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CORRESPONDENTE

LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY - A CASE STUDY

OF 'SESAME STREET'

por

ANGELA FARIA BROGNOLI

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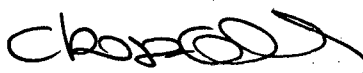
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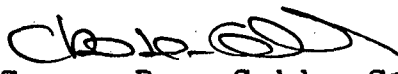
MESTRE EM LETRAS

Opção Inglês e Literatura Correspondente

Profa. Dra. Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard

BANCA EXAMINADORA:

Profa. Dra. Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard

Prof. Dr. José Luiz Meurer

Prof. Dr. Richard Malcom Coulthard

Aos meus pais
Ao Martim
Ao João Batista

AGRADECIMENTOS

ABSTRACT

The work carried out in this dissertation consists of a Critical Language Study (CLS. Fairclough, 1989) of the American educational television program 'Sesame Street'. I try to demonstrate that, as a product of a dominant ideology, the program conveys values of the North American elites.

In order to arrive at the hidden discourses of 'Sesame Street' six video taped programs were selected for analysis. I use linguistic categories and insights from semiotics, and the analyses and argumentation are based not only on textual features, but also on contextual elements.

The texts chosen, representative of the specific genres I concentrate on (Interview, Conversation and Song), reflect relations of power at both institutional and societal levels. Power relations of race, age and class are discussed, and special emphasis is given to relations of gender, in terms of the discourses they convey.

The analyses demonstrate that, although the television program 'Sesame Street' expresses some social criticisms, the discourse of the program reinforces the dominant North American ideology.

RESUMO

O trabalho desenvolvido nesta dissertação consiste em um Estudo
Crítico da Linguagem (Fairclough, 1989) do programa educacional de
televisão 'Sesame Street'. Tenta-se demonstrar que, sendo um produto
de uma ideologia dominante, o programa transmite valores da elite
Norte-Americana.

Para a análise de 'Sesame Street' foram selecionados seis
programas vídeo-gravados, objetivando demonstrar o discurso
implícito presente no programa, através de critérios que englobam
não só categorias textuais linguísticas e semióticas, mas também
elementos contextuais.

Os textos escolhidos, representantes dos gêneros Entrevista,
Conversa e Música, refletem relações de poder a níveis
institucionais e, num sentido mais amplo, de sociedade. Dentro deste
contexto, discute-se as relações de poder de classe, idade, raça e
gênero, identificadas no programa, tendo-se como preocupação maior
as relações de gênero, pelo discurso que transmitem.

As análises vêm comprovar que, apesar de 'Sesame Street'
expressar algumas críticas sociais, o discurso do programa reforça a
ideologia dominante Norte-Americana.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the educational program 'Sesame Street' ('SS' from now on) in the North American television scene in 1969 caused great impact. This popular program with numerous formative and informative issues obtained immediate success, and is now known in more than sixty countries (Martinho, 1989).

'SS' is not only attractive for children. In fact, children's excitement and acquaintance with the program is shared by relatives, educators and social scientists.

Although not denying its importance, one feels tempted, however, to question the reasons for the North American State (through its Department of Education), together with rich American corporations, to invest enormous amounts of money to produce such an elaborate program. What interests does the State have in producing a successful program of this sort? Is it purely interested in solving children's educational difficulties? Who benefits from it?

In this dissertation I intend to look at 'SS' as an instrument of the dominant American class, in order to arrive at its hidden discourse. I try to show that, as a product of American capitalism (representative of two institutions of the State, (Education and Television), 'SS' tends to reproduce the dominant American ideology.

Despite questioning some conventional issues, the program is strongly charged with dominant values. This can be explained by

the fact that 'SS', as any expression of worldviews, cannot completely deny the environment in which it is embedded.

The capitalist class divided society, which gives birth to a program like 'SS', is marked by relations of exploitation which are essential for the survival of the system. The dominant class needs to reproduce relations of domination over the dominated class, so as to maintain the class structure.

The dominant class not only controls the economic relations, but also the individuals' worldviews (ideology) as a means to continue holding the social, economic and political power. Hence, this class reproduces values and ideas which, although partial and favouring their privileges, are said to be universal and concerned with the common welfare. The dominant class ideology is reproduced through specific apparatuses such as the church, school and the mass media. These institutions convey worldviews which legitimate the privileges of the dominant bloc.

Language has a crucial role in the ideological process. Expressing individuals' worldviews and power relations among them, language not only conveys the dominant class ideology, it is also a means for the dominated class to impose their counter-ideology.

The hidden discourse of the dominant class can be perceived from contradictions which inevitably emerge. Through the historical analysis of the dominant class discourse and practice I begin to detect these contradictions and thus reveal the dominant discourse.

In my attempt to detect the contradictions of the discourses transmitted by 'SS' I will analyse six video taped programs chosen at random. These programs were recorded in California in 1985.

The theoretical support for the analyses comes from two main fields of study: Philosophy and Linguistics. From Philosophy I will use the concepts of 'ideology', 'hegemonic' and 'dominated class', 'class struggle', 'basis', 'superstructure', 'civil' and 'political society', according to the work of the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci. As part of what Fairclough (1989) calls Critical Language Study this dissertation discusses not only the language of the object under analysis, but also the socio-political environment surrounding it. Without disregarding the controversies and complexities involving the critical theory of knowledge (Larrain, 1983), it is important to observe that this theory is crucial to any type of socio-political study. This, however, is not meant to be an exhaustive discussion.

From Linguistics, I will borrow the fundamental idea that language is the linking element between individuals' knowledge of the world and their social practices, since language has a mediating role between individuals' thought and behaviour. This idea is developed by authors such as Bakhtin (1985), Kress (1985), Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.) and Fairclough (1989).

The ideological aspect of language does not lie in the linguistic system which is autonomous, but in the use of language, which is not (Florin, 1988). As products of their relations with others and of their comprehension of these relations, individuals interpret their experiences according to their position in the economic structure of the society in which they live. Thus, representing people's minds and consequently embodying different worldviews (Fowler et al, 1979), language reflects the structure of the society it conveys.

I will analyse the language of 'SS' in two different levels: firstly, I will look at the 'SS' microcosm as a whole, considering mainly its semiotic elements, that is, non-verbal signs which are transmitted through the visual means. My main objective is to demystify the implicit discourses of class, age, race and specially of gender. Secondly, I will analyse eleven texts (transcribed from the video). Here I will make use of both linguistic categories and semiotic elementss, concentrating on the discourse of gender and other embedded discourses.

The texts chosen, representative of three different genres — Interview, Conversation and Song, will be analysed according to the linguistic categories of Classification (Representational level), Interactional Conventions and Modality (Relational level). Fairclough (1989) and Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.) use them to demonstrate ideological implications, since they are cues to the discourses that the texts convey.

The dissertation is structured as follows: in Chapter 1 I will present basic concepts on the critical theory of knowledge and its connection with language. In addition, I will discuss views on the role of television and society and its influences on children's development. The preliminary discussions of Chapter 1 will support the other three chapters.

In Chapter 2 I will discuss the concepts of 'discourse' 'genre' and 'text', and how they are related to each other. In addition, I will define and exemplify the categories chosen for analysis.

In Chapter 3, I will describe 'SS' as a whole and develop the first level of analysis. I will also refer to power relations in the North American society and present criticisms of the program,

since they are contextual elements which help to explain the covert discourse of 'SS'.

In Chapter 4 I will proceed to the detailed linguistic and semiotic analyses of the selected texts (transcribed in the Appendix).

In the last part I will draw some conclusions connecting the analyses with the theoretical background.

CHAPTER 1

IDEOLOGY, LANGUAGE AND TELEVISION

1.1. Some Relevant Points on Ideology

The Italian marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1986:16) defines ideology as

> ... o significado mais alto de uma concepção do
> mundo, que se manifesta implicitamente na arte,no
> direito, na atividade econômica, em todas as ma-
> nifestações de vida individuais e coletivas...

He emphasizes the fact that ideology pervades individuals' lives and determines the way they see the world. The author also makes clear that individuals' worldviews are organically related to the classes they belong to. This idea, present throughout his work, is pointed out by the French scholar J.M. Piotte (1972), a specialist on Gramsci's work. In his synthesis of Gramsci's definition of ideology Piotte says:

> La ideología es, pues, el sentido vivido de las
> diferentes relacio/nes que mantiene el hombre con
> la naturaleza y con los demás hombres. Todo com-
> portamiento, toda actividad humana implica
> entonces una visión del mundo e, inversamente, to-
> da concepción, en tanto que expresa a una clase
> social, tiende a manifestarse en todos los tipos

de comportamiento de los miembros de esta classe.
(pp. 179-80)

The two classes in which the capitalist society is essentially divided, the dominant, or hegemonic class, according to Gramsci, and the fundamental dominated class, pursue opposite interests. In order to survive as it is, the dominant class depends on the existence of the dominated in its exploited condition. The latter, for its part, needs the extinction of both, in order not to be exploited anymore. There is, then, between the opposing classes and their respective perceptions of the world, an ongoing process of conflict (class struggle), since the interests of one class are contrary to those of the other.

The hegemonic class, which controls the State apparatus, dominates and directs the economic relations, maintaining thus the existing social division of work. This class also seeks to reproduce their values and ideas, so as to remain in power. According to Severino (1986), the hegemonic class dominates and exploits the dominated using ideology as an intellectual device. The author views ideology as a theoretical justification which constitutes, and is constituted in power since it presents, at a subjective level, apparently coherent worldviews, taken as universal and corresponding to everybody's interests. These values and 'truths', however, are partial and specific to the interests of the hegemonic class, which seeks to hide the real contradictions of the social structure.

Ideology here refers exclusively to the dominant class. However, one can also refer to the ideology of the dominated class, or to their counter-ideology.

The dominant class ideology is absorbed by the individuals of the dominated class who internalize it as if it corresponded to their own material reality. This class thus becomes alienated from

the objective facts of their reality which are determined by two spheres of society: their material means of existence (economic basis), and their worldviews (superstructure). It is at the sphere of superstructure that the dominant class seeks to reproduce its domination, through the transmission of its values and interests (ideology). According to Gramsci (cited in Piotte, 1972), the superstructure is constituted by:

1. the civil society (social institutions such as family, religion, school, media, philosophy...).

2. The political society (1) which makes use of coercive power, when the power to impose unconsciously (ideologically) is not enough.

The two spheres of society (basis and superstructure), which are controlled by the dominant class, influence each other, although each has relative autonomy, as it will be discussed later.

Alves (1980) views ideology as essential to make societies work, since it unites, to a certain extent, individuals' experiences, creating a common language - ideas and meanings - among its members. In this sense ideology is taken as a 'cement' which unifies people's way of thinking and acting, despite their divergent concrete realities. The reality experienced by the dominant class, which corresponds to the dominant ideology, is completely divergent from that experienced by the dominated class in the material plan. In the intellectual plan, however, the representation of this reality is distorted by the dominant ideology.

This unification aimed at by the dominant class, however, is not always linear and passively assimilated by society. As Gramsci (1986) states, the problem is to maintain a given society cemented

by the same ideology, since this ideology is not so easily imposed on everybody:

> Mas, neste ponto, coloca-se o problema fundamental
> de toda concepção de mundo, de toda filosofia que
> se transformou em um movimento cultural, em   uma
> 'religião', em uma 'fé', isto é, que produziu uma
> atividade prática e uma vontade, nas quais esteja
> contida como 'premissa' teórica implícita...   o
> problema de conservar a unidade ideológica de todo
> o bloco social, que está cimentado   e unificado
> justamente por aquela determinada ideologia.
> (p.16)

Similarly, for Alves (1980) the ideological assimilation does not reflect the dominant ideology in a uniform manner, since individuals' different positions in society make them assimilate the dominant ideology in different manners. The Brazilian government, for example, has recently launched a campaign through television calling adolescents to join the Brazilian army. The propaganda says it is necessary to fight wars so as to achieve peace. The persuasive character of the visual and verbal language leads alienated individuals to think of their 'duties as citizens' (to defend women and children, for example) and of their patriotism. More conscious individuals, however, can easily perceive that this is part of the dominant Brazilian discourse.

Exactly because individuals' alienation is not uniformly maintained, the dominant class needs to be engaged in an ongoing process of feeding back their ideology. According to Cury (1987),

> ... a classe dominante, para se manter como tal,
> necessita permanentemente reproduzir as condições
> que possibilitam as suas formas de dominação, sem
> o que as contradições do próprio sistema viriam à
> luz do dia. (p.13)

In addition to reproducing its ideology, the dominant class also needs to evolve, following the dominated class demands. As the awareness of the dominated class grows in society, the dominant

class provides some of the changes requested by the dominated class, so as to avoid that the dominated class perceive their condition. Thus, the hegemonic class, embodying and therefore weakening the dominated discourse (see Chapter 2 for definition), assimilates different perspectives to its own dicourse, so as to maintain the control. The dominant class operates at very subtle levels, otherwise it would not obtain the dominated class consent. This argument explains why 'SS', although produced by the dominant class, expresses elements from unprivileged discourses, as indicated in the last two chapters.

The dominated class awareness process starts from contradictions. Trew (1979:98) refers to them as "...the intrusion of what is not supposed to happen"..., and this inevitably appears, despite the hegemonic class efforts. These contradictions emerge from differences between the dominant and the dominated class realities on the one hand, and the dominant ideology imposed to the dominated class, on the other.

By questioning the dominant class ideology, the fundamental dominated class (through its intellectuals) starts a demystification process of the dominant class discourse, in the attempt to construct a more egalitarian society. It is important to point out that, for Gramsci (1978), the mediators of the demystification of the dominant ideology, as well as its articulators are the intellectuals.(2)

Alves (1980) maintains that the counter-ideology is not restricted to theory. Rather, it is able to transform the historical reality becoming hegemonic in its two spheres: basis and superstructure, suppressing thus class society. This change occurs with the occupation of the same spaces used by the dominant class (school, media, church...) to transmit its ideology. In this

historical process both theory and practice reinforce each other, one providing wider spaces for the accomplishment of the other.

The points which have been raised so far will continue to be discussed now with emphasis on the relationship between language and ideology.

1.2. Language and Ideology

1.2.1. Linguistic Studies and Ideology

The connection of linguistic studies with the society which a given language represents is proposed by, among others, Kress and Hodge (1979). They suggest that Linguistics might achieve a wide scope so as to help individuals understand each other and the world in which they live. Similarly, Hodge, Kress and Jones (1979) draw attention to the importance of language for the study of ideology:

> Ideologies are sets of ideas involved in
> the ordering of experience, making sense
> of the world. This order and sense is
> partial and particular. The systems of
> ideas which constitute ideologies are
> expressed through language. Language
> supplies the models and categories of
> thought, and in part people's
> experience of the world is through
> language. (p.81)

Fairclough (1989) introduces the term Critical Language Study (3). The author emphasizes that this approach to language study is an attempt to demystify what, through language, may be hidden from people. In this sense Critical Language Study may help individuals to be aware of the processes of domination through language, that is, it may help them to perceive that language is used not only as a means of communication, but also as an instrument of power and control.

Though a very recent trend in the field of Linguistics, Critical Language Study has been antecipated by some authors. Fiorin (1988) points Tacito, a Roman historian, as one who already discussed the relation between language and ideology. The new aspect of language and ideology, according to the author, is in locating ideological determinations in language, in explaining how language conveys ideology, and in deciding what is ideological in language.

More recently, the anthropologist Malinowsky, whose work was carried out in the 20's, is cited by Stubbs (1983) as the one who started to look at language "as action in context". The Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin also provided essential insights for the issue around the 30's.

Bakhtin (1988) criticised traditional Linguistics which approached language in a "dead" corpus, and viewed language as totally determined by the social and historical context. As part of an ongoing process, language cannot be cut up into static pieces. Rather, it should be analysed in context, that is, in the whole process of which a given text is a part.

The linguistic historicism developed by Bakhtin and other authors inevitably connects language with other fields of study, mainly to social theories.

Although most of the authors discussed in this work concentrate on the analysis of verbal language as an instrument of domination, some call attention to the importance of paralinguistic as well as non-linguistic features which complement the meaning of words in discourse. As a matter of fact, Fairclough (1989) refers to visual language as the richest part of speech in the production of meaning.

Verbal language is just one of the components ("...the most highly developed, most subtle and most complicated.", according to

Hayakawa 1978:22), among the set of symbolic processes, which is an intrinsic feature of human beings. Undoubtedly, words, as suggested by Bakhtin (1988), are the fundamental object of the study of ideologies, and all non-verbal symbols are embedded in language. However, some symbols such as pictures and music, cannot be completely substituted for words, that is, words cannot explain their meanings exhaustively.

Just as individuals' consciousness is explained from the social-historical context, so is the meaning of signs which is created in the individuals' socialization process. Signs can acquire specific significance in different discourses since each ideological stance refracts reality in its own way.

According to Bakhtin (1988), any physical entity can become a symbol. The author cites the hammer and sickle which are products of consumerism, but which represent the Soviet Union in certain circumstances. Thus, whenever a physical entity becomes a symbol, it is not only part of a specific reality anymore, it also reflects and refracts another reality, external to the object itself. In Bakhtin's words, "Tudo que é ideológico possui um significado e remete a algo situado fora de si mesmo." (p.31). In 'SS', products of consumerism such as cars, computers, books, etc... inserted in the context of the program also convey the values transmitted in addition to exercising their own functions in the program.

As the authors above explain, the observation of both components of speech, verbal and non-verval, contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the object in focus, since one part completes and complements the meaning of the other.

1.2.2. The Power of Discourse

Hayakawa (1978) suggests that words (discourse in general, I would add) make things happen, that is, they control people's attitudes. As the author explains, this control is not only made through explicit power relations such as commands and orders, but is also implicit, and usually more pervasive, when more indirect ways are used. Making a comment about a certain product or a candidate for elections, for example, may convince someone to buy the product or vote for the candidate. According to Hayakawa (ibid.)

> With words...we influence and to an enormous
> extent control future events. It is for
> this reason that writers write; preachers
> preach; employers, parents, and teachers
> scold; propagandists send out new releases;
> statesmen give speeches. All of them, for
> various reasons, are trying to influence
> our conduct — sometimes for our good, some-
> times for their own. (p.91)

The power of discourse seems to lie not only in the way people relate to each other (degree of intimacy, social status, age, etc...) and of their reliability in communication, but also in what Bordieu (1983) calls the linguistic market:

> ... a relação de comunicação não é uma simples
> relação de comunicação, é também uma relação
> econômica onde o valor de quem fala está em
> jogo: ele falou bem ou não? É brilhante ou
> não é? É uma pessoa 'casável', ou não?... (p.78)

According to Bordieu the way people use language is quite relevant in expressing what they want to say and what they are. Language production involves selections among innumerable possibilities provided by the linguistic system and the use of certain choices reveals the speaker's/writer's intentions. Kress and Hodge (1979:15-6) cite the example of the wife who argues with her

husband because of the rubbish which should be put out. Instead of asking her husband if he had emptied the garbage directly ("have you emptied the garbage?"), the wife chooses to delete 'you', changing thus the theme of the sentence: "has the garbage been emptied?". The linguistic transformation made by the wife indicates, according to the authors, that she does not want to order her husband directly, so as to avoid a confrontation and fail in her attempt to convince him of his obligation.

Without judging who is right in the rubbish episode it can be observed that what is 'well said' is usually more convincing and that language not only reflects power relations, but is also a site of struggle. According to Fairclough (1989) social practices not only determine discourse; they are also determined by them. Kress (1985) states that language is used to code certain habits and through time it ends up reinforcing these habits. However, in the same way that habits are coded and reinforced they can also be altered. Therefore, one can change reality through changes in discourse. For Fairclough (1989), this is the view of discourse as a creative process, as opposed to the view of discourse as a consolidation of the actions of the powerful. The mutual influence between language and social practices is a simultaneous process which, according to Kress (1985), is explained by the historicism of facts in society. Thus, at a given moment language determines individuals' thought and actions, while at another the reverse can occur. As suggested by Fairclough (1989), this permanent tension occurs because power is not linearly held by one part only. Both the powerful and the powerless struggle to impose their discourses; the powerful, trying to maintain their superiority, and the powerless,

trying to achieve it. This permanent tension marks a dialectic movement between language and the society which it represents.

The discourse of the dominant class is obscure, full of gaps, or unexplained facts, since it hides unequal relations of class divided societies, in order to maintain the dominant class privileges. Ianni (1976) draws attention to some points which are avoided by the dominant discourse: relations of antagonism, historical transformations, analytical perspectives which permit a globalizing view of relationships, and processes and structures of assimilation and domination. All of these critical perspectives, compromised with objectivity and totality, threaten the coherence of the dominant discourse. As stressed by Lyra (1979:43),

> A ideologia da classe dominante... está conde-
> nada a não se expressar, porque a verdade histó-
> rica a condena. No lugar de questionar a
> realidade (isto é: a si mesma), ela deriva
> para questões inconseqüentes e, quando
> se permite algum tipo de manifestação,
> esta se camufla artificiosamente em ardis
> semânticos pelos quais ela sonha com a lega-
> lização do privilégio.
>
> ... a ideologia dominante vai assim contornando
> a verdade em colocações ambíguas e foge da
> discussão para não colocar em questão
> esses privilégios...

The characteristics of the dominant discourse mentioned by the authors above can also be found in 'SS', as will be shown later. The program not only omits the discussion of crucial issues which are related to the structure of American capitalism, but also conveys the idea that 'SS' represents an egalitarian society.

The more subtle the way the dominant class presents its concepts the more pervasive they are likely to be. Discussing the distinction between two types of power, coercion and consent, Fairclough (1989) mentions ideology as the means to obtain consent,

since through ideology individuals are led to view reality acritically, alienating themselves from the objective facts. Coercive or direct power, on the other hand, is more likely to find resistance since the exploitative intention becomes explicit resulting in the individuals' awareness and the consequent struggle to change reality. Dominant discourses tend to be more or less coercive, depending on the degree of awareness of their audience. As Fairclough (ibid.) points out, although there has been a tendency for less direct authoritative discourse in the last two decades, this does not mean that power-holders are trying to be more egalitarian. Rather, they have been forced, as a consequence of minority groups growing awareness, to apply less explicit power.

