request, sat on the floor by his chair and focused his attention on the TV. This segment of the programme finished and Pauline began to sing a song. Cory was not familiar with the song so he was not as attentive to the TV screen. He turned around and told the researcher that he had watched **Play School** already. When Pauline finished singing, there was a video clip which showed a person going on a train ride.)

C. "A plane in the sky." (He said this to his mother when a plane flew over their house. His attention was redirected to the TV.)

M. "Yeah."

C. "That's a train."

M. "Have you been on a train before?"

C. "Yes."

M. "What kind of a train?"

C. "A steam train. They are singing a song about that train." (On the video clip music accompanied the visuals. Cory got up, made noises like a train and went from the lounge to his bedroom and back again.)

C. "That was a yellow-red train."

M. "Are we going on another train ride?"

C. "Yes, a red train."

M. "What are they in?" (The train went into a tunnel.)

C. "A track."

M. "Why is it all dark?"

C. "It's a tunnel." (When Pauline returned to the screen, she was sitting on her couch. She commented on the video clip and then pretended to be in a train by bouncing up and down.)

C. "This train didn't bounce."

Messaris (1986) argues that if parents view television with their children they can likely increase its educational impact. He maintains that parental involvement in viewing provides not only information but teaches the child to use television as springboard for mastery of new areas of knowledge. In other words, it rewards a child's intellectual curiosity and is related to using television as a source of information. Anderson and Collins (1988: 69) report, however, "at this time there is little evidence that parent-child co-viewing modifies the cognitive effects of television beyond facilitating online comprehension". They noted that a fair percentage of co-viewing occurs, but they state that there is no solid evidence beyond very early childhood, (see, for example, Lemish and Rice, 1986), that parent-child co-viewing is extensively used for productive cognitive interrelations between the two. This research on **You And Me** yielded many examples of parent-child interactions which would suggest that parents are aware of the importance of such interactions in relation to their children's cognitive abilities to comprehend the material that is presented to them.

Each day after viewing **You And Me**, Cory was asked what he liked about the programme. His reply was always the same, "I liked all of it". When the researcher asked about specific aspects of the programme, for example, did he like the puppets, Cory answered, "Yes. Like I said last year, I loved it all". (When Cory said "last year" he meant yesterday.) He appeared to enjoy watching **You And Me** and this was backed up by his positive comments when interviewed. However, his mother did not like the programme and she said that she would not encourage Cory to watch it. She stated, "It tells you lots of things but it really doesn't teach anything". Moreover, she would like it to be changed "so it would be like **Play School**". She felt the programme needed to "bring in more people, change the set, change the activities, everything".

(4) Duncan

The fourth participant, Duncan, was a 4 year, 4 month old Pakeha male. His father worked full-time while his mother worked part-time from home for the family business. They owned an old "character" house, which they had nearly finished doing up, in a semi-industrial street. He was the middle child in his family, with an older brother and a younger sister. He had just started morning Kindergarten, attending five days a week.

Duncan was a thoughtful, relatively quiet child who was of average height. The researcher did not know Duncan prior to doing the research so she visited with him and his family the week before starting the observation. Duncan's mother was known to the researcher beforehand so this seemed to make Duncan at ease more quickly.

Duncan was a regular viewer of **You And Me**. When the researcher asked his mother if she encouraged Duncan to watch the programme, she replied:

A. (Answer) "I normally give him the choice. You know, I say to him, "**Play School** is on, **You And Me** is on". He will say that he wants to watch **You And Me**. So he will sit there but he never stays and watches the whole thing. He will watch the opening, um..."
Q. (Question) "But if he was watching **Play School**, would he sit and watch the whole programme?"
A. "He would. He would sit and watch **Play School**, the whole thing....Like I encourage him to watch. Like I will say to him **You And Me** is going to be on soon. He'll watch the opening of it but that's sort of, that's it. Probably if I sat with him that would make a difference. Like perhaps if I did. Like if I am encouraging him to watch it, then I should be participating in it too. Just to try and get him to watch just a bit more. But no, I just really let it be his choice, really, so as to what he wants to watch."

As pointed out earlier, an individual's family's involvement in institutions outside the home has an influence on a child's television use. In Duncan's case, one probable reason

for intermittently viewing the programme was that he went with his mother and sister at 2:50 to pick up his older brother at school. **You And Me** finished at 3:00. During the observation week, Duncan was quite happy to stay with the researcher to watch the end of the programme while his mother picked up his older sibling.

Duncan's family owned one television. This was located in the family room which was situated between the kitchen and the formal lounge. It was a fairly small room which was bright and attractive. The large television was placed in one corner so it could be seen from both the kitchen and the main hallway. In the room there was one couch that faced the television set and another chair which did not. Duncan preferred to sit on the carpet close to the TV while viewing.

Duncan's family regulated his viewing habits. They used the rationing approach, where they allowed a certain viewing time, approximately two hours per weekday, with an increase on the weekends. When asked what other programmes her children watched, Duncan's mother stated:

> The TV sort of goes on like when Greg [Duncan's brother] gets home from school. Um, they watch **Play School**, they watch the programme **Dinky Dives**, which is on like something like half past four. And then we watch the **Bugs Bunny Show**....Night time they do not watch anything. We turn the TV off. Once the **Bugs Bunny Show** is finished, we turn the TV off and they sort of don't watch anything after that. Saturday morning, they watch, yeah, **What Now** but that's only like as they are going in and out of the house and that's not like they are sitting and watching the whole thing. And probably cartoons. There are a few cartoons on on Saturday morning, too. Sunday, the TV rarely goes on.

In her dissertation research, Field (1987; cited in Anderson and Collins, 1988) analysed reported co-viewing in the home observation research done by Anderson et al. (1985). She examined co-viewing of **Sesame Street**, a programme whose producers especially

urged that parents watch with their children. Her findings indicated that there was significantly less parent-child co-viewing for **Sesame Street** than for general television viewing. Field did not analyze co-viewing other children's programmes. She found that while watching **Sesame Street**, the 5 year olds watched by themselves 18 percent of the time, co-viewed with their mothers 14 percent of the time, and with their fathers 4 percent.

Anderson and Collins (1988) imply that these finding indicate parents do not make any special effort to co-view with their children, and, in fact, they are less likely to co-view during the educational programme, **Sesame Street**, despite being urged to do so. One plausible interpretation of these findings is that parents sometimes use the television set as a means to keep their child occupied while they engage in other activities. Lemish and Rice's (1986) research on mother-toddler interactions while they watched **Sesame Street**, supports this interpretation. They observed that while the mothers did not often spend long periods of time in the television room, they did enter and leave frequently, but in doing so they interjected comments that focused their child's attention on the television set or explained the content of the programme. Duncan's mother was constantly interacting with him as she entered and exited the room, as the following example shows:

On the second day of observation, September 30, 1992, Duncan was sitting on the kitchen floor making a teddy bear scuba diver when the researcher arrived. The TV was on and he could see it from where he sat. He continued making the bear when the programme started. Duncan kept glancing over at the TV screen while he worked, cutting sticky tape. He did not interact verbally or physically with the programme. Duncan's mother had gone into his baby sister's bedroom as she awoke when **You And Me** began. His mother brought Ruby into the TV room to change her. Duncan was making flippers for his bear when the puppet segment came on.

M. (Mum) "Who's that man Duncan?"

D. (Duncan) "That's a girl. One's her mum, one's her sister." (His mother left the room to get an article of clothing for Ruby.)

While Duncan watched the programme, his mother was busy looking after his baby sister, and doing other household chores. It may be the case, therefore, that the potential effectiveness of co-viewing need not be a linear function of time spent together in the family television room (Anderson and Collins, 1988). It is also not clear whether parents are more likely to interact with their children during the screening of educational programmes such as **Sesame Street** or **You And Me**, rather than children's commercial productions. (This is an area that needs further research, but is beyond the scope of the study.)

When Duncan's mother was asked what she thought of the programme, like other parents, she made a comparison between **You And Me** and **Play School**.

A. (Answer) "Okay, I find it (pause) probably I compare it a lot with other programmes. Probably because Pauline is on the repeats of **Play School**. Um, I think that the opening of it is really good. That always seems to captivate it. It is a lovely welcome, a nice welcome. It is the same song each day. It's interesting stuff and it holds Duncan's interest.....I just sort of think that it doesn't hold the children's interest the same way through or the whole way through it."
Q. (Question) "Why not?"
A. "....There's only the interaction between like, I was thinking this the other day, between Pauline and Duncan or Pauline and the children. There's nothing else that is really coming through....the songs are quite awkward for them to learn. And, I think I keep comparing it back to **Play School**. I know I shouldn't do but I still think that they have lots of things for the children to do. It seems quite older for the children [referring to **You And Me**], the programme runs on a lot older lines. And that is just one of the things. I like it, as I said the songs, and the actual concept of it is really good but it's just the, it just seems to be aimed I feel at older children because it definitely doesn't hold Duncan's interest for the whole time, anyway like the stories. One thing I have found the other day when Pauline was reading the story, she had the book down here (pointed to her lap)."
Q. "Umm."
A. "And..."

Q. "At your waist level?"

A. "At here." (Pointed again to her lap.) "And she was more or less talking the story to the child. There were no pictures to hold their interest. So that was one thing I really noticed. The songs were another thing. The welcoming song is really neat because they got to know it but there is no sort of other repetition. There's no, like things, like making things whereas Duncan is really into making things. They really don't do that very often. Those sort of crafty things or no children's art work. You are not really seeing anything like that. That's something I have not really thought about. Duncan is right into crafty things so he is always watching, like on TV if something is being made he will want to do it afterwards or want to try doing himself. So that's another thing."

During the interview, when questioned if she thought Duncan learnt from the programme, his mother answered, "I wouldn't say he is learning a lot from it for the moment because he is not really watching it the whole way through". However as the interview progressed and she was asked if she thought TV could be educational, she answered:

> I think there's lots of programmes that are educational like **Sesame Street**. Although **Sesame Street** has stopped now but the children really loved that. Um, **Play School** of course. I keep coming back to **You And Me**, like when I said that I didn't think that it was educational, but, or when I said Duncan didn't learn much from it, Duncan must be getting benefits out of it to actually sit and watch it. You know, he sits there and enjoys it when he is watching it so he must be gaining something out of it or otherwise he wouldn't sit there and watch the beginning of it, would he?

Despite this discussion, Duncan's mother stated that she would not video **You And Me**. It was obvious that she preferred **Play School**. However, she let Duncan decide which pre-school programme he wanted to see. This was because she did not often co-view with Duncan.

(5) Emily

The fifth child, Emily, was a 2 year, 11 month old Pakeha female. Her father worked full-time and her mother part-time. The family owned their own home in a tree lined, attractive

street. Emily was the youngest of three children. Her sister Alison was six years old and her brother George was eight. She attended a local Playcentre three mornings a week.

Emily had an engaging personality which emerged gradually during the observation week. She was a little taller than average with well developed physical skills. The researcher knew Emily's mother but she had only briefly met her daughter a couple of times. The researcher had to make herself known to Emily before commencing the observation.

When the researcher approached Emily's mother about using her daughter in this study, she replied that they had not seen **You And Me** before, since Emily usually watched **Play School**. They watched it twice before the observation period began. In the parent interview, Emily's mother stated, "I still really like **Play School.** It's still our favourite". However she went on to say, "She chooses. I think after watching **You And Me** for a week, she might even choose **You And Me** but she really didn't know it before".

Emily's family had one television and it was located in their family kitchen/dining/lounge area. It was a small TV that was placed along one wall. The TV could be viewed from the work area in the kitchen. Some of the furniture in the large room was arranged so that it faced the TV screen, however the television did not dominate the room.

Emily's parents regulated her viewing habits. Although Emily was beginning to be allowed to turn the television on and off, her parents acted as censors, checking out the programmes their children wanted to see, and they also viewed and discussed the programmes with them. As noted, Emily's mother watched **You And Me** before the observation began so that she could check out the programme. When the researcher asked how often she watched TV with Emily, she stated:

A. (Answer) "Whenever I can."
Q. (Question) "Okay, that's good." (It must be noted that the researcher's tone of voice was not indicating agreement but merely encouraging Emily's mother's continued dialogue.)
A. "Because it's in the kitchen and I can be still working in the kitchen like you saw me doing."
Q. "Right."
A. "That's normal. I would always be working with her. I don't like going out and just leaving her blobbed in front of the TV....I don't like her watching more than half an hour at a time."

Emily had an afternoon nap every other day. On nap days, her mother video taped the programme and it was viewed an hour later at 3:30. By this time, Emily's older brother, George, and sister, Alison, were home from school and they watched the programme with her.

When children view programmes with their older siblings, they serve as models for their younger brothers and sisters (Dunn, 1983). Furthermore, younger children may imitate the programme preferences of their older brothers and sisters even when the older siblings are not present. Co-viewing with older siblings, too, can promote the elaboration of programme elements, presenting the opportunity for comprehension and learning (Alexander, Ryan, & Munoz, 1984; cited in Pinon, Huston, and Wright, 1989). On the second day of Emily's observation, October 7, 1992, her siblings viewed the programme with her. When their mother put in the video tape, George saw that the programme was **You And Me**.

George (G) "**You And Me**. Cool."
Emily (E) "It's **You And Me**." (Emily sat cross legged in front of the television with her sister, Alison. They had afternoon tea while viewing the programme. After the opening song, Pauline asked the audience if they knew anything about dinosaurs. George replied, "Yes". Pauline showed a Diplodocus and stated, "This is a Diplodocus. Can you

say that?" Both George and Alison replied, "Diplodocus". Next Pauline showed a Stegasaurus. "This is a Stegasaurus". This time Emily stated, "Stegasaurus".) Although this was only the second day of observation, Emily was more vocal in the presence of her siblings than she had been the previous day with just her mother to interact with.

Emily's mother during the interview, like the other parents, made comparisons between **You And Me** and **Play School**. She made the point that imagination was encouraged on the programme, for example, by not showing pictures during story time. She went on to state:

> Her [Pauline] interjection is really good sometimes, but occasionally put something else in. I wonder about the use of those puppets. And I asked Emily about them and she said, "What puppets?" So she obviously doesn't even look. (Laughed) Um, I know that gives Pauline a break perhaps from being on the screen all the time but it would be nice to see someone else come and knock on her door and visit or something....I don't mind the Maori language coming in. But **Play School** had that too, so they were getting quite familiar with that.

During the observation period, Emily's mother viewed all the programmes with her. Although her attention was not totally focused on the TV screen, she constantly commented on what was happening. Sometimes she reinforced the questions that Pauline asked or she encouraged Emily to "give things a go". Singer and Singer (1984: 11) argue that "parents who set rules about television-viewing, who pre-screen programmes from newspaper guides or discuss and restrict viewing may indeed be establishing an atmosphere that leads the child towards more critical viewing". They concluded that "parents and educators must increasingly recognise that an important feature of child-rearing requires careful attention to the role of the television set in the child's daily life".

(6) Finn

Finn was a 3 year, 2 month old Pakeha male. The family lived in a house that they had built in a new subdivision. He had a younger brother who was 6 months old. His father

worked full-time while his mother stayed at home. Finn attended a private pre-school three mornings a week.

Finn was a friendly, happy child, of average height, who was at ease conversing with the researcher although he had not met her previously. His vocabulary was extensive for his age and he had a lot of self confidence. Finn was a handsome child and this may have contributed towards him being so assured for his age.

Finn's family owned two televisions; one was located in the parents' bedroom and the other was in the family lounge. There was a video recorder attached to the TV in the lounge. The lounge was a large sunny room and the furniture was arranged so that the television set was a dominant part of the arrangement.

Finn watched **You And Me** from a two seater couch that was placed directly in front of the TV screen. While watching the programme, Finn held his blanket, which he called "cuddly", and he occasionally sucked his thumb. He was talkative throughout the observation period, commenting on what was happening on the programme and sometimes relating this to events that had occurred to him. The following conversation, during the first observation on October 19, 1992, illustrates this. Finn had seen **You And Me** before but was a regular viewer of **Play School**.

F. (Finn) "I know what this is. It's on. It's on Mum." (Finn was on the couch, with his cuddly, and the researcher sat beside him. The programme just started. The images that engaged Finn's attention at this beginning stage were clearly the graphics. This included puppets which were dressed in bright clothes, their house, the sun, a rainbow and the lively theme tune. Following this were real children having fun with a clever mixture of real images with cartoon-like images and special effects, for example, a rainbow curved itself around people and animals, birds pecked at children, squiggly lines came out of a boy's clapping hands to denote sound - all in eye-catching colours.)

M. (Mum) "Good." (Finn's mother was in the adjacent room, cutting out material for a quilt. She asked the researcher if it was okay not to watch the programme with Finn.)
F. "I seen a girl going down a slide at pre-school. Do you know what her name was?" (Finn said this to the researcher during the opening segment which showed some children climbing up a slide and others sliding down.)
R. (Researcher) "No."
F. "Cindy." (Pauline introduced herself and sang the opening song.)
F. "Pauline said **You and Me** today." (Pauline began an interactive dialogue with the viewing audience but Finn lost interest.)
F. "Sometimes I pick my nose."
R. "Do you?"
F. Yes, and sometimes I don't." (Pauline sang a song about a bus. This refocused Finn's attention back to the TV screen.)
F. "It's a good one. I've watched it before." (Finn listened to the rest of the song.) "Amy has a bus."
R. "Does she?"
F. "Yes."

When Finn's mother was asked what she thought of **You And Me**, she answered:

A. (Answer) "Um, I like it. (Laughed) Not as much as **Play School** but then I wonder if that's perhaps because we have always had **Play School** so we are used to it. But, um, I like some of the things that she does. I don't particularly like just the one person format."
Q. (Question) "Right."
A. "I think that is something that I really love about **Play School**. It's both of them. And often if one of the presenters is a bit quieter, and the other is a bit zany, like today (October 23, 1992), that programme that Martin was on....When there's two of them, you sometimes get a bit more out of the kids. Like I have watched Finn watching **You And Me** and he doesn't, he tends to just watch it. Whereas with the **Play School** he tends to get up and he does whatever they are doing or he laughs at them, "Oh, look what he is doing."

When asked if she would encourage Finn to watch **You And Me**, his mother replied:

> I probably would now. Now that we have watched it for five days in a row. (Laughed) Um, I never would before probably because we usually don't watch TV now. We usually watch it, um, actually first thing in the morning. That's the time and so we usually watch taped stuff then which I am used to **Play School** being on so that's what I have taped. So I think, yeah, we would make an effort to watch it now.

During the observation period, Finn's mother was present most of the time. Finn's brother had an afternoon sleep around this time and if he was still asleep, Finn's mother used the period to get caught up with chores. If the baby was awake, both the baby and Finn's mother viewed the programme with him. On the third observation day, October 21, 1992, Finn's mother and the baby were sitting on the couch. Finn turned on the television and then came and sat with them.

M. (Mum) "Here she comes."
F. (Finn) "Pauline do have children." (Finn referred to the opening segment.)
M. "She would have lots of kids if these were all hers."
F. "Oh, she's got a nice T-shirt, eh?"
M. "She does, lots of nice colours." (After singing the greeting song, Pauline asked, "Have you ever been on a bus?")
F. "We have not been on a bus, eh?"
M. "That's right." (After further dialogue, Pauline sang "The Wheels On The Bus".)
M. "We know this song." (Mum sang along with Pauline and then Finn joined in.)

Finn's parents regulated his viewing habits. They checked out the programmes Finn watched and they also viewed and discussed programmes with him. This was evident when asked what other programmes they let Finn watch.

> He watches **Play School**. Um, first thing in the morning there's a programme on, **Alice In Wonderland**, and he loves it....He loves **Postman Pat** and **Fireman Sam** so I have taped a lot of them.....Another one that he watches is **Super Ted**. (Can you think of anymore that he watches? This question was directed at her husband who was preparing his "late" lunch in the kitchen which was beside where the interview was taking place. He replied, "**Test Cricket**".) **Test Cricket**, sure, sure. (Laughed) Oh, actually he does watch, we have taped a few **Our World** programmes and there is one on tigers and he just loves tigers. (Her husband then stated,

> "There is one on bears this Sunday that we must tape".) Yeah. We will have to do that one on bears. But, um, I don't, there a lot on the kids programmes that I don't like him watching. Just because they are so weird; weird and wonderful. So he tends to have just a few favourites and he watches those.

Finn's mother also stated that Finn was able to turn on the TV himself.

> He can do it himself but he always comes and asks first can he do it. Just because I, um, have taped so much he can actually operate the video now, too. (Laughed) It is very good, in that, if I am busy with Justin [the baby] or cooking or something like that and he says, "Can I watch TV?" I can say, "Yes" and he can go and turn it all on, set it all up himself and sit down.

When asked if she would video **You And Me**, Finn's mother said, "Yeah, I probably would now....video that just as much as **Play School** just to give a change more than anything." However, her comments demonstrated that she preferred **Play School**:

A. (Answer) "I think **Play School** is miles better, a lot better. Um, I think I like the format of **You And Me** that it's in, it's in her home. I think that's quite lovely."
Q. (Question) "Right."
A. "And she's sort of doing things that mums probably do at home anyway. But I think it would be nice if there was someone else there. She's just a bit dead sometimes, you know. (Laughed) I mean, she is quite interesting for an adult to watch but for a kid, I think that's the real test. Because when you watch **Play School** as an adult, you often think, "Oh, my goodness." You think, "How can they do that?" They are being absolute idiots and yet Finn will sit there and he laughs and he just thinks they are amazing. Whereas with Pauline, if I am not there to stimulate a bit of conversation, he will watch it and often just lose interest. And those puppets! Those puppets are ridiculous. The puppets need, I think the whole programme needs to be scaled down a wee bit, aimed a bit more at kids....2 1/2 to 5 year olds. So they like silliness and zaniness....I would really like to see, um, them doing songs and even stories that the kids might be a bit familiar with. It's nice to have new stuff or even if they are going to introduce all new songs, repeat them a bit more. The thing I love about **Play School** is that they sing songs that the kids learn, you know, the songs he learns at Daycare or at Pre-school."

During the observation period, a lot of interaction was recorded between Finn and Pauline as well as between Finn and his mother in relation to the programme. Finn joined in the singing of songs that he was familiar with and he did the actions to these as well as the stories. When Finn was interviewed following each programme, a typical reply was as follows:

Q. (Question) "Did you enjoy the programme **You And Me** today?"
A. (Answer) "Yeah."
Q. "What did you like best of all?"
A. "I liked it all."
Q. "Did you enjoy the songs Pauline sang today?"
A. "Yeah."

The interviews were not taped due to Finn's age but it was interesting that he answered the same each day.

(7) Gemma

The seventh participant, Gemma, was a 3 year, 7 month old Pakeha female. She was the eldest of two children. Her brother, Tim, was 18 months old. The family owned a three bedroom house on a well established street. Her father worked full-time while her mother did not work outside the home. Gemma began afternoon Kindergarten the week following the observation.

Gemma was a thoughtful, quiet child. She remained reserved towards the researcher, whom she did not know beforehand, for the entire observation period.

The family owned one television set and it was located in one corner of a large, tidy, open plan lounge, dining and kitchen area. The television was not the focus of the room. It

was surrounded by the children's toys and Gemma's mother had to pull it out from the wall before it was turned on to view the programme. The family did not own a video recorder and they had no plans to purchase one in the near future. There was one two seater couch that did face the television set but it was some distance away. The TV screen was small.

Gemma's parents regulated her viewing habits. They checked out the programmes that she watched and her mother tried to watch and discuss the programmes with her . Her mother stated, "I think that there is a lot of awful things on. Even cartoons and things that we don't want them exposed to."

Gemma's mother was also caught in a dilemma in that when her children, in particular Gemma, were watching TV, she was able to get chores done around the house. She said:

> I would say most mornings she would watch TV. It is such a good time for me. That's the thing. Plus there's good programmes in the morning for this age....From 9 till 10 who would watch that bit. You know, sometimes from 8:30 to 9:30. Sometimes 9:30 till 10:00. And then, um, we would quite often watch this hour. You know, **You And Me**, and a bit of Jason [Gunn]. So it ends up being quite a bit really. It doesn't really please me but....

Gemma was a regular viewer of **You And Me**. During the observation week, Gemma and her mother sat down on the floor in front of the TV and they watched it together. This was their special time. Tim, her brother usually had an afternoon sleep so Gemma had her mother's attention all to herself. Gemma and her mother interacted with both Pauline and each other during the entire programme. On the third observation day, Tim was teething so he did not sleep during this time period. Gemma's mother's attention was divided between her two children. She found this frustrating and it was observable that Gemma

did not pay as close attention to the programme as she had previously. Their regular viewing routine was disturbed.

The researcher noticed that Gemma turned the TV on for the start of **You And Me**. She asked if Gemma was allowed to turn the television on when she liked. Her mother replied, "We don't growl at her if she turns it on sometimes but, um, we don't let her. We tell her as soon as she does to turn it off." Gemma's mother did not think too highly of television. She thought "it is a bit of a trap". She did not like to have her daughter "sit there for ages and just watch it". However, she did think that it could be educational "because it can be great".

Like the other parents, Gemma's mother compared **You And Me** to **Play School**. She said, "When I first saw **You And Me** I used to think that it was boring in comparison just because **Play School** had people that it can bounce off". She would have liked to see "some action or something" in more of the programmes. She also commented that the programme required Gemma to have good concentration skills. She related this to the previous day when her son was awake during the programme. Gemma was not as attentive to the programme when her mother was not there to encourage her.

Gemma's mother commented on a programme, shown the previous week, which had a little boy on and he did several different things that she thought were really good. He went for a ride on the bus, on a train, and on a boat. Both Gemma and her mother enjoyed that episode. They "could relate to that. It is things that they can relate to that I think keeps them interested."

(8) Hazel and (9) Isabelle

Participants eight and nine, Hazel and Isabelle, were Pakeha female, fraternal twins aged 3 years, 2 months. They had an older brother and sister from their mother's previous marriage; both were young adults so there was a large age gap between them and the twins. The older brother lived at home and worked full-time. Their sister did not live with them. The twins' father worked full-time while their mother looked after them full-time. They owned their own home in an "up and coming" street of home owners and rental accommodation. The twins attended a local playcentre three mornings a week.

The researcher did not know Hazel and Isabelle prior to doing the observation. They were both shy in the researcher's presence for the entire week, although Isabelle was the more outgoing of the two. They obviously took a long time to get used to someone they did not know. This posed problems as it was difficult for the researcher to discuss the programme with them. The extent of their conversation was, "Yes" or "No". When asked if they liked the programme, they both replied, "No". On the fourth day of observation when the researcher arrived at the twins' house, it was obvious that they did not want to watch the programme. Hazel and Isabelle were both tearful. Their mother had to show them that there was only news on the other two channels before they were persuaded to watch **You And Me**. (Their mother tricked them so that they would watch the programme. It was obvious that the twins watched certain programmes regularly and the researcher was upsetting their routine. When their mother was interviewed at the end of the observation period, this was evident from her discussion. Please see below.)

Another problem was that they would not stay in their lounge where the television was located without their mother, as they were shy in the researcher's presence. If she left the room to get something, they would follow her. In the interview, their mother said that she

did not sit down and watch TV with them as a rule. She stated, "That's when you can do things".

The twins had not seen **You And Me** before. They were regular viewers of **Play School**. When they watched TV they had their own special beanbag chairs which they would pull close to the front of the TV screen.

The family owned one television and this was located in the family lounge. The room was large and the furniture was arranged so that it faced the television set. Beside the television was the girls' toys. There were a lot of toys as there was two of everything. The family owned a video recorder. When the researcher asked the twins' mother if she would video **You And Me,** she replied, "No". She did not care for the programme. She felt that it was "boring and it was repeating itself and it didn't do enough". Furthermore, she thought that there should be more than one presenter like on **Play School**.

The twins' mother regulated their viewing habits. She checked out the programmes that they wanted to see, and she sometimes viewed and discuss the programmes with the twins. As discussed in the literature review, though, while the merits of children viewing with their parents is widely accepted, the practice is not widely adopted. The twins' mother stated as much in her interview. When asked how often did she watch TV with her children, she answered, "Just now and then really....I usually pop my head back in and have a look and talk about what's on ....But, um, I really don't sit there with them a lot though, no. I suppose I should really."

When asked what other programmes did her children view, Hazel and Isabelle's mother stated:

A. (Answer) "Um, **Play School**." (Laughed)

Q. (Question) "**Play School**. Okay."

A. "And they love **Alice In Wonderland**."

Q. "That's a very popular one."

A. "They just love it. If we sleep in they just sit there and they cry. I think because there is a little girl in it but they get upset with it too because sometimes she is falling or something."

Q. "Oh, really."

A. "But she comes out of it happy in the end."

Q. "I must look at that because nearly every other parent has said that their child just absolutely adores it. And not just females, but the males as well."

A. "Yeah, it's really something. And it's got the twins in it, you see, Twiddle Dee and Twiddle Dumb."

Q. "Oh, do they? I must look at it."

A. "It's quite good as cartoons are."

Q. "That's neat."

A. "It will be their favourite programme at the moment."

Q. "Oh, that's interesting. And what other programmes? Okay, **Alice In Wonderland**."

A. "And there's that **Lambchop**."

Q. "**Lambchop**."

A. "Then **Spot** comes on, **Spot the Dog**."

Q. "Right."

A. "Um....(Pause)

Q. "I haven't watched those. I must watch them because those are the morning programmes, aren't they?"

A. "Yeah. I am trying to think what they watch in the afternoons. It's usually just **Jason**."

Q. "Right, so that's **Jason Gunn**?"

A. "They aren't actually wrapped in any programmes in the afternoon. I wouldn't say that they watch TV in the afternoons."

Q. "Right. Do they watch any programmes in the evening?"

A. "Oh, only the **Simpsons** if they are still up." (Laughed)

During this part of the interview, Hazel and Isabelle's mother stated three times, "They don't watch a lot of TV". When questioned how much TV would her children watch each day, she replied, "I don't think that they would watch that much, about three hours per day or something like that". Comstock (1993: 123) notes four hours a day is average for this age group.

> The amount of viewing in the United States has always been inversely associated with socioeconomic status, with education having a larger role than income, so taste is certainly a factor, but the role of time available is so great that the age groups that are higher in exposure also are those more likely to be at home - children, women, older adults.

As previously discussed, Anderson, Lorch, Smith, Bradford and Levin (1981) found that young viewers take cues from others in the vicinity of the set. They observed that when children, aged three and five years, viewed television in groups of two or three, there was a tendency for the behaviour of any one child (attending or not attending to the screen, or becoming highly actively involved in viewing) to be followed by the other child or children doing the same thing. In the twins' case, there were many instances of this occurring during the observation week. The following observation, on November 13, 1992, illustrates this:

The twins were playing with a wooden puzzle in the lounge, when the researcher arrived. Hazel and Isabelle's mother turned on **You And Me** and the twins' attention was caught by the opening segment.
M. (Mum) "Look what's on."
(When Pauline appeared on the screen, the twins began working on their puzzle again. They both shared their attention between the programme and the puzzle. When the puppets came on they lost interest in the programme and give their total concentration to the puzzle. They had difficulty putting the puzzle together so Hazel took it over to her mother for help. Her mother was sitting on a chair, facing the TV. Isabelle followed Hazel. Isabelle began to watch the programme. She laid down on the stool beside her

mother, and began to suck her thumb. Pauline was talking about different expressions and she had cards with a happy face, a sad face, and so on.)

M. "That's a sad face, isn't it?"

(This comment helped draw Hazel's attention to the TV programme. Isabelle slipped off the stool, climbed back up again, and sat facing the TV. She began sucking her thumb. (During the observation week, both the girls began to suck their thumbs when they appeared to focus directly on the material presented on the programme.) Meanwhile, Hazel was on the floor near the TV, working with her wooden puzzle. Her attention was mainly on the puzzle and not the TV.)

M. "Have you got a happy face?" (Their mother tried to get both girls interested in the programme.)

H. (Hazel) "Look at that one."

(Isabelle got off the stool and began to push her "play" pram. She went past the researcher and gave her a big smile.)

H. "My pram."

M. "You are doing the jigsaw."

M. "Oh look. What are they doing? Can you do that? Can you stand up and do that?"

(This segment showed a group of children moving different parts of their bodies. These comments refocused Hazel's attention back to the TV screen. Isabelle continued playing with the pram.)

M. "Give the pram to Hazel and watch the TV."

I. (Isabelle) "I don't want it. I don't want it."

M. "You don't want the lady on?"

I. "I don't want it."

M. "She is going to tell a story. You might see some pictures. Oh look, a Taniwha."

H. "A Taniwha."

(Isabelle went back to the stool and ate her piece of toast while listening to the story that Pauline was telling. Hazel began to play with the pram, giving the wooden puzzle a ride.)

M. "Finishing off your breakfast?" (This was directed at Isabelle. Hazel came and sat in front of her mother, fixing her pram.)

H. "It's stuck." (Referred to her strap on the pram.)

(On **You And Me** there was a segment of a girl and her mother in a kitchen. Both girls looked at the TV.)

M. "Oh, she's got long hair." (She was commenting on the girl's hair in the video segment.) "Oh, a dirty stove." (The people in the video were making porridge.) "Oh, making porridge."

H. "Making porridge. They make the porridge. That's like Hazel."
(Following this video clip, the second puppet segment came on. The twins were focused on the show but they lost interest. When Pauline returned, Isabelle paid no attention to the screen, playing behind the stool instead. Hazel sat in her chair facing the TV, sucking her thumb. She was distracted by Isabelle playing and she climbed up on the couch as well.)
I. "I think I want the big chair." (Referred to the lounge suite in the room rather than her small beanbag chair.)
M. "You want the big chair, do you?" (Pauline sang an action song about living things and she invited the audience to jump if you like your name.) "You kids are not jumping."
(The girls were busy playing on the lounge suite. They were not interested in the TV programme at all.)
M. "We have had all these." (Pauline finished her song and this was followed by a video clip shown earlier of different people's faces. Hazel and Isabelle continued playing on the lounge suite, having lots of fun and did not look at the TV. They did not watch Pauline sing the "Good-bye" song.)
M. "Oh, she's going."

Isabelle and Hazel knew how to turn the television on and off. Their mother stated, "I suppose I let them turn it on now....But if there is something on that I don't think is good for them, then I will flick it over." The twins did not know how to change channels. It seemed quite likely, judging from the observation period and the comments noted about the programme, that if the twins were to turn the TV on to **You And Me**, their mother would probably change channels.

(10) Jade

The tenth subject, Jade, was a 2 year, 10 month old Pakeha female. She was the youngest of three children. She had two older brothers: Jimmy, aged 6 years, and Brian, who was 10 years old. The family owned a large four bedroom home in a well-established area of town. As both parents worked, Jade attended a childcare centre full-time.

Jade was observed in the morning during one week of the school holidays, January 15 - 11, 1993. Her parents were on holiday so they watched the programme along with Jade and her brothers. This was the only case where this occurred, hence they both were interviewed.