The 'Abertura Politica' in the 80's has definitely changed the dominant Brazilian discourse. Although there were in fact changes, as a result of popular pressure, many of the announced changes remained at the discourse level. The dominant discourse absorption of the word 'democracy' is a clear example of less explicit discourse. Very often not reflecting reality, this word is a subtle device to convince the population that Brazil has changed. The direct elections for president, governors, etc., referred to as 'democratic', are still controlled by power holders who make political manoeuvres to obtain the election of their candidates.

The dominant discourse conveyed in 'SS' is not as explicit as the discourse of other texts whose ideologies are analysed (Eco and Bonazzi, 1980, Nosella, 1979, Faria, 1986...). As mentioned earlier, the dominant discourse changes according to the dominated class demands. It seems that 'SS' is part of this 'evolution' since the dominant values presented are very subtle. The first impression transmitted is that the program is critical. Through careful

analyses, however, one can note that those apparent criticisms are in fact isolated critical elements which do not correspond to the whole, acritical discourse of the program. The critical elements of 'SS' thus can be interpreted as a device used by the producers to obtain the audience's consent.

According to Fiorin (1988) critical discourse emerges from conflicts and contradictions existing in reality. Once the dominated class realizes that the dominant discourse diverges from reality, they struggle to change this reality. Firstly , by unveiling the incoherences of the dominant discourse, and then, by presenting an objective and coherent discourse.

A good example of the individuals' use of discourse to demystify dominant social practices is in an alternative use to the generic 'he' to refer to both genders in English. Writers who start calling attention to the fact that their addressees are not only men, as the rules of English may lead them to believe, are opening a space for introspection and a possible transformation as concerning women's position in society. In this sense individuals act as agents of simultaneous linguistic and social changes, as posed by Kress (1985).

As Fairclough (1989) emphasizes, demystifying the dominant class discourse requires the addressee to assume a critical position by distancing her/himself from the text. Only then is it possible to perceive its contradictions, which are not only in the text itself, but also in the relation between the text and the surrounding environment.

The dominant class discourse can be uncovered from the surface, which is the level that the ideological determinations of the deep structure become apparent. As ideology works at the

phenomenological level, or level of appearance (Fiorin, 1988), verbally, the structure of the discourse, including omissions, classifications and other linguistic choices, signal the text producer's intentions, as pointed out by Fowler et al (1979:3)

> We show how linguistic structures are used to
> explore, systematize, transform and often obscure,
> analyses of reality; to regulate the ideas and
> behaviour of others; to classify and rank people,
> events and objects; to assert institutional or
> personal status. Many of the processes mentioned here
> happen automatically, eluding the consciousness of
> source and recipient.

Non-verbally, all the visual and paralinguistic features are elements which transmit ideology. As claimed by Bakhtin (1988), all ideological symbols are materialized in form of sound, colour, physical mass or any other material form constituting thus a fragment of reality.

1.3. Television

The exploitation of non-verbal elements of discourse becomes specially important in the analysis of the audio visual media, particularly the mass media used by the object of analysis of this work.

As discussed below, television is an extremely powerful means, not only because of the seducing character of vision, but also because of the wide range of public it reaches.

1.3.1. The Power of Television

Sodré (1984) refers to television as an object which meets the tendencies of modern society. The author points out the importance

of the eye as the means "...que registra e instaura a ilusão" (p.17). Sodré explains his interpretation of narcisistic individuals as those who get away from their concrete reality, living in the illusion of appearance, that is to say, of their image. Such narcisism is strongly encouraged in today's society by what he calls "telerrealidade", that is, the reality of television. The success of television in modern capitalist society is attributed by Sodré (ibid.) to the growing importance given to vision since contemporary humans are so much attached to what is visible, measurable, touchable..., and they tend to rank appearance first. The author also mentions Freud's observation that unconscious mental processes are more successfully achieved through visual, rather than verbal thought.

Fairclough (1989), as mentioned earlier, reinforces this idea stressing that in the interaction between visual and verbal language to produce a given message, the visual part is richer in meaning. He refers to a "post-linguistic culture" named by postmodernist writers who claim that visual is more important than verbal language in today's society. For Sodré (1984) and A.L. and M.B. Rezende (1989) the process of communication is more effective when more than one sense receives the message, as in the case of television where sound and image are transmitted together.

In his conclusions Sodré (1984) makes clear that teleVISION is such a powerful means that it pervades the human personality determining its values and ideas, as stated below:

> 1.A visão humana integra o largo capítulo das trocas
> simbólicas. Desde o início da Modernidade, a visão
> vem sendo utilizada como dispositivo de poder   ou
> de controle social, através das técnicas da escri-
> ta e da perspectiva. Com o advento da era da re-
> produção mecânica e, depois, eletrônica, a visão
> foi cada vez mais mobilizada para constituir e

> fixar as estruturas do sujeito individual no
> Ocidente. Os simulacros, as imagens produzidas
> pela sociedade industrial, terminam gerando um
> universo próprio, com novas formas de relaciona-
> mento social, centradas no contato à distância e
> no olhar. Esta é a ordem - tecnonarcisística - da
> televisão. Aí se configuram as linhas de uma nova
> estrutura da personalidade, ao lado de alterações
> profundas na instituição familial e nos costumes.
> (p.143)

Another intrinsic feature of television is to do with its authoritative character. Sodré (ibid.) draws attention to the one way communicative process of television since the audience has no chance to reply to what is shown on the screen:

> ... a forma televisiva - dissimetria do processo
> de comunicação (impossibilidade de resposta, dis-
> junção ver/ser visto), da produção (separação ra-
> dical entre produtor e consumidor) - administra o
> espaço social, procurando dissolver os antigos la-
> ços comunitários, serializando os consumidores,
> homogeneizando a cultura. (p.46)

Sodré (1984) relates the visual aspect of television with its power to dominate the audience, although the intention to dominate is never explicit. Despite showing reality "in the eyes" of the audience television has the power to blind them since the reality constructed in television is fragmented, crystallized, ahistorical. The images presented are not real, but ideal; there is not a concrete reference with reality and the audience is psychically, rather than physically touched. For Sodré,

> O complexo televisivo se instala no vazio ins-
> titucional para simular uma continuidade do real-
> histórico. Ou seja, estimula retoricamente o
> olhar, fascinando-o, para ocultar o fato político
> da implantação de novas formas de controle social
> que nada mais têm a ver com ocupação de territó-
> rio, aniquilamento físico ou disciplinamento pro-
> dutivo, e sim com a assimilação psicológica dos
> indivíduos, das consciências narcisicamente tele-
> dirigidas. (p.131)

The author says that television is paradoxical in that, while assuring its faithfulness to reality, it leads the audience to an imaginary world without any concrete reference. In the magic world of television - "telerrealidade" - everything becomes possible.

As the discussions above indicate the power of television to control its audience is very strong. In fact, Fernandes (1990) refers to its important role in reproducing the dominant ideology, as mentioned below:

> Os meios culturais de comunicação comercializada,
> com a televisão à frente, multiplicaram por mil a
> hegemonia ideológica das elites das classes
> dominantes. (p. A-3)

As an instrument of the State at the sphere of superstructure, television is used as a means to reproduce dominant values. For Caparelli (1986) television is included in the "hegemonic project" of the dominant class with the intention of creating in the audience, since childhood, an internalization process of the hegemonic class worldviews. Hall (1973) calls attention to the cultural power imposed on the audience of television, since power holders define the issues to be discussed, the forms in which they will be discussed, and the active participants of those discussions.

Television is, among other mass media, specially powerful in homogenizing individuals' worldviews. Its special power is the way it connects events, "mapping" them into larger contexts, providing the audience with a thorough pattern of how to behave (Hall, ibid.). Viá (1977) explains how the mass media universalizes people's experiences diluting their own concrete reality:

> Os meios de comunicação atingem os grupos sociais,
> quebram sua estrutura e contribuem à formação de
> um novo conceito de classe, resultando em busca
> natural e inconsciente de ascensão social... com os
> meios de comunicação de massa penetrando nos lares

oferecendo as interpretações já prontas e manipuladas é
que se estabelece uma visão do mundo, partilhada por todos
os grupos.Os slogans da propaganda, a emissão e difusão de
clichês imaginários, orientadores de condutas conju-
gadas com a mentalidade, as idéias e as escalas de
valores, tendem a homogeneizar as classes sob um
determinador comum...(p.17-18)

1.3.2. Television: Site of Struggle

The unifying character of television is a reality of
contemporary society. However, although Viá's (ibid.) questioning of
the existence of class ideologies after the emergence of television
is sound, one can say that the process is not so linear.
The massification process of television is not thoroughly successful
because humans are not so easily 'tamed'. As A.L. and M.B. Rezende
(1989) suggest, one cannot fall into the fatalistic view in which
the State has control over the media, and that nothing can be done
to break the chain:

> A tevê, produzida pela sociedade tecnológica, re-
> produz esta sociedade, cria estereótipos, induz
> ao consumo, despolitiza. Não é possível assumir,
> todavia, diante da programação da tevê, a atitude
> paranóica persecutória. Antes de desejar inculcar
> a ideologia dos grupos dominantes, os produtores
> de tevê querem vender imagens e ser bem-sucedidos.
> Na medida em que o telespectador for um consumidor
> crítico, a pressão social se fará sentir. Haverá a
> inevitável abertura de válvulas e mudanças na ca-
> deia: produto produzido para o consumidor, e con-
> sumidor que é produzido para o produto. (p.94)

Although the messages of television are usually partial and
ready made, Sodré (1984) argues that, in certain circumstances, the
means of communication permit requests which oppose the interests of
those who control the State apparatus. Hall (1973) suggests that the
complexities of the social structure and the inevitable
confrontation between reality and the abstract facts represented
through the media create possibilities for such requests. These

complexities are reflected, for example, in the relation between media professionals, mediators of the communicative process, and the ones who control the media, which are not always of subordination. Hall (ibid.) observes that although, theoretically, media professionals should follow the power holders' desires, they also feel "a duty 'to inform the public'" (p.15) which leads them to present reality more objectively, whenever possible. As the author states, there is still a relative autonomy since the media

> ...are both 'relatively autonomous' institutions
> of the power nexus, and yet also 'articulated in
> dominance' with those institutions. (p.36)

The television audience can behave in distinct ways: either remain at the superficial level, or question the reality imposed on them, as well as the reasons for producers to do so.

The heterogeneous interpretations of television messages are mainly a result of social, economic and cultural power imbalance among the audience, as A.L. and M.B. Rezende (1989) maintain:

> A captação e interpretação das mensagens, por mais
> que a tevê as homogeneize, passam pelas reais con-
> dições de vida do telespectador, vale dizer, pela
> situação que ele ocupa na produção. (p.20)

Hall (1971) indicates several degrees of awareness of the way the audience interprets the television messages. They range from the most alienated, who accepts the hegemonic view of the world which communication provides, to the most critical ones, who refuse to read the world as it is presented by the media. This "oppositional reading" of the world, which is made from the inevitable contradictions appearing on television, is the space conquered by the critical reader to unveil the dominant discourse of the mass media.

1.3.3. Television and Children

A.L. and M.B. Rezende (1989) suggest that children's critical consciousness is not yet formed; consequently, they are more likely to be manipulated and the content of what is transmitted through television is much more likely to be accepted. In addition, the authors stress that children, like adults, interpret the television messages according to their experiences of the world. Children who have more diversified experiences, with a richer surrounding environment, have much more opportunity to view what is shown more realistically. Television is just one more stimulus for their development. Less privileged children, however, are more restricted to the world of television because of a lack of other options. For these children television is a magic world offering pleasures which they do not have access to, in real life.

In relation to the pedagogical role of television, the first point which can be posed is the fact that television does not encourage the audience to critical reading. In addition, its authoritative character does not provide children with a chahce to reply; they are taken as mere receptors.

A.L. and M.B. Rezende (ibid.) do not believe in the use of television for pedagogical purposes exactly because they see education as a product of an intimate relation between the individual and her/his reality. This type of relation is not possibly obtained with television because of the linear process of communication in which the audience is idealized, and the objective facts of reality are generalized. As the authors point out,

Assegurar a coerência entre a realidade contex-
tual e a educação exclui o artificialismo de
situações pedagógicas especialmente produzi-
das. (p.83)

Perroti (1986) criticises the view that children are passive and incomplete beings, widely held in capitalist societies. He includes children in a dynamic process interacting with two moments: age and history, that is, their natural development and their relation with the historical moment which determines their actions. The author argues that children need physical space to produce their own culture, as quoted below:

> ... não se pode roubar das crianças o espaço,
> oferecendos-lhe em troca produção cultural
> feita por terceiros. (p.25)

Efron and Hickey (1970) make a thorough and careful discussion of television in which both arguments, for and against television, are meticulously defended by reputable specialists in the area. According to the authors the human mind is quite complex to afford generalizations such as "TV is beneficial or TV is harmful". The authors quote the famous conclusion from the 1961 study by Schramm, Lyle and Parker — Television in the Lives of Our Children —:

> For some children under some conditions, some
> television is harmful. For other children under
> the same conditions, or for the same children
> under other conditions, it may be beneficial.
> For most children, under most conditions, most
> television is probably neither particularly
> harmful nor particularly beneficial. (p.528)

Although the authors' opinion on the relativity of television is sound, it is important to call attention to the danger of such conclusion. Referring to the relativity of television without specifying parameters for this relativity is to construct a very abstract, ahistorical statement. To which children television is good or bad, and under what conditions? One cannot forget that children's programs, as every social sign, are not neutral at all. Either they educate well, or badly (Caparelli, 1986). Moreover,

whatever the quality of the pedagogical devices employed, they still convey a world conception. As a matter of fact, having in mind the American imperialist capitalism in which 'SS' is inserted, one can state that the techniques mask the ideology conveyed in the program, since the pedagogical method is used to channel the American world conception.

In his discussion of the quality of television programs Engelhardt (n.d.) concludes that one cannot expect a better society presented on television for our children if the programs reflect the same society which originates them. The author maintains that:

> For better or worse, childhood is not an immune
> age of life. If we want a different set of images
> on the screen, we'll have to produce not just
> better plots, but a different production system
> with different goals in a different world.
> (p.110)

The author proposes that there might be a change in society, and then television will have possibilities to be different. Here one can point out the importance of mass media for its role of connecting the dominant with the dominated class. This is where the great contradiction of television lies. While instrument of the hegemonic class to reproduce its control over society television can also be used against this control. As Fox (1983) remarks,

> Communication can reflect, can retransmit, can
> transform or can manipulate. It/is the channel
> and the contact between civil society and the
> state and is also a form of resistance to the
> imposition and brutality of totalitarianism.
> Just as changes in society will not be channeled
> through only one institution, be this a political
> party, or organization, or other, so the
> multiple facets and styles of communication
> constitute the discourse of civil society,
> permiting, when possible, this change to occur.
> (p.40-1)

The discourse of television, and hence of 'SS', as part of the dominant class discourse, tends to be, in essence, full of contradictions, since it hides unequal relations of power in a class divided society. However, this dominant discourse can also be seen critically.

The task of this work is to develop a type of reading which is critical enough to point to the contradictions existing in the program. Seeking, from the whole context in which 'SS' is inserted, to unveil the values which are in disagreement with the objective reality and thus contributing to the maintenance of the dominant class power, one can add to articulate the working class counter-hegemony.

The special concern with the little spectators of 'SS' is justified by the fact that their minds are even more sensitive to manipulation than the adults'. In this sense, it becomes important to alert them with critical eyes.

The next chapter consists of a presentation of the linguistic concepts and semiotic elements to be explored in the analyses in Chapters 3 and 4.

Notes

(1) "...antes de mais nada, ele [Gramsci] distingue duas esferas essenciais no interior das superestruturas: a 'sociedade civil' e a 'sociedade política'. Essa última expressão designa precisamente o conjunto dos mecanismos através dos quais a classe dominante detém o monopólio legal da violência; ela se confunde com os aparelhos de coerção estatal, em particular com as burocracias ligadas às forças armadas e à aplicação das leis". (Coutinho, 1984:78)

(2) For Gramsci, both the dominant and the dominated classes have representatives who articulate each class worldviews: "Cada grupo social, nascendo no terreno originário de uma função essencial no mundo da produção econômica, cria para si, ao mesmo tempo, de um modo orgânico, uma ou mais camadas de intelectuais que lhe dão homogeneidade e consciência da própria função, não apenas no campo econômico, mas também no social e político; o empresário capitalista cria consigo o técnico da indústria, o cientista da economia política, o organizador de uma nova cultura, de um novo direito, etc... etc..." (Gramsci, 1978:3-4)

(3) "The approach to language which will be adopted here will be called **Critical Language Study**, or CLS for short. **Critical** is used in the special sense of aiming to show up connections which may be hidden from people — such as the connections between language, power and ideology referred to above. CLS analyses social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show up their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system". (Fairclough, 1989:5)

According to the author the other approaches to language — Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis — discussed in his work, although contributing to CLS, are limited as concerning a critical point of view.

CHAPTER 2

DISCOURSE, GENRE and TEXT

In this chapter I will first present the concepts of 'discourse', 'genre' and 'text', since they are fundamental for my analyses. In the second part of the chapter I will define and exemplify the linguistic categories which will be explored in the analyses.

2.1. Discourse, Genre and Text as Social Practices

By 'discourse' I mean contextualized language, following Fairclough's (1989) and Kress' (1985) views. Fairclough defines discourse as "Language as a form of social practice" (p.22). He discusses in his work conventions of language use which are subordinate to social institutions. The subordination of language use to institutions, in Kress, is already stated in his definition of discourse:

> Discourses are/ systematically-organized sets of
> statements which give expression to the meanings
> and values of an institution. Beyond that, they
> define, describe and delimit what it is possible

> to say and not possible to say (and by extension
> -what it is possible to do or not to do) with
> respect to the area of concern of that
> institution, whether marginally or centrally
> (pp.6-7).

According to the author, people's discourses are usually the voices of institutions, since various institutions control existing social groups, what they say, and consequently, what they do.

The different discourses existing in any social group are not isolated. Rather, they are interconnected, as emphasized by Kress (1985:7):

> Discourses do not exist in isolation but within
> a larger system of sometimes opposing, contra-
> dictory, contending, or merely different
> discourses. Given that each discourse tends
> towards the colonisation of larger areas, there
> are dynamic relations between these which ensure
> continuous shifts and movement, progression or
> withdrawal in certain areas.

In addition to these dynamic relations between discourses, the author also points out that "Discourses tend towards exhaustiveness and inclusiveness..." (p.7), since they attempt to affect people not only in their specific issue of concern, but also in other areas.

As the author explains, the wider the scope of the discourse of an institution, the more dominant and successful it tends to be. He cites the discourse of gender which reaches family relations, work, and most areas of social life. The nationalistic and religious discourses are examples in which one institution reinforces the values of the other. Kress (ibid.) compares the effects of discourse with that of military power domination. For him,

A discourse colonises the social world
imperialistically, from the point of view of one
institution. (p.7)

Having in mind the interlaced set of discourses suggested by
Kress, in the analysis of 'SS' I will refer to other discourse types
whenever they emerge embedded in the discourse of gender. It is
interesting to observe, though, that all the discourse types
discussed in this work are a part of a wider dimension. The
discourse of education (educational program) which coveys
institutionalysed values of formal education, shelters other
discourses such as gender, race and class. These discourses, for
their part, turn out to constitute the wider dimension, since they
contain the worldviews transmitted in education.

The discourse of education presented in 'SS' becomes more
complex since it is conveyed by the discourse of television. In
fact, the latter not only encompasses the former, it also transforms
it. When other fields of knowledge are conveyed through television
they lose their own peculiarities. Therefore, the discourse of
education assumes a different perspective, as it is adapted to the
technical devices of television. In this sense, the massive
discourse of television - as it attempts to universalize worldviews
- becomes more pervasive than that of education. This fact justifies
the special attention given to this powerful mass media in the
dissertation.

According to Kress (1985) discourses are realized through
texts (materializations of discourses), which are constructed in
certain circunstances, and with certain goals, acquiring thus
specific forms, depending on the social interactions in which they
occur. Specific elements and structures of the interactions, the
purposes and the goals of the participants, are characteristic

features which define the forms of texts and give meaning to the social occasions. Interviews, classes and consultations are examples of interactions which represent different social events. Kress (ibid.:19) refers to them as different "genres".

Genres usually follow institutional conventions imposed by the dominant class ideology, being connected to rituals in varying degrees. They range from those thoroughly ritualised such as royal weddings, sporting encounters and committee meetings, to those with many fewer rules such as familiar interactions - meals, "fights over who is to do the dishes" and conversations (Kress, ibid.:19) -. In this sense genres signal which social occasions are considered relevant in a given community at a given time.

The conventional way participants behave in social occasions, a result of institutional power, lead them not to question the established pattern of social behaviour. Fairclough (1989) suggests that the constraint to follow the established rules is not simply a one way process. In a dialectic process of mutual influence, discourses are also able to affect social practices, and therefore change them. The author mentions an asymmetric relationship between a doctor and a group of medical students visiting a hospital. As the powerful participant in the event, the doctor controls the whole interaction by: announcing what they are going to do, interrupting students' contributions, telling a student when to start talking and evaluating the students. The authoritative way the doctor directs the event is legitimized by the social structure. This is the usual way doctors act in such situations. However, although generally not aware of the power exercised in such cases, individuals contribute to the reproduction of power relations in society through naturalizing

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to the imposed rituals, and hence be able to change reality, if they refuse to follow what is pre-established in specific situations.

Kress (1985) places discourse and genre as two stances which provide meaning to the text. According to the author, they

> ... carry specific and socially determined meanings. Discourse carries meanings about the nature of the institution from which it derives; genre carries meanings about the conventional social occasions on which texts arise.
>
> Both discourse and genre arise out of the structures and processes of a society: discourses are derived from the larger social institutions within a society; genres are derived from the conventionalised social occasions on and through which social life is carried on. (p.20)

For the linguistic part of the analyses carried out in this dissertation I have selected texts from INTERVIEWS, CONVERSATIONS and SONGS which, from my observation, are the most recurrent genres present in the program.

As has already been discussed, the hidden discourses of 'SS' are very subtle, leading one to think of the program as really critical. I will make use of the linguistic and semiotic analyses in order to make these hidden discourses more easily detectable, and thus demystify them. According to Fiorin (1988) it is at the surface level (in this case the linguistic, paralinguistic and extra-linguistic language) that the real meanings can be grasped.

Kress (1985) reinforces the suggestion above stating that language almost always expresses imbalanced relations. He emphasizes that it is not that power derives from language. But, as people's relations are inevitably of power difference, and language expresses people's worldviews, it is therefore natural that language expresses power relations.

Although both discourse and genre give meaning to the text, it is only through its formal features that one can identify the genre to which the text belongs and the discourses it conveys. Based on Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.), Fairclough (1989) and Kress (1985), I will explore linguistic and semiotic features to analyse the texts and thus show their hidden discourses.

Following Fairclough's (1989) steps of Critical Language Study I will first describe the linguistic categories and semiotic elements. Then, I will gather meanings not only from the texts, but also from the context; the physical situation, properties of participants, and what has been said previously, that is, I will observe the world of the program in order to interpret the discourses of the texts. I will also attempt to explain the meanings of the texts in a wider dimension. Here I will include elements from the society which has created 'SS' and its institutional discourses (discussed in Chapter 3).

2.2. Linguistic Categories and Semiotic Elements

Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.) distinguish two moments of analysis of press and TV news: the **Representational** and the **Relational**, since the media produces not only verbal but also non verbal language. In program 3, for example, there is a group of black boys singing the 'School Song' (Appendix- text 1, tape 1). One can observe in this event how verbal and non-verbal language are organized so as to convey the discourse of the powerful.

Through the representational level, one analyses how the world of the text is constructed. In this sense, the choice of 'SS' producers to portray poor black Americans singing in defense of the American school indicates the producers' view. Although the

capitalist system does not allow a great proportion of poor blacks to go to school, 'SS' conveys the idea that there is school for everybody.

The representation of reality in any text also involves a certain position in relation to an addressee, and this has to do with the relational level. The black singers establish a relationship of confidence with the public through some linguistic devices, as well as through their visual: colour, clothes and gesture.

Classification, among other categories of the Representational moment, is related to the choice of words selected from numerous alternatives to refer to reality. It is, for Fowler and Kress (1979:210) "...the linguistic ordering of the world...". Readers can evaluate the text producers' positions through the way they classify the world. Following the black singers' example, it can be noted that school is connected to pleasure all through the lyrics as in "love", "play games", "best time" "learn", "like", "really cool", and so on. This acritical defense of school conveys a distorted view of reality, consolidating thus the dominant discourse which tries to hide the role of school as an institution for reproducing the dominant ideology.

Fairclough (1989:113) shows how reality can be represented differently transcribing two opposite interpretations of the same psychiatric practice. The first text, an "oppositional" reading of the event, condemns it through expressions like:

> solitary confinement, immobilizing
> people by tying them into wet sheets and
> then exhibiting them to staff and other
> patients, other physical restraints on
> body movement, a range of public humiliations
> such as the prominent posting of alleged
> intentions to scape or commit suicide.

The second text, in favour of the practice, constructs it quite differently:

> availability of seclusion restraints and
> closed wards to grant a patient a respite
> from interactions with others, enabling him
> to think about his behaviour, to cope with his
> temptations to elope and succumb to depression,
> and to develop a sense of security,
> immobilizing the patient to calm him, and
> satisfy his dependency needs, give him the extra
> nursing attention he values, and enable him to
> benefit from peer confrontation, placing
> limits on his acting out

While the first text is very specific, describing the practice in detail and objectively, the second is more general, using metaphors to hide the brutality of the treatment. In addition, the second text focuses on the aimed results, in an attempt to justify the practice.

The **Relational** moment, placed by Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.) in the cultural sphere, is concerned with relations of power - domination and subordination - among participants in interactions. I will consider two categories from this moment: **Modality** and the **Interactional Conventions**.

Fairclough (1989) defines **Relational Modality** as the expression of relations of authority among participants.

Some of the linguistic elements which signal this relation are: modal auxiliary verbs, adverbs, and the way participants address each other. The use of Mr. and Ms., and the indefinite 'you' to express solidarity are examples in which one conveys a certain manner of dealing with an addressee. The use of personal pronouns and more or less formal words also indicates degrees of intimacy, respect and directedness, according to Fairclough (1989) and Fowler and Kress (1979). The black singers, for example, establish an intimate relation with the audience through the use

of direct address in the pronouns "you", "I" and "me", placing themselves as colleagues of the boys and girls who watch them:

> Come and meet me in the classroom. I'm
> telling you, it's really cool.

The group also makes clear that they do not have any close relation to the school as the pronoun 'they' is used to refer to the people at school:

> ...all the stories that they wanna read
> you...and when snack time rolls around
> they've got cookies, milk and juice to
> feed you.

Finally, the modal auxiliary 'will' and the personal pronouns again, reinforce the friendly relation established by the group in:

> If you asked me, will I like it, man?
> Well,...I'm telling you're guaranteed.

In addition to the elements mentioned above characters also speak black English, establishing thus greater identification with the audience. In this sense, the program tries to reproduce the audience through these characters ('SS' is supposed to teach a low class audience) so that the audience can identify with them and thus accept their messages without resistance.

In terms of the visual, Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.) refer to the camera viewpoint as important in establishing relations between addresser and addressee. Through the direct eye-contact characters establish a realistic relation with the audience, outside the fantastic world of the program. Furthermore, they point their index fingers, as if demanding students to commit themselves to go to school.

Speech Acts, "...the actions which are performed via language", according to Fowler and Kress (1979:200), are

linguistic realizations at the pragmatic level which provide important clues to the type of relation participants hold among themselves in the interactions, as pointed out by the authors. Fairclough (1989:156) explains Speech Acts as "what the producer is doing by virtue of producing a text... - making a statement, making a promise, threatening, warning, asking a question, giving an order, and so on". Although there are 3 main syntatic modes (declaratives, grammatical questions and imperatives) which formally position subjects in utterances, in discourse terms, the way subjects are positioned in utterances does not always correspond to their respective modes. As the author emphasizes, the real meaning of a Speech Act cannot be achieved simply by the formal grammatical features of an utterance. Interpreters also need to take into account other contextual information. The importance of Speech Acts for critical analysis is in verifying that they can be useful manipulative tools for participants in interactions. The use of a question, for example, may disguise the authoritative tone of an order by the powerful party in an interaction, and therefore give the impression of an egalitarian relation. In Kermit's conversation with a little boy (Appendix-text 2, program 2, tape 1), Kermit apparently makes a suggestion:

> How about we talk about...the parts of
> a face, like: where is your nose?

However, as it can be noted, Kermit in fact imposes the topic of the conversation, since he does not wait for the boys' answer about the suggestion.

The last category to be explored, **Interactional Conventions**, for Fairclough (1989), consists of the "organizational" features of texts which signal the participants' control of the interactions. Firstly, the author refers to the **Turn-Taking**

Systems, that is, the exchange of turns between participants. He also observes that the participants' turns depend on relations of power. In informal conversation between equals, participants are supposed to negotiate their turns. On more formal occasions, however, the powerful impose constraints not only in the taking of turns, they also control the topic of the conversation. The author mentions teacher-student interactions in which the teacher has the power to establish what is important to be discussed, issue instructions, and provide evaluative comments to the powerless.

Secondly, Fairclough draws attention to how the powerful party controls the other participants' contributions through: Interrupting, Enforcing Explicitness, Controlling Topic and Making Formulation (rewording of implicit or explicit meanings in order to: check understanding or impose one's views).

The following description of two interactions in 'SS' provides examples of both types of Interactional Conventions: Turn Taking Systems, and Control of participants' Contributions.

The film of a real class (Appendix- text 3, program 2, tape 1) shows the teacher discussing computer use with her kindergarten pupils. The way the teacher directs the event, her tone of voice, as well as the distribution of pupils around the classroom (in circles) indicate an egalitarian relation between teacher and pupils. Nevertheless, the teacher still exercises power over the children, following constraints of the gender. She chooses the topic for discussion ("What do you think a computer is?") and controls the topic through a series of questions ("What else can we do with computers?", "How are we different from computers?"). In addition, the teacher interrupts pupils when they speak

together, telling them to speak one at a time ("Wait, wait...")
and evaluates the children's answers ("That's right!", "hm, hm!").

Grouch teaches children how to use his "trashy" computer
(Appendix- text 4, program 3, tape 1). His authoritative role is
much more explicit than the teacher's. The first indication of
Grouch's authority is his intonation which expresses his usual bad
humour. He uses this imperative tone all throughout the event to:
tell children what they are going to do,

> ...today ..we're gonna learn about trashy
> words which start with the letter 'C'

issue instructions of how to use the computer,

> ...you press that button....now, push
> the 'trashy' key,...now, let's gonna
> show pictures....

tell pupils' turns to use the computer,

> Adam...let's see how you do. You come on
> up here...give it a try...come on, Adam.

and enforce explicitness ("You got that?....", Here we go...
see?").

It is important to note that the linguistic categories
sometimes overlap. In the psychiatric texts discussed by
Fairclough (ibid.), for example, one can observe not only
different worldviews (**Classification**), but also different
relations established between text producer and addressee
(**Modality**). These relations are indicated through the precise
words used in the first text, on the one hand, and the euphemisms
used in the second. When there is overlapping of categories in the
analyses which will follow I will choose the more meaningful one,
according to my own interpretation.

The analysis of the paralinguistic and extralinguistic
features complements the meanings of the linguistic categories to

be identified in the video-taped texts, as exemplified above. The characters' positions in the program, the activities they perform and the images they portray (outfit, gestures, tone of voice, intonation, etc.), which constitute the semiotic level, not only complement the linguistic elements of the characters' speeches. In fact, sometimes they are more meaningful, as in the case of the camera viewpoint which is a semiotic category **per se**. Fairclough (1989) proposes the use of **visual** rather than **spoken** language to refer to this semiotic level which provides crucial information to the meaning of the text.

Through a focus on those verbal and non-verbal elements mentioned above I will show, in the different genres, how each text reveals the implicit discourse of gender (and other embedded discourses) which the program conveys. I will focus on how female and male characters interact in the program (which verbal and visual devices they use), as well as on the content of their interactions, in order to arrive at those hidden discourses.

A common feature among the events discussed here is that all of them come out of a fictitious program. Although the issues raised, as well as the relations represented among characters are not part of a factual and therefore really interactive discourse, they are a product of a real society. In this sense, they have a task to accomplish, which is not purely to entertain and educate. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, behind the explicit educational aim, this fictional program conveys values which are considered important by the American elites.

In the next chapter I will start a critical reading of the program considering the whole contextual environment.

CHAPTER 3

SESAME STREET: AN OVERVIEW

In this chapter I will make a brief introduction to 'SS' and describe its structure. I will then analyse it, considering the six (6) video taped programs as a whole.

In order to support the analysis of the 'SS' microcosm I will raise some points on the North American worldview, as well as on practical examples of power relations (involving 'SS') in the American society. In addition, I will discuss the opinion of critics about the program. All of these contextual elements are determinant factors to the reality of the program since, as mentioned in the Introduction, Critical Language Study requires an investigation of the social-historical surroundings in which discourse is inserted.

3.1. Brief Introduction to the Program

With the production and exhibition of 2.500 episodes until 1989 in the USA the first attempt to use television as an educational means has already won several awards. In the first year 7 million children aged 3 to 5 saw 'SS' in the USA, where the

program is transmitted every day, for two hours in the morning, and two hours in the afternoon, a repetition of the morning program (Martinho, 1989; Cook et al, 1975).

According to Wylie (1970:79) 'SS' originated in 1966, when

> ... os programas infantis na TV americana eram um
> pantanal de insípidos desenhos animados cheios de
> violência insensata e de programas baratos, cho-
> chos, sufocados por anúncios.

The author reports that Lloyd Morriset, the Carnegie Corporation (1) vice president at the moment, thought it was possible to take advantage of both television and pre-school age children, considering the fact that these children are in a crucial moment of their intellectual development. Morriset asked Joan Cooney, a producer of documentaries for a New York educational channel, to study the issue. The American company Children's Television Workshop is a result of an agreement among Ford Foundation, the American Department of Education and Carnegie Corporation. The Children's Television Workshop (CTW) produced 'SS' and exhibited it through some of the North American PBS (Public Broadcasting System), educational channels.

The main objectives of 'SS' are the introduction of pre-school age children to notions of written English and Mathematics, and to a number of other formative and informative habits as well. These are an attempt to substitute school for 'underprivileged' children who do not have access to it (Wylie, ibid.). According to Martinho (1989) the program, still coordinated by Joan Cooney, has recently introduced, among other experiences, basic notions of sex education and a special concern with racial and linguistic minorities in the USA.

Wylie (1970) states that on her first report to Carnegie Corporation, Joan Cooney observed that the National Association of Education recommended that every child should be given the chance to go to school from the age of four. The report argued that television could substitute school in this task. The emphasis was on the cost: this 'video-taped school' would cost only one fraction of the cost of regular school, since 90% of the American low class families had television.

Led by Gerald S. Lesser (professor of Education and Development Psychology in Harvard), a group of psychologists, educators, film producers, book illustrators, television producers, audience researchers and publicists started work. Having in mind the underprivileged children (target audience of the program), the organizers took their first decisions. The group wanted children to 'wake up' to the world without becoming confused or frightened. They raised questions about the best way to teach children things like numbers, the alphabet, animals and people, and about the way to introduce them to techniques of reasoning and problem solving. In Wylie's words,

> A solução veio a ser um cenário de teatro que re-
> produzisse uma rua típica da cidade — calçada, ár-
> vores, com pequenos prédios escuros de apartamen-
> tos, uma lojinha vendendo jornais e balas, uma
> caixa de correio e um terreno em escavação com
> tapumes contendo uma série de portas multicores.
> As portas se abriam màgicamente, transportando as
> crianças para aventuras filmadas em lugares dis-
> tantes — fazendas, lagos, montanhas e praias.
> (p.81)

Having thus presented the origin and explicit purposes of 'SS', I will now describe its structure.

3.2. Structure of the Program

The lively and fast pace style produced in the 'SS' microcosm is a complex frame constituted of different characters: puppets, humans and drawings. The main characters are puppets who usually perform together with adults, acting as mediators between the puppets and the audience.

Oscar the Grouch, Kermit the frog, Snuffle Upagus, Big Bird, Bert, Tellie and the Cookie Monster are basically the main puppet characters. They are regular participants, not only in terms of their frequency in each program, but also in relation to their performance in more than one sketch of the same program. Maria, Susan, Louis, Gordon, Olivia and David, the human adults, constitute the staff around whom many things happen in the village.

The group of occasional characters is constituted by puppets like Super Grover, the Little Girl, and other puppets, humans and personified objects whose names are not given.

The so called invited guests are many times caricatures of famous fictitious characters like Sherlock Hemlock, miss Muffet, Old Mc-Donald, and other puppets, humans and drawings, who vary in each program. The drawings represent not only people in general, but also humanized animals, balls, stones, hyphens, etc...

In addition to the human adults performing in 'SS', children also frequently act, although their participation is more restricted than the adults'. They usually complement the puppets' performances, acting when requested. Sometimes children also act as narrators, as in the case of the lost dog, the film about nature, the description of the old gardener working, and so on

(these examples, as well as the others mentioned further, constitute my data and are in the Appendix).

The characters' performances are greatly diversified. Some puppets like Big Bird, Ernie and Snuffle Upagus have childish personalities and others behave more like adults, although sometimes presenting strange behaviour. Such is the case of Bert and Kermit. The characters' peculiar behaviour constitutes the main feature responsible for the humoristic tone which pervades the program. In the nice and mockery sketches, the children are led to read, count, calculate and do other typically school-like activities. Moreover, they are exposed to discussions as well as to practical examples of computer use, plant care, animal care, notions of astronomy, printing and so many other informative themes. The introduction of human relation elements such as feeling sad, angry, lonely, the respect to one's individuality and the need to cooperate, to be industrious, courageous and dynamic are also strongly explored issues throughout the program.

The characters interact through different manners in interviews, conversations, songs and classes. They sometimes address the audience directly teaching things and inviting the audience to participate. At other moments, characters address each other referring to the audience indirectly only, or they just do not address the audience, as if there was none. This is very common in films which are inserted into the sketches of the program.

These films consist of a more serious part since the characters (unknown) are shown performing in their real lives; here the fantastic world is brushed aside. The lumberjack shouts "Timber!" when the tree falls, the dolphin trainer brushes a

dolphin's teeth, the mother knits cardigans for her daughters, the farmer takes care of a baby cow, and the man and boy talk about the lives of animals while pictures of animals, plants and river are shown. These are some of the sketches which introduce a realistic aspect to the entertaining fantasy of puppets, humans and drawings.

The resulting effect of the enormous variety of elements in 'SS' is an intense bombarding of images and information transmitted to the audience, behind which one can perceive the dominant discourse of class divided societies as in the case of the American society in which 'SS' is inserted.

3.3. Contextual Elements

3.3.1. The Dominant American Discourse

An intrinsic characteristic of the capitalist, class divided society, is its primary concern with capital/profit, rather than with labour/human beings. The profit aimed at in capitalism is a privilege of a minority/dominant class, since the accumulation of a few people's richness requires the work of many. Thus, while the majority of the population in a given society works for their survival, the minority concentrates the wealth produced by the former. However, in order to grant the maintenance of their privileges, the dominant class needs to reproduce, not only the economic relations, but also values and ideas which sustain these relations. Necessarily partial, these values and ideas hide the existing unequal relations of power, as part of the dominant class's ongoing struggle to prevent the dominated class from taking power.

The American capitalist dominant interests can be well expressed by Mickey, the famous fictitious character, prototype of the American thought. Mickey's words in an imaginary interview are transcribed by Mattelart (1979:120)(2).

> Naturalmente sou sustentado pela grande moda a-
> mericanista em todo o mundo. Porque sou feito
> de acordo com a imagem da América, de uma Amé-
> rica específica, a dos pioneiros, da aventura,
> ação e coragem. Uma América que confia em si
> própria e em seu estilo de vida. Conquistador.
> Promotor. Mas, mais do que isto, e sem orgulho
> descabido, falo das profundezas da alma humana,
> da luta do pequeno contra o grande, de David e
> Golias. Se não fosse assim, não seria o que
> sou: uma figura universal.

As the above quotation suggests, the American ideology is primarily concerned with its superiority over other societies. Qualities such as self-reliance, courage, competitiveness, pragmatism and adventure are clearly values conveyed by the dominant American ideology not only spread in the American society, but also in other countries, as part of the so called American imperialist capitalism. Those features mentioned, and others (respect to individuality, cooperation, industry, dynamism, sensitiveness and discipline), are the ones which emerge in the discourse of the dominant American class (Fichou, 1990, Mattelart, 1979). Though positive at first sight, they are treated in an abstract and partial form sustaining, in the context of the American reality, other implicit features which constitute the American target of domination. In the analysis of the Disney productions by Schiller and Mattelart and Dorfman (cited in Caparelli, 1986) the authors found recurrent values which they define as typical of the dominant American ideology: CONSUMERISM (characters' permanent search for the treasure), COLONIALISM

(characters from faraway stereotyped countries), CLASSISM (blue collar workers portrayed as murderers) and IMPERIALISM (characters removing treasures to their own countries). These hidden values emerge as a result of a reflection from the set of explicit language articulated in the dominant class discourse. Ianni (1976) observes that in spreading what Dorfman and Mattelart call the American Dream of Life the relations between conditions of social existence, consciousness, thought and action are completely inverted, that is, individuals become unconscious of the objective facts of their reality.

Kress (1985) discusses the capitalist discourse of freedom (respect to Individuality) which is, essentially, a device used by the dominant class to maintain the dominated class alienation:

> The notion that the resources of language are
> freely available to any individual is as
> potent as the notion that the material
> benefits of the capitalist system are
> freely available to all; and as misleading.
> There is of course no barrier to anyone
> becoming a successful capitalist —indeed
> the ideological strength of the system
> depends on that, though as it happens the
> structures of most of our lives tend to
> make it unlikely. (p.50)

The dominant American discourse can be shown not only through the opinion of critics, but also through a representative of the dominant American bloc. Mattelart (1979) gives an example of the imperialistic discourse in a memorandum made by president Kennedy in which he defines the task to be performed by USIA (United States International Affairs), institution of the government official propaganda after the World War II.

> É necessário.... dar aos E.U.A. a imagem de uma
> nação dinâmica, democrática e forte com qualida-
> des para liderar os esforços feitos pelo mundo a

fim de alcançar este objetivo. (p.112)

The obscurity of Kennedy's discourse can be observed through the abstract words he uses - "dinâmica", "democrática", "forte", "qualidades". Completely decontextualized, these words do not mean anything, effectively. On the other hand, Kennedy is very explicit when he mentions the need to construct an "image", showing his concern with appearance, rather than with essence. Another of Kennedy's explicit points is in the word "liderar". Although he does not mention which 'qualities' are necessary, being obscure in this respect, he implies that it is positive and necessary to lead other countries, without ever questioning if it is good for other nations to be dominated.

The task suggested by Kennedy has been accomplished. In 1972 the USIA had more than 200 million dollars per year, and 9.885 agents spread around 109 countries. With the aim of imposing the American values over those countries the institution was advised by Kennedy to use numerous communication means such as personal contact, radio networks, libraries, books, the press, television, cinema, English teaching, and so on (Mattelart, ibid.).

The following two pages consist of a special example of the dominant American discourse: the dominant class's view of 'SS'.

Wylie (1970) claims that 'SS' is a revolutionary program. However, his presentation of the philosophy of the program (see 2.1. Brief Introduction to the Program) is clearly another good example of the dominant American discourse, as discussed below.

One can point out two basic facts which indicate Wylie's (ibid.) perspective of 'SS'. First of all, it is important to stress that Wylie's article is published in "Seleções do Reader's Digest", a widely known means of transmission of the dominant

American ideology around the world, translated into 13 languages.
The content of this magazine, analysed by Dorfman and Mattelart
(cited in Mattelart, 1979) transmits American dominant ideas such
as: scientific knowledge is neutral and benefits everybody; the
American society is democratic and its power is equally
distributed; and, those who act according to the established law
obtain success in life. Mattelart (ibid.) observes that
"Seleções do Reader's Digest", along with "Time", "Life" and the
Walt Disney's strips, was summoned by the OIAA (Office of
International American Affairs), in 1938, to promote the American
ideology against the Nazi propaganda.