Jade's family owned one television set, hooked up to a video recorder, located in their large, open plan family lounge. The dining area was off to one side of the lounge and this was beside their kitchen. The lounge suite, one three seater sofa and two single seats, were arranged so that they faced the television screen. The furniture was placed quite a distance back from the television set. During the observation period, it was noticeable that Jade did not sit in one particular spot. She was constantly moving from one spot on the large sofa, where her mother usually sat, to where her father sat on one of the single seats. Other times during the programme she stood in front of the large sofa but at a closer distance to the TV set.

Jade was a happy, confident child who was of average height. The researcher knew Jade's parents beforehand but had only met Jade briefly a couple of times. Knowing her parents seemed to assist Jade in become comfortable in the researcher's presence relatively quickly. This was evident on the first day of observation, January 15, 1993:

The researcher arrived at Jade's home ten minutes before **You And Me** started, to get better acquainted with Jade. They were sitting on the large three seater lounge sofa that faced the TV when the opening sequence on **You And Me** began.

J. (Jade) "It's this thing."
D. (Dad) "Here it is Jade." (Her father sat down in his special chair that faced the television set. Prior to the start of the programme, he was occupied with preparing and cleaning up the dishes from breakfast. Jade left her place beside the researcher and went to

sit by her father. A few minutes later her Mum came into the lounge from the upstairs bedroom, where she had got out of bed. She sat on the large sofa beside the researcher. Jade then came over and sat on her lap.)

M. (Mum) "Do you yawn when you wake up?" (Pauline told the viewing audience that she was tired today. She sang a song about being tired.)

J. (Nodded)

M. "You do, don't you?" (On the TV, Pauline yawned.) "Daddy's doing it. Look!"

J. "Mum. Mary Jane." (Jade pointed the researcher out to her mother.)

Jade had seen **You And Me** before. She saw the programme with her mother when it first aired in July 1992. Jade's mother mentioned in her interview that she "sat down one afternoon and that was the one episode where she [Pauline] did a painting. And, um, I have not seen any since then. And when she first did it, it was a very stilted thing and which had surprised me because she is such an experienced presenter. So that's I guess what I sort of thought she would be very fluid and it was very self-conscious."

Jade's parents stated that she regularly watched **Sesame Street** in the mornings and sometimes **Play School** in the afternoons, during the holidays. These programmes were on the same time as **You And Me**. The researcher wondered if Jade watched **You And Me** at her childcare centre because she appeared to be familiar with it, particularly the opening sequence of the programme.

With her parents' encouragement Jade interacted enthusiastically with the programme. For example, on January 13, 1993 at the beginning of the programme Pauline told the audience that she was feeling grumpy. She sang, "If You're Grumpy And You Know It", to the tune of "If You're Happy And You Know It". During this segment, Jade drank her juice and was attentive to the TV screen.

M. (Mum) "You sing this at Creche, don't you?" (Jade continued to drink and did not answer her mother nor did she sing with Pauline. She finished her drink while still attentive to the TV.)
M. "Do you know that song?"
J. (Jade) (Nodded)
M. "I know you did." (On the TV, Pauline closed her eyes and pretended to be somewhere else to make herself less grumpy.)
M. "Somewhere warm? At the beach with the sunshine?"
J. "Sunshine coming in my eyes." (Jade pretended along with her mother and Pauline.)

When the researcher asked Jade's parents what they thought of **You And Me,** they stated, "very patchy". Jade's mother further clarified her response:

M. (Mum) "It just seemed patchy in that some of, like, the episodes yesterday we thought was really quite good [January 14, 1993] yet the one today was a bit wishy washy. And the one on Wednesday [January 13, 1993] had three to four concepts in it and we weren't sure what it was that she was trying to get across at the end of it."
Q. (Question) "Right."
M. "So it doesn't seem to have a sort of a smoothness to it or a sort of an evenness to the sorts of messages she is trying to get across. Um, some of the messages seem to be quite simple and like the Wednesday one [January 13, 1993] there was lots, wasn't there? (She addressed this question to Jade's dad.) She was grumpy and she had lost something and there was something else. You know, there were several, several different themes in one, in one episode. And I don't think at the end of it that, I mean Jade didn't seem to take much notice of it all whereas there is only one thing they seem to get more involved."
Q. "Right."
M. "In it, so, well I guess that is what I meant by it is patchy."
Q. "Okay, that is great."
D. (Dad) "I don't think that they do enough. She doesn't have activities, does she?"
M. "No."
D. "She doesn't make anything. Oh made a hat one time but that was about it. She doesn't make anything or do anything. Draw many things or... "
M. "Yeah. And Jade liked those things on **Play School** which would be the nearest relative, you know, when they make something."

When the researcher asked Jade's parents if they would video **You And Me**, their following responses indicated that it was unlikely:

D. (Dad) "Does she sit and watch it always? I don't know. If we videoed it would she sit and watch the whole thing?"
M. (Mum) "Um, maybe. We have videoed various things. We got tapes and tapes full of **Thomas The Tank Engine** cause Jimmy had a real fit on them at the same age and they were so short. How many minutes did they go for? About five?"
Q. (Question) "They were very short, weren't they?"
M. "And that they were great, you know, because they were the right length of time. Um..."
D. "She watches that."
M. "She likes them. They are very short time spans. Um, um, possibly. We have thought about taping **Sesame Street** for her or **Play School** for her."

Similarly, when Jade's parents were asked if they would encourage Jade to watch **You And Me**, after viewing it for an entire week, her dad replied, "Probably not". Jade's mother added, "Depending what else is on".

Jade's mother, like the other parents, made the comparison between **Play School** and **You And Me**. She thought "that the things they do on **Play School** are much more familiar to our children which is what is easy about it. Um, that they sing songs that the children know. It is much easier for children to engage with **Play School** because the activities that they use are familiar, the songs are familiar, the stories are familiar. They are much more likely to sit down and read **Goldilocks And The Three Bears** than they are on this one. They never use any familiar stories and very rarely use familiar songs." This concerned Jade's mother as she felt that a "knowledge of nursery rhymes and songs is really important". She argued that "it would make a hell of a lot of sense to use traditional rhymes and songs than to use originals. But it, because it is going against

the flow of the literature I guess so that is sort of the uneasiness I have with using the originals are fine but not maybe in this form where, um, language development is all important."

Jade's parents regulated their children's viewing habits. They allowed a certain viewing time, "at least an hour and a half", per weekday, with an increase on the weekend. They also watched TV with their children; Jade's father in particular.

D. (Dad) "Yeah, I like watching it. I like watching children's programmes." (Laughed)
Q. (Question) (Laughed)
D. "**Sesame Street**. I watch **Sesame Street**, don't I?" (This question was directed at Jade.)
M. (Mum) "And sometimes in the afternoon we'll watch TV with them. **Transformers**. (Laughed) (Brief discussion on **Transformers**.) "It just depends but sometimes we just plonk in front of it."

When questioned if they allowed Jade to turn the TV on and off when she liked, her parents replied, "She doesn't know how". In the case of her older bothers, Jade's mother stated, "They always ask. They do not turn our television set on without asking." Jade's father added, "Except in the mornings when they come down before us!" It would be interesting to know if they would turn the television on to **You And Me** and leave it on that channel if they got up before their parents. During the observation period, Jimmy sometimes interacted with the programme, answering the questions that Pauline asked along with Jade. In a few instances, Jade's parents had to ask him to refrain from answering so that Jade could do it by herself. He also joined in with the actions to songs. Brian, who was much older, saw himself as "too old" to join in the activities but alongside his parents he encouraged his younger siblings to "give things a go". The following illustrates this:

On January 14, 1993, before the first puppet break, Pauline sang a song about "shaking her sillies out".

M. (Mum) "Do you sing that song at Creche?"
J. (Jade) (Nodded)
M. "Is that a good song?"
J. (Nodded)
B. (Brian) "Tell Jimmy to sing that song."
J. "Jimmy do it."
M. "Can you shake like that?" (This was directed at Jade.)
J. "Can't."
M. "Can't shake?"
J. "Yes."

Jade and her brother Jimmy enjoyed the show. However, it was obvious that their parents would not encourage them to watch **You And Me** since they did not think highly of the programme.

(11) Sean

The eleventh child, Sean, was a 22 month old Pakeha male. He was an only child. His mother stayed at home with Sean while his father worked full-time. They lived in a rented two bedroom home in an attractive tree lined street. Sean did not attend an early childhood education programme.

Sean was an outgoing child, of average build, who was very energetic. The researcher did not know Sean nor his parents beforehand. She met with Sean and his mother before doing the observation and Sean very quickly became comfortable in the researcher's presence.

Sean had seen **You And Me** when it was first televised but he did not want to watch it. Instead he was a regular viewer of **Sesame Street, Noddy, Postman Pat** and

Thomas The Tank Engine. In the afternoons he watched **Jason Gunn**. During the period of observation, January 18-22, 1993, Sean's mother videotaped the morning broadcast of **You And Me** and the researcher arrived at their home mid-morning to do the observations.

Sean's family owned one television which was situated in the family lounge/dining area. This was a small, crowded L-shaped room which contained a two seater couch and a single, comfortable chair which directly faced the TV. Sean's toys were stored beside the television set but some days these were spread throughout the area. Also in the room were three storage cupboards as well as the dining room table and chairs. During the observation period, there were many incidents where Sean shared his visual attention between the television and his toys.

During the observation, Sean's usual place for viewing the television was sitting on the couch beside his mother. His mother co-viewed the entire time with him. She was constantly interacting with Sean in order to draw his visual attention to the TV screen and to assist in his comprehension of the programme. Studies done by Huston et al., (1990) and Pinon, Huston, and Wright (1989) found that the level of attention given to **Sesame Street** and other educational programmes for very young viewers was enhanced when they were encouraged by parents. An example to illustrate the above point is as follows:

On the third day of observation, January 20, 1993, Sean stood in front of the TV playing with his toys. When the opening song came on, he stopped what he was doing and he focused on the TV screen.

S. (Sean) "Moo." (Stated this when he saw the cows eating grass in the opening segment.)

M. (Mum) "There they are. There's Pauline. What's she doing?" (Mum sang "It's Our Time" along with Pauline. Sean went and sat on the couch beside his mum, taking off his hat.)

S. "Daddy." (He referred to the fact that his dad bought the hat for him.)
M. "Cleaning the windows. Look. Squeaky clean." (On the programme Pauline was cleaning up her "house". Sean began to play with his hat, dividing his attention between it and the TV screen.)
M. "She is going to do some vacuum cleaning." (There was a video segment of children playing in a playhouse in their backyard.)
M. "Oh look. They are in the playhouse. They have a box just like you used to. A playhouse. They are playing outside." (Despite her efforts, Sean focused more on his hat than the TV.)
S. "Mum" (Sean wanted his mother to fix his hat. Meanwhile Pauline sang a song about a house.)
M. "That's the roof of the house. Doors. Windows. Floor."
S. "Bye."
M. "She is not finished yet." (Sean got off the couch and played with his play tennis racket. He left the room and went into the kitchen.)
M. "Puppets are on." (This comment persuaded Sean to return to the lounge. On the previous two days, whenever the puppet segments came on, it visually caught his attention. An auditory cue, music, also indicated the puppets were about to appear on the show.)
M. "See the puppets are on." (The puppets talked about roses. Sean went and pretended to smell the roses on the TV screen.)

Sean's mother did not think "a lot" of the programme. She stated that she would not encourage Sean to watch **You And Me** for she did not feel at his age he learnt anything from it. "Maybe, perhaps when he has got a bit older....there is no sort of counting or ABC's, or anything really." However, when asked if she would video **You And Me**, she replied, "No".

Sean's parents regulated his viewing habits. His mother thought that "there is good things and there is bad things" on the television. "I think that you just really got to pick what you allow your children to watch. There is a lot of rubbish." During the week she told the

researcher that she never watched TV at night with Sean. In the interview, the researcher brought the subject up again.

Q. (Question) "He never sees what you would call 'general audience' programmes?"
A. (Answer) "No, no. He doesn't. If there is something like a children's movie. (Pause) Like I taped **Muppets Go To Disney World**. I taped that and we sat and watched that in the morning but, um, so we don't have it on especially cause if we had it on I think at night before he went to bed he would be all hyper and couldn't settle. So we just don't have it on."

Sean knew how to turn the television set on and off. However, when asked if he was allowed to, his mother replied, "No, he's not". Usually Sean's mother made an effort to co-view with her son. Sometimes, though, she noted, "I will go and do some jobs and let him watch as long as I know what's on. Or sometimes I will pre-record something so I know what he is watching."

When asked what she would like **You And Me** to do for her child, Sean's mother felt that the producers should provide "more visual stimulation really instead of just Pauline talking and shorter stories and more pictures", Sean's mother agreed that "repetition is good but she [Pauline] sings the same songs over a lot". Furthermore, she would like the Maori content to be translated. "We didn't have a clue what they were talking about. He [Sean] sort of looked at me as if I was a bit silly, really." (Laughed) "I don't know what they were talking about. You know, I think that they have gone a bit overboard on the bicultural side."

Sean was verbally interviewed after each programme. The interviews were similar as indicated below.

Q. (Question) "Sean, did you enjoy watching **You And Me** today?"
A. (Answer) (Nodded)
Q. "What did you like best about the programme?"
A. (No answer)
Q. "Can I come and watch **You And Me** with you tomorrow?"
A. (Smiled and nodded)

Van Evra (1990: 15) argues that young children's relatively poor results on many tests may well be "due to their inability to express their mastery of a concept or an idea rather than to their inability to understand it". In Sean's case, he certainly made his feelings known when the researcher asked if she could come and watch the programme with him the next day. But, in regard to the programme itself, he was unable to articulate what he liked or did not like about the show.

(12) Molly

The last child, Molly, was a 22 month old Pakeha female. She was the only daughter in a family of four children. Molly was the second youngest child. Her eldest brother, Julian, was 6 years old. The second eldest, Jonathan was 4 years of age. Molly's youngest brother, Ryan, was three months old. Her father worked full-time while her mother stayed at home. They lived in their own home in a cul-de-sac where all the houses were privately owned. Molly did not attend an early childhood education programme.

Molly was a friendly, self contained child with a ready smile who was tall for her age. She spoke quite happily to the researcher but her vocabulary skills were limited. The researcher did not know Molly beforehand although she was acquainted with her parents. Molly seemed at ease with the researcher right from the beginning. This was noted during the first observation on January 25, 1993:

Molly and her mother were in the lounge with the researcher, just before 8:30, with the TV turned on waiting for the start of **You And Me**. Molly's dad and her older brothers were in another room. The researcher used this time to become better acquainted with Molly. Molly's mother was sitting in the large, comfortable chair that faced the TV set, while Molly stood beside her, playing with a naked Ken Barby doll.

M. (Mum) "Oh look." (Molly's mum pointed out the programme had started.)
M. (Molly) "Up."
M. (Mum) "You want up?" (Mum lifted Molly onto her lap. Molly held her doll in one hand and put a finger from her other hand in her mouth. She was totally focused on the opening sequence. After Pauline sang her greeting song and began discussing the day's main concept, camping, Molly looked over at the researcher.)
M. (Molly) "Hair." (She pointed to the researcher's hair. Molly divided her attention between the television and playing with her doll. On the programme Pauline had a sleeping bag. She stated that she was going on a pretend camping trip. At 8:35 Ryan, Molly's baby brother woke up.)
M. (Mum) "You stay on the chair while I go and get Ryan." (Pauline began singing a song about going camping.)
M. (Molly) (Smiled at the researcher. She stayed sitting in the chair by herself and was quite happy to remain in the room with the researcher.)

Molly's family owned two television sets; one was located in the parents' bedroom and the other was in the family lounge. There was a video recorder attached to the TV in the lounge. Molly watched **You And Me** in the lounge, which was a good sized, very tidy room. The furniture in the room was arranged so that it faced the television set. Molly viewed the programme from two positions; standing in front of the television or sitting on a large, comfortable easy chair, which was arranged so that it faced the TV set.
Molly's family used the rationing approach in response to their children's TV viewing. They allowed "an hour and a half" per weekday, with an increase on the weekends. Molly's mother stated, "I normally don't let them watch things in the mornings". Her son,

Julian responds, "And I do". His mother replied, "Yeah, during the holidays you do but during school time, you don't". Julian blurts out, "But I do watch it in the school time". His mother restates, "No, you don't". Again Julian maintains, "Oh, yes I do". His mother affirms, "Sometimes he is up at half past six and he turns it on and so when you come out you turn it off. He doesn't come and tell you....But after school they normally go and sit down for an hour and a half and watch it." Molly's mother pointed out, however, that this did not apply in her daughter's case. "She just plays. She is just not interested. She finds it really boring, I think."

When asked what other programmes her children watched, Molly's mother noted:

A. (Answer) "Um, well Molly actually watches very little. She doesn't really sit and watch the TV so. But the boys would watch things, well Julian is 6 and Jonathan is 4. They watch things like...**Transformers** more than anything else. Yeah, say the **Transformers** and so on. What is that car race programme, Julian? Whatever that one is?"
Q. (Question) "I know which one it is."
A. "**Speedracer**."
Q. "**Speedracer,** yeah."
A. "Yeah, that's it.....I also tend to video programmes like, um, **The Land Before Time**. Yeah, that type of thing."
Q. "Does Molly sit down and watch those?"
A. "No. She is just not interested." (Laughed)

Like the other parents, Molly's mother used the educational programme **Play School** as the basis for a comparison for **You And Me**:

A. (Answer) "I don't really like it **[You And Me]** because children aren't interested in it. There is no props. There is nothing to sort of hold their interest."
Q. (Question) "Right."

A. "So you are just looking at her and maybe something else but there is nothing, no nice books. She doesn't seem to have books or....no soft toys or anything like that. Like the **Play School** one. She doesn't really seem to do a lot of painting or... (Pause) Children are more interested in that."