The second point, to be added to the contextual information,
is that through a linguistic analysis of Wylie's criticism one can
note the partiality of his report. First, the text is full of
abstract information, since it generalizes facts. The author makes
reference to isolated cases such as "um menino....", "uma mãe
escreveu dizendo....", "uma professora...." to justify the
philosophy of the program and its successful effects, as if those
cases stood for the majority. In addition, Wylie gives no concrete
reference to support his statements. He simply mentions studies
like: "Segundo recentes descobertas psicológicas...." and "Ao
atingirem cinco ou seis anos, segundo um estudo...."

Secondly, the author uses widely known negative effects of
television to show the success of the program. Wylie turns these
negative effects into positive ones, as if they could be used to
justify the good quality of the program:

>...uma vez que muitas mães hoje usam a televisão como
babás eletrônicas,....não poderíamos esperar que
elas fizessem um esforço especial para ligar a
televisão ,a menos que nós lhe assegurássemos uma

> hora inteira... (p.81)
>
> Uma menina de dois anos interessou-se tanto pelo programa que êle prejudicou a sua aprendizagem de fazer suas necessidades. (p.82)

The author does not consider, in these two examples, the negative persuasive character of television. He simply attributes the 'probable' harmful side of the issue to the excellence of the program.

Thirdly, the force of the author's expressions to classify the program is very unrealistic. He uses a propagandistic style with a list of exagerated and suspicious expressions to refer to the program: "Louvando este sensacional programa", "uma avalanche de 13.000 telefonemas e 7.000 cartas de aplauso...", "O entusiasmo foi compartilhado pelo resto dos E.U.A....." and "Os críticos de jornais aclamaram 'Rua Sésamo' como uma revolução na televisão..."

Fourthly, Wylie omits the discussion of the effects of the program on the target audience. What happened to the poor class children who were the main concern of 'SS' producers?

In addition to all the elements mentioned above, the author does not mention the existing connections of power (discussed below) between the government (public television/Department of education), and the private corporations which sponsor the program. Rather, Wylie puts those relations as natural and completely disinterested. For him, those institutions have purely educational intentions.

3.3.2. Power Relations in the North American Mass Media

Melo (1985) observes that the mass media in capitalism is primarily concerned with the interests of the powerful, as quoted below:

> No sistema capitalista, antes dos interesses, ex-
> pectativas e aspirações da coletividade a   que
> serve um meio de comunicação, estão as vantagens
> particulares do seu dono e as conveniências   so-
> ciais a que se vincula por raízes de classe. (p.
> 96)

Hall (1971) draws attention to the importance of identifying power relations in any system of communication so that one can evaluate and interpret more adequately the meaning of the messages transmitted. He mentions several difficulties in accomplishing this task, which lie in the fact that power holders have the whole system favouring them, and therefore covering their manoeuvres. Yet, one can overcome those obstacles and detect evidence of how the system really works, as explained by Mattelart (1979) and Nordenstreng and Varis (1979). Although critics of the dominant ideology conveyed in the mass media usually emphasize the implications of commercial channels whose private ownership indicates private interests explicitly, the authors show that educational television also conveys the dominant discourse.

According to Nordenstreng and Varis (1979) the PBS, or NET (National Educational Television), is financed by private enterprises such as IBM, XEROX and Ford Foundation.

Mattelart (ibid.) points out that the initiative of private enterprises in exploring the educational field is not restricted to Ford Foundation. The author observes that in 1970 Congress

advised the North American multinationals to encourage the development of educational television.

These connections between the American educational system and the multinational companies, however, started before that:

> Desde 1965 a divisão educacional da Westinghouse tomou a seu cargo, a pedido do governo, a formação da diretoria do Corpo da Paz para o Brasil e Colômbia. (Em 1973, a Westinghouse convidou para vice-presidente de sua divisão teleeducacional o Sr. Frank Shakespeare, que acabara de pedir demissão de seu cargo de diretor da USIA.)
>
> Um novo fato surge por volta de 1970: a irresistível promoção das firmas multinacionais dos setores eletrônico e de aeronáutica à categoria de produtores de cultura, graças ao controle que exercem sobre o que chamam de 'tecnologia da educação' e tecnologia dos satélites. O ponto principal não era mais universalizar a cultura de lazer através de histórias em quadrinhos, seriados na televisão e outros produtos de cultura de massa, mas universalizar modelos educacionais. Todas as grandes firmas eletrônicas têm agora divisões educacionais e, nos últimos anos, têm exercido pressão sobre os meios de comunicação de massa tradicionais.... (p.121)

As it can be noted, the innocent view previously held by Wylie (section 3.1) that those commercial enterprises are purely interested in contributing to community welfare can now be reinterpreted. These corporations are in fact concerned with two main things: contributing (together with the State) to maintain the status quo, and disguising their harmful actions, as suggested by Fichou (1990). Another relevant fact concerning what Mattelart (1979:21) calls 'invasão da pedagogia de massa, uma tarefa das multinacionais' is that Jack Vaughn, who worked as American embassador to Colombia from 1970 to 1971, was nominated director of the International Department of CTW (Children's Television Workshop) in 1973. In 1972 Nixon assigned director of the public television network Henry Loomus, one of those responsible for

USIA. Henry Loomus had been director of the radio network Voice of America, one of the organs controlled by USIA, up to that moment.

The connections between the State and the private corporations managing educational television show that both, in fact, belong to the same power bloc. Therefore, one can conclude that educational television is essentially commercial, despite its claim to be neutral, and thus isolated from the commercial system which involves the mass media. Nordenstreng and Varis (1979) point out that, theoretically, educational television could be an interesting alternative to commercial television. In practice, however, this is not what happens. In fact, the educational channels seem to be part of the ongoing changes in the discourse of the dominant class, a result of the audience's awareness process. As the intentions of commercial channels are now explicit, power holders invented educational television, another mask of the dominant discourse to hide real intentions subtly. In this sense one can say that the individuals' growing awareness does result in real changes. These changes, however, are not complete, as claimed by the dominant class discourse, but partial. Thus, although educational television has in fact better quality, their producers (which means the dominant class) cannot provide the audience with really critical issues, at the risk of starting a demystification process of their own hegemonic discourse.

Nordenstreng and Varis (ibid.) draw attention to contemporary capitalism which, marked by accumulation of international capital (economic basis), caused several superstructural changes. Among these changes are the technological advances in communication which allowed imperialism to extrapolate the boundaries of culture and leisure, and penetrate the

educational field. Matterlart classifies the actions of technology owners, in the last 15 years, as "more aggressive", not only in terms of the techniques employed, but also of the programs and message content.

According to Matterlart (1979),

> Com o Vila Sésamo apareceu a nova fase do imperia-
> lismo cultural que tenta mascarar a penetração i-
> deológica com um apelo pedagógico e uma suposta
> neutralidade das mensagens dirigidas às crianças.
> Esta série marca uma mudança nas técnicas de 'con-
> trole de mentes': sendo extremamente diferente das
> séries comerciais, ... (p.123).

In addition to unveiling the existing power relations between the government and private corporations involved in the program, the critics also call attention to other facts which indicate the real aims of 'SS'. Although 'SS' is said to be created with the aim of substituting school for pre-school age children who do not have access to school, Caparelli (1986) draws attention to the American environment in which 'SS' emerged:

> Concebido no Children's Television Workshop, após
> as revoltas urbanas nos Estados Unidos, Sesame
> Street foi uma reação aos tumultos, voltando-se
> para a educação, combinada com o dinheiro de fun-
> dações milionárias e do Ministério da Educação
> daquele país. O objetivo era trazer as crianças
> dos guetos para uma filosofia participativa, que
> diminuísse sua marginalização social. (p.73)

> ... Vila Sésamo... teve como origem os problemas
> e incertezas da década de 60; a pobreza, o pro-
> blema racial, o declínio do volume de leitura, e
> trazia embutida a crença de que a educação era
> um remédio para todos os problemas. (p.77)

Lesser (1974), one of the 'SS' producers, also mentions the need to control poverty and revolts in the USA. He, however, implies that 'SS' expresses concern with the common welfare only. Although there is in fact concern with providing children with

education in 'SS', it is important to point out that it is also in the interest of the State and the private corporations to control growing poverty. Power holders need to keep poverty at acceptable rates; otherwise, they may lose control and, consequently, their domination. In this sense 'SS' is a subtle means of reproduction of the dominant ideology. Firstly, because it is taken as a substitute for school. Although, as discussed in Chapter 1, television cannot do this work effectively, the dominant discourse says it can be done. Thus, the dominated class is led to accept that they are being provided with school and that the State is accomplishing its obligation. The second fact is that 'SS' is labelled 'educational' and is supposedly neutral. Misleading the audience who accepts this discourse, in essence the program reinforces the exploitative system.

Two more important contextual elements reinforce the view of 'SS' as belonging to the dominant ideology: its connection with the Disney productions, and the permission, by its producers, to license 'SS' toys.

As mentioned above, the Disney productions are one of the entities summoned by the OIAA to promote the American ideology against the Nazi propaganda. The possibility, raised by Caparelli (1986), that the values found in Disney can also be detected in other television programs, as well as the article by Mengozzi (1990) announcing novelties to the Disney World, aproximate the Disney productions to 'SS'. Mengozzi reports that the Muppets are going to join the Disney family in the 90's.
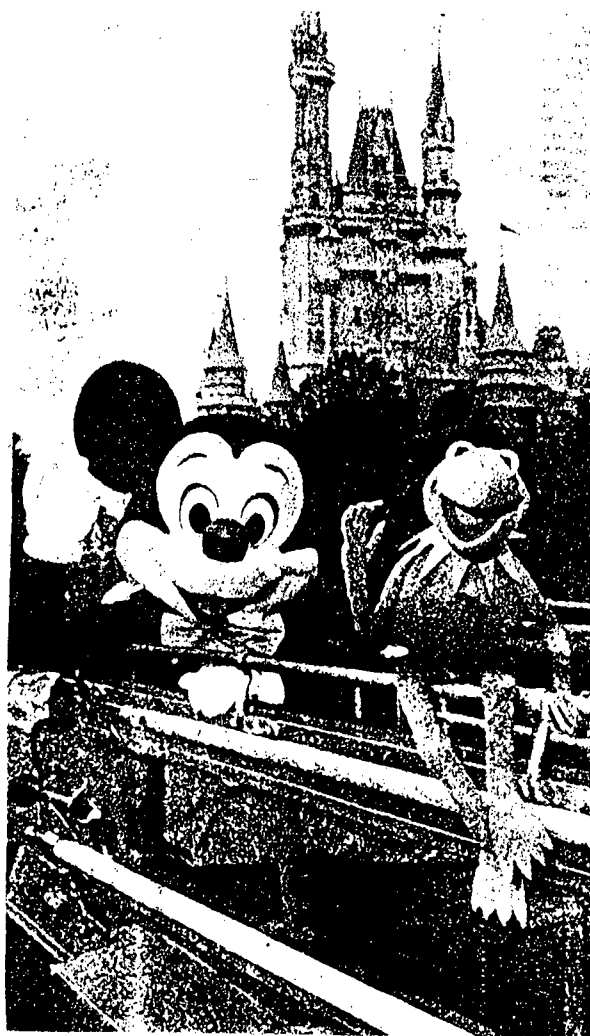
A família Muppet virá se juntar à família
Disney. (Mengozzi, 1990)

Although the Disney ideology is quite explicit and 'SS' is
considered by many authors as a 'high quality' program, these
connecting points show that in fact the two productions do have
more points in common than it seems at first sight. Actually, the
difference is in the degree of subtleness of transmission of the
dominant ideology. While Disney is explicitly ideological, as
mentioned before (encouragement to consumerism, for example, is an
explicit feature which pervades the Disney adventures, according
to Caparelli, 1986), 'SS' is explicitly educational and therefore
'neutral'. This is where the danger of 'SS' lies since, as I

intend to demonstrate, the real values transmitted are covered, and thus more easily assimilated by passive consent.

The other contextual element is raised by Erausquin et al (1983), as well as by Engelhart (n.d.). The authors criticise the fact that, although there are no advertisements during the 'SS' shows, a multinational company was allowed to produce 'SS' toys, dolls and other licensed products, thus encouraging commerce through a program which claims to be anti-consumerist, in a very subtle manner. Indirectly, this follows exactly the capitalit aim of profit.

3.3.3. Evaluation of the program

As far as the analysis of the program itself is concerned, the critics discussed in this work present different views. Erausquin et al. (1983) point out the high quality of the program in relation to the specialized staff and the consequent elaborate and well produced sketches, as well as its good reputation among critics. However, the authors criticise it vehemently in relation to several aspects.

First, the encouragement of passivity caused by television is not invalidated, according to the authors, despite the dynamics of the program.

Second, children are exposed to the dominant discourse in the sense that they are 'bombarded' by images and information. Children finish assimilating the alphabet in the same way as they assimilate pop advertisements. According to the authors, the techniques employed are based on publicity 'spots'. They say that this device

is comprehensible for selling purposes, but not for pedagogical aims.

The third criticism is that the village presented is not representative of real society, since there is always peace, never conflict, and there is no proletariat as in a real Spanish village (the Spanish 'SS' was analysed). The authors finally state that 'SS' is 'o menos ruim dos programas destinados ao público infantil dos emitidos pela RTVE" (p.129).

As concerning pace Wylie (1970) maintains that 'SS' has a great variety of short sketches with numerous technical and pedagogical devices to meet children's needs, since their concentration span is still very brief. Wylie (1970) reports on one of the producer's view on this issue:

> ... eu havia constatado que os garotos ficam
> fascinados pelos anúncios de ação rápida, pelas
> músicas fáceis de guardar....embora alguns
> educadores não vibrem com a idéia, nós achamos
> que o nossso programa teria que movimentar-se em
> ritmo acelerado. (p.80)

Although the fast pace and variety are considered by the educators involved in the program as necessary to keep children's interest and to provide them with an environment of the 70's, J.L. and D.G. Singer (1981) argue that children need time for response and reflection.

Engelhart (n.d.) also criticises the advertisement form based program with sketches lasting no longer than two minutes. According to the author the program itself can be seen as advertisement, and the ideas, as sellable /inculcated. Although the cable TV and PBS are taken by the author as the ones which present some variety with "age specific programming", 'SS' is seen as "ultraspeedy", in opposition to the "slow motion" 'Mister Roger's Neighborhood'.

Summing up what critics say about 'SS', one can point out that it is a consensus among the authors that 'SS' is a high quality program. As a matter of fact, some authors point out 'SS' as an alternative to the poor options of children's television.

In terms of ideology, however, those who mention it are not very explicit in indicating the dominant values transmitted. They restrict themselves to stating that the program is ideological and to explaining power relations which sustain their statement. 'SS' is obviously a means of reproduction of the dominant ideology, as discussed before. But the sophisticated techniques employed (eg. fast pace) and the pedagogical claim cover the dominant class discourse behind its language.

3.4. Analysis of the 'SS' Microcosm

I will now develop simultaneous procedures of interpretation and explanation of 'SS' based on both, the contextual elements of the program, and on its language.

Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.), when discussing ideology and power in press and TV news, refer to fundamental cultural power relations such as CLASS, AGE, ETHNICITY and GENDER which are transmitted in the media reinforcing thus the exploitative system. Fairclough (1989) states that relations of class, in a broad sense, establish parameters for other asymmetric relations of capitalism such as gender, race and age. Although the class divided system alone is not responsible for other types of asymmetric relations, it reinforces and produces other asymmetries.

Throughout my analysis I will indicate elements of the dominant discourse implicit in these four types of asymmetric relations

(concentrating on gender), in order to gather evidence that 'SS' reproduces the American establishment.

I will concentrate on the identification of the 'SS' microcosm as a whole focusing in particular on the meanings transmitted by the scenery, the relations between the characters and what they represent (their activities and behaviour), as well as on the linguistic category of **Classification** (as defined in Chapter 2). The aspect of Classification analysed in this section, however, is basically restricted to the characters' names and adjectives referring to them, rather than the more complex set of word choices which will be analysed in the next chapter.

SCENERY

The main scenery presented in 'SS' is the village where most of the puppets perform, together with humans. It is a poor village with old and dark buildings, and the characters usually perform in the street which has trees, trash cans, old wooden walls and fences, a swing made of tyre where children play, brooms, boxes and other objects which identify the village as a poor place. The indoor scenes such as Mother Goose's office, Bert and Ernie's house, the little girl's house and many others are performed on stage, supposedly inside the houses of the village.

In addition to the performances on the street and the ones es inside the 'houses', many other places constitute the 'SS' scenery: parks, schools, clubs, camping sites, farms, streets, beaches, offices. These are either filmed in real places or created in drawings. Outside the village the world presented is usually more

sophisticated; the places are clean, neat and richer than the places inside the village.

As one of the purposes of the program is to be seen as educational rather than commercial, the absence of advertisements during its shows gives the impression that 'SS' does not encourage consumerism. The program does not present explicit values of consumerism (happiness obtained with purchases), but the rich scenery outside the village, with all the apparatuses employed, is an indication of the consumerist character of the American society. In the films inserted, characters are usually well dressed and use sophisticated instruments such as spaceship and computer. Hence, one cannot deny the consumerist society subtly reflected in the program.

It is important to observe the contrast between the two kinds of scenery. Although there is an apparent concern with the low class in terms of identification of the program, the scenery outside the village shows to the audience the other side of the society represented. One can make an interesting analogy with Wylie's (1970) explanation of the title of the program:

> O cenário sugeriu o título: assim como a ordem
> 'Abre-te, Sésamo' abria a porta mágica para a
> caverna do tesouro no famoso conto das Mil e Uma
> Noites, assim também 'Rua Sésamo', ao que se
> esperava, abriria a porta do saber para milhões
> de crianças. (p.81)

The door which is open in 'SS' can also be interpreted as a passage to the real world which is open when, among the fantasy of puppets and drawings, reality emerges through the films. Hence, one can conclude that, in fantasy, (the 'SS' studio), the poor class Americans can find themselves in the video. The reality which the films show, however, provides enough information about imbalances in

the American society, contradicting thus the explicit egalitarian discourse of the program.

CHARACTERS

The richness of the characters' performances, in accordance with the diversified setting, also conveys important clues about the worldviews transmitted by the program. The characters' appearance, how they relate to each other (more superficially), their activities and their names indicate the treatment the program gives to typical questions of class divided societies such as **CLASS, RACE, AGE** and **GENDER.** The latter seems to be the more clearly explored issue, or the easiest to perceive, therefore the most thoroughly discussed here.

a) **Class**

One indication of the classes portrayed is obtained by observing the characters' activities and professions, as shown in the list below which separates the activities according to categories:

1. **LOWER CLASS/RELATED TO PRODUCTION**

Trashman
Baker
Lumber jack
Shoemaker
Farmer
Gardener
Driver
Bricklayer
Cook
Printer
Mailman
Smith
Carpenter

2. **ENTERTAINMENT/FANTASY**

Host (show)
Vampire
Musician
Dancer
Singer
Super hero
Pirate
Witch
Painter
Sportsman
Poetess
Wizard
Dolphin trainer
Musician

Scuba Diver

3. TERTIARY SECTOR

Seller
Mender
Counterperson
Barman
Detective

4. INSTITUTIONAL ORDER/LAW

Soldier
Fireman
Sailor
Policeman
Ship Captain
Guard
Journalist
Detective
King

5. KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

Astronaut
Dentist
Veterinary
Doctor
Scientist
Teacher
Archeologist
Architect

It seems to be a sample representative of the majority of society with strong emphasis on professions representing middle — low classes, as it can be observed in the long list of workers who are more related to the production of goods. The other long list is to do with entertainment in general, including elements of the fantastic world of children's stories. Here there is a mixture of the real and magic worlds, dissolving everything in the children's fantasies.

In addition to these two categories which provide a more alternative aspect to the world presented, the other three categories are more related to the dominant forces of capitalist societies: the tertiary sector which deals directly with the purchasing market, motor condition of capitalism, and the two categories of institutional forces: some representatives of the repressive apparatus of the State, and the ones responsible for the production of scientific knowledge (power of knowledge).

Although, as mentioned before, the lower classes are indeed represented in the program, there is no criticism of any type of exploitative relation, such as the one existing between employers and employees. There is nothing explicit about the professionals' interests; if they are articulated with labour, or with capital, for example. The program dissolves concrete relations, placing all professions in the same level, from the point of view of the positions they occupy. In the case of the farmer, for example, it is not clear if he is the farm owner, or if he is an employee. Everybody works happily in their conditions, there is no complaint, everything works beautifully. Therefore, the idealization of the different social classes represented hides the structural conflicts and injustices of capitalist societies, following the dominant class's interests.

b) **Race**

In relation to race it is important to note that blacks and Hispanics constitute a significant proportion of the characters in the program. However, although white Americans sometimes portray the roles of gardener, farmer and baker, they usually occupy higher posts than blacks and Hispanics. The professions of vet, astronaut and dentist, for example, are occupied by whites, while blacks and Hispanics are more related to sports and music. Thus, although white Americans occupy higher as well as lower positions, the program seems to close the possibility for blacks and Hispanics to achieve higher hierarchical roles, professionally.

It is important to observe that there is a large number of different ethnic groups in the United States, specially Hispanics in

areas like New York and California, where the program is produced. Thus, the fact that there are many Hispanics and blacks in the program provides the audience with a greater identification with the society in which they live. The lower positions that those ethnic groups occupy, however, seem to reflect the producers' view as concerning the issue: white Americans come first, Hispanics and blacks must continue in inferior positions. This view is reinforced by Wylie (1970:81) who, once more, states the egalitarian 'image' which 'SS' has:

> Visando a proporcionar o calor humano, pessoal,
> haveria um elenco de personagens constantes -os
> moradores da Rua Sésamo- negros e brancos.

The author implies that the program is not being racist, simply because it places blacks and whites together in the same scenary. Careful analysis, though, shows this is not enough.

The lack of conflict in face of the differences shows that, according to the program, those who are in 'underprivileged' positions are satisfied with their situation, alienated from the prejudice against them. In this sense the audience is unconsciously led to accept the usual inferior position of blacks and Hispanics in the American society.

c) Age

The ages represented in the program are more often the pre-school age, adolescence and adulthood. Old people appear a few times, but their activities are more often restricted to the countryside. The gardener taking care of plants, the smith making a horse shoe, Old Mc. Donald being interviewed, and the drawing of another old man, all of them in the countryside, constitute old men's restricted field of action. The two different portrayals

presented are an old piano player and an old man who works as a printer. As concerning old women, they are almost absent from the program. An old woman contestant is introduced in the calculation show, but the show is interrupted before she starts to act. The other portrayal is of an old woman feeding her cats at home. She does not say anything either.

The only exception to the stigmatized portrayal of old age is in the representation of the 'Old Woman'. Although apparently old (the name and her appearance) the traditional nursery rhyme character is portrayed as an independent and emancipated (in terms) mother, as it will be discussed in detail later on.

The discussion above shows that in 'SS', as in real society, old people are not given much space. They usually do not perform any productive role outside the farming activities which are more related to leisure. Thus, the program contributes to reproduce the society's view of old people. As they are not part of the productive body of society anymore, their activities are subjugated to secondary importance.

d) Gender

As far as the representation of women and men is concerned many significant observations can be made. The number of human female and male characters represented (in the data I analysed) is a first indication that males dominate the scene. Male characters appear in the program many more times than females, not only when they perform alone, but also when they perform in pairs and groups. Moreover, when males and females perform together, males are usually more active.

Another important quantitative datum is the gender of animals and objects in the program. The animals whose sex is identified (through either voice quality or outfit, or nouns and pronouns referring to them) are listed below.

FEMALES

Gladis- cow
Bessie- cow
Papa Piper - parrot
Bernise - pigeon

MALES

Kermit - frog
Big Bird
Blue Bird
Slummy - Worm
Dorsy - Worm
The Owl
Billy - Mary's Lamb
Dann - Turtle
Snuffle Upagus - Elephant
Charlie - Spider
Adam - Dog
The Monkey
The Ants

Firstly, there is a meaningful quantitative difference between the female and male animals.

Secondly, females usually perform less active roles, while most males have meaningful participation, and when they are not active they become important through other characters' words. Gladis and Bernise are active characters, but Bessie is just a 'passer-by'.

The males' participation, however, is much more meaningful. To begin with, Kermit, Big Bird and Snuffle Upagus are part of the group of main characters. In addition, Slummy and Dorsy are musicians who play their instruments and talk to the other characters. Blue Bird and the Owl are also active participants; they talk a lot to the others, teach and sing. Dan, the turtle, is recited in poetry. Charlie also becomes important in the reconstructed nursery rhyme Little Miss Muffet, since he speaks and attacks Kermit. Similarly to Charlie, Mary's lamb has an active participation, as he frightens Kermit . Adam is a girl's dog who is

lost. Although this real dog does not participate directly, he is the object of concern to the girl and other characters who go after him when he disappears.

In relation to other personified objects whose sex is identified (mainly through the voice) one can mention the letter 'S', the tooth brush, the typewriter and the little ball and his father as male characters. Conversely, there is not any female object.

The characters' professions, as well as their names or nicknames (adjectives), also clearly show how each gender is treated in the program. The female characters occupy, with some exceptions such as an architect, astronaut, vet, singer, ballarina, painter and poetess, the positions of mother, teacher and lover (discussed further in Chapter 4) with no other explicit profession. In the case of mother, women represent either real mothers, like the one who knits cardigans for her daughters and the Latin mother who dresses up his son and takes him to school; or they activate their maternal instinct, as when Susan puts Big Bird to bed kissing and caressing him. Females restriction to the family activities is also indicated in the vet sketch. The parents who accompany their children with pets are, except for one father, all mothers.

The males' professional world, on the other hand, is explicit most of the time and it usually follows stereotypes existing in society (all the activities listed in the section **CLASS** which are not referred to as occupied by females in this section). The greater number of activities performed by males, rather than by females, also confirms that males are more numerous and active than females. Other evidence of the stereotyped portrayal of the male world in 'SS' lies in: the portrayal of males reading newspaper (one out of

five characters reading the newspaper is a woman); and the male voices narrating the sketches (most of the adults who narrate the sketches are male).

Females' stereotype portrayal is also present in their names. All of the (known) female puppets (except Mary) are referred to with expressions which mark their condition, always related to submission: **Mother** Goose, **Miss** Muffet, **Little** Girl and the **Old** Woman. Among the male puppets derogatory qualifications are restricted to **Old** Mc. Donald, the Cookie **Monster** and Oscar the **Grouch**. In the cases of **Super** Grover, **Nobel Prize** and **Big** Bird their names are not depreciatory. In addition to these puppets Tellie, Count, Ernie, Bert, the baker, the magician, the host, Sherlock Hemlock, Kermit and Snuffle Upagus constitute the majority in the group of puppets. Six of these male puppets are regular characters of the program, while there are no female representatives.

In relation to the male non traditional representations, one can point out the man who sweeps the floor as only an attempt to change the stereotype of men, since the reading one can do of this sketch is that men do not know how to sweep. As concerning the exploration of the male sensitivity, however, the program seems to introduce a new perspective. Although sensitivity is a typically female feature 'SS' calls attention to the male's sensitivity in some samples: Big Bird and Snuffle Upagus explore the importance of self-esteem and friendship intensively in their relations. Big Bird loves being caressed and looked after, and Bert waters a plant showing its need for care. Although these puppets can be taken as 'males-to-be', due to their childish personalities, their sensitivity is already meaningful. At least they are not being encouraged to follow the rational/sensitiveless male pattern from an

early age. Other male adult puppets also show sensitiveness. The Owl singing a lullaby to Big Bird and one monster singing a lullaby to his fellow (with the word 'love' in the background) show a new proposal for males, despite the fact that puppets, in a sense, hide sex distinctions. These male characters with 'female' features do not seem odd because they are puppets.

In terms of the representation of children there seems to be less imbalance between boys' and girls' performances. Although boys alone perform more than girls, when they appear together (more than each one alone) the girls are usually more numerous. Yet, the girls very often have protective attitudes (maternal instinct, taking care of pets more than boys), while boys have more stereotyped activities for their sex. They play soccer, basketball and swim, while the girls' games are not usually very specific to their sex. Both boys and girls participate in activities such as roll skating, singing and talking to each other in classes. Some girls like 'Little Girl', Mary and the girl who teaches "how to blow your nose" are examples of girls who do not follow the usual pattern. Although they are visually conventional their actions show that they are different. The girl who teaches "how to blow your nose" represents a 'tom boy'; she is very active and the way she speaks and sits (with the legs open) is very much like the one of a boy. Similarly, the boy in the kitchen making a fruit salad for other children shows a different model of males.

In conclusion, through a global analysis one can say that 'SS' is a diversified, beautiful and happy world with a few proposals for a fairer society.

As concerning the position of blacks, Hispanics and old people, as well as the different classes living together in the same society

'SS' transmits prejudice and difference encouraging conformity to the established patterns.

In relation to the role of women, despite a few exceptions, the traditional system which oppresses them is still very explicit.

Although 'SS' presents different realities the lack of conflict among those differences indicates that the program encourages alienation to the traditional structure and the consequent injustices of capitalist societies. As Caparelli (1986) points out,

> Não basta colocar um personagem preto como prota-
> gonista para se desfazer do ranço do racismo. Ou
> preconceituoso em relação à mulher. (p.79)

These isolated elements, ahistorically and harmonically situated, hide the divided social reality and its conflicts, leading the audience to assimilate the dominant discourse conveyed.

Having thus detected the first impressions of the program as a whole, my purpose is now to look at some selected texts which are a sample of the world of the program.

Notes

(1) "Fundo para Aperfeiçoamento e Difusão do Conhecimento entre o Povo Americano e de Certas Áreas do Commonwealth." (Wylie, 1970)

(2) Published by Realités. Paris, December, 1974.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPLICIT DISCOURSE OF GENDER
AND OTHER EMBEDDED DISCOURSES

The power relations discussed in Chapters 1 and 3 are fundamental issues to support the analyses carried out in Chapter 4. The 'SS' microcosm, looked at from a globalizing viewpoint in Chapter 3, will be now examined in more detail. I will attempt to show how the implicit discourse of gender and other discourses of 'SS' express the dominant North American ideology.

In addition to the general way women and men are represented in the program (discussed in Chapter 3), the interactions between female and male characters also express quite explicit values which convey the discourse of gender of the program.

Scott (1990) uses the term 'gender' to refer to the relashioship between women and men in society. The author argues that this concept is part of an attempt of contemporary feminists to introduce a more comprehensive theory which is able to explain recurrent imbalances between women and men more adequately. Through the concept of gender applied here Scott (ibi.) rejects the partiality of feminist politics implied in terms such as 'sex' and 'sexual difference' ('gender' has a more objective and neutral connotation), since these terms restrict the issue of power relations between women and men to biological explanations. In

addition, 'gender' constitutes a category of historical analysis which implies not the study of women isolated, but the social relations between both women and men. To the author,

> O gênero torna-se, antes, uma maneira de indicar
> 'construções sociais'— a criação inteiramente
> social de idéias sobre os papéis adequados aos
> homens e mulheres é uma maneira de se referir
> às origens exclusivamente sociais das identidades
> subjetivas dos homens e das mulheres. O gênero
> é, segundo esta definição, uma categoria social
> imposta sobre um corpo sexuado...O uso de gênero
> põe a ênfase sobre todo um sistema de relações
> que pode incluir o sexo, mas ele não é direta-
> mente determinado pelo sexo, nem determina di-
> retamente a sexualidade. (p.7)

The selected texts discussed in this section will be distributed according to the genres already mentioned: INTERVIEW, CONVERSATION and SONG. During the analysis of each separate genre I will proceed as follows. Firstly, I will introduce each text (transcribed in the Appendix), considering the elements of situation, participants and purposes, as suggested by Fowler and Kress (1979), in order to contextualize each interaction.

Secondly, I will interpret the meanings from the linguistic features of **Interactional Conventions**, **Modality** and **Classification**. The semiotic elements will be explored together with the linguistic categories, since they usually complement the linguistic meanings transmitted. I will close the discussion of each text with the explanation, where I draw attention to the implicit discourse(s) of the text and the society it represents.

4.1.Interviews

Interviews, classified by Fairclough (1989) as 'unequal encounters' with explicit power relations, have pre-established

interactional features which shape the form of the text, and set
parameters to how the event might occur. The interviewer occupies
the powerful position since s/he controls the event by imposing
constraints on the intereviewee. According to the author, in
typical interviews the interviewer is given the right to
interrupt, enforce explicitness, introduce or change topic and
make formulations. To this list, Kress and Fowler (1979) add
elements like starting and terminating the event, and the right to
ask questions (directing the event in a way that, if s/he wishes,
s/he can even refrain the interviewee from giving new
information). The right to ask questions is given to the
interviewee just with explicit permission. Yet, the interviewer
can refuse to answer it. Failing to answer a question however, is
the greatest fault the interviwee can commit.

Although the interviewer usually has complete control of the
interviewee s/he is also constrained by the situation, as pointed
out by Hall (1973). The interviewer has a mediating role between
the interviewee and the audience and as such s/he has some tasks
to perform: s/he needs to elicit the interviewee's view and to
keep the interview within limits expected by the audience, since
s/he performs 'on behalf of' them. In addition, s/he needs to
follow "rules of conduct" of politeness and rationality. The
interviewer should not be impatient, use tricks, or take too much
advantage of the interviewee's embarassment.

Interviews are clearly motivated by difference of power and
knowledge rather than by agreement, as stated by Kress (1985). The
interviewer, who has the power in the event, does not usually have
the knowledge which the interviewee has. Because of the specific
knowledge that the interviewee has, the status of both

participants outside the event is often opposed to their status inside it. Therefore, it seems that the interviewee's usually higher status outside the interview creates constraints within the interview itself. Despite being the power holder, the interviewer more often addresses the interviewee with respect and distance, while the interviewee is usually not very careful in this respect. Hayakawa's (1978) statement that knowledge is power can be applied here, since the interviewee, who supposedly has the knowledge, ends up acquiring some power inside the interview environment too.

In addition to the external status of the participants, another element seems to contribute to the interviewer's respectful and distancing treatment to the interviwee: the rules of politeness indicated by Hall (reference above), to which the interviewer is subjected, while performing her/his mediating role.

Although the 'SS' fictional interviews have some unusual features which are not likely to occur in factual interactional texts, the typical shape of interviews is not invalidated in these texts.

Turning to the situational aspects of the interactions, the two interviews by Kermit take place in an external environment, familiar to the interviewee. This fact seems to be crucial to the way the interviews are carried out. The participants are 'famous people' being interviewed by a journalist. In relation to the purposes, in these interviews Kermit attempts to make the audience better acquainted with their idols' daily and present lives. He goes to the interviewee's places (home/school) and tries to question them about their private lives as well as about their roles as protagonists in traditional American nursery rhymes.

4.1.1. Miss Muffet and Kermit the Frog

(Appendix- text 1, program 1, tape 1)

Miss Muffet (original nursery rhyme)

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet
Eating of curds and whey;
There came a big spider,
And sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.
(Mc Nally, Rand & Company, 1981)

The inversion of roles between women and men is an outstanding feature in 'SS'. Although women are usually portrayed as passive, fragile and less intelligent than men, in some sketches of 'SS' (Muffet and Kermit, Mary and Kermit, Little Girl and Super Grover) this prototype is transferred to the male party. In the reconstruction of the traditional nursery rhyme 'Little Miss Muffet' Kermit, a green-leaf, funny and cute frog, is presented as an insecure and submissive reporter who interviews the nursery rhyme protagonist, Miss Muffet, an extremely authoritarian character. In this interview Miss Muffet denies her traditional role as an old-fashioned and weak woman (in the original nursery text), and introduces a modern view of herself, causing great surprise to the interviewer.

Most of the features mentioned above as peculiar to interviewers are transferred to the interviewee in Kermit's interview with Muffet. Although Kermit starts performing his role as a traditional interviewer, the interviewee takes the floor very early and starts to control the event. Here the interviewee's higher status externally has been taken too far, placing the interviewer in a ridiculous submissive position, which gives the mocking tone to the sketch.

Interactional Conventions/Modality - Explanation

Although Muffet's position should be the one of answering to questions and being directed, she unexpectedly refuses to answer questions put to her. Instead, she asks her own questions, challenges the truth of what the interviewer says, makes strong commands and is responsible for the end of the speech event. The interviewee's first sentence, when asked if she is miss Muffet, is the only agreement along the interview. After that, all she does is to oppose to what the interviewer says. In "what poem?" she starts to interrupt Kermit and to show contempt for what he says. This interruption and the others ("tuffet? what is a tuffet?", "curds and whey?") are the ways she uses to start taking the floor and to tell the audience that she is not the girl presented by the original rhyme anymore. Here Kermit's reaction is not of attempting to hold the floor, as it should be expected. Rather, he lets her disturb his work ("what poem? you know...") and thus advance gradually until she takes the floor completely. Kermit tries to retake the floor again, making a formulation (based on what Muffet had imposed) "...so far it's going just like the poem..sort of.. 'Little miss Muffet...'", but his effort is useless, since Muffet continues dominating the scene. Having been completely displaced from his superior role, Kermit is obliged to terminate the interview saying: "This is Kermit the frog, and I think this is the end of our interview", thus reiterating his role formally only, since in practice he has lost it.

Muffet's superiority in the interview is as explicit in Modality as in the Interactional Conventions. Kermit's respect for the interviewee can be noticed through the way he addresses her

("Miss Muffet"), in contrast with the protagonist who refers to him as "the frog", telling the spider to try to frighten him. The spider, which interrupts the interview accentuating Kermit's lack of control of the situation, is addressed by Muffet as "Charlie", his name, indicating greater familiarity with the animal which used to frighten her in the past (original rhyme). Kermit, for his part, calls him "Mr. Spider", expressing respect due to his (the frog's) weaker condition. Kermit shows intimacy only with his audience, the children, to whom he confesses his intention ("...I didn't want to worry her...") and addresses as "folks". His explicit and frequent use of the pronoun 'you' indicates politeness and proximity with the audience. His use of 'we' to this same audience as in "Oh, we all know about that part" indicates intimacy and solidarity since he knows the type of audience he has. He knows that the children are well acquainted with the rhyme. Kermit also includes himself as part of the group in "We'd just like to ask you..." thus placing himself as one of Muffet's admirers.

The most explicit indication of power relations in the text seems to be in Muffet's commands. Although in the beginning she uses a more disguised form which is the interrogative, her tone of voice conveys more than simple questions. Muffet's authoritative role becomes more explicit with subsequent uses of declaratives and an overt imperative form. In the use of interrogatives ("What poem?", "What is a tuffet?", "Curds and whey?", "What was that?") Muffet denies her past (according to the nursery rhyme) and even laughs at it ("This? Ha, ha, ha... no! This is my water bed."), since the present is what interests her, and the mocking tone reinforces her attitude of contempt over the past. Here Muffet

disrespects the interview rules twice: she not only refuses to answer questions, but she also asks questions herself. However, these questions have the function of asserting her new role rather than really seeking information. After the first turn-takings, Muffet starts getting aggressive and reaches the climax when she shouts, using interrogative and declarative forms: "Curds and whey? I don't eat curds and whey"., and the final imperative: "Well, then don't tell me I've gotta eat them! They are yachie!", in which she becomes terribly authoritative and rude.

Muffet also makes use of the interrogative form in very coercive manners expressing her anger at what she used to be frightened by("Spider? Is that spider going to show up again"?) and enjoy ("Have you ever tasted curds and whey?") in the past. But Muffet soon calms down and decides to play with what she used to get bothered by in the past. She tells the spider to frighten the frog ("Hey, try the frog!"). The rest of Muffet's speech, then, is quite playful. She seems to recover a friendly attitude and ignores the fact that she, in a sense, causes the frog's fear of the spider. Miss Muffet's attitude of non-involvement with the problem she causes to Kermit (a male), places her in a position, I would say, more common to men in relation to women. As a matter of fact, from this example and others it has become clear that, in the reconstructed nursery rhyme, miss Muffet (the female) has simply taken Kermit's (the male) place, thus transferring her oppression to the one (the spider- identified as male by his voice and name) who used to oppress her in the past, instead of conquering her own space.

Kermit's speech form contrasts with Muffet's in that his sentences are mostly declarative (some are interrogative), but

they always express doubts, as shown through fragmentation, repetition and the use of expressions such as

> We'd just like to..., I thought, well...,
> I don't know, Right?, Oh, well, sure,
> Oh, Ok... well, folks....

These expressions indicate Kermit's insecurity due to his powerless condition in relation to miss Muffet. Kermit uses one imperative form in "But you've gotta eat curds and whey. It's in the poem", with quite a different tone from the one Muffet has used, and his intention is just to state a logical fact. However, his only use of imperative insults Muffet and causes her to react with an aggressive and explicit command. The use of the interrogative form 'Aren't you miss Muffet?' is one more indication of distance between the interlocutors. As is noticeable through the context, the real function of Kermit's question is not to obtain information, but to make a formal introduction of the protagonist.

The interactional elements discussed in this interview indicate unexpected imbalance between the participants, since the interviewee disregards the usual conventions of the genre 'Interview' (discussed earlier).

It is interesting to observe the contradictions between the characters' discourse, and what they look like in the video. Kermit looks like a perfect gentleman is his gabardine, tie and cap, a common outfit for American journalists in their outdoor reports. In spite of the respectful outfit his speech causes him to fail in his intent. Muffet, for her part, denies her past (traditional nursery rhyme) and imposes a new image of herself through discourse. However, her old style dress and the lady-like

hat with a ribbon tied round the neck remind the audience of her past life. Muffet's aggressiveness may be a way of showing that the innocent and fragile girl who is afraid of spiders, represented in the original rhyme, does not exist anymore.

Muffet's aggressive and authoritative behaviour presented in this mock interview indicates that this portrayal of the woman as oppressor carries great prejudice against the woman, once more. There is a price for the woman's change; she has become self-reliant, dynamic and modern, at the cost of having become unpleasant and unpolite too.

The reconstruction of the traditional nursery rhyme 'Miss Muffet' (as well as 'Mary and her Little Lamb' and 'There Was an Old Woman' in the other sketches) can be taken as part of the American imperialist project to universalize the American culture.

These reconstructions also reflect the Americans 'disposable' spirit. By rewriting traditional nursery rhymes the program erases a piece of the history of humanity devaluing classical culture, 'contemporizing' and 'Americanizing' those classics which originated in Europe. Here culture becomes as disposable as any other product of consumerism.

4.1.2. Mary and Kermit, the Frog

(Appendix- text 2, program 3, tape 1)

Mary and her Little Lamb (original nursery rhyme)

Mary had a little lamb
Its fleece was white as snow
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.
...
(transcribed from the program)

The portrayal of male as weaker than female is also in Kermit's interview with the protagonist of the nursery rhyme Mary had a Little Lamb. The event takes place in front of Mary's school, where Kermit meets Mary, after her class is finished. Here, too, the informality of the place favours the interviewee causing, on the other hand, uneasiness to the interviewer (as a consequence of an external element to the interview).

Interactional Conventions/Modality - Explanation

After introducing Mary to the audience (recites the nursery rhyme) Kermit starts the interview performing as usual. Kermit's position as an authority is marked, firstly, by his opening of the event:

> I'm Kermit from Sesame Street news and I'm
> wondering if I can ask you a couple of
> questions!

In addition, he controls the topic and directs the event ("Tell me..."), until a certain point.

Kermit starts asking questions, ("How did you go in School today?"..."And with the lamb?") and continues questioning Mary until almost the end. However, as the lamb starts to frighten him, he starts to interrupt the event:

> Maybe we should step over here away
> from the lamb,... It's coming along,
> oh..!, ...Yeah, he is a cute little
> guy, isn't he?, yeah.... Oh yeah, so....

Here he stops speaking because Mary decides to scold the lamb, since she realizes that Kermit is afraid.

Although in this sketch Kermit tries to avoid the disaster of not being able to close the interview, he fails again. He tells

Mary to go with the lamb, and shows relief with their leavetaking. But when he prepares to terminate the event formally, for the audience, the lamb unexpectedly comes back. He tries to make the lamb go away ("No. Going home, going home!"), but it is no use. The lamb starts to push him, causing him to be completely out of control, and disaster is inevitable:

> Listen... this is Kermit, and I'm being...
> being followed by Mary's lamb... and I'll
> return to your regular schedule...uh! uh!
> uh!! [goes away shouting and running, with
> the lamb after him.]