Molly's mother was also critical of the times when **You And Me** was aired. She pointed out, "I think it is on at a bad time. Half past eight is just hopeless. Half past two is not that great either." She further stated, "you are not going to get children this age watching it because of Kindy and school". Pinon, Huston and Wright (1989) make the obvious point that with an increasing number of mothers entering the workforce, a larger percentage of pre-schoolers are spending their days in alternative care settings away from their home. Television viewing is not encouraged in the majority of pre-schools and child care centres. Educational programmes are typically broadcasted during the hours that children are in school or in child care settings. The authors note in order for children's educational television to be used effectively programme planners must do more than just make programmes comprehensible and entertaining, they must also schedule programmes when the targeted child audience is most likely to be watching television at home.

During the observation period Molly viewed only specific segments of the programme. When it came time to interview her at the end of the show, Molly was usually busy doing other things. She did not answer when asked if she had enjoyed watching **You And Me**. She was unable to articulate what she liked or did not like about the programme. However, she always smiled and nodded in reply to the question, "Can I come and watch **You And Me** with you tomorrow?"

Luke (1990b: 56) argues that for young children real live interaction with other peers, older siblings and adults is extremely important, not only for the enhancement of creativity and imagination but also for social and language development. This is encapsulated in one

of Vygotsky's (1978) key concepts, the zone of proximal development; children require help and supervision until they acquire competence in developing skills. Despite the high quality children's programmes that are available, the screen is no substitute for social interaction, particularly for very young viewers. So even if infants and pre-schoolers are watching educational programmes at 18 months, parental "scaffolding" in "play and play acting with the youngsters, talking with them, or initiating ideas, is imperative in fostering *active* development in the children" (Luke, 1990b: 56).

This suggests that parents should begin to take an active role in helping their children to become active, selective, and critical viewers. Luke (1990b) claims that the first step towards this is parental involvement: developing an informed perspective on issues involved in the child - TV debate and be an active participant in their child's television viewing. Educational programmes such as **You And Me** can promote pro-social behaviours and attitudes: if watched in moderation and with parental guidance and interactional support, it can provide positive social learning experiences for its viewers. In relation to **You And Me**, the programme is about joining in and co-operating, factors which are vital to social development in the pre-school years.

Summary

Parental responses to children's TV viewing fall broadly into four groups, related to different family structures and the social dynamics therein. The majority of parents in this study used the rationing approach, allowing a certain viewing time, between one to two hours per week-day, with an increase on the week-end. Others acted as censors, checking out the programmes their children wanted to watch, and they also viewed and discussed programmes with them.

In accordance with the literature in this area, the children's parents appeared to be thoughtful and careful about their children's television viewing. They also encouraged child-appropriate viewing that they considered may be beneficial, and they co-viewed general audience programmes with their children. Furthermore, as St. Peter et al. (1991) found, programme content was cited as the most frequent reason for both encouragement and restriction for pre-school children. Following the observation period, some of the parents said that they would encourage their children to watch **You And Me**, or at least give them the choice, as they saw positive value in the content of the programme. The parents who did not like the programme stated they would not encourage their children to watch it.

All the parents made a comparison between **You And Me** and **Play School**. Many wanted **You And Me** to be just like **Play School**'s format as it was familiar to them, and they and their children enjoyed watching it.

There were many examples of parent-child interactions recorded which suggested that parents were aware of the importance of interaction in relation to their children's cognitive abilities to comprehend the material that was presented on **You And Me**.

CHAPTER 6

THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS: RESPONSES TO THE PROGRAMME

This chapter discusses the children and their parents' responses to both general and specific aspects of the programme: mode of address and the programme setting; age range; educational content, and the question learning; use of songs; story time; visitors on the programme; follow-up activities; the puppets; and biculturalism. Particular sections will make very brief reference back to major related points in the literature review. Another important area addressed in this chapter is attention to, comprehension, and enjoyment of the programme. These are not programme elements; they are child-related characteristics.

One of the aims of this study was to investigate children's responses to **You And Me**, in particular, how they participated and what engaged their attention. Currently, as is shown in Chapter 2, research on children's use and understanding of television emphasise that it is both the content features and the noncontent formal features or symbol systems of TV which indicate how children process and learn from television. Both need to be taken into account when describing what children view on television and how they process what they view (Wartella, 1987). Furthermore, both content and noncontent feature of television tend to elicit attention among children. The programme content discussed here drew upon the central features outlined in Chapter 4.

(1) Mode Of Address And The Programme Setting

In the programme Pauline personally addresses the viewer through a monologue to the camera (which gives the appearance of a personal dialogue with the viewer), and

through her eye contact (through the camera, with the audience). This is a common established technique that works well with young viewers (Luke, 1990b; Noble and Duck, 1986). This was very successful with the children, as the following examples indicate:

Gemma (aged 3 years, 7 months) and her mother -- October 27, 1992.
(After the second puppet interlude, Pauline repeated the song about friends. The theme of the show was friends. When she finished, Pauline stated, "I'm glad I've got you as a friend".)
M. (Mum) "Who is she talking about?"
G. (Gemma) "Me!" (Laughed)
(The next day, October 28, 1992, the theme of the programme was colours.)
M. (Mum) "Pauline doesn't like the colour of her jersey. She hasn't told her friend who made it."
G. (Gemma) "But I like the colour because it is green."
M. "What is your favourite colour?"
G. "Green."
(Pauline continued discussing whether she should tell her friend.)
G. "She is talking to me!" (Laughed)

As Jade's father had viewed the programme for the entire observation period, the researcher asked him his thoughts concerning the lone female presenter. He stated, "the format that they have designed I don't think that you can do it with two people....If they did it with two people it would then probably become like **Play School**." He commented further, "I don't not like it. But I can't say I like it. It is just a programme."

Fabes, Wilson, and Christopher (1989) maintain that the potential of television to shape viewers' conceptualisations of family life is quite strong given the number of TV programmes that portray families and their interactions. They noted in the United States there are about fifty families portrayed every week on TV. The most common family

structure consists of families where there are one or two parents, plus children. The authors note, too, that television families are also more likely to be middle class rather than working class. Middle-class television parents, and their children, are more likely to be portrayed as intelligent, mature persons able to cope effectively with any problems. On the other hand, working-class parents and their children are likely to be portrayed as more inept. Consequently, the middle-class family on the TV is seen as more glamorous and successful than it is in real life. As well, there are relatively few working mothers. The researchers state, in light of these findings, there is the possibility that the portrayal of idealised middle-class family on television may present unattainable and unrealistic goals for viewers and, consequently, may lead them to question the adequacy and quality of their own family life. Ani's mother commented on this:

> ...I wonder about the setting of the house. I reasonably like it, but it is probably a bit too flash....A very middle-class environment and set-up there.

Jade's mother, too, mentioned the "nice looking set" of the programme. "They have tried to make it as natural as possible and I don't know whether you need to make it as natural as possible. It sort of made it home-like."

(2) Age Range, Educational Content And The Question Of Learning

It was the older children who interacted most with the programme, i.e., they always answered Pauline's questions and they did the actions to the songs and activities that she presented. The examples cited in section (9) illustrate this. The younger children tended to be more passive observers. These findings are in agreement with Easterbrook's (1992: 2) comments that in her discussion with parents it "was the 4, 5 and 6 year olds who were enjoying the programme the most. So if that is the age range it appeals to, then the timing of it each day is unsuitable." Part of the problem may be, as Huston et al. (1990) have demonstrated, children lose interest in material that is incomprehensible

and attend to material that is clearly within their range of comprehensibility. **You And Me** did subsequently change the time it was scheduled in the afternoon, from 2:35 to 3:35, after this was suggested by Shuker and Shuker (1992).

Jade enjoyed watching **You And Me**. When she was interviewed after each episode, Jade was positive in her comments concerning aspects of the show. However, her verbal performance was limited, due to her age (22 months), as is illustrated by the following:

Q. (Question) "Did you enjoy watching **You And Me** today, Jade?"
A. (Answer) "Yes."
Q. "Did you enjoy the songs that Pauline sang today?"
A. "Yes."
Q. "Did you like the puppets?"
A. "Yes."
Q. "May I come and watch **You And Me** with you tomorrow?"
A. "Yes."

Similarly, Sean (22 months) spoke in one and two word sentences as his verbal skills were limited. In order to express himself clearly and fluently, he used body language. This was noted on the first day of observation, January 18, 1993:

Sean and his mother were sitting on the sofa in front of the TV. The video segment was showing a man and a young girl planting in the garden.
M. (Mum) "What is she doing? Putting her shoes on, isn't she? They are speaking in Maori. Now they are going to go to the garden like daddy does. He is raking the garden like daddy and they are"
S. (Sean) "Pole, pole, pole." (Sean pointed to the rake on the television.)
M. "They are putting the seeds in. Remember helping daddy do that? Pumpkin seeds. Now they need to be covered over. (Pause) What's that? (Pause) Water. Water helps them grow." (Pauline returned to the screen. She commented on the segment and stated she was going to pretend to be a seed.)

M. "She is going to pretend she is a seed." (Sean was playing with his toe.) "She is pretending to be a seed."
(Pauline sang a song about a seed.)
M. "There she goes. She is a rain cloud."
S. "Sun's gone." (Sean looked over towards the window.)
M. "Yes, it is today."

Van Evra (1990: 17) points out that young children "may lack adequate language skills to describe the meaning they get from complex visual material". In Jade's case, this may have been caused by the length of **You And Me**, or she may have had difficulty remembering particular components especially when she was not a regular viewer of the programme at home.

With the emphasis on everyday experiences within the home and family, **You And Me** is clearly relevant to the development - physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual - of pre-school children. However, as already indicated, the researcher's observations led to the conclusion that some of the material was far too difficult for the younger viewers (22 months to 3 years, 4 months). The two older females, Ani and Beth were able to anticipate and answer Pauline's questions, but the younger children, unless a parent was present, did not interact with Pauline. It is interesting that when the parents were asked if they felt their children learnt from the programme, the younger children's parents replied "no". For example, Molly's mother answered, "No, I think it is above her head, especially for a two year old". Emily's mother replied in the same manner:

A. (Answer) "No, I don't think so. Not at 2 1/2."
Q. (Question) "Right."
A. "She picked up on the dinosaur theme when she was..."
Q. "She did, didn't she?"
A. "Yeah. And she talked a lot about that and we read books for a couple of days afterwards and you saw the set-up that Alison did." (On October 8, 1992, which was the

day following the programme in which Pauline discussed dinosaurs, Emily and her sister had arranged all their dinosaurs on the tray of Emily's old highchair.)

Q. (Laughed)

A. "She thought that was pretty neat. And she remembered Paulineosaurus." (Laughed)

Q. "Well, that's good, isn't it?"

A. "But whether that's learning anything that's different from what she would learn at Playcentre where we play with dinosaurs all the time too."

Cory's mother felt that the programme did not teach anything. "It tells you lots of things but it really doesn't teach anything." The older children's parents were a bit more positive, as demonstrated by the comment Beth's mother ,

> Oh, I suppose she learns sort of different things. It is good because they have more, um, like you say **Play School** is more fantasy and this is more real life sort of thing. It is about the forest, different trees, things around her and she learns more about that than she would probably off of **Play School**, so that's better. And it still has stories, and the songs and that she knows and all the rhymes, so that is good.

Finn's mother also felt that her son learnt from the programme.

> I think, um, language development. I think he probably picked up a lot from either whatever he is watching. Cause that, I mean, like all this week she has done transport and talked about things so it gives him a chance to talk about the times he has been on a bus, or a car, or a train, or so, I suppose, um, more so when I am watching with him. Cause then I talk to him about what they are doing. Otherwise I think if he just watches by himself, he tends to just blob. And if something goes past the window he'll watch that just as much as he would watch, you know, what was on TV. Whereas if I am there with him and talking to him about what he is seeing and, "Oh, gosh, we have done that Finn", and "Remember that time", and you know, "da da da da".

You And Me is different in its approach to "teaching" things such as colours, shapes, letters, days of the week, seasons, isolated words in Maori; this shift in emphasis, towards helping a child grow with skills and understanding for everyday activities and relationships, is not as obvious as in other familiar programmes such as **Play School** and **Sesame Street**.

(3) Use of Songs

On **You And Me** there are many original songs, consequently the children are not familiar with them. If a new song was introduced in a particular episode, Pauline repeated it two or three times. However, these new songs are not repeated on subsequent programmes. The children, and their parents, were unable to learn these songs without them being repeated more frequently. It was observable that the older children attempted to sing along and do the actions with Pauline, whereas the younger viewers passively watched during these segments. This supports the studies cited in the literature review that showed when material is beyond young children's comprehension, they become passive viewers or else they found something else to do. When Pauline sang songs that were familiar to the children, nearly all of them tended to happily join in with the singing and the actions required. A suggestion put forward by the parents was perhaps the new music material could be repeated in subsequent programmes. Examples to illustrate the above points are as follows:

a) Emily (2 years, 11 months) co-viewing with her mother who was writing a letter at the table near where her daughter was sitting. Mum glanced periodically at the TV, and asked her daughter questions pertaining to the programme) -- October 6, 1992.

(Pauline sang an unfamiliar song about making a nest and pretending to be a bird. Emily was sitting cross-legged in front of the TV, with her teddy bear in her lap, focusing totally on the TV. She did not join in with Pauline. Next Pauline sang about making Jelly. Emily rocked back and forth to the music.)

M. (Mum) "You were wabbling like a Jelly." (Emily smiled.)

(Next Pauline pretended to be a butterfly using the scarf that she got in her parcel at the beginning of the programme. Mum hummed along while Pauline sang. Emily did not sing but gave the TV her full attention.)

M. (Mum) "Can you fly like a butterfly?" (Pauline moved rapidly around her living room, pretending to be a butterfly while she sang.)

E. (Emily) "No."

Emily's mother felt that it was very important to repeat the new songs that were introduced on the programme.

A. (Answer) "I would like to hear the songs again and again because that gets them familiar with the kids. And if they really want the kids to learn anything....music is just as much value as anything else they might have on the programme."
Q. (Question) "That's right."
A. "It's good to repeat it. You know they do on **Play School**." (Laughed)
Q. "They do. It's interesting because the only song that Emily actually sang was, "The Wheels On The Bus Go Round And Round".
A. "Yeah. She knows it."
Q. "And it's the only one that during the whole time I saw her she actually, you know, she responded to."

b) Gemma (3 years, 7 months) and her mother watching You And Me -- October 27, 1992.

(Pauline sang an unfamiliar song. She asked the audience to repeat after her while she sang it again.)
M. (Mum) "We sing after Pauline, okay Gemma?" (Gemma nodded her head. Both mother and daughter are standing to do the actions with the song. Mum sang along with Pauline but Gemma did not. She did, however, do the actions with encouragement from her mother. At the end of the song Pauline asked the viewers, "Did you join in?")
M. "Mummy did."

c) Hazel and Isabelle (twins: 3 years, 2 months) co-viewing with their mother -- November 13, 1992.

(Pauline sang an action song. Isabelle was inattentive to the television, glancing at it occasionally while playing behind the stool in front of the TV. Her sister, Hazel, gave her full attention to the TV, sitting in her beanbag child sized chair, sucking her thumb. During the song Hazel lost interest. She got up from her chair to climb on the couch located behind it.)
I. (Isabelle) "I think I want the big chair."
M. (Mum) "You want the big chair, do you?"
(Pauline stated while singing, "Jump if you like your name.")

M. "You kids are not jumping." (The two girls continued playing on the couch showing no interest in the programme.)

Hazel and Isabelle's mother felt that Pauline "repeats everything. She repeats the songs too much." She would like the programme to incorporate more songs that are familiar. She pointed out, "Like today, it was about being happy (November 13, 1992). Why not sing, "If You're Happy Clap Your Hands", as that is the one that the kids know and she made up this other song which they don't know." She felt her children would have paid more attention to that particular programme if they were familiar with the songs.

d) Beth (4 years, 4 months) -- September 11, 1992.

(Pauline stated, "Shall we go for another walk on the mountain?" She was referring to the song she sang earlier in the programme.)

B. (Beth) "Wait for me." (Beth put on her scarf, gloves, and slippers while she sang along with Pauline. Earlier in the programme Pauline discussed which warm clothes would be needed for a walk in the mountains. Pauline pretended to put on a scarf, gloves, and boots but Beth preferred "real" clothes. She went into her bedroom to get her scarf and gloves. Beth wanted her winter boots as well but her mother suggested that she could pretend with her slippers.)

After each episode when the researcher asked the children, "Did you enjoy the songs Pauline sang today?" They all replied, "Yes". However, when asked if they could remember what the songs were about, most of them answered, "No". On the other hand, the opening and closing songs proved to be extremely successful in terms of the children recognizing the start of the programme and when it was finishing. The following examples illustrate this:

a) Finn (3 years, 2 months) watching You And Me for the fourth time -- October 22, 1992.

F. (Finn) "Oh, here it is." (Referred to the opening segment.)

M. (Mum) "Rolly, polly down the hill."

F. "Yeah, I love it. I talked to a girl at the picnic. She wasn't a he, she was a she." (Finn sang along with Pauline.)

b) Cory (3 years, 4 months) watching the programme for the second time -- September 22, 1992.

C. (Cory) "You have seen this, haven't you?" (Cory asked the researcher as the programme began. The researcher replied, "Yes, we watched it together yesterday".)

C. "Look Dianne." (This remark was directed towards his mother's friend who was visiting with her baby son.)

C. "Look Mary Jane." (The researcher answered, "Yes, we saw this yesterday".)

C. "Look, Mum."

M. (Mum) "What has she got?" (Pauline was on the screen.)

C. "Dried flowers."

c) Duncan (4 years, 4 months) -- September 29, 1992.