In order to start the interview Kermit calls Mary's attention ("Oh, Mary!!!"), indicating through the way he calls (shouts on the street) and addresses Mary, an informal situation. Although Mary is also a nursery rhyme protagonist, Kermit does not use either surname or title to refer to her.

Mary also follows the conventional stereotype, apparently. She goes to school, has braids, wears skirt and has a pet. However, she does not feel constrained by the interviewer at all. Her behaviour throughout the interview is of lack of embarassment and willingness to answer the questions put by Kermit:

> Isn't he cute?... Oh, well, certainly...,
> Oh, sure!..., Oh, it was wonderful.

Mary even feels sufficiently comfortable to interrupt the interview and call the lamb's attention: "Billy, come on! Cut it up!".

Although Kermit is an authority in the interview, he uses the typical politeness of reporters, to minimize his directing role, in the beginning:

> I'm Kermit from Sesame Street New and I'm
> wondering if I can ask you a couple of
> questions!,

As the interview continues, his strategies change. From 'democratic' he decides to change to 'false politeness' ("I'm wondering if maybe we should step over here away from the lamb."), and then he pretends a protective tone:

> Well, don't you think that it's probably time,
> you wanna go home now, Mary? Oh... Bye, bye,
> Mary. Bye, bye, little lamb!

In fact, behind Kermit's disguises is his uneasiness with the lamb. As he does not want to show his weakness, neither to scold his interviewee's pet, he tries to avoid the lamb with those devices. Kermit's fear of the lamb increases gradually during the interview (as the lamb gets closer) and it becomes more explicit when he starts to stutter, fragmenting sentences and repeating words:

> Yeah...tell me...Yeah...What did you...
> Oh yeah, so....so, you learned to...to add,
> yes...

Kermit is sincere only at one moment, during the interview ("It's coming along."), in which he shows his concern with the lamb. Afterwards, he pretends up to the moment in which Mary leaves the interview place and the lamb comes back by himself. Here Kermit does not use politeness anymore, and his tone indicates his anger and fear: "No. Going home, going home!". At the end of the sketch, then, as Kermit gets desperate, shouts and gets away from the lamb.

In this retelling Mary has not been transformed into an aggressive girl like miss Muffet. She is just an ordinary girl

with a pet and she proves to have a respectful relation with Kermit. The only element which threatens (and in the end destroys) Kermit's power is the lamb.

Despite Mary's conventional appearance, her behaviour as well as her pet, during the interview, show she is not conventional. Her pet is not "cute little", as described by Kermit. As a matter of fact, Mary's lamb (not a very common pet for a girl) seems to be a symbol of her strength, rather than fragility. In contrast, Kermit shows himself very 'little' in his practice, since he loses control of his post because of the girl's pet.

The inversion of roles here occurs mainly in the sense that the female party is secure and self-controlled, while the male is insecure and out of control. Although the female party does not oppress the male one, her pet does oppress him symbolically; fear of animals seems to be a typical socially constructed feminine feature.

The exchange of roles in both interviews with Kermit has its value for presenting women's and men's behaviour different from the crystallized pattern usually presented. However, the new proposal is not satisfactory either. First, Kermit is not a normal representative of males. As he is incompetent, it can be concluded from these interviews that women can be superior, but ironically, only to incompetent males. Second, the antagonistic relationship between females and males continues. In this sense, instead of proposing that women and men struggle together for new social relations, the program reinforces the existing opposition between them.

4.1.3. Astronaut, Maria, Children and David

(Appendix- text 3, program 1, tape 1)

The last interview discussed here follows a completely different pattern from the previous ones. Although it is also part of a fictional program the interviewee is a real and famous astronaut who talks about her professional experience. Similarly, the interviewers are real people questioning the famous astronaut. In this sense the interview is carried out within the boundaries set by this type of genre. There is nothing unusual about the way participants interact or what they express throughout this real event which takes place in a fictitious environment.

The peculiarity of this event which happens in one of the village doorways is that it is not a simple interview. Rather, it is marked by elements from both interview and lesson, and the outcome is very close to a real conversation. The common point between interview and lesson is that both have explicit power-holders, responsible for openings and closings, turn-takings and topics. The two 'SS' adults in this event (David and Maria), plus the children, perform the roles of interviewers. But the three adults also accumulate the post of 'teachers', thus being more powerful than the children.

Interactional Conventions/Modality - Explanation

The constraints imposed by the interviewers are mostly related to choice of topic and opening as well as terminating the event. The interview, therefore, becomes very similar to a casual conversation. According to Kress and Fowler (1979) interviews can be seen as peculiar conversations and conversations, by the same

token, can be taken as peculiar interviews. The point held by the authors, that both genres are permeated by power relations (although one is more explicit than the other) can be taken here with the argument that this interview/lesson is very similar to a conversation too; the imbalance in power is implicit, in fact very light, being more clearly manifested in the parts which contain elements of a lesson.

The event is characterized as an interview because the questionings are practically directed to the astronaut, a professional who holds the knowledge in relation to this area. In addition, there is a certain control of turns, mainly in the opening and closing of the event, and the questioners are interested, (most of the time) in the knowledge held by the interviewee as in: "What stuff did you do once you got up there?".

The interview takes the shape of a lesson because two of the interviewers (adults) open the event exactly like 'democratic teachers'. They ask the other interviewers, the children, several questions whose answers they know, as in "What's her name?" and "What does she do?", in order to check the children's knowledge, as well as to teach the audience, making the educational purposes of the program very clear. Another point is that they provide feedback after the children's answers ("It's a pretty big word", "Five hundred feet, no!"), as teachers usually do. Similarly, the end of the event is controlled by the two adults who, among other things, make a joke with the kids in order to close the interview:

How about we all going to the space next time
with Sally? How many want to do that?

The kids raise their hands to show agreement with David's proposal, as in typical lessons.

I referred to the parts of this interview/lesson as 'democratic' because there is relatively free participation of all interviewers/pupils, and the topic is directed not only by the 'teachers', but also by all the interviewers/pupils, and, except for the beginning and end, children can ask questions whenever they want. This informality of turns is the main element which approximates the interview/lesson to a conversation.

The egalitarian relation between the interviewers and the interviewee is not only signalled by the informal environment created with the exchange of turns. The interviewers also address the astronaut as 'Sally', using her first name only.

The 'teachers' show equality and closeness with the 'pupils' when they share their experiences as in: "I think so too", and when they connect the issue discussed with the children's own lives as in: "would you like to go up to space some time?". In addition, the 'teachers' show willingness to learn with the interviewee, together with the children.

The interviewee not only answers questions, she also asks questions herself: "Do you know what 'weightlessness is?'" and "You know what else we wear?". Her questions, however, have the function of gathering the interviewers' background knowledge in order to define the starting point of her explanations, as teachers do with pupils. This fact also reinforces the close and informal relation between the interviewers/pupils and the interviewee/teacher.

The informality of the occasion does not prevent the event taking a serious form too. Most of the astronaut's answers to the children's questions have the force of scientific explanations, as shown below:

> We carried a couple of satellites, up in the
> space, and released them, put them up... hm ...
> carried them up in the shuttle, and then we took
> them out of the shuttle.... we ran an experiment
> to make medicines that you can't make... down here
> on earth.
>
> When we launch, we go straight up in the air and
> it takes us about **eight** minutes to get where we
> are going, and after.... **two** minutes we are
> already.... **much higher than an airplane**... so,
> in about.... the time I can count twenty... we're
> almost as high as the clouds.

The Speech Acts transcribed above reveal the woman's professional side, rather than the stereotyped side of the woman usually portrayed in the mass media.

The interview presents a relatively symmetric relation (considering its pre-established rituals), and the woman is given a prominent role here. Although she is portrayed in a very egalitarian way (considering she is an 'important' person), which is in fact good, the program shows a different female model. Getting away from the major prototypes presented, 'SS' shows here a woman playing an atypical role. The program conveys a 'progressive' discourse in this respect. However, an interesting point should also be made here. Although the program presents a woman infiltrating the male professional world 'SS' never portrays males performing roles which traditionally belong to the feminine domain.

4.2. Conversations

Based on Sacks (MS), Coulthard (1985) defines conversation as 'a string of at least two turns'. Kress (1985) suggests that conversation, like any text, is constituted by difference, but that this genre is usually marked by agreement in its overt form.

Although many conversations do have explicit disagreement, if the interaction is not overtly marked by agreement, the genre may be labelled an argument or a debate. As a result of its tendency to agreement, participants in conversations are expected to use textual strategies such as: exemplification, (minor) modification, reformulation, development (of the thread of conversation), comprehension and interest.

Fairclough (1990) and Kress (1985) call attention to conversation as the genre which implies least power difference among participants. Consequently, participants are supposed to have equal rights, and thus negotiate their turns to talk. In this type of interaction each member has the right to select others to speak, select her/himself, or continue speaking. Fairclough (1990), Kress (1985) and Coulthard (1985) point out that conversation is characterized by a lack of pre-established interactional markers, a result of its egalitarian aspect. The content, however, is the most pre-established element in conversation, according to Kress (1985).

Although Kress (ibid.) states that no participant is supposed to play a directing role in conversation, Fairclough (1989) observes that in practice, this ideal kind of interaction rarely occurs in the reality of class divided societies. There is usually a power relation between interactants, as in the case of the teacher-student, which respects certain differences such as status and hierarchy. These differences impose constraints on the conversation, resulting in the powerful's control of the event.

The authors (referred to above) focus on the analysis of turn-taking systems, since the characters' devices to hold/ take

the floor seem to be the most explicit indications of how conversation works, due to the lack of pre-established features.

In the 'SS' conversations, however, turn-takings are not the strongest points to be explored. As the conversations are scripted (fictional television program) they do not happen like real conversations in which participants "think on the spot" (Kress, 1985). Yet, the use of "clause chains", rather than "sentence chains" (Kress, ibid.) give the impression that characters do "think on the spot", but there is not the characters' struggle for the floor. Hence, the taking of turns itself does not seem to be the most explicit indication of power relations in these genres. However, other elements of the interactional conventions such as formulation and topic control show these relations of power difference among interactants in the events.

4.2.1. The Old Woman and Mother Goose

(Appendix- text 8, program 1, tape 1)

The Old Woman who Lived in a Shoe (original nursery rhyme)

There Was an Old Woman who Lived
   in a shoe.
She had so many children she
   didn't know what to do.
She gave them some broth without
   any bread.
She whipped them all soundly and
   put them to bed.
(Mc Nally, Rand & Company, 1981)

A very peculiar type of imbalanced relation between two women is in Mother Goose's talk with the Old Woman. Mother Goose, the imagined author of the traditional nursery rhyme 'There was an Old Woman', is writing the poem in her office. The nursery rhyme

protagonist, the Old Woman, arrives in the office with her children to pick up the poem. As Mother Goose has not finished it yet she asks the Old woman to wait and help her to finish writing the poem.

Interactional Conventions/Modality/Classification - Explanation

The exchange of turns between both women follows symmetrically, with no constraints imposed by any party, in the beginning. The first interruption of the conversation is made by the Old Woman's children. They start making noise and making a mess of Mother Goose's office, a fact that disturbs the two women's work. Mother Goose has to interrupt her speech frequently, in order to calm down the children, and to impose herself:

> ...you be quiet, kids..., were you guys...
> boys and girls...., all right, quiet now, be
> quiet boys and girls! listen!, Would you
> cut that out?, ...leave that paper alone...
> Don't touch that picture! ok! Please,
> stop it!, hey,.. boys and girls, this is
> my office! I paid... for this place.

When Mother Goose thinks the poem is finished she tries to close the event:

> Ok, good, that's it. The poem is finished. Let's
> go to the zoo. Get your hats and coats....

Here Mother Goose makes use of her authority, as the office owner, to end the event, since the Old Woman, the children's mother, does not do anything to make them quiet. As the confusion continues Mother Goose is interrupted again, and loses control: "My dear, I don't know what to do!" Although she struggles to control the situation, ("I what? Hey, come back!"), the Old Woman dominates.: "Ah, dear.. they like a hot lunch at about one. Bye,

bye", taking control of, and terminating the event. Mother Goose becomes extremely nervous, tries to be heard ("I can't.. I'm too busy! I can't take care...."), but it is useless. She leaves the last utterance unfinished, because the Old Woman cannot hear her anymore. She has left.

The use of "dear", "hi" and "hello" by both women to address each other indicates solidarity. Furthermore, using a polite request, Mother Goose asks the Old Woman to help her to compose the poem ("Maybe... see... you can help me out, ok?") This informal and polite way of asking for help reinforces the egalitarian relation between them.

The Old Woman, however, starts to reveal what she is really like, as the conversation continues. In the traditional poem she is referred to as a poor Old Woman who does not even have a name, and whose life is dedicated to her children. But in the 'SS' performance the Old Woman is also intelectually productive, and she can even change the course of her life. Although the poem says that she does not know what to do, she decides that she can do something for herself: "I got the poem, dear, you got the kids".

The Old Woman is classified as 'old', but her actions show a 'new' and active woman born from the old one, since she changes her practice. From passive and dedicated to her children, the Old Woman becomes active and decides to take care of herself, rather than of the children. In addition, she evaluates the position of the woman (herself) described in the poem: "MOTHER OF THE YEAR", calling attention to the great 'deed' which is to be a mother of many children.

Although the part of the poem constructed during the sketch is the same as the original rhyme and the protagonist represented

in the sketch is apparently a prototype of the Old Woman, she definitely changed in the video. The two Classification elements mentioned above, plus the way the Old Woman finishes up imposing herself in the conversation, indicate this contrast. The Old Woman wears round glasses, a scarf on her head, wears a shawl and has a typical high pitch voice. Her practice, however, is quite immature and irresponsible for both an old woman, and a liberated one.

As was observed above, the conversation starts with the two participants being kind to each other. But as the children start to disturb them the usual struggle for power starts. Mother Goose tries to impose her rights as the office owner, but she fails. Although cordial in the beginning, the Old Woman finishes imposing severe constraints on Mother Goose, simply transferring her responsibility for the children's care to Mother Goose. The modern concept of the Old Woman conveyed in this sketch presents the view of a woman who obtains her freedom at the cost of another woman's oppression. Now it is Mother Goose who does not know what to do.

This type of attitude seems to indicate an early stage of the women's liberation process. Instead of solving her oppressed position with an effective solution, the Old Woman simply transfers her oppression to another woman. It seems that the program cannot propose a great many changes in these terms, since these changes imply deeper, structural changes, as it will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

4.2.2. Little Girl and Super Grover

(Appendix- text 9, program 3, tape 1)

Super Grover is a satire of the super-hero of children's stories. He is a slim and ugly anti-hero who wears an armour-like helmet, and the traditional cape worn by super heroes. Super Grover is literally a failure, although he does not think so. He tries to help a 'defenceless' girl, but all he does proves to be useless. Despite the girl's reaction Super Grover is convinced of his 'success'. Here again the program portrays inversion of roles between the male and the female parts.

Interactional Conventions/Modality/Classification-Explanation

Although there is a clear difference in knowledge – and consequently in power (little girl: powerful; Super Grover: powerless) between the two characters, the interactional conventions do not show this imbalance. Conversely, one can note through a few clues, how the fake hero tries to construct the image of a real super hero and thus of superior, through his authority in some moments. When Super Grover arrives at the Little Girl's home, he gives her no chance to ask for help. He simply states: "Oh little girl, it's Super Grover to save the day". In the end of the sketch, when the girl discovers the problem with her computer and tells him that it is working, again he takes advantage of the situation again:

> what, what?.... no, not bother to say thank
> you. I must be off. I must be off to save
> other little girls and boys in distress.

As far as Modality is concerned, one can note through the meanings of the characters' Speech Acts, the difference in knowledge between them, and the way the girl actually sees Super Grover.

To start with, Little Girl shows great disappointment when she realizes it is Super Grover who is 'landing' on her house, as indicated through her intonation and facial expression when she says: "Oh, oh, what is that? a bird? a plane?... oh, it's Super Grover!". Then, the girl's decision to ask for help to fix the computer, also shown through the intonation, and the stress on the word "computer", indicate she does not expect him to be able to help her: "Oh, do you know ANYTHING about COMPUTERS?". Super Grover avoiding to say "no" directly ("Yes, yes, I do. I do know that I do not know ANYthing about computers") for his part, reinforces the girl's suspicion. Through his answers Super Grover makes clear that he attempts to make people believe he is different from what he really is. And when Super Grover leaves, Little Girl looks at him, as if saying: 'no way!'. To sum up, the characters' attitudes through words, intonation and body expressions show the little girl's superiority over Super Grover, although there is not a competitive relation between the two.

The greatest contrast between the two characters is in the words selected to represent each one's world. Super Grover is "super", and is described by the narrator as

> ...faster than lightning, stronger than steel,
> and smarter than a speeding bullet.

The "Little" Girl, is a girl "in distress" who needs to be protected. The reality of both characters, however, shows the opposite situation. Although the girl considers herself "silly"

because she had forgotten to turn on the computer switch, she manages to solve the problem by herself. She is a modern girl who works with a "computer", an object which Super Grover had never seen before. Super Grover is so old fashioned, that he wears an old helmet, like a medieval knight, and makes witchcraft to help the girl. Super Grover flies to his adventure in the illusion that he really is a hero, but he returns home via real transportation means (on foot). He is incompetent and alienated, in contrast with the girl who is stigmatized as 'little', but who is in fact big enough to take care of herself.

The super-hero portrayed in this sketch has nothing to do with the stereotype hero of children's stories. Neither has he anything to do with the hero-man stereotype that most women supposedly dream of. The perfect prototype of a man is modern, intelligent, potective, efficient, strong and handsome. This is the image which is sold on television, cinema and magazines. Our hero, however, is a fake.

It can be noted that the context of the program emphasizes the use of the Spanish language. In addition, many of the 'SS' characters are Hispanic, as a consequence of the significant proportion of the Hispanics in the United States. Thus, the fact that Super Grover says "adios" rather than 'good bye' can be interpreted as a subtle devaluation of the Hispanic culture, as it is put in the mouth of an anti-hero, and the consequent valorization of the American culture, since the fake hero portrayed is not American, but Hispanic.

4.2.3. Maria and Louis

(Appendix- text 10, program 4, tape 2)

Maria is a Puerto Rican 'mulata' belonging to the group of human characters who perform in the village, together with the puppets. Louis, another Hispanic, also takes part in the group. In the sketch discussed here the couple works together in a store. The passage starts with Maria reading a book and Louis interrupting her to remind her of her tasks in the store.

Interactional Conventions/Modality - Explanation

One can observe in this conversation some points which indicate the character's asymmetric relation, although, in a sense, they are not very explicit. Maria's turns to speak are interrupted by Louis when:

1. She finishes reading and says: "THE END! WHAT A GREAT BOOK! I'm...." Maria does not continue her observation because she realizes Louis' disapproval.

2. Maria starts to explain why she did not help him

> I didn't mean to let you do all the work by
> yourself. It's just I got so wrapped up in
> this book! It's ...

But Louis does not hear her. Instead, he shows interest in the book, takes it from Maria and reads the title: "The-adventures of captain Swashbuckle".

Although Maria realizes she should have helped Louis, she tries not to let him take too much advantage of his position as a victim. She makes a formulation, in the attempt to recover an egalitarian relation:

> Look, I know that it's better when we work
> together and when we do the job together.

But against Maria's formulation, Louis makes a reformulation, imposing his own solution to the problem:

> Maria, don't worry.. We can still do the job
> together....well, hm, I brought the boxes in,
> while you read.. So now, you can put the
> SUPPLIES up, while I read.

The Interactional Conventions show that, although Louis has the right to request Maria's help to do the job, he is too insistent, and finishes solving the problem in an authoritative way.

The way both characters address each other, simply as 'Maria' and 'Louis', indicates their close and informal relation.

Another mark of informality is the way Louis refers to Maria's obligations. Louis not only asks her to help him. He demands her to, as when he reminds her: "It's a job for both of us". Although he tries to introduce an egalitarian environment through his words, the imperative form and the intonation indicate his authority over his workmate. The second time Louis calls Maria's attention he becomes softer, and more polite: "Maria, would you give me a hand?", but the tone of his voice shows he is impatient. The third time, after Maria promises to work, he just says "good!", but he points his finger, indicating where Maria should go.

Maria, for her part, keeps apologizing and promising to help, but she does not accomplish her promises until the end of her reading:

> Yes, I am.. I'm gonna help you right now., ok,
> I'm sorry. Yes, I will, I'm closing the book

right now, see? And I'm putting it down.

When Maria stops reading and offers real help, ("What do you want me to do?"), Louis starts to show his revengeful tone: "No, no, no! That was the last box!"

As was observed above, their conversation happens informally, and symmetrically, in a sense. Although Louis' requests have the force of commands, they are not strong enough to make Maria stop reading the book; they are just workmates. In addition, Maria's excitement with the reading is stronger than her need to fulfill her obligations.

In order to explain the possible meanings of Maria and Louis' relation, I will depart from the last word said by Louis: "Cooperation!", which summarizes the explicit discourse of their interaction.

When Louis states that Maria will put the supplies up while he reads, Maria does not look pleased. He, in turn, replies with a revengeful tone: "Cooperation!". Louis seems to imply not only that cooperation is the rule which governs their work, but also that 'He who laughs last, laughs longest'. Louis seems to contradict his discourse here, as he talks about cooperation, but establishes a competitive relation with Maria. In fact, based on the way Louis behaves, their conversation gets very close to an argument.

Undoubtedly, the relation of the two characters is quite conflicting, despite their equal status and the consequent informality. From the point of view of gender relations, the conflicting relation described here shows the male party as successful in dealing with the situation. The fact that Maria does not feel compelled by Louis' authority is explained by the

educational aim of the program. Through Maria's irresponsibility hat work, the program shows how pleasant it may be to read a book. In the end, 'SS' shows that the male party finishes up dictating what to do. The fact that Maria over-apologizes (transcribed above) seems to indicate a very 'feminine' feature; apologizing could be a way of being liberated from work. As Louis decides that Maria can do another task afterwards, while he reads, she does not like it. Maria's disapproval of Louis' decision shows she wants to keep the privileges of submissive women and leave the heavy work for Louis. Maria shows she is not prepared to share work with men. Although the type of work Louis proposes to share (carrying weight) is usually attributed to men, he does not try to be a 'gentleman'. This seems to be a positive symptom on his part. But in the end he fails, since he dictates what to do.

Thus, in terms of gender relations, the program tries to convey a progressive discourse (women and men sharing work), but it is unsuccessful in face of Maria's immaturity, and Louis authority and revenge.

This portrayal of cooperation between female and male needs further discussion, though, in terms of the capitalist discourse conveyed through the explicit 'cooperative' principle. The program encourages cooperation among Hispanics from the same class and the same hierarchy. 'SS' does not show this problem from the point of view of the employer in relation to the employee, which is the real critical point. The program only shows the poor class's need to cooperate among themselves. In this sense, the capitalist discourse of cooperation becomes dangerous, since it eliminates the notion of division in human relations. Without ever questioning how cooperative human relations are in capitalism, the

program provides a partial view of the problem, leading the audience to accept exploitative, rather than really cooperative relations.

4.2.4. Maria and Tellie Monster

(Appendix- text 11, program 1, tape 1)

Tellie Monster, a funny-looking puppet who belongs to the group of main characters, is the prototype of dissatisfaction. In all the sketches he performs, he shows great concern with his limitations. He is so pessimistic about himself, that even when he succeeds, he does not feel pleased. He immediately starts thinking about a probable situation in which he will fail, as when he tries to teach a group of people to count in Spanish. Maria joins the group on the street of the village and notices an embarassing environment. One of the children tells Maria that Tellie is having problems teaching counting in Spanish, and Maria decides to help him.

Interactional Conventions/Modality/Classification - Explanation

Maria's powerful role in the interaction is signalled from her arrival and interruption of the event: "Hi, everybody!. What's going on?", and it continues with her control of the conversation until the end. Maria's direction of Tellie and the children's actions is shown in:

        Listen closely..., I'll tell you what.., Watch
        my mouth..., I want you...., You say, and they
        will say..., All sing together....

In addition, she shows her authority, as a teacher, in her demanding feedback from Tellie ("You got that, Tellie?") and in the formulation to conclude the event: "All right, Tellie. You did it!"

The lesson form which this conversation acquires is a consequence of the educational aim of the program. Although the event is explicitly a conversation (marked mainly by the place where they are), its real aim is to teach the audience how to count in Spanish. Therefore Maria, who is one of the puppets and children's friends, also becomes their, and the audience's teacher, controlling the way the event occurs.

Tellie, for his part, accepts Maria's impositions in her attempts to help him, assuming the role of a pupil. He does everything that Maria orders, as in "Yes, please!", "I'm all ears", "ok, ok", "uno, dos, tres..." although his insecurity makes him hesitate, for a moment: "No.... no, I couldn't."

Maria does not impose a constraining environment, when she joins the other characters and greets them informally ("Hi, everybody!"). The informal and close environment can also be observed in the forms of address used ("Tellie", "Maria" and "you"), as well as in the way characters look in the video.

The force of Maria's commands, however, indicates her implicit authority over the others. She is very careful, though, since she uses a lot of devices to soften her impositions, and thus show a more egalitarian relation. First, she tells Tellie the kind of person who is able to help him, preparing him to accept her contribution:

Well, Tellie, I can help you! If you wanna
teach counting in Spanish, just ask someone

who speaks Spanish...

Then, she announces her knowledge of Spanish ("Yo hablo espanol also! I'm Puerto Rican. I speak Spanish"), and recalls their friendship ("How long have you known me?"), indicating he can trust her. Finally, she introduces an interrogation to offer help: "You want me to teach you how to count in Spanish?".

As can be noted, Maria imposes her authority very subtlly, and she continues doing it throughout the conversation, in an attempt to maintain an informal and close environment. She uses direct commands to control the event, but always with a democratic, questioning tone, to leave the other participants at ease to change the thread of the conversation, if they want:

> All right.... listen closely, ok?, I'll tell
> you what, Tellie... all right?, ... just
> watch my mouth!, Now, I want you.... ok?,
> You say, and they will say..., Once more,
> ok?, All sing together now, ok?, One more
> time!.

Maria's commands are mostly accompanied by soft expressions followed by interrogation marks, in order to decrease the imperative force.

Another strong indication of Maria's teacherish style is in the force of her formulations to encourage Tellie's self reliance. First, she sings, preparing Tellie to follow her:

> You will count in Spanish
> If you take your time
> Just follow me, and you will see,
> You will be just fine!

Then, she introduces another command ("You're on your own, now") implying that he is able to do what he wants. After Tellie's successful result Maria praises him, as a prize for his learning: "All right, Tellie! YOU DID IT! I'm so PROUD of YOU!."

The careful way Maria deals with Tellie, however, does not help him to feel more secure, as his Speech Acts indicate.

Although he denies he has a problem, ("Oh no, there's nothing wrong with me!"), transferring his limitations to an unknown subject ("...I'm supposed to teach..."), he finishes up confessing: ("...I don't know how.").

Tellie's insecurity is also apparent in the force of his hesitations: "No...no, I couldn't!", "Ha, ha" (doubtful), "Well, you know...". Negative sometimes, in other moments he is more positive:

> I'm all ears!, Ok, ok, waal, I DID IT!, I'm
> proud of me too, Maria, ha, ha...WAAL! that
> was great!

Tellie has ups and downs, in the credibility of himself along the event, but in the end he fails completely:

> Maria... Maria!... what if someone asks
> me to count in Russian, or Portuguese, or
> Bangalee... oh, Maria, I'll be in big trouble!.

As was observed, Tellie's speech is marked by a negative tone, and the program punishes him for his lack of self-reliance. He is stigmatized as "monster", and proves to be unsuccessful in most of his actions (other sketches). Although Tellie succeeds in this sketch, in the end he feels frustrated and unsuccessful.

During the conversation portrayed in this sketch, the female party uses the authority of a teacher in her performance, while the male plays the role of a subordinate pupil. Here, as in

other sketches, one can observe the woman playing a stereotyped role since the female's powerful position is a consequence of her authority as a teacher. The teaching professions (and motherhood) are socially 'permitted' to women.

Work with children is a continuation of the housing tasks. The stigmatized view of women as incapable is observed in this respect, since their task is restricted to the world of the house and the children. The program portrays a stereotype here in the sense that it reflects the reality which restricts the world of the woman. The portrayal of female teachers and mothers is a recurrent feature in Sesame Street, as observed in Chapter 3.

In addition to the sexist connotation, one can also note a strong American value implicit in the sketch: the traditional American self-reliance. Americans do believe in their capacity, and this helps them to be successful, as Emerson (1974) expresses throughout his 'Self-Reliance'. The author preaches that one has to trust oneself, as shown below:

> To believe your own thought, to believe that what
> is true - for you in your private heart is true
> for all men, - that is a genious.

> There is a time in every man's education when he
> arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance;
> that imitation is suicide; that he must take
> himself for better for worse as his portion.
> (p.1108)

Tellie does not follow the American pattern, and the program punishes him. Self-reliance is clearly encouraged among

Americans, since it is necessary to trust oneself in order to be ahead and to conquer other countries.

The American imperialistic mind can also be perceived in the 'respect' to the Hispanics' culture, another recurrent feature in the program. By teaching Spanish, superficially, the program projects an image of respect and value for the Hispanics. Behind this image, however, one can note that the official language, English, as well as the American behaviour (self-reliance, for example), is the pattern actually imposed to the Hispanic communities living in the USA.

4.2.5. Amanda and Ernest

(Appendix- text 12, program 1, tape 1)

In the 'boat love' sketch, the program portrays the prototypes of the woman-lover and the man-professional.

The puppet characters, Ernest and Amanda, are sailing on a tourist boat. Ernest is the boat captain, as identified by his uniform. Amanda, one of the passengers, seems to be the captain's close friend. During the voyage Ernest declares his love for the boat. Before his first declaration Ernest, very gladly, greets a passing eagle, while a romantic music plays in the background.

Modality/Classification - Explanation

The meaning of what the characters say in this sketch is strongly conveyed through the characters' intonation.

Amanda greets Ernest with a rising intonation conveying the intimacy of someone who is in love. She also implies certain tension and formality, as if expecting something important to happen: "OH! OH! GOOD MORNING, ERNEST!". Ernest, conversely, shows through his intonation no excitement whatsoever at Amanda's arrival: "Oh, good morning, Amanda." As he is very enthusiastic about his boat, he wants to speak up: "Do you know what I love?" Using a rising intonation again, Amanda shows she expects him to say he loves her. "OH, WHAT DO YOU LOVE, ERNEST? Ernest then continues playing Amanda's game:

```
E: AMANDA!... I love... I love THIS BOAT!
A:          YES?          YES?
```

Amanda's first reaction to Ernest's statement of love for the boat, rather than for her, is of disappointment ("OH!"). But she soon recovers, and transfers her love to Ernest's boat too, adequating to the new situation ("Oh, well, I love this boat too!"). Ernest now seems to interpret Amanda's statement as a coincidence, rather than a result of his refusal to love her: "You do?". And Amanda intensifies her transferrence ("Oh, yes... I adore this boat", "I'm CRAZY ABOUT THIS BOAT!"), while Ernest continues with his indifferent tone in relation to her: "Oh, oh, good!".

The frequency of the word 'love' used in the sketch (11 times) shows the whole sketch is centred on a love affair. However, it is not a love affair between human beings, but between a man and his boat.

This passage reveals a visible opposition between the man's dedication to his profession (boat captain), and the woman's dedication to the man (Ernest's lover), prototypes of men's and women's behaviour in society. The sketch also shows the woman flexible to what is put to her, as a result of her submission to the man.

4.2.6. Susan and Big Bird

(Appendix- text 13, program 3, tape 1)

Big Bird, a nice yellow puppet bird around 2 m. tall, is a very childish character. He is a great friend of the children, the puppets and the adults. His delicate voice and the way he relates to everybody in the village make him very well accepted. In fact, Big Bird is one of the main characters, appearing several times in each program.

Susan and Gordon are a black married couple. Together with David, another Hispanic, they also take part in the group of adults who perform in 'SS'. In the passage, the three adults are talking in the doorway of one of the houses of the village, when Big Bird joins them. The characters talk about the stars, shooting stars and the moon — giving the audience some notion of astronomy —. In additon to the central topic of the conversation, there is another discussion (mainly between Big Bird and Susan) around the problem of going to bed late.

Modality - Explanation

The power relation between Susan and Big Bird becomes explicit through their Speech Acts, rather than through the Interactional Conventions used..

Activating her maternal instinct when Big Bird joins the group late in the evening, Susan is not pleased because Big Bird does not go to bed. One can say that Gordon also activates his paternal instinct, as he shows concern with Big Bird being up late: "Big Bird, what're you doing up so late?". Gordon does not reply to Big's greeting, indicating, as suggested by Coulthard (1985), that he does not consider Big Bird his conversationalist, since Big Bird is supposed to be sleeping at that time. Although Gordon's intervention has the form of a question, he is in fact telling Big Bird it is time to go to bed. But Gordon, a prototype father, is not persistent. He leaves the job to the one 'in charge' of it, while he keeps the responsibility for giving Big Bird explanations on astronomy.

Susan is much more persistent, in her attempt to convince Big Bird to go to bed. Big, for his part, directs his excuses to Gordon only in the first reply. In the others, he tries to convince Susan of his reasons for staying up.

Susan's first intervention can be noticed in the tone of her (paralinguistic) observation ("um, hum"), after Big Bird's first excuse. Then, she starts laughing and says tenderly: "..that's very nice, honey. Maybe you wanna go back to bed!". Although Susan is apparently making a suggestion ("Maybe"), by her intonation and by touching him softly she indicates authority over Big Bird.

Susan and Big Bird's relation continues with Big's excuses and requests to stay, followed by Susan's permissions (and tolerance), permeated with the group discussion of astronomy:

> BB: Oh, but I'm not even tired! Come on! Can I
>   stay up a little while? Please... Please,
>   please, please.
> S: Oh, all right. But Big Bird, just for a while,
>   ok?
> BB: Ok.
>   ....
> BB: I never knew that either! Did you know that,
>   Radar? Good idea coming out here!
> S: Um, hum! tone of repression

When Big Bird yawns, Susan tries to convince him again ("Ok, ok, come on. Let me walk you back to bed!"). But Big Bird decides to fight for his right to stay, challenging Susan's authority: "But why, why, Susan?". After Susan justifies her attitude ("But you're falling asleep!"), Big finds no more arguments and decides to consent: "Oh, I'm, I'm... right way!".

In addition to Susan's explicit and subtle commands, as well as her arguments to convince Big, her affection through words, tone of voice and caressing him are clear signs of her relation with the bird. Although she is not his mother, she decides to protect him and take care of him, as if she were.

The portrayal of woman here is also a stereotyped one, in that Susan follows women's conventional behaviour, occupying the post of a mother. This is not to be taken as a protest against women's choice to be mothers. Rather, I'm taking into account the whole of the program which restricts the women's world, while it proposes quite diversified roles for men. They usually have more interesting, 'enriching' tasks. In addition, men are not reinforced in their roles of fathers.

4.3. SONGS

The songs discussed here are quite meaningful in expressing the whole of the discourse of sex conveyed by the program. These songs are not seen from the perspective of the characters' power relations among each other, since these relations do not occur. However, one can refer to how the characters position themselves in relation to their audience.

The most meaningful category of the first song (among the ones I selected) is Classification (representational level). The second song conveys information through Relational Modality, in addition to Classification. Elements such as pronouns and modals mark the characters' position in relation to the audience and to the content of their narrative.

The first song I chose tells about the problem of a Hispanic 'mulata'. The second song refers to women in general, comparing their past with their present lives.

4.3.1. 'Maria's Inner Conflict'

The recurrent tendency to portray women in an early stage of their liberation process in 'SS' seems to be reinforced by Maria, the Puerto Rican character. Maria's inner conflict can be taken as a confirmation and a summary of how most female characters are viewed throughout the programs selected for this work: immature in their attempt to conquer their own spaces.

Maria, the slim 'mulata', is a representative of the Latin community living in several areas of the United States. She is nice and helpful to the puppets and to the children in 'SS', as

exemplified in the sketch (discussed above) in which she teaches Tellie and the children how to count in Spanish.

In addition to the warm relationship with her fellows and her usual good humour, Maria also shows a different behaviour. In this sketch she comes out to Sesame Street from one of the houses of the village, and starts singing a song about her attempt to control her anger. The song, as well as her face and gestures indicate she is very upset. She counts and pulls her hair down, among other gestures, trying to keep calm. But she finally realizes that those devices result unsuccessful:

```
          As I stand here before you
          I bet you'll never guess! [clenched teeth]
          That underneath this dazzling smile
          My feelings are a mess
          I don't know how much longer
          I can keep this anger in
          Although I've counted up to twelve
          And Maybe should again
          I've clenched my teeth so long they hurt
          And that's become so weary [hands on the forefront]
          Perhaps I might feel better
          If I pull down on my hair, [pulls it down]
          Courage!
          One, two, three, four... one, two, three, four...
          One, two, three.... oh, forget it!
          I'm getting VERY NERVOUS! I'm getting VERY TENSE!
          [smiles]
          They say that self-control is good
          And maybe that makes sense!
          By now I should be raving mad
          I'm like that as a rule
          But this time I'm in control
          I will not blow my cool
          So there you see I've done it
          My performing was supreme
          And now if you excuse me, please
          Ah.... and now if you [starts to relieve] excuse
          me, please
          Ah... and now if you excuse me, please, [runs to
          hide behind a fence]
          I think.. that I... will... SCREAM!... SCREAM!!!
          that's it! one more SCREAMM!!! [hits the walls
          of the fence and shakes her hands up. Then, she
          comes back and says:] TERRIFIC! [released, she tries to
          fix herself.]
```

Modality/Classification - Explanation

In this text there is not a relationship represented among characters, since Maria performs alone. However, she establishes a strong relational position with the audience. Hartley and Montgomery (n.d.) call attention to the significance of the camera viewpoint in establishing a relation with the audience, and emphasize that direct eye-contact is rarely used in television and cinema fiction. The authors suggest that this use of the camera is made in the representation of factual discourse. In this sense, through the direct eye-contact with the audience, Maria 'invites' the audience to leave fiction, and penetrate a realistic world. The use of the pronouns 'I' and 'you' also indicates Maria's direct address to the audience. Through this direct address Maria assumes a relation of friendship with her audience, and expresses her emotions, as if talking to a friend: "As I stand here before you/I bet you'll never guess!".

One can note a basic opposition in Maria's emotions, through the words below. On the one hand, she expresses the real feelings of her inner world, through adjectives and verbs with a very heavy, negative connotation:

        mess, anger, clenched teeth, hurt,
        weary, nervous, tense, raving, mad,
        scream, pull down on my hair.

On the other hand, Maria shows she tries to overcome her problems, as she also uses positive words to represent her struggle. Although she expresses doubts about the best way to act ("should", "perhaps", "maybe"), she makes an effort to feel better:

> Dazzling smile, feel better, courage,
> self-control, good, makes sense, in control.

Through these words Maria shows that she expects to overcome her problems using discipline and self-control. She feels herself the only one responsible for her problems, as she never questions the world around her. She tries to be "courageous" by repressing her anger. It is interesting to observe the discourse of "courage" here, which implies self-repression and discipline. As a matter of fact, Maria expresses irony through the words "performing" and "supreme", when she shows the need to hide her real feelings in order to behave according to what is expected from 'normal' people.

Although Maria tries hard to act according to the social norms (to be 'in control') in front of the camera, at a certain point she decides that it is useless to continue her "performance", and that it is better to relieve her anger. In a sense Maria dares, since she decides not to repress her anger anymore, and screams. But she is not courageous enough to scream in front of the camera, or even to say what her problems are. Rather, she hides behind a fence ('hidden' is better accepted), screaming and hitting the walls.

Maria does not say what her problems are, perhaps, because she does not even know. Betty Friedan (1963) mentions "the problem that has no name", referring to a permanent dissatisfaction which women had, in the mid-twentieth century. Seeking fullfilment for their lives as wives and mothers, these women suffered from lack of identity. Although Maria also seems to be looking for her identity, her problems appear to be even more complex than those of the women mentioned by Friedan.

Maria is a 'black' woman from an underdeveloped country, living in an imperialistic capitalist country. Hence, one can guess that she is not likely to have a very satisfactory position in the American society, since she carries a triple stigma over her.

Although the program opens the possibility of criticism by presenting a Latin woman anxious, not as happy as the 'SS' world usually is, it does not go any further. 'SS' does not discuss the reasons for Maria's problems, neither does it present a satisfactory solution. The only possibility presented for Maria is to scream, surrounded by walls; a pacific, personal and solitary solution for her problems. As if her problems could be solved in the individual, rather than the social level. Here one can note the traditional American individualism which supports the system. What Maria really does is to relieve her anger, in a self-aggressive manner. In addition, her hysterical attitude is very stereotypical of women. Screaming is a very common palliative used by women to 'solve' problems. It is easier to be passive and scream, than to be active and change social practice. Maria's attitude is so repressed that she even excuses herself for trying to liberate her anxiety: "And now if you excuse me, please"....

Relieving her anger instead of trying to solve her problems signals immaturity in Maria's liberation process. She does not overcome the first step, since she remains at the stage of announcing she is not well, and that is all.

4.3.2. "'Women's Liberation' Chorus"

The chorus of 8 funny-looking puppets presents a narrative about women's historical changes in society. Dressed up with uniforms which signal professions belonging to the male world, these puppets call attention to women's abilities, and talk about their repressed lives in the past, as well as about their present as emancipated women.

```
        A: I'm thrilled to be here [before song starts]

   Chorus: Women can fly way up high on trapezes
        M: Women can be /roller skaters/
   Chorus: Women can help to find cures for diseases
        B: Women can hunt alligators
   Chorus: Pilots and poets, policewomen too
           Look at the things that we women can do

        M: We can be clowns
        A: We can be cooks
        C: We can be bus drivers
        D: We can /?/
   Chorus: Just look around you, it's easy to see
           There's nothing we women can't be

        G: /?/
        D: I used to be good with a needle and thread
           I'd sew dainty dresses of blue
           Then I got an urgen to be a great surgeon
           And now I sew people up too
   Chorus: Then she got an urgen to be a great surgeon
           And now she sews people up too.

        E: Margareth, tell about the cat!
        M: Once I had a cat that I tried to teach tricks
           Quiet and sweet it would be
           The tricks I was tryin required a lion
           And that's why I'm here in this ring
   Chorus: The tricks she was trying required a lion
           And that's why she's here in this ring

        F: I used to go bicyclin far from my home
           My mother would say 'come back soon'
   Chorus: Come back soon!!
        F: I travelled so fast off the earth in a blast-off
           Now I'm on my way to the moon
   Chorus: She travelled so fast off the earth in a blast-off
           5, 4, 3, 2, 1 ...........  'F' launches as a
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         rocket
         Now she's on her way to the moon.

Chorus:  Women can ride up inside of a rocket
     B:  Women can be /oftenly/ clever
Chorus:  /?/
     M:  Women can be soda jerkers
Chorus:  Pilots and poets, policewomen too
         Look at the things that we women can do

     M:  We can be clowns
     A:  We can be cooks
     C:  We can be bus drivers
     D:  We can write books

     O:  We can catch fish
     E:  We can train dogs
     F:  We can climb mountains
     M:  We can chop logs

Chorus:  Just look around you, it's easy to see
         THERE'S NOTHING WE WOMEN CAN'T BE.
```

Modality/Classification - Explanation

Although there is a group of characters performing, they do not interact with each other directly. The fact that they sing together using the inclusive pronoun 'we' makes clear that they recognize each others' participation in the song, and that they are in fact speaking with one voice. The meaning of the inclusive 'we', however, is not restricted to solidarity among the group. Those female puppets also extend their solidarity to the female audience in "There is nothing **we** women can't be!". The characters' relationship with the audience is also explicit in:

1. The camera viewpoint. The puppet characters, like Maria, look straight at the audience. Here, however, the situation changes, since puppet characters cannot establish direct eye-contact as successfully as humans. In addition, the camera does not get as close to the puppets, as it does to Maria.