D. (Duncan) "Someone else might come after this. It might be **Play School**. She might be on it. She will have to change her clothes. She is getting ready." (Duncan made these remarks while Pauline was singing the "Good-bye" song.)

d) Beth (4 years, 4 months) -- September 4, 1992.

B. (Beth) "I think this is it." (Stated this as the programme began. Beth had seen a few programmes of **You And Me** when it was first televised.)

B. "I think this might be the adult's one or the child's one?" (Beth's mother told the researcher that she was confused with the programme **Parent Time**, which screened at 1 o'clock. Pauline Cooper originally hosted the programme, and it used the same music score from the opening sequence of **You And Me**.)

e) Jade (2 years, 10 months) -- January 14, 1993.

(Jade finished singing an action song along with Pauline. While Pauline concluded the programme, Jade came and sat beside her Mum. Pauline sang the "Good-bye" song. Jade recognized the significance of this auditory cue.)

J. (Jade) "This is not finished."

M. (Mum) "Don't you want it to be finished?"

J. "No." (End of song)

M. "It's finished. Are you going to say good-bye?"
J. "Good-bye."

(4) Story Time

During the show's story telling time, it was observable the children lost interest in the story when there were only one or two pictures being shown. Children are used to seeing pictures when reading or having someone else read a story. This happens in the home, early childhood settings, and in primary school. As Wichtel (1992: 72) points out, "If you're going to tell a story, tell a story. If you're going to use a picture book, viewers should get to see all the pictures." Research on how young children retain information in regard to story telling demonstrates that it is very important that the stories are relatively short and directed at their comprehension level (Lorch, Bellack, and Augsbach, 1987). Furthermore, in a study comparing televised and traditional (oral) storytelling, Meringhoff found that children who saw a televised story remembered more of the concrete and visual events of the story. The children who had the story read to them, on the other hand, remembered more general events, asked more questions, and made more comments about the story (Meringhoff, 1980; cited in Signoreilli, 1991: 44).

Storytelling and imagination go hand in hand, and television's role as children's storyteller has had an effect upon their ability to be imaginative or creative. Much of the literature suggests that realism in television content, and children's ability to distinguish between fantasy and real material, are important factors in their comprehension of television information and in television's effects on them. Young children have difficulty distinguishing the content on television from real-world experience and may overgeneralise. Van Evra (1984; cited in Van Evra, 1990: 18-19) found first-grade children in one study, for example, did not see television as a world apart. When questioned, the children revealed an inability to give varied responses to real life,

television, and "own family" categories. The children still appeared to be sufficiently egocentric as they assumed that whatever happened in their own family also occurred more generally in other families both in real life and on television.

Children, then, must first learn to distinguish between fantasy and reality on television. Signorielli (1991) suggests that it is not until the age of seven that the average child can readily make these distinctions. Young viewers are more likely to believe that there is a literal reality to what they see on television. This belief decreases with age, diminishing as children begin to understand how television programmes are created and that there are different types of programmes (Gunter and McAleer, 1990: 40-45; Luke, 1990b; Van Evra, 1990).

The work of Jerome and Dorothy Singer at the Yale University Family Television Research and Consultation Center is perhaps the most well known work in the area of children, television, and imagination. (See for example, Singer and Singer, 1983; 1986.) Singer and Singer (1986) state that results from their various studies indicate that while there is no real substitute for adult intervention as part of training children to increase their levels of imaginativeness, the regular viewing of a carefully paced programme that includes make-believe and fantasy, and encourages pretending but clearly separates fantasy and reality, can stimulate the imaginations of children.

These points are important to **You And Me**. The programme does includes many instances of make-believe and fantasy, with Pauline making a distinction between fantasy and reality. Additionally, Pauline encourages the viewer's imagination through her storytelling, by showing some but not all of the illustrations. Likewise she tells oral stories, but the researcher observed that the children lost interest in stories without pictures as is illustrated by the following:

a) Molly (1 year, 10 months) co-viewing with her mother, and her brothers, Julian and Jonathan -- January 29, 1993.

(At 8:45 Pauline began to tell a story but showed no pictures. Previous to this Pauline sang, "The Wheels On The Bus".)

M. (Mum) "Let's do the actions, Molly." (Molly did the actions with her Mum. Julian and Jonathan, sitting in front of the TV, joined in too. The song was familiar to all of them. When it finished, Molly stood by her mother's big, comfortable chair which faced the TV set. Her mother sat in the chair, eating a bowl of cereal for her breakfast, while co-viewing with her daughter. Molly continued to watch the programme but began to lose interest in the story Pauline was telling. Instead, she turned her attention to her mother's breakfast, and kept asking for every other spoonful of cereal. Jonathan was focused totally on the television screen, while Julian was listening but moving around. Molly showed no further interest in the story. There were no pictures to draw her attention back to the screen.)

b) Finn (3 years, 2 months) watching with his mother who was feeding her youngest son -- October 19, 1992.

(Pauline read a story about Mr. Gumby.)

F. (Finn) "I like that story, Mr. Gumby. We don't have that story do we Mum?"

M. (Mum) "No."

(Finn gave the television his full attention at the beginning of the story. However, he soon began to watch the television with brief interruptions, shifting positions on the couch.)

F. "Have you got a big boy baby as well?" (This was addressed to the researcher while Pauline continued reading the story.)

When Pauline acted out a story, with props, the children listened attentively to her. An example is as follows:

Ani (4 years, 11 months) watching the programme with her mother. This was the first time her mother had seen You And Me -- September 18, 1992.

(Pauline stated that she was going to tell a story but first she dressed-up like a scarecrow. Pauline asked, "Do you know what a scarecrow is?" Ani shook her head.

Pauline then asked, "Have you heard of a dancing scarecrow?" Ani looked over at the researcher and shook her head. Ani sat in her chair watching the TV and squished her sandwich between her hands before eating it. Pauline began her story and asked, "What was making that mooing sound?")

A. (Ani) "A cow." (She listened intently to the story Pauline told but did not join in the dancing.)

M. (Mum) "Do you think she is a good scarecrow?"

A. "She doesn't be like one."

As these examples illustrate, the children were interested in listening to a story with props but lost interest in stories without the pictures. The use of accompanying visuals with the stories would be a good idea, as suggested by Shuker and Shuker (1992).

(5) Visitors On The Programme

In the episodes watched where Pauline had visitors the children showed more interest in the programme. The parents also found these specific programmes much more enjoyable. The visitors observed, in particular Martin, were more zany than Pauline and the children really liked them. (One of the suggestions made by Shuker and Shuker (1992) was that more visitors should be introduced on the programme. Consequently, the producer, Julie Weatherall released a media statement indicating that visitors would now be part of the programme every Friday.)

Gemma's mother, too, emphasised that she enjoyed the programmes where Pauline had visitors. (During Gemma's observation period, there were two programmes where Pauline had visitors.) Gemma's mother felt that the visitors represented "normal, everyday people" that children could identify with. Furthermore, she related this to their home environment where they have visitors come into their house all the time. She also noted that they showed things on the programme that "kids can and would normally do and can relate to".

The example of Finn illustrated children's positive responses to the visitors:

Finn (3 years, 2 months) -- October 23, 1992

(Pauline's friend Martin came to her "house". He has just arrived from the airport. Martin helped Pauline tell a story about his trip to the airport, flying in the plane, and the taxi ride to Pauline's place. Finn was lying down on the couch with his cuddly, watching the TV. Finn's Nana, who was visiting for a few days, was knitting on the other couch which also faced the TV.)

N. (Nana) "Who lives in Dunedin?" (Referred to Martin who just arrived from the Dunedin airport.)

F. (Finn) "What?" (His whole attention was focused on the TV.)

N. "Who lives in Dunedin? What's their children's names?"

F. "What's the big boy's name?"

N. "John." (Finn's mother came into the room and sat by Finn on the couch.)

M. (Mum) "What's Pauline doing today?"

N. "Talking about flying. I asked him who lives in Dunedin."

(Pauline and Martin sang, "Zoom, Zoom, Zoom" after the story was finished.)

M. "Where do we sing that?"

F. "Where?"

M. "On **Play School**!"

(Pauline and Martin used their hands to pretend to be planes and zoomed around the house while singing.)

M. "Are you going to do that Finn?"

F. (Shook his head. He was watching the TV with his total attention.)

N. "He was doing the actions earlier." (Referred to the song Pauline sang earlier in the programme.)

M. "He's good, isn't he?" (Commented on Martin.)

F. (Nodded in response.)

(6) Follow-up Activities

There were only two examples noted of follow-up activities relating to the programme. When observing Finn (3 years, 2 months - October 22, 1992) Pauline made a train with boxes. Finn asked his mother if he could make one of them. She replied that they

would have to look for some small boxes. The next day when the researcher arrived Finn showed her a small box they had found to make a train. Another example was Emily (2 years, 11 months - October 7, 1992), who after watching a programme with the theme dinosaurs, said to her sister, "The dinosaur book". Her sister left the room and returned with the book on dinosaurs which Emily showed the researcher. As the researcher was leaving, she walked past Emily's bedroom. Emily stopped the researcher and went into the room to get her plastic dinosaur models. Together they identified the dinosaurs Pauline had discussed on the programme. The following day, after the opening song on **You And Me**, Emily pointed out the highchair to the researcher in the corner of the room. She had arranged her model dinosaurs on it along with plastic trees. She was very pleased with herself.

Jade's mother pointed out that **You And Me** did not encourage follow-up activities in the same manner as **Play School**:

> And if you were at home everyday watching **Play School** they would say for the next episode you will need three toilet rolls and if you had some then it was great because then you could get the three toilet rolls and then they could have a go at some of the things, so, you know, at least work it out what they did and do it later on so there was a sort of continuity between them which was, which was nice.

(7) The Puppets

The segments with the puppets visually caught all the children's eyes. They liked the puppets. However, it was the older children who seemed to get more out of the puppets, verbally commenting on what they were doing. This was demonstrated by Duncan (4 years, 4 months), who told the researcher, "He lost his toothbrush", when the boy puppet stated that he could not find it. When the researcher interviewed Duncan following each programme and asked what he liked most about the programme, the puppet segments were one of his favourites. A typical reply was as follows:

Q. (Question) "What was the best part of the show today?"
A. (Answer) "The puppets."
Q. "The puppets. You really like those puppets, don't you? Why do you like the puppets so much Duncan?"
A. "Cause"....(Pause)
Q. "Do you like what they have to say? Do you like their voices?"
A. (Nodded)
Q. "Today it was the mummy and the little girl, wasn't it, that was on it, the show?"
A. "Yup."
Q. "And your mummy thought it was two men, didn't she?"
A. "Yup." (Smiled)

During another interview, when discussing the puppets, Duncan went on to say:

A. (Answer) "I've got puppets at my kindy."
Q. (Question) "Have they? Do they look like the puppets on **You And Me**?"
A. (Nodded)
Q. "Do they?"
A. "Yeah."
Q. "How many puppets have you got at Kindy?"
A. (Held up both hands.)
Q. "You have got ten puppets at kindy? That's a lot isn't it? Was there anything you didn't like about **You And Me** today, Duncan?"
A. "Yup."
Q. "What didn't you like?"
A. (Shook head.)
Q. "Or did you like it all?"
A. "Yup."

Ani, too, was able to relate the material she saw on the puppet segment of the programme to her own situation. She told the researcher she liked the puppets on **You And Me** and she began to discuss what occurred in that day's segment.

A. (Answer) "Hey guess what? I only liked the puppet one."
Q. (Question) "Did you?"
A. "Yeah, I only liked that." (The radio microphone that was clipped to Ani's top fell off again. It was difficult to attach it securely.)
Q. "Why did you only like the puppet one, Ani?"
A. "Um...Because it had these little kids. And one had a toy and said, "Mine, mine, mine".
Q. "They did, didn't they? They were fighting over it almost, weren't they?"
A. "Yeah. They were fighting over it. They took each others' toys and then they had a go again and they changed and they go, "Ha, ha, ha".
Q. "That's right. And have you got a favourite toy like the puppets had?"
A. "Um...Yup. I like that rubber dog, dog. I like that doggy."

The parents' reaction was quite different. They wondered about the purpose of the puppets and their place in the programme. Hazel and Isabelle's mother, for example, felt that the puppets attracted her daughters' attention but she really did not "think they understood what was being said". She believed the material discussed in the puppet segments were beyond their age group. She went on to say, "the whole programme was beyond their age". She thought "five year olds would probably get more out of it".

The puppet segments did not always flow with the rest of the programme. Jade's mother pointed out, "the puppets don't seem to connect at all". Jade's father agreed. "He was angry or something, wasn't he [the boy puppet]? Like little Jack was angry because he did not have one baked bean label. But that did not have anything to do with what she [Pauline] was talking about. She was talking about being tired." As well, the transition to the interlude with the puppets was sometimes too abrupt, as is shown in the following example:

Finn (3 years, 2 months) -- October 23, 1992.
(Pauline pretended to be an airplane while singing, "Zoom, zoom, zoom".)

F. (Finn) "Oh, I am going to do that. They fly like this and run." (Finn went around the room, pretending to be a plane. Suddenly the puppets came on. Finn stopped in mid-flight. He then went and got his "cuddly" and sat back on the couch.)

(8) Biculturalism

On **You And Me** English is the dominant language, with Maori language and Taha Maori seamlessly woven throughout each programme. "The programme has come a long way in its Maori content - not just language usage, but in Taha Maori integrated into every part of **You And Me**" (Kirton, 1994: 18). Other languages, particularly those from the Pacific Islands, have also been introduced. The team behind **You And Me** feel that the integration and use of Maori language is appropriate (Weatherall, 1991), though some parents are finding it difficult to accept. There were only two cases where the children observed spoke Maori.

a) Ani (4 years, 11 months) -- September 18, 1992.

(Pauline pretended to collect eggs. First, Pauline counted how many eggs she had in English and then she counted in Maori. Ani counted up to five in Maori with Pauline.)

M. (Mum) "Clever Ani."

b) Hazel and Isabelle (twins: 3 years, 2 months) watching with their mother -- November 13, 1992.

M. (Mum) "She is going to tell a story. You might see some pictures. Oh look, a Taniwha."

H. (Hazel) "A Taniwha."

When the researcher asked Gemma's mother what she thought of the programme, she stated that she liked the aspect of the bilingual material that was presented. She also thought the mode of presentation was excellent, for example, talking directly to the viewing audience. Gemma's mother did encourage her daughter to watch **You And Me**. She felt Gemma enjoyed it. Gemma's mother pointed out that it was Gemma's choice to

view this particular programme. When asked if she thought Gemma actually learns from the show, she replied:

> Yes I do. But just because she has been exposed to things and, um, you know especially the bilingual thing too, although she doesn't say anything. But she is aware of the whole Maori....Maori words and things like that. Though I don't do anything specific though we had the odd book.

It was observed that Gemma's mother encouraged her daughter to recognise whenever Pauline spoke or sang in Maori. An example is as follows:

On the third observation day, October, 29, 1992, Gemma, her mother and baby brother, Tim were sitting on the floor watching the programme. Gemma and Tim were eating a biscuit for afternoon tea when Tim threw his biscuit on the floor. Gemma picked it up and began to eat. Her mother took Tim into the kitchen to wash his hands and face. While doing this, she told Gemma:

M. (Mum) "You listen to what Pauline says." (Pauline spoke in Maori.)

G. (Gemma) "That's Maori."

On the other hand, some parents were critical of the Maori aspect. Jade's mother noted:

> There does seem to be a disjunction between very middle-class setting and the fact that she keeps putting in token Maori songs here, there and everywhere. So it sits uneasily with me. I feel uncomfortable with it. I wish that they would either come out and be out and out middle-class about it or make it a traditional sort of programme. It seems to me that it sits very uncomfortably. the way they have gone about it. Um, I mean I don't have any problems with them using Maori songs or Maori language but I think that the way she goes about it is hard. She goes in and talks in Maori or Samoan and yet it's not, she doesn't always seem to use the same words in English. You know, there isn't a translation going on.

Beth's mother also mentioned the lack of translation of the Maori content when asked her thoughts concerning the programme:

A. (Answer) "Well it's alright. Um, but I mentioned before about the Maori words and that. Like, um, they don't explain it enough. I don't know what she is saying and I noticed like when they sing that song and they do all the different phrases and Beth will sing along to it but she doesn't seem to try to do any of the other words. I don't know because she really doesn't know what it's there for and I don't really know what it means so it's a bit hard to get around that."

Q. (Question) "What they want to do in the programme is they wanted to just put the Maori words in so that it just flowed rather than explain them. You obviously do not think that it is a good idea?"

A. "Well I haven't learnt anything from it so I don't see how a four year old can. Maybe I'm too old to be flexible to go with the flow and you know. But it doesn't seem to be, sort of, she doesn't seem to be catching on."

Q. "Right." (It must be noted here that the researcher used this expression only in acknowledgement that the parent had replied to the question asked. The researcher was not confirming that she agreed with the statements that the parent articulated.)

A. "She has picked up a few Maori words but that has been from Kindy when they have done things."

(9) Attention To, Comprehension And Enjoyment Of The Programme

The children observed, on the whole, were attentive to the television screen for extended periods. For example, one of the participants (Emily, aged 2 years, 11 months) gave the television her full attention for the duration of the programme, while another child (Ani, aged 4 years, 11 months) watched the television with only brief interruptions. The youngest participants (Sean and Molly, 22 months of age), viewed only specific segments of the programme. In regard to Sean, when Pauline spoke for long periods of time he lost interest. This may have been due to the fact that Sean did not comprehend what Pauline was talking about. Sean's mother commented on this as well. "He is just not really interested in it. He likes the start but then he loses it. Ummm. He gets a bit bored with it, I think....he liked the puppets but I really don't think he could understand what they were going on about. He liked just looking at them. They talked too quickly."

This reflects the established finding that attention to such programmes varies with age. The longitudinal analyses of 325 children over a period of two years, divided into two age groups, beginning at years' three and five by Huston, Wright, Rice, Kerkman, Seigle, and Brememr (1990) and Pinon, Huston, and Wright (1989) found that the level of attention given to **Sesame Street** and other educational programmes for very young viewers declined with age, and was enhanced when they were encouraged by parents or, among the older children, when younger siblings were also viewers. Perceived age suitability and the time made available to view were more important than cognitive changes in the declining exposure. Such studies support the notion that parents should try and watch educational programmes such as **You and Me** with their children.

This phenomenon is called a shift in preference with increasing age: at early ages, comprehension predicts attention to the screen; comprehension increases with age; and so attention at first rises with age and then declines somewhat, as less attention is required for comprehension (Comstock, 1991: 20). In regard to **You And Me** the younger children did not pay as much attention to the TV, or had to be drawn back to the TV by their parents or older siblings. This suggested that the content was far too difficult for the younger viewers, in particular ages 22 months to 3 years. This is an important objective to keep in mind as **You And Me** is aimed at the pre-school audience, ages 2 to 5 in particular, and the makers of the programme obviously would like children to start watching the programme as young as possible and continue until they are five.

Like familiar programmes such as **Play School**, the slow paced format and the absence of a multitude of quickly shifting visual stimuli enabled children to pay relatively focused and consistent attention to the various programme segments. Luke (1990b: 55-56) points out that this sustained attention, in turn, suggests that children are able to interact with the presenter and activities by talking to the screen, clapping hands, singing or dancing along

with a song. Duncan appeared to enjoy watching **You And Me**. He thoughtfully answered some of Pauline's questions and also expanded on the ideas or issues that were addressed on the programme. For example, on the first day of observation, September 29, 1992, Pauline was singing a song about fishing. Duncan, who was in the room alone with the researcher because his mother had left to pick up his brother from school, stated, "A real big one". He told the researcher that, "We had fish. Shane died. It was the summer he died." (Shane was his fish pet.)

Most of the children responded favourably to the programme. When the researcher questioned Gemma, concerning her response to the programme she had just viewed, her replies followed the same pattern. For example:

Q. (Question) "What did you like about **You And Me** today?"
A. (Answer) "I liked it."
Q. "What did you like best of all?"
A. "The game." (Referred to the game Pauline did during the show, October 28, 1992, where Gemma picked out the object that was different.)
Q. "Was there anything you didn't like about the programme?"
A. "I liked it all."

On another day, when asked, "Why did you like it?", Gemma stated, "Because it's good". During the observation period, Gemma's reactions to the programme indicated that she enjoyed watching and interacting with Pauline. Gemma was also observant in regard to the details in the programme. During the opening segment Gemma would identify most of the images, "Swing, seesaw, farm, park, farm, the vegetable shop". In the second observation, October, 28, 1992, while Pauline was talking from her kitchen, Gemma pointed out, "She has got some golden syrup". The can was on the shelf in Pauline's

kitchen. Gemma added, "She's got peaches". Gemma went over to the television and pointed out these objects to her mother and the researcher.

Beth, Emily, and Ani provide further examples of the children interacting positively with activities in the programme:

a) Beth (4 years, 4 months) -- September 10, 1992.

(Pauline stated, "We are going to play with water today." She then asked the audience if they like playing with water.)

B. (Beth) "Yeah, I like playing with water."

(Beth joined Pauline when she sang the "Good-day" song. Following this Pauline asked the viewers if they have the objects she has.)

B. "Yup, I got one of them." (A funnel.)

B. "Mum's got one of them." (A strainer.)

B. "Yup, I got one of them." (Beth stood in front of the TV, eating a small container of yogurt.)

B. "Yup, Mummy has got a sponge. See." (This was directed to the researcher when Pauline squeezeed the sponge with detergent.)

B. "She is getting it on her jersey." (Laughed. Pauline then asked the audience if they like bubble baths.)

B. "Yeah, I like bubble baths." (Beth continued to look at the TV while eating her yogurt. Meanwhile, her mother was getting more wood for the fire and doing other odd jobs out of the TV room. Next Pauline showed how to blow bubbles from a cup.)

B. "Oh, I have never done that."

While watching **You And Me**, Beth was an "ideal" subject in that she interacted verbally with Pauline, answering the questions that were asked. Beth also participated in the actions of songs and stories that Pauline introduced. When the researcher interviewed Beth and asked her what she liked about that day's programme, a typical reply was as follows:

A. (Answer) "I liked blowing bubbles." (September 10, 1992.)

Q. (Question) "That looked like it was a lot of fun. Have you done that before?"

A. "Yup. I can do it now." (Blew bubbles out of her mouth.)

Q. "That is a good way of doing it, isn't it? And what else did you like about the programme today?"

A. "Um, I liked the row, row, row my boat gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, row." (Sang the song.) "That's it."

Q. "Gosh, and have you heard this song before?"

A. "Unhum."

Q. "And where have you heard this song before?"

A. "Oh, at **Play School** and stuff like that."

Q. "Did you? That's good. Was there anything you didn't like about the programme today, Beth?"

A. (Paused)

Q. "Did you like it all?"

A. (Nodded)

During the week, though, it was noticeable on a few occasions that Beth was not interested enough to repeat rhymes or songs with Pauline. For example, on September 9, 1992, Pauline was reciting a rhyme and Beth said it along with her. When Pauline asked the audience, "Want to do it again?" Beth replied, "No". Nonetheless she joined in with Pauline.

Beth's mother also commented on this.

> She [Pauline] can be a very like, you say, a teacher type of figure where they say alright we are going to do and do this now, we are going to dance now. And Beth gets a bit rebellious about we have to do this again. But she gets up and does it anyway because she is being told to do it. Whereas if she gets up and dances, I mean if they get up and do it, well fine, but it like she feels like she is being ordered to sort of in a way.

b) Emily (2 years, 11 months) -- October 13, 1992.

(Emily still had afternoon naps so her mother taped the programme and it was viewed later in the afternoon. Emily had an older brother and sister, who attended Primary School, and they watched the programme with Emily. On the TV Pauline sang "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star". Emily knew the words so she sang along. Her mother, brother and sister joined in too.)

E. (Emily) "No, just me." (Emily stated this to her brother.)

M. (Mum) "That's lovely, Emily." (Mother praised Emily for singing along with Pauline. Pauline repeated the song and Emily sang again. Pauline sang it once more and so did Emily.)

(Later in the same programme Pauline told a story and her visitor, Tim, drew the pictures to illustrate what Pauline was saying. Tim began to draw. Emily's brother stated, "Oh, he's good". His mother asked, "Do you think he's good, George?" He nodded. Next Tim drew a shark and Emily's sister laughed, "That's a silly shark!" Pauline then asked Tim to draw a "Bat in the cage", which he did. During the story, Emily's mother was in the open plan kitchen so she could see what was happening on the TV. She finished preparing the evening meal and came to sit beside Emily, who sat cross-legged on the floor in front of the TV. Emily's full attention was on the TV.)

M. "Isn't that good?" (Mum asked Emily, referring to Tim's drawings. She did not reply. At the end of the story Pauline asked the viewers which picture they liked best. Both Emily's brother and sister replied, "Shark!")

E. (Emily) "The monster."

M. (Mum) "The monster?"

E. "And the cave."

M. "The cave?"

E. "I like, I like all of them."

M. "Do you?"

E. "Yes."

(After the story, Tim drew more illustrations, including a cat. Emily laughed and pointed to the picture. Pauline asked the viewers, "What rhymes with cat?")

E. (Emily) "A table on him." (Tim drew a hat which Emily thought was a table. Next Pauline asked, "What rhymes with hat?" Tim drew a bat which both Emily's brother and sister identified.)

M. (Mum) "What's that, Emily?"

E. "A bat."

c) Ani (4 years, 11 months) -- September 18, 1992.

Ani had not previously seen the programme. During the week of observation Ani interacted frequently with Pauline, both verbally and nonverbally. She appeared happy to join in the songs and fingerplays Pauline introduced. Some were familiar to Ani while others were not. For example, on September 18, 1992, Pauline introduced various farm animals and the sounds that they made. Afterwards, Pauline told the audience, "I know a song about a farm." She was referring to "Old MacDonald had a farm". Ani immediately stated, "Old MacDonald had a farm". Pauline asked, "Do you want to sing it with me?" Ani shook her head. Pauline began to sing and Ani joined in on the second verse when a pig was introduced. When Pauline finished, she asked, "Did you sing along?" Ani nodded.

In some instances the material was too easy for Ani. She anticipated the questions that Pauline asked and she answered them correctly before they were stated. During one particular segment of a programme, where Pauline introduced the concept of counting up to five, it was interesting to note that Ani counted in Maori but the presenter did not. Ani's mother also made the comment that Pauline could have done the counting in Maori. When Ani's mother was asked if she thought Ani learnt from the programme, she noted:

A. (Answer) "From what we saw today, not for her age."
Q. (Question) "Do you want to explain that further? Do you think she is too young to get the concepts?"
A. "Oh, well the language stuff, you know the expressions were pitched too high but the other content, she is more advanced. She is nearly five. So if you were thinking about a three year old, yes, I think a three year old would. But it needs to bring in more modeling, more play modeling."
Q. "Right, but it was interesting as she [Ani] anticipated the questions Pauline would ask. She could answer them correctly, and she anticipated them before Pauline stated them."
A. "I really liked the interaction."
Q. "It's good, isn't it?"
A. "I think that's excellent. It is much more interactive than **Play School**. I think that could be built on."

When the researcher interviewed Ani to ask what she liked about today's programme, she was very specific in her answers, for example:

A. (Answer) "Yup, I liked the scarecrow, and I even liked the, (paused), the, and I even liked the story about the scarecrow. And I even liked the one when the scarecrow, when all the kids were sleeping and out pops the scarecrow."
Q. (Question) "That was a nice story, wasn't it? Was there anything you didn't like about the programme today, Ani?"
A. "No."
Q. "Did you like everything?"
A. "Of course I did." (Laughed) "You asked me if I liked everything about the programme and I said of course I did." (Laughed)

Transcribing Ani's interviews revealed that there were many examples of complexive thinking, that is, the stringing together of ideas that have no unifying concept (Hatch, 1990). When discussing particular aspects of the programme Ani did or did not enjoyed, she stated:

A. (Answer) "I don't like the, um, oh yeah, I didn't like the kind of when the, there was the writing that message. No, when she was doing that painting and drawing that note."
Q. (Question) "You didn't like that?"
A. "Yes, I did like that one."
Q. "You did like that?"
A. "Yeah, but I didn't like this canoe. (There was no canoe in the programme). I didn't like the one where there was the school girl. Oh, I was at the beach with my Daddy. I didn't like that bit." (This was not related to what was on the programme.)

As pointed out in the literature review, children as well as adults are likely to do other activities while viewing television (Loch, Anderson, and Levin, 1979). This was illustrated, for example, during the third observation period of the twins, November 11, 1992:

The researcher was greeted by the twins and their mother at the back door. Their mother stated, "It's time for the lady to come on". The girls, their mother, and the researcher went into the lounge. Isabelle arranged their special chairs in front of the TV. However, Isabelle stood beside her chair and began to suck her thumb while Hazel sat on a stool beside her mother, sucking her thumb. After the opening credits and Pauline's greeting, Pauline told the audience that she had lots of washing to do. The twins' mother comments on this, "She's got lots of washing". The twins are still wary of the researcher. They divide their attention between the TV screen and the researcher. Isabelle edged closer to where Hazel was and sat down beside her on the stool. Their mother left the room to go into the kitchen and Hazel immediately followed her. Isabelle's attention was on the TV so she stayed in the room a few sections more before she left too. This was during a segment where a daughter and her father were doing laundry.

Isabelle returned to the lounge with her toy clothes line. Hazel followed her bringing in clothes that she began to hang on the clothes line. Their mother encouraged them from the kitchen where she was busy but both girls return to the kitchen. Their mother returned to the lounge with them. Together the girls began to hang up the clothes while glancing periodically at the television.

Summary

While **You And Me** is generally engaging the children, its main appeal is for the older children, and it has yet to win over the youngest viewers and the parents. This may be a function of longevity and sequent familiarity. With the emphasis on everyday experiences within the home and family, **You And Me** is clearly relevant to the development - physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally - of pre-school children.

Some aspects of the programme worked better than others. The common established technique of the single presenter, Pauline, personally addressing the viewer was very successful with the children. The home-like setting of the programme appealed to the children, however some of the parents felt that it portrayed a very middle class environment, which would be unattainable for many viewers.

The programme incorporated many original songs. The older children, and the majority of the parents, attempted to sing along and do the actions, whereas the young viewers passively watched during these segments. This supports the finding that when material is beyond young children's comprehension, they become passive viewers, or else they find something else to do. The opening and closing songs, on the other hand, were very successful in catching the attention of all children and they recognised their significance. **You And Me** attempted to encourage the children's imagination through storytelling by showing some but not all the illustrations. The children, however, lost interest in stories without pictures. Children are used to more accompanying visuals with stories.

Visitors on the programme proved popular, providing more interest and enjoyment for both the parents and the children. The parents liked the interaction between the presenter and her visitors.

The programme format did not encourage follow-up activities in the same manner as **Play School**, with only two incidents recorded.

The puppet segments visually caught all children's attention. They liked the puppets, but it was the older children who more readily understood the material presented. The parents, however, questioned the purpose of the puppets and their role in the programme.

Ambiguity in parental attitudes towards the Maori content was also evident. Some parents mentioned that they would prefer to have a translation of Maori so that they and their children could understand what was going on.

Overall, the children were attentive to the programme for extended periods. The youngest participants viewed only specific segments, while the older children watched with only brief interruptions. This reflects the established findings that attention to such programmes varies with age. Pinon, Huston and Wright (1989) found the level of attention given to **Sesame Street** and other educational programmes for very young viewers declined with age, and was enhanced when they were encouraged by parents or, among the older children, when younger viewers were also present. Such studies support the idea that parents should co-view educational programmes such as **You And Me** with their children.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Television is a particularly powerful force in the contemporary socialisation of pre-school children. The majority of households in New Zealand have television, and children spend a significant amount of their time viewing it. There is an accumulating body of academic research evidence, some of which is highlighted in this study, which strongly supports the very positive learning potential of television. Research suggests that this learning function can be implemented during all stages of childhood, if appropriate programming for the targeted age group is utilised. Studies done in the United States using educational pre-school programmes such as **Sesame Street**, and in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand with **Play School,** illustrate that children can and do learn many valuable lessons from such television programmes. However, real live interaction with other children, older siblings and parents, or other adults, is extremely important, not only for the enhancement of creativity and imagination but for social and language development as well. Regardless of the quality of such programmes, the television screen is no substitute for social interaction, especially for young viewers. Young children can benefit most from television if parents co-view with them and discuss what they have seen. Parental involvement, through guidance or interactional support, or "scaffolding", in play and play acting with their children while they watch, or initiating ideas, is necessary in fostering development in terms of physical behaviour, verbal communication and cognitive abilities.

The major aims of this study were to explore young children's responses to **You And Me**; for example, how they participated, and what aspects engaged their attention, and to investigate whether their parents watched/discussed the programme with their children. The individual child studies undertaken illustrated the individual nature of each child's

viewing behaviour in relation to the programme. The interaction that occurred during the observation period in most instances involved the parents. Children's responses to **You And Me** had much to do with cognitive ability, age, overall viewing time, types of other programmes watched, and parental supervision of both viewing and programme selection. They appear to understand the basics of television at an earlier age than was previously thought. Children actively watch television and tend to understand what they watch; they do not just sit and stare vacantly. They look at and away from the television set with their viewing guided by the auditory cues that signal programme material they will enjoy and understand. As Anderson and Collins (1988: 22) note, "Children's attention to television generally appears to be a rational rule-guided activity which acts in the service of comprehension and allows engagement in concurrent activities".

Given that children are active viewers who absorb information and actively process it, their strategies for doing so become more efficient as their general cognitive skills mature and they acquire more experience with television. Children increasingly use verbal encoding of television material, which enhances their comprehension and retention. At the same time, television can also enhance children's language development. In accordance with the research done in this area, the children who took part in this study varied developmentally in their reliance on the salient feature of **You And Me** to guide their viewing experience.

For pre-school children, television can stimulate conversation skills, co-operation with other children and parents, imaginative play, the development of logical inferences, the comprehension of stories and insight into, and sympathy with, other people's human dilemmas. Parents, and other significant adults, play an important role in encouraging this learning. There are differences in the quantity and quality of scaffolding support given to children. Quantity refers to how high the scaffold is, what level and how long it is kept in

place, while quality is associated with the different ways in that aid is offered, for example, through directing attention, modelling, giving encouragement or asking questions. There were many instances where the children with encouragement from their parents, or older siblings, became more active viewers of **You And Me**. The study confirmed Smith's view: "Ideally children, initially spectators, become participants and with the support of an adult learn the rules, grasp the meanings and become able to provide assistance to themselves and control their own behaviour" (Smith, 1992a: 12). The important benefits derived from television viewing must be cultivated and encouraged by parents.

The Limitations Of This Research

There are two primary limitations which must be acknowledged in a study of this kind: the breadth of the relevant literature; and methodological constraints and difficulties.

As Anderson and Collins (1988: 75) state, in the literature on children and television, one can find relevant theory, research, commentary, and considered analysis in a variety of printed and electronic sources of an interdisciplinary and international character. This range of sources is uneven in quality, and represents a substantial problem of search and selection for researchers. The problem is exacerbated by the vast number of substantive areas related to the central field of children and television, which include particular aspects of child development, cognitive science, communication studies, education research and practice, linguistics, marketing and advertising research, the neurosciences, pediatrics, philosophy (especially semiotics), psychiatry, sociology, and television production.

Then there are the difficulties associated with doing small-scale research on children and television within a limited time frame. A relatively small sample was used in this study, and a limited time was spent with each of the children and their parents. This made it

difficult to make sustainable broad generalisations. Of course, this is a constraint of all case study research. Further, the youngest children's limited verbal skills suggested a lack of programme comprehension. As Van Evra (1990) points out, however, there is an important difference between linguistic competence and linguistic performance in such situations. Young children's relatively limited responses may well be "due to their inability to express their mastery of a concept or an idea rather than to their inability to understand it" (Van Evra, 1990: 15).

Future Directions For Research

The current production, scheduling and funding of local children's television is an area that requires further research. To provide a context for analysis, the historical evolution and contemporary status of the child audience needs to be undertaken.

Since the New Zealand government deregulated broadcasting in 1989, the television industry has been rapidly transformed. The current competitive environment has led to a new construction of the child audience, one that relates more closely to advertiser appeal. Children have become a market, and the quality of programmes offered to them has declined. At the first world summit conference on television and children in Melbourne in May, 1995, New Zealand was ranked well below other developed countries. The executive director of the Association of New Zealand Advertisers, David Forsythe (cited Mahy, 1995: 18) stated: "From Anza's viewpoint, the main conclusion of the conference is that the overall quality and variety of children's television programmes here falls well short of the standards achieved in many other countries ... advertisers will obviously have much to lose if the networks fail to respond to some of the conference's main outcomes".

Researchers working in the area of children and television emphasise the pressing need for more research on the educational uses of television. In particular, researchers need to

know specifically how children's developing cognitive capacities make certain forms and formats of television too easy, appropriate, or too difficult to engage the most mature and thoughtful processing of which they are capable. Here, the observation of pre-school children's viewing in the home environment offers the opportunity for a rich source of data.

In New Zealand, until recently, there was a lack of available research on pre-school children and television. Lealand (1992; 1993), and Shuker and Shuker (1992) produced tentative findings about what worked and did not work in educational television aimed at the pre-school audience. But a longitudinal study was needed to better explore the role television plays in the development of this age group, and, in particular, how well educational television prepares them for school. In late 1995, Lealand's comprehensive longitudinal study on television and New Zealand preschoolers was published, filling an important gap. Lealand (1995: 8) described an important aspect of the lives of New Zealand children "with some complexity and detail", and expressed the hope that "other researchers will be encouraged to extend the scope of this research, perhaps by examining the place of television in the lives of *older* New Zealand children -- if only to reduce our sometimes uncritical dependence on overseas research and perspectives!"

Such longitudinal research needs to be extended by beginning early in the pre-school years before television viewing is well established as a consistent behaviour, and it "*must* contain assessments of the intellectual environment provided by the family, including attitudes toward schooling, reading, and TV viewing" (Anderson and Collins, 1988: 77). The extent that New Zealand parents participate in their children's television viewing also needs to be examined in more detail, given that parent involvement in discussing programme content, particularly explaining and highlighting particular content aspects, will provide positive social learning experiences for under five's.

Finally, programme makers need to be more conscious that visual attention alone is not sufficient for a child's comprehension, and formal features which maintain children's attention can increase learning when the content is within the child's capacities. "Children come to understand and use the codes and symbol systems of television to make sense of the content that it presents. To the extent that they correctly perceive segments markers, anticipate future content from formal cues, understand the connotations of forms as well as content, and understand the grammar of the medium, they will be likely to comprehend the content presented" (Huston and Wright, 1984: 16). Producers of children's television can use this information to make their programmes maximally comprehensible, to assist viewers to select central content themes, and to represent information in a manner that can be readily understood by children. It is important that television content be understood in order for pro-social and educational messages to be effectively conveyed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Questionnaire: Children

1. What did you like about **You And Me** today?
2. What did you like best of all?
3. Why did you like _____?
4. What did you not like about today's programme?
5. Why not?
6. Did you enjoy the songs Pauline sang today?
7. How do you know when it is time to watch **You And Me**?

Interview Questionnaire: Parents

1. Tell me what you think of the TV programme **You And Me**?
2. Do you encourage your child/ren to watch **You And Me**? If yes, explain why.
3. Do you think your child learns from this programme? If yes, what?
4. Do you video **You And Me**? Why?
5. What other programmes do your child/ren watch?
6. How much TV does your child/ren watch?
7. How often do you watch TV with your child?
8. Do you regulate your child/ren's viewing habits?
9. Are your child/ren allowed to turn the TV on and off when they like? If yes, at what age did you let them?
10. What is your opinion of TV?
11. Do you think TV can be educational?
12. What would you like **You And Me** to do for your child/ren?

APPENDIX 2: OBSERVATION SAMPLES

The following are examples of the observations recorded while the children watched **You And Me**.

(a) Cory (3 years, 4 months) watching the programme with his mother -- September 21, 1992

(Cory sat on the floor, in front of the TV, colouring in his book. The TV was turned on before **You And Me** started. This is the first time Cory and his mother have seen the programme.)

2:35 (When the programme began Cory continued to colour while watching it.)

M. (Mum) "Put your colouring away and sit up and watch the programme." (Mum sat in her comfortable chair, which directly faced the TV screen. She kept herself busy knitting while watching **You And Me**.)
C. (Cory) "I've seen this before."
M. "No, you haven't."
C. "You're right, I've not seen this before."

(When Pauline sang the opening song, Cory was stretched out on the floor, on his stomach, close to the TV. He kept time to the music with his legs, moving them up and down. After she finished singing, Pauline talked about parties. She asked the viewing audience, "Have you been to a party?")

C. (Cory) "I have."
M. (Mum) "Yes you have."
C. "Natalie's." (Smiled)

(Pauline made a party hat. During this time, Cory's attention was focused on the TV. He did not lie still, his legs were constantly moving. Pauline asked if her hat looked good.)

C. (Cory) "It does." (Next Pauline cut off pink strips of paper and stated, "Do you know what colour this is?")
C. "Pink." (Pauline, when finishing making her hat, asked, "Does it fit?")
C. "Yup."

2:45 (While Pauline sang, Cory kept beat with his feet. During the song, Cory began to colour in his book again.)

C. (Cory) "I am going to make this for Mary Jane." (Told his mother and then he went and showed the researcher the picture. He returned to his position on the floor except this time he was on both knees, bent over. He watched the TV while colouring in.)

(There was a video clip of Rickie "trying on hats".)

M. (Mum) "Oh, that's a nice hat." (Cory focused once more on the TV. He put his feet straight out from under him and watched this segment. Pauline came back on and sang another song. Cory began colouring in, with attention to this task.)
C. (Cory) "I'm drawing a picture." (Stated this to the researcher, who replied, "That's nice".)
C. "I am doing it for my Mum." (Showed his Mum the picture and then the researcher. He moved with his colouring book in front of where the researcher was sitting and began to colour. When the puppets came on, he glanced at the TV. He then moved the colouring book back where he was originally, near his mother.)

C. (Cory) "I am colouring in a picture now for Mary Jane."
M. (Mum) "Try and stay within the lines, now, won't you?"
C. "I am trying."
M. "Try going a bit slower." (Stopped colouring to give his full attention to the TV. He sat up on his two legs.)

2:55 (Cory did not do any of the actions that Pauline suggested. Instead, he started colouring.)
C. (Cory) "This is purple, Mum." (Choose a purple crayon to colour in. When the puppets came on, Cory gave his full attention to the TV. When they finish, he began colouring once again.)
C. "Heaps of blue. You're going to have lots of blue, Mary Jane." (Cory continued to colour in when Pauline repeated the party song. Cory's attention was focused more on his colouring than on the TV.)
C. "You can have three (colouring pictures). Once, two three." (Pointed to each one as he counts. When the closing song is sung, he listened to Pauline.)

(b) Duncan (4 years, 4 months) is a regular watcher of You And Me. (His mother gave him the choice of watching either Play School or You And Me and he preferred the later. On the second day of observation, September 30, 1992, Duncan was sitting on the kitchen floor making a teddy bear scuba diver when the researcher arrived. The TV was on and he could see it from where he sat.)

2:35 (He continued making the bear when the programme started. Duncan kept glancing over at the TV screen while he worked, cutting sticky tape. He did not interact verbally or physically with the programme. Duncan's mother had gone into his baby sister's bedroom as she awoke when **You And Me** began. His mother brought Ruby into the TV room to change her.)

2:45 (Duncan was making flippers for his bear when the puppets come on).

M. (Mum) "Whose that man, Duncan?"
D. (Duncan) "That's a girl. One's her Mum, one's her sister." (His mother left the room to get an article of clothing for Ruby.)

(Duncan finished his task in the kitchen, went into the TV room and sat in front of the TV. Pauline showed a posture of Mother Earth and Father Sky she found while cleaning up her living room.)
D. (Duncan) "She has boobs." (Duncan was referring to Mother Earth and he directed this statement to the researcher as both his mother and sister had left the room. The researcher replied, "That's right. She's a Mum.")
D. "The man might fall on her boobs. He might fall on her face." (Pauline began to sing.)
D. "She likes the song." (Referred to his sister, Ruby, who came back into the room with his mother who was dressing her. Following the song, Pauline read a story about a cat called 'Moon.')
M. (Mum) "Have we heard this story before?"
D. "Yes at _____." (Named the day care centre he used to attend. While Pauline read the story, Duncan began to do exercises while glancing at the TV.)
D. "She be on **Play School** too." (Stated this to his mother and the researcher. At this point, Duncan's mother and his sister left to pick up his older brother from school.

Duncan stayed with the researcher to watch the end of **You And Me**. Duncan continued to do his exercises.)

D. "See where I put my arms? See where I put my feet so I don't hurt my head?" (He told this to the researcher. He then told the researcher about his friends and about his older brother's school yard. This happened while Pauline read the story. He still glanced at the TV.)

D. "Moon?" (This was directed to the researcher, so she replied, "That's a funny name for a cat." Following the story, Pauline sang a song about a home. Duncan did not sing along.)

2:55 (The puppets came on.)

D. (Duncan) "He lost his toothbrush." (When Pauline returned she had her posture she found while cleaning up.)

D. "She has to put it there." (Discussed where Pauline should put the posture. She sang another song.)

D. "She uses two hands." (Comments on the actions Pauline did while singing. Duncan did not join in. After singing, Pauline stated, "I liked that song.")

D. "She likes that song, too. She is going to put that posture up there." (Pauline put the posture on the notice board.)

D. "We have to do that now." (Referred to the interview done following the programme, on the tape recorder, when Pauline sang the "Good-bye" song.)

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SAMPLES

(a) Beth (4 years, 4 months old); Interview -- September 9, 1992

Q. (Question) "What did you like about **You And Me** today?"

A. (Answer) "I liked the sea."

Q. "Umhum."

A. "Aren't you going to hear me on the microphone?"

Q. "It is already playing on the microphone now. So you liked the sea did you? What else did you like about the programme?"

A. "Um. I liked (paused) the story with Harry."

Q. "That was a good story wasn't it? Have you heard that story before about Harry?"

A. "Yup."

Q. "Have you? Where did you hear it before?"

A. "At Kindy."

Q. "At Kindy."

A. "Oh and at **Play School**."

Q. "On **Play School**. That's nice, isn't it?"

A. "And I hated Spot." (Laughed)

Q. "Sorry?"

A. "I hated Spot."

Q. "Right. Now what didn't you like about the programme? Was there something you didn't like about the programme today?"

A. "I liked lots of things. I liked the whole lot of the programme."

Q. "You liked the whole thing did you? And did you like the song that Pauline sang today?"

A. "Yup. And I can sing you a song after I talked about this."

Q. "You like singing don't you?"

A. "Yeah. And I am going to sing on the microphone."

Q. "Okay, you can sing a song."

A. "When I finished talking."

Q. "Okay that's fine."

A. "And I liked (long pause) the birdie on the other day." (Referred to yesterday's programme)

Q. "Yes, you asked me if she still had the bird. Do you think she might still have her bird?"

A. (Paused)

Q. "She might, mightn't she?"

A. "It might have been hers or one of her friends."

Q. "It might have been. It was a beautiful bird, wasn't it? Do you know what kind of bird it was?"

A. "Blue."

Q. "Blue. Do you know what type it was?"

A. (Paused)

Q. "Was it a parrot?"

A. "I think so."

Q. "Do you think it was a parrot? Okay. Now I was going to say how do we know what time **You And Me** is on? How do we know when it is on?"

A. "Um. Cause it's after the ads."

Q. "It's after the ads. Well that's a good reason, isn't it?"

A. "Yeah."

Q. "Oh well, that's good. Okay, I think we'll stop here."

(b) Beth: Interview -- September 10, 1992

Q. (Question) "What did you like about **You And Me** today, Beth?"

A. (Answer) "I liked blowing bubbles."

Q. "That looked like it was a lot of fun. Have you done that before?"

A. "Yup. I can do it now." (Blew bubbles out of her mouth)

Q. "That is a good way of doing it, isn't it? And what else did you like about the programme today?"

A. "Um, I liked the row, row row my boat gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, mow". (Sang the song.) That's it."

Q. "Gosh, and have you heard that song before?"

A. "Umhum."

Q. "And where have you heard this song before?"

A. "Oh, at **Play School** and stuff like that."

Q. "Did you? That's good. Was there anything you didn't like about the programme today, Beth?"

A. (Paused)

Q. "Did you like it all?"

A. (Nodded)

Q. "Oh that's good. I noticed that you are learning the song when Pauline sings 'Good day' when she first starts. Do you know the words mostly to that song now, don't you? And you sang the 'Good-bye' song too, didn't you? Do you like those songs?"

A. (Nodded)

Q. "And did you like the song about the bubbles today?"

A. (Nodded)

Q. "Did you? Did you like doing the actions to it while Pauline was singing it?"

A. "Yup."

Q. "That's good, isn't it? I think that is all we need to ask about today. How did we know when **You And Me** was going to start today, Beth?" How do we know when it is on?"

A. "Cause it's after the ads."

Q. "It is, isn't it? Well that's good. I think we might stop here today."

A. "That's two times we've been doing it. After the ads, after the ads."

Q. "That's right. I asked you that yesterday, too, didn't I? You were very clever to remember."

(c) Ani (4 years, 11 months); Interview -- September 15, 1992

Q. (Question) "What did you like about the programme **You And Me** today?"

A. (Answer) "Um. I think." (The microphone fell off.)

Q. "Do you remember what you liked best of all about the programme?"

A. "Yes. I liked (The microphone fell off again). Oh, it has come off again."

Q. "Yes, it's very sensitive. I will put it on again for you. Here we go."

A. "Hello." (Ani spoke right into the microphone.)

Q. "Did you like the song Pauline sang today on the programme, Ani?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "Did you?"

A. "Umhum."

Q. "And did you like it when she did the sign language? I saw that you were imitating it. Did you enjoy learning the sign language?"

A. "Yeah."

Q. "Was there something you didn't like about the programme?"

A. "Um, when she done the show."

Q. "When she did what sorry?"

A. "When she done the show."

Q. "Yeah, that was nice, wasn't it? Did you like the beautiful card that she made?'

A. "Yes, I loved it."

Q. "Did you?"

A. "With spots and colours of yellow, red and blue. Look can you see that vase up there?" (Pointed to the shelf with the vase standing on it.)

Q. "That's a beautiful vase up there, isn't it?"

A. "Yeah. You got funny earrings."

Q. "I do, don't I, Ani?"

A. "Yeah."

Q. "Ani, was there anything you didn't like about the programme today?"

A. "Oh yeah."

Q. "What was that?"

A. "Umm. Oh no, nothing."

Q. "Nothing? Did you like everything about the programme?"

A. "Yes, I liked. No I know what I didn't like. I didn't like the kind of bits when it wasn't, when it wasn't, um, I love, um, I didn't."

Q. "What bits didn't you like? What bits are you talking about? The puppets? The? Which bits are you talking about, Ani?"

A. "I don't like the, um, oh yeah, I didn't like the kind of when the, there was the writing that message. No, when she was doing that painting and drawing that note."

Q. "You didn't like that?"

A. "Yes I did like that one."

Q. "You did like that."

A. "Yeah, but I didn't like this canoe. (There was no canoe in the programme.) I didn't like the one where there was the school girl. Oh, I was at the beach with my Daddy. I didn't like that bit."

Q. "You didn't like that bit. Oh, that alright. You do not have to like all the bits, do you?"

A. "Yeah, but I liked the rest of the bits."

Q. "Good. I am really pleased about that. I think that we will finish here today."

(d) Ani: Interview -- September 18, 1992

Q. (Question) "What did you like about **You And Me** today?"

A. (Answer) "Yup, I liked the scarecrow, and I even like the (paused) the, and I even liked the story about the scarecrow, and I even liked the one when the scarecrow, when all the kids are sleeping and out pops the scarecrow."

Q. "That was a nice story, wasn't it? Was there anything you didn't like about the programme today, Ani?"

A. "No."

Q. "Did you like everything?"

A. "Of course I did. (Laughed) You asked me if I liked everything about the programme. And I said, of course I did. (Laughed)

Q. "Did you like the songs Pauline sang today, Ani?"

A. "Umm."

Q. "Did you like the songs that she sang today?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "Did you?"

A. "Umhum."

Q. "Do you remember what songs she sang today?"

A. "No."

Q. "That was a hard question, wasn't it? That was another toughie. And I was just going to say, was there anything you didn't like about the programme? Did you like the puppets on the programme?"

A. "I liked everything."

Q. "Did you like the puppets?"

A. "Of course. If I hadn't liked the puppets, I loved everything."

Q. "Did you? Do you think (the microphone fell off). It comes off quite easily, doesn't it?"

A. "Yeah, it pops off."

Q. "It pops off, doesn't it? I don't think I put it on right. Okay?"

A. "Hey guess what? I only liked the puppet one."

Q. "Did you?"

A. "Yeah, I only liked that." (Microphone fell off again.)

Q. "Why did you only like the puppet one, Ani?"

A. "Um... Because it had these little kids. And one had a toy and said, "Mine, mine, mine."

Q. "They did, didn't they? They were fighting over it almost, weren't they?"

A. "Yeah, they were fighting over it. They took each others toys and then they had a go again and they changed and then they go, "Ha, ha, ha."

Q. "That's right. And have you got a favourite toy like the puppets had?"

A. "Um... Yup, I liked that rubber dog, dog. I like that doggy."

Q. "Do you? We will stop here."

(e) Emily (2 years, 11 months); Interview -- October 6, 1992

Q. (Question) "What did you like about **You And Me** today?"

A. (Answer) "The girl."

Q. "Do you remember her name?"

A. "Pauline."

Q. "That's right. Now was there anything you did not like about the programme?"

A. "No."

Q. "Did you like the puppets?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "Can you remember anything else that you liked on the programme?"

A. "No."

(f) Emily: Interview -- October 7, 1992

Q. (Question) "What did you like about **You And Me** today?"

A. (Answer) "The dinosaurs."

Q. "Which dinosaurs did you like the best?"

A. "Just the baby dinosaurs."

Q. "Was there anything that you didn't like about today's programme?"

A. "No."

Q. "Did you enjoy the songs Pauline sang today?"

A. "Yes."

APPENDIX 4: HIGHLIGHTED EXTRACTS FROM ANI'S MOTHER'S INTERVIEW -- September 18, 1992

Q. (Question) "Jean, can you tell me what you think of the TV programme **You And Me**?"

A. (Answer) "On the positive side, it is very interactive."

Q. "Umhum."

A. "The child interacts a lot. But I think that it is too restrictive to the one room, the one environment."

Q. "Right."

A. "So like if you look at today's programme, there's the scarecrow. How many children will have seen a scarecrow? Or a picture of one? And the cow? There will be some kids watching that don't know a cow. So I felt that there should have been some visual input there of the real thing."

Q. "So like in the story, she should show pictures of the story instead of just acting it out?"

A. "Both."

Q. "Both?"

A. "Both should be incorporated in. The good thing about not showing the whole story illustrated is that it leaves the child imagination to bring in things."

Q. "That's a good point."

A. "And most TV programmes don't."

Q. "That's right. They just show you the book and read it."

A. "Yeah. They exclude the imagination. So I liked the way there was plenty of room for the child's imagination to see the cow coming up the scarecrow. But I wondered about children that don't know what a scarecrow looks like or a cow looks like. What kind of a creature are they seeing? So I felt if I was presenting I would have put in, with a group of new entrants children, I would have put in a picture of a cow first, and a scarecrow. We would have talked about what's a scarecrow, what it does. You do not even see them anymore, they have those guns."

Q. "Oh that's right. You don't."

A. "Also scarecrows aren't used anymore. Alright?"

Q. "That's right."

A. "Unless the children have had a book read to them about scarecrow and been shown a picture of one, they won't know what it is. They won't know what it does. Because the word scare and crow is not going to be part of their vocabulary at this age."

Q. "That's very good. And can you think of anything else you want to add there? These are very good points, actually."

A. "That was the main thing I noted. I also wondered. (Paused) I thought it was a good attempt the way they were trying with "you have lost your voice". (Jean was referring to one of the puppet segments in today's show.)

Q. "Right."

A. "And "the cat's got your tongue". They were trying to explain what that language meant. But I felt that it was a bit too wishy washy. Wasn't it?"

Q. "Ummm."

A. "It wasn't specific enough to show it as a joke. And it was probably a bit beyond this age level. They are probably a bit too young to appreciate it. Whereas if you were talking to eight and nine year olds like that."

Q. "It's quite different."

A. "Yeah. It's standard one. They know a cat can't get your tongue but a preschooler thinks a cat can get your tongue. So I felt that was good to take expressions and explain them but it was pitched at too high a level."

Q. "Okay, that's good. What do you think about the puppets?"

A. (Pause) "They look a bit strange." (Laughed)

Q. "Someone described them as demented, demented looking creatures."

A. "Yeah, um, they look strange to an adult point of view but we got to look at how the kid responds to it."

Q. "Yeah, that's why I asked Ani if she liked the puppets."

A. "Because children often prefer something simpler and basic features rather than too, (paused) and also if it a bland feature like that the kid is left to project their own personality and project themselves into it and I wondered if that was what they were trying to do with that kind of a puppet."

Q. "And also, too, if you look at kids drawings, for example, there are the big heads, stick arms and legs."

A. "But I think they need to be a bit more rounded. Those are the basic points. But **I wonder about the setting of the house. I reasonably like it, but it is probably a bit too flash.**"

Q. "Very middle-class?"

A. "Yes, **a very middle-class environment and set-up there**. I thought it was good the toy library, she put it in like that because a lot of preschool parents do belong to toy libraries and there is that sort of access. (A piece of material used in today's show, Pauline stated that it was borrowed from the Toy Library). But I felt the,

um, there wasn't enough, the adult presenter wasn't able to play with the objects the way a child would play with the objects."

Q. "Very good comments, Jean."

A. "She never played with them. She made a slight attempt with the final showing of that." (Pauline had toy farm animals which she used to sing "Old McDonald had a Farm", twice.)

Q. "That's right."

A. "With the sheep. But just sort of held the thing, didn't actually, whereas it was chicken pop, pop, pop, or whatever it is. She could have been pecking with it or playing with it like a child would play. So I think they need to do some observations of child play there."

Q. "Right."

A. "And see how would a child play with that. Because they want to be modeling play."

Q. "The kids do rather than..."

A. "The presenter needs to be modeling appropriate play with the toys that are presented on the show. Which is what they do very, very well on **Play School**. They do this very well on **Play School** but they were not doing it there. They might need to bring in some other kids, or other children should be there. The child should be there playing or the adult needs to be modeling the play. They are not doing that."

Q. "Okay, that is a good point. Now tell me something. They are trying very hard to make it a bicultural programme. How successful do you think that is?"

A. "It's a token gesture. Some language in, but that's it."

Q. "And what do you think about the way she does it? She doesn't explain at all, she just corporate it in with her presentation, her so called token gesture. Do you think that's going to work?"

A. "Well, at the end she was repeating it in English."

Q. "Mmm."

A. "At the end part, she sang the Maori and the English."

Q. "But in some programmes."

A. "I have not seen the others."

Q. "But in some programmes, it's not that clear. It was just a comment another parent made. She was quite concerned because her knowledge of biculturalism wasn't very strong and she said, "How am I going to explain that to my child?" Because the presenter didn't help the parents, I guess in some ways, to help the child know what was being said."

A. "Yeah, it was just a gesture. But it is the kind of gesture that is commonly practised like in primary, like when the people, the teachers aren't competent in words like that. But she [Pauline] could do a lot more. There is a lot more that could be linked to action, like I'll sit down now, she could put that in Maori."

Q. "And then she could do it?"

A. "And then stand up. Et tu. You know, do it action. It needs to be linked in. When she was saying, "Good-by", she could have waved. So the child could have ended up with a visual image. It needs a bit more. There is nothing apart from a few words."

Q. "There is no writing on the wall, or things like that?"

A. "No. No Maori elements in the programme. No Maori decorations."

Q. "Having seen **You And Me** would you encourage Ani to watch it?"

A. "**Not while Play School's on.**"

Q. "That's the problem. **Play School** wasn't suppose to be on. It was suppose to be terminated by the time this programme started. This is the replacement for **Play School**."

A. "**I think if it didn't clash with Play School, yes. But while it is clashing, no. I don't know, I would like to see more of them [You And Me].**"

Q. "**You have got a video. Would you ever video it?**"

A. "**Yes, probably.**"

Q. "**So that would be the way to get around it.**"

A. "**Yeah. But it needs more New Zealand content.**"

Q. "**That's what it is suppose to be, a New Zealand programme.**"

A. "**I did not see much New Zealand culture content. You know, like the choices of the songs.**"

Q. "Okay, having seen the programme, do you think Ani would learn from this programme?"

A. "**From what we saw today, not for her age.**"

Q. "**Do you want to explain that further? Do you think she is too young to get the concepts?**"

A. "**Oh, well the language stuff, you know the expressions were pitched to high but the other content, she is more advanced. She is nearly five. So if you were thinking about a three year old, yes, I think a three year old would. But it needs to bring in more modeling, more play modeling.**"

Q. "**Right, but it was interesting as she [Ani] anticipated the questions Pauline would ask. She could answer them correctly, and she anticipated them before Pauline stated them.**"

A. "**I really liked the interactive.**"

Q. "**It's good, isn't it?**"

A. "**I think that's excellent. It is much more interactive than Play School. I think that could be built on.**"

Q. "**Generally, what other programmes do your children watch?**"

A. "**That's a good one. (Laughed) Umm... The after school ones. Some of them.**"

Q. "**Right.**"

A. "**Do I have to specify them?**"

Q. "**No you don't.**"

A. "**Friday night is our TV night as a family. Dinosaurs, The Wonder Years and Quantum Leap, The Simpsons. What else do you watch, Sarah?" (Asked her eldest daughter who was standing nearby, preparing a snack. She answered, "Three PM, The Bugs Bunny Show, Tiny Toots. Ani loves Tiny Toots.**")

Q. "**So lots of different programmes.**"

A. "Yeah."

Q. "Now in terms of Ani, or in terms of all your children, I guess, how much TV would your children watch?"

A. "I don't know."

Q. "That's a hard question, isn't it?"

A. "I'll have to make it up."

Q. "That's alright."

A. "Oh, probably about a couple of hours a day. Yeah, a couple of hours a day."

Q. "Okay, now how often do you watch TV with your children?"

A. "Once a week. (Laughed) I tell them to be quiet while I watch the news."

Q. "Fair enough, too."

A. "**Once a week we watch those Friday night schedules.**"

Q. "Right. But you also regulate your children's viewing habits, don't you?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "Because you watch the programmes before. Cause you mentioned this before."

A. "**Yes, I will check stuff. I might not watch it but I will have a glance at it and see what it is they are watching. If it is**

something I don't like, I have been told that Transformers is back on."

Q. "You're kidding?"

A. "Ummm. **So we will see what the content of it's like. I have not done that yet, it is only come back on. But I banded it last time. It was too violent.**"

Q. "In terms of Ani, at what age was she able to turn the TV on and off?"

A. "Oh, at about 2 1/2."

Q. "Right. And your children are allowed to turn the TV on and off but you do have certain times and programmes that they can't watch?"

A. "That I regulate? Yes I do. Not strictly but I do monitor, background monitor what they are watching. I often turn it off because they have all gone off to play."

Q. "On the whole, what's your opinion of TV?"

A. "Within my home, or generally?"

Q. "Both."

A. "Umm. Well it can be a nuisance. It can be useful. There is some junk on that is just junk."

Q. "There are also some good programmes too."

A. "I tend to switch off."

Q. "Ummm."

A. "If it is really junk. There is other stuff. Oh, we always watch **Shortland Street**." (Laughed

Q. "Yeah, a home grown New Zealand one. It's important to support New Zealand made."

A. "Yeah. Umm. I like the wild life, **I think the wild life programmes are really good**."

Q. "**They are excellent, aren't they?**"

A. "**Yeah.**"

Q. "**Would you call that educational? That's really my next question?**"

A. "**Yeah, I like the educational stuff. The wild life. I used to watch a lot of documentaries but I haven't had much time lately.**"

Q. "**That's what it is, time isn't it?**"

A. "**I liked watching them very much. I encourage the kids to watch the wild life programmes. They usually really enjoy them. Those sorts of things.**"

Q. "They are well done."

A. "Yeah. They are really good. And the older ones are now watching the news. Quite a lot. They get quite a bit from that. They are getting quite interested in what's happening and we talk a lot about that. About what the war's about and what's going on. I think the news has deteriorated. I don't like this chat business for half an hour that are basically on topics that are pretty mundane."

Q. "I know. That's pretty interesting. I think that we have already discussed the final question. You have talked about what you would like **You And Me** to do for Ani basically, and what sort of things you would like changed. I think that's about it."

A. "**I think, you know, exposure to experiences that the children aren't going to get that are city based. Well if they are farm based children, the city experiences they will only get occasionally. Umm, farm based experiences for the city children, the rural things. These experiences can be brought into their homes. And okay, it is second hand but it broadens their world, and knowledge of the world.**"

Q. "One of the aims of the programme, like **Sesame Street**, is to help those children who need extra knowledge."

A. "Well, it's not doing that."

Q. "I would say that it caters very much for the middle class."

A. "I would be inclined to agree. And there are plenty of children at school that have hardly been out of their home. They haven't even been to the corner shop. There are a few like that. So I think **You And Me** should be exposing to other, you know, they should have film clips segments like they do in **Play School**."

Q. "They actually do. In today's programme they did while you were in the kitchen."

A. "**And I miss the dates and things like that Play School does. I remember the day of the week and things like that which establish patterns. Because that is all used right through the Infant rooms (at school) and the kids have got that exposure from TV. That's an activity they do in the mornings at new entrants** and let the kids know."

Q. "Yeah, like you think how much of this is actually going to help them when they go to school. That is the question you really have to ask, if that's the purpose of a pre-school programme?"

A. "It's aiming at that but it doesn't look like it's doing. Well it's starting to, the counting. That could have been done in Maori."

Q. "Well it's just like Ani."

A. "Ani put it in Maori but the presenter didn't."

Q. "Yes I wrote that in my observation. Thank you Jean."

APPENDIX 5: CONSENT FORM

INVESTIGATION OF AUDIENCE RESPONSES TO "YOU AND ME"

CONSENT FORM TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a student at Massey University, working towards a Masterate in Education. I am doing a research project to examine pre-school children's responses to the television programme **You And Me**. I would like your consent to observe your child watching **You And Me**, in your home.

Participation in this research project will involve the following. Firstly, I will interview your child after viewing particular episodes of **You And Me** over five consecutive days. These interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Secondly, I will interview the parent(s) to discuss what they think of the programme **You And Me**. This will take place on the final day, following the child's interview, and will be recorded and transcribed.

Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty of any sort from the researcher. The data collected shall be treated as confidential and the names of the subjects will remain anonymous. The interview tapes will be erased once they have been transcribed.

A summary of the results can be made available on completion of the project.

I/We.....

.....being the parents

of..... (name of child)

of.....

.....(address)

hereby consent to.....(name of child)

being the subject of a research project by Mary Jane Shuker.

Telephone: 3569099 Extension 8355 (Work)
3563687 (Home)

I/We have the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Dated.....day of 1992

.....

.....Parents

APPENDIX 6: THE PROGRAMME DEVELOPERS

The producer, Julie Weatherall, has been working with children for years at many different levels - from nannying in Canada, to teaching at early childhood centres in Dunedin and Christchurch, through to writing for children's television. "You can't work this closely with young children without learning to understand their world and what motivates and excites them," she says. "With so much fundamental skill and knowledge being gained during the pre-school years **You And Me** has to know its audience. We aren't writing, directing and presenting to a camera -- we're connecting with a child" (Weatherall cited in TV3 Programme Information, November 1-7, 1992).

The executive producer of **You And Me** is Rex Simpson. He has been involved in making children's television for the past twenty years, including **Nice One Stu**, **What Now**, the **Early Bird Show** and **Play School**. "While I was producing **Play School** I really felt the need to make a totally indigenous programme for pre-schoolers. We've just got to face up to the fact that we are a bicultural society; we have to recognise the Treaty of Waitangi. We have to make sure that we have a homogeneous society rather than one that is polarised. And those of us working in the early-childhood area must make the relationship [between the cultures] as seamless as possible" (Simpson, cited in Huggett, 1992: 58).

The presenter, Pauline Cooper, is a familiar face to New Zealand children and their parents. She was a **Play School** presenter off and on for 17 years and once fronted a series called **The Renovators**. She has worked in a variety of childcare centres over the years as well as run a bakery, and owned her own carpentry company in Houston, Texas (Hugget, 1992). Pauline has practical parenting experience that comes from raising six children (aged between four and twenty-one years) and she studied early childhood education at Dunedin Teacher's College.

You And Me's writer/director, Mary Phillips, has a Diploma in Teaching, ten years experience as a kindergarten teacher, and eighteen months experience as a senior teacher in Otago. Furthermore, she has provided home-based care for pre-schoolers while working as a nanny. Her special strengths lay in puppetry and music and she has led numerous courses and workshops in these subjects.

Another writer/director, Karen Best, has an extensive background in radio, theatre and television. She is also a mother of four children and a kindergarten teacher. "It's wonderful to work with a team of professionals who have enough of the child in them to sing along with the songs," she says. "When I look at my 2 1/2 year old niece watching the show and see how involved she gets with Pauline -- well, I just wish my children could have had a show like this when they were little" (Best cited in TV3 Programme Information, 1992).

Alice Gallaway, who is also a writer/director on **You And Me**, has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Otago and a Diploma in Kindergarten Teaching. She spent three years teaching at a multi-cultural kindergarten in Tawa and like Julie Weatherall and Mary Phillips, she has worked as a nanny. Gallaway believes that a "young child's self-esteem is paramount and that building it up should be warm and fun" (Gallaway cited in TV3 Programme Information, 1992).

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