2. The modal 'can' indicates that the group is announcing and thus trying to convince their colleagues (audience) of their abilities.

3. Finally, the group also uses the imperative form, trying, in a more impositive manner, to make women open their eyes and see, as they tell them: "Look at the things that we women can do!"

Through the tense mark "I used to...." and the adverb "now" the women's chorus shows two different stages in their lives, and they position themselves in favour of the second stage, which shows them as 'liberated'.

Semmantically, the song is divided into three parts. In the first part the group mentions several activities that women can perform, such as: "...fly... on trapezes", "...find cures for diseases", "...hunt alligators". In the second part the characters name professions which women can occupy: "clowns", "cooks", "bus drivers", "poets", "pilots". In the third part each woman, separately, narrates which was her activity, in the past ("needle x tread", "had a cat", "go bicycling"), and which it is nowadays: "...sew people up", "...required a lion..." and "...way to the moon." After each woman tells about her adventures, the group repeats the last part reinforcing the colleagues 'spoken' transformation processes.

One example of the woman's transformation process is well demonstrated through the words 'cat' and 'lion'. In the past, she used to have a cat, which is a nice little pet, typical of girls. But, as she grew up, she changed it to a lion, which is a symbol of masculinity and strength. These women's liberation process is marked by a complete infiltration in the male world. Most of the professions (mentioned above) that the characters say they can

enter are traditionally performed by men. In addition, although
these women undervalue the feminine world ("I used to be good with
a needle and thread") and mention the repression existing in it
("...my mother would say 'come back soon'"), they do not propose a
new perspective for their world, such as valuing housework and
encouraging men to do it.

The women's liberation process is defined here exclusively by
their infiltration into the male world, since there is no process
of reciprocal exchanges between the sexes. These women also show
aggressiveness (tone of voice, imperatives, and modals) in their
announced transformation. They attempt to take the men's role not
only in this respect, but also in projecting an image of
super-heroines ("THERE'S NOTHING WE WOMEN CAN'T BE").

The achievements of the women's chorus are not revolutionary,
since they have embodied the male world. In addition, their speech
contradicts the practice of women as a whole in the program.
Comparing the things that these women say they can do, in the
sketch, with the things that women do in 'SS', one can note that
'SS' still portrays women in a very conservative perspective,
except in a few cases. The women portrayed here are still in the
fictional level, while Maria is in the factual, as discussed
above.

Based on the analyses presented in this part, one can
conclude that 'SS' portrays both, stereotypes and 'alternative'
models, as concerning the roles of women and men.

The interactions between Maria and Tellie, Amanda and Ernest,
and Susan and Big Bird reveal the portrayal of stereotypes. The
roles of teacher, mother and lover are the ones traditionally
attributed to women. Males are currently seen as professionals, as

in the case of Ernest who oppresses his 'lover'. The male parties'

subordination to women are widely accepted when women are mothers

and teachers. This is what happens to Tellie and Big Bird who play

the roles of pupil and son. Maria and Louis' relation proves to be

symmetric to a certain extent, but in the end the program shows

the male party to be powerful, and the female still performing her

traditional role.

The other events analysed do not follow traditional

stereotypes. However, they are revolutionary in appearance only,

since the new models proposed are still quite partial. The two

sketches in which the male (Kermit) interviews females (Muffet and

Mary), the latter are given prominent roles. Secure and

independent, the two interviewees have changed in the recreation

process of the nursery rhymes in which they are protagonists. In

these sketches, however, the male party has become powerless and

submissive, exchanging roles with the females. The same type of

relation happens to Little Girl and Super Grover, the fake hero.

Although in these relations women are emancipated, men have become

stupuid. The Old Woman, another nursery rhyme protagonist, is also

presented in a modern version. However, in her relation with

another woman (Mother Goose), the Old Woman transfers her

oppressive position to the other, instead of seeking a more

effective solution. The woman astronaut interviewed in the program

seems to convey the most progressive discourse, though it

restricts the issue to the woman's infiltration in the

professional market. Again, the program does not lead the audience

into deeper discussions.

Maria revealing her frustration in the song, shows how the

program actually sees the woman. Despite some achievements, she is

still immature. Although the women's chorus tries to convince the spectators that women have changed, their changes are restricted. In addition, Maria's direct eye-contact is much stronger than the chorus' address to the audience. While Maria brings the audience to the factual world, the women's chorus seems to convince this audience that women have only become liberated in fantasy.

The different perspectives mentioned above are undoubtedly contributing to disseminate the role of women as different from the crystallized patterns usually conveyed in television and education. The discussion of gender relations in 'SS' is a positive result of the women's movements. As the oppressed categories obtain some space in society, their achievements are inevitably reflected at the superstructural sphere (as in the case of television). One needs to be careful, though, and seek the origins as well as the determinations of such limited proposals which do not point to a greater, structural dimension.

Evangelista (1990) mentions two main trends in the women's liberation movements: one belongs to the liberal thought; it does not question the capitalist society and its class divided structure. The other discusses women's historical construction, its consequences and determinations in class societies. As the author emphasizes, the latter is not only concerned with women's liberation, but with human beings' liberation.

The liberal, 'bourgeois' feminist movements are primarily concerned with capital and therefore struggle to liberate one aspect of women rather than their complete selves as human beings. Thus, they educate women to enter the working market with lower salaries than men, to elect bourgeois representatives for the parliament, or to convey the dominant class ideology. Evangelista

(ibid.) concludes that what may underlie the discourse of this feminist trend is the attempt to integrate women into the capital order, leading them to think that they are achieving their aims just because they are working or becoming sexually liberated, although these advances are also important.

The author draws attention to the second trend of feminism. She proposes that feminist movements must take into account problems which are common to both women and men, without dissolving each others' peculiarities and richness. Human beings' education must seek equal treatment not only in relation to women and men, but also to all kinds of power relations.

Discussing the role of women according to the liberal thought, the program restricts the issue of power relations to women and men, as if essential problems could be solved just at the level of woman-man, rather than work-capital relation. Without further criticisms, 'SS' may be using the 'progressive' (apparently critical) discourse of gender to convey completely acritical elements too. In this sense, the program may be misleading the audience twice: Firstly, by conveying an apparently critical discourse of gender; secondly, by conveying other acritical discourses together with the 'critical' discourse of gender. Privileging the issue of gender relations, the program seems to open a channel to convey other discourses which are not critical at all. The transmission of dominant values is more likely to be successful if performed in an apparently critical environment. The seducing idea of proposing women's liberation from their subordination to men may lead the audience to believe in the egalitarian perspective of the program. Thus, the audience is led to accept ideas which, if deeply analysed, sustain the

existing power relations not only between women and men, but also between rich and poor, old and young, black and white, etc.

The liberal discourse of gender in 'SS' finishes up reinforcing the other embedded discourses, since the former does not propose any changes in the American social order. Hence, the other discourses implicit in the sketches consolidate the American imperialist capitalism, together with the apparently critical discourse of gender.

The American imperialist behaviour is present, for example, in the recreation process of the American nursery rhymes, an attempt to universalize the American culture, since 'SS' is exported to more than sixty countries around the world.

Through the Hispanic fake hero Super Grover, the program also conveys the American's superiority, as it devalues the Hispanics. Although there is an apparent respect when Maria teaches how to count in Spanish, the American culture is the one actually imposed.

Maria and Louis' relation also shows the discourse of cooperation transmitted by the program. Actually competitive, the explicit discourse of 'cooperation' is a mask for the perpetuation of the American empire. They need to encourage cooperation among subordinates, in order to be in control of American and foreign citizens. Through Maria's song the program clearly expresses which is the solution for the Hispanics and blacks: self control and discipline.

As has been shown, the linguistic and semantic features explored throughout the analyses, which are at the surface level, are cues to the hidden discourses which the texts convey.

The ideas described above are some of the values with which the program deals, in an abstract form. As they are transmitted, they tend to be absorbed (to a lesser or greater degree) by the audience legitimating thus the dominant North American ideology.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, through the analysis of six video taped programs, I intended to demonstrate that, as a product of the American capitalism, 'SS' conveys the implicit discourse of the dominant North American ideology. Although the program does express concern with unprivileged groups, one cannot expect it to be critical of the capitalist society. 'SS' does not present the dominated class discourse, but the capitalist discourse imposed to the dominated.

Since the subtle dominant values expressed in 'SS' lead to alienation, the Critical Language Study developed in this dissertation attempted to detect its contradictions and thus demystify the dominant discourse existing in it.

In the analyses of 'SS' three general types of contradiction were found.

1. Looking at the 'SS' microcosm I observed the egalitarian proposals of the program, on the one hand, and the inevitable oppositions which come out of its reality, on the other. These oppositions become specially explicit when the 'world' recorded in studio is compared with the isolated pieces of reality which are filmed and inserted during the fictional program. Although prepared to reinforce the perspective of the program, the reality

presented contradicts it, since it provides cues to imbalances of the real society which 'SS' attempts to hide.

2. Throughout the detailed linguistic and semiotic analyses I could also observe apparent criticisms in the issues discussed and the relations of power amongst characters. The program in fact shows some advances in this respect, by favouring some interests of the dominated class. It does not go any further, however, since these discussions do not point to any change in the structure of American society. When they do not omit the real causes of imbalances, they deal with those imbalances in an abstract and partial form.

3. In addition to the contradictions which were observed at each level of analysis (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4) it can also be pointed out, that the two levels of analysis, in a sense, contradict each other. Some changes which are announced in the selected sketches (Chapter 4) do not correspond to the usual practices of the characters throughout the program.

As a conclusion, I can state that 'SS' works with some isolated critical elements at the appearance level. Being decontextualized and treated partially, in essence these elements hide objective facts of power relations in the American society. In this sense, 'SS' presents a normative, rather than creative discourse, in that it consolidades the actions of the powerful.

Although this dissertation is an attempt to help educators (and individuals in general) to become aware of the ideology implicit in any vehicle of worldviews, further research is needed. On the same line of this dissertation, for example, the Brazilian television programs for children such as XOU DA XUXA, OS TRAPALHÕES, and the Brazilian equivalent to 'SS', the educational

program RA TIM BUM could be analysed. The North-American programs, imported by the Brazilian television, could also be analysed critically, in terms of the American Imperialist discourse implicit in them.

Guides on how to read with critical eyes could be constructed for elementary and high school Brazilian students. Didactic books and other educational materials could be produced on the same line.

Obviously this is a limited study, but its importance, I think, is in its contribution for the individuals' awareness process. Calling attention to the dominant values, as well as to the critical points of the program, is a way of cooperating with a process in which the counter-ideology becomes hegemonic. The role of educators, as representative of an institution of the State, is to contribute to the individuals' awareness, mediating critical thinking. As Evangelista (1984) points out, "Cabe a nós, educadores, desvelar o ocultado e compreender o revelado." This work, then, is a contribution for the individuals' consciousness of their roles as agents, rather than patients of their own historical process.

As a product of school, institution of the dominant class, this dissertation is a concrete example that the dominant space can be used, for its contradiction, to demystify, rather than reproduce the dominant class ideology.

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APPENDIX

****

Transcription conventions based on Tannen, 1984.

,   marks phrase-final-intonation (more to come)

..   marks short pause

...   marks longer pause

!   marks emphatic stress

CAPS   mark very emphatic stress

.   marks sentence-final falling intonation

?   marks question (rising intonation)

/ /   words with slashes indicate uncertain transcription

/?/   indicates transcription impossible

[BRACKETS]   are used for comments on quality of speech and

             context

     ⌈ Brackets between lines indicate overlapping speech

     ⌊ Two people talking at the same time

     Brackets on two lines ⌐

                         ⌊ indicate second utterance

     latched onto first, without perceptible pause

****

TEXT 1
BLACK BOY'S SONG

School, you love school
School is where you wanna be
And it is really plain to see that you'll
Learn a whole lot more than you ever
Knew before at school

You can show things, you can tell things,
You can even learn to spell things down at school
There is a teacher there to teach you
Every letter, number, /?/ and rule
Come and meet me in the classroom
I'm telling you it's really cool
In the school room there is a bookshelf
Where all /?/
All the stories that they wanna read you
And when snacktime rolls around
They've got cookies, milk and juice to feed you
...
/If/ You asked me, will I like it, man?
Well, I'm telling you're garanteed to
...
In the school you'll play games and
Have the best time you ever had
They even got a nurse you can visit
when you're feeling bad
...

TEXT 2
KERMIT AND LITTLE BOY

K: Hey, listen.. hm.. how about we talk about... the parts of a
   face, like: where is your nose? [Boy points his finger]
   Here is your nose, yeah... and what ... what is right beneath
   the nose? What is that?
B: My mouth
K: Your mouth, sure! What do you stick out of your mouth?
B: My tongue
K: Your tongue, right! And, what are those white things inside
   your mouth?
B: Teeth
K: And right below the mouth we have the...
B: Chin
K: The chin, right!... and... then on the side of the head we
   have...
B: Ear.
K: Ear... /?/ touch... touch the ear there... so you know where
   the ear is. That's one ear. Where is the other ear? [Boy
   points]. That's ear. What do you need your ears for?
B: Hearing
K: What?

B: [Louder] hearing
K: You see... frogs don't have ears. So, I can't... hm.. I can't
   hear too well...

TEXT 3
TEACHER AND PUPILS

T: What is a computer? If someone knows nothing about it...
   what would you tell them a computer is? What would you say?
   [children raise their hands; teacher indicates one pupil to
   answer]
Ch_1: Well, a computer is something that you write on.. and.. and
   press buttons on.
T: All right. So, it is something that we can write with... what
   else can we do with computers?
Ch_R: Make designs..
T: How can you make designs on the computer?
Ch_2: Well, you press.. some buttons, and then you can make a
   design...
   " ...
T: What else /?/ Danielle? What do you think a computer is?
Ch_3: It is something like a TV... and... you.. make /?/ and it
   helps you to read!
T: How are we different from the computer? What else do we have?
Ch: It is not human.
T: That's right!
   [children start talking together]
T: Wait, wait.. [telling students to speak one at a time] ...
   Danielle, what did you say? ... does a computer think?
Ch: No! [chorus]
   ...
T: Whose brain tells a computer what to do?
Ch: Ours! (chorus]

TEXT 4
GROUCH AND CHILDREN

G: Today... you're gonna learn about trashy words which start with
   the letter 'C', by using the old grouchy computer here.... Now,
   you notice on the keyboard there, there are some special keys.
   One of them, has a picture of some trash on it. That's the
   'trash' key. Another one has the letter 'C' on it. That's the
   'C' key. You got that, /?/ Ok, Adam.... let's see how you do.
   You come on up here and give it a try. Come on, Adam.
   [Adam goes to the computer] Ok, now.... push the 'trash' key.
   [Adam pushes it] That's it.
A: Nothing happens!
G: Well... it's /?/ just to put into the 'trash' mode... now,
   let's gonna show pictures of trash, but.. you have to /?/ some
   more things, like... what letter should it start with... let's
   try the 'C'.
A: 'C'!
G: Yeah... there you go! See?
A: Yeah

G: Did you see? Now, what's that?
A: A can
G: That's right. See? It starts with the letter C. /?/

... Ok.. you got it! All right, take you seat there, Adam.
A: Ok!
G: All right, now... hm.. hm, /?/, you come up here! [/?/ goes to computer] ok, now.... push the 'C' button again.... hm, hm, .. what's that? hm?
/?/: A clock.
G: A clock! Clock starts with 'C'. it's a broken clock too! Ha, ha! that's why it it trash. Ok, now let's see another thing which starts with 'C'. You can take your seat.

...

TEXT 5
MISS MUFFET AND KERMIT THE FROG

K: What do you want me to call you? Miss... what... that's what you want... [behind the camera]
[camera starts focusing kermit. When he notices he gets embarassed; clears throat, and....]
K: Oh..hi, ho. Kermit frog here... and today I'm going to interview that world famous curds and whey eater, tittle miss Muffet! Now, if you remember the poem...
        LITTLE MISS MUFFET SAT ON HER TUFFET
        EATING/HER/CURDS AND WHEY...
and this thing I'm standing next to, here, is a tuffet. At least I think it is a tuffet. Actually,I've never seen a tuffet before, but.. perhaps we can ask miss Muffet. Here she comes now ...
[she comes in, singing] Pardon me.. pardon me.. aren't you miss Muffet?
M: Oh, yes, I am!
K: I'm sure our viewers already know you from the poem. We'd just like to ask you.──┐
M: └─What poem?
K: What poem? you know.... hm
Little miss Muffet, sat on her tuffet──┐
M: └─Tuffet? What is a tuffet?
K: What is a tuffet? I, I.. thought.. Oh, well.. I don't know... I thought.. hum.... this thing right here is a tuffet.... hu?
M: This? Ha, ha, ha... no! This is my WATER BED!.
K: Your what?
M: Yes, I sit here everyday and eat my lunch!
K: Oh, well....oh, well....[clears throat] your lunch, oh.... we all know about that part. We all know how little miss Muffet eats her.. curds and WHEY right?
M: CURDS and WHEY? I don't eat 'CURDS and 'WHEY! [shouts aggressively]
K: But you've gotta eat curds and whey. It's in the poem.
M: Have you ever tasted curds and whey?
K: Well.. hm..no,.... no...──┐
M: └─WELL, THEN DON'T TELL ME I'VE GOTTA EAT THEM! THEY ARE YACHIE!
K: Oh, well [clears throat], hm.. sure. What is it that you're

/eating/, then?

M: Crunchy granola. They are the real good kind with dates... and raisins.

K: Yeah... Oh, ok, [clears throat]well... folks, so far it's going just like the poem. Sort of:

                    LITTLE MISS MUFFET SAT ON HER WATER BED
                    EATING HER CRUNCHY GRANOLA

Hm.. but now comes the exciting part.. you see... because now comes the part where the spider comes in and says:
[addresses the audience with low voice]

                    ALONG CAME A SPIDER
                    AND SAT DOWN BESIDE HER
                    AND FRIGHTENED MISS MUFFET AWAY

M: What was that?

K: Hm, oh, nothing, nothing... [adresses the audience again] You see, I didn't want to worry her about the spider

M: ⌐SPIDER? Is that spider gonna show up again? [aggressive]

K: Oh, well, as a matter of fact.. yes, he is. Hm.. I think so. As a matter of fact, HERE HE COMES NOW!

S: Heeee... hi, dear miss MUFFET! [fearful voice and intonation]

K: Oh, what a fearful looking beast!

S: I've come to FRIGHTEN you AWAY! HEEE!

M: Sorry, Charlie. But no girls are frightened by spiders anymore!

S: Rats!

M: Hey, try the frog!

K: Hey, don't... don't try the frog! [frightened]

S: Hey, FROG!

K: Hi, /dear/ mr. Spider!

S: I've come to FRIGHTEN you AWAY!

K: Well.. I think you're going to succeed! This is Kermit frog, and I think this is the end of our interview.

S: Hey, frog, boooo!   ... booo!   ... boo!

K: uh....   uh....   uh...
   Hu...hu...hu... [spider runs after the frightened frog]

M: Too bad they left! There was plenty of crunchy granola for everyone! [expression of contempt]

                         TEXT 6
                    MARY AND KERMIT

K: Hi, ho. Kermit frog here for 'SS' news. Do you all remember the poem

                    'MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB
                    IT'S FLEECE WAS WHITE AS SNOW
                    AND EVERYWHERE THAT MARY WENT
                    THE LAMB WAS SURE TO GO ...

remember that? Well, do you remember the part where it follows her to school? Well, this is Mary's school right here.And... oh ... look, there comes Mary and the little lamb is following her ... Oh, MARY!!! [shouts to call Mary]

M: Um.. Um?

K: I'm Kermit frog from 'SS' news and I'm wondering if I can ask you a couple of questions!

M: Oh, well... certainly!

K: Um, hum.. well, how did you go in school today?
M: Oh, it was wonderful!
K: Um, hum.. and, and.. and with the lamb?
L: It's not baaaaaad! [making lambs typical noise]
K: Baaaab! Ha! Ha!
M: Isn't he cute?
K: Yes, he's very cute but, actually, I...I was wondering if maybe we should step over here away from the lamb...
M: Oh, sure!
K: So.. I can ask you the questions..
M: OK.
K: Oh, ... [frightened] it's coming along, oh....oh...
M: Billy, come on!
K: Oh, it does follow you everywhere, doesn't it?
M: Oh, if a lamb likes you, it follows you anywhere.
K: Oh, yeah... always.
M: Oh, and he likes you too!
K: Yeah, he is a cute little guy, isn't he? Yeah... [unease]
M: Billy, come on!
K: Yeah... tell me... yeah... what did you... what did you... learn in school today, Mary?
M: Oh, well.. we learned that one plus one is two.
K: Oh, yeah, so... [the lamb interrupts]
M: Cut it up, Billy
L: ... aaaaaaad!!
K: So, you learned to... to add, yes... [stuttering] uh, uh
L: : aaaad!
K: [frightened] that... that's very good... where... where... did you get ... this little guy anyhow, Mary?
M: Oh, I got it from my father.
K: From your father, from your hm.... hm....
L: Daaaaaaad!
K: Daddy, yes! Hm..hm..Well, don't you think..hm.. it's probably time, you wanna go home now, Mary? We can watch the lamb follow you home, don't you think!
M: Oh, sure. He just likes you A LOT! Ok, Come on, Billy, we're going home, come on, come on!
K: Ok. Bye, bye, now, bye, bye.... Bye, bye, little lamb!.... [relief] Ok, ah, this is Kermit the frog and... I've been talking to Mary and her little lamb and...ah..
L: [comes back] Beeeeeee!
K: Ah, you are supposed to go home with Mary.
L: Beeeeee! [starts to push Kermit]
K: No. GOING HOME, GOING HOME! No, going home... I /?/ now.... You cut that out... listen... this is Kermit frog, and I'm being... being followed by Mary's little lamb.... and I'm returning into your regular schedule... Uh... Uh..
Uh. UUUU! [shouts frightened with the lamb after him]

TEXT 7
ASTRONAUT, MARIA, CHILDREN AND DAVID

M: Hey, do you all know who this person is here?
C: Yeah!
M: You do? What's her name?

C: Sally /?/

M: Yeah!

D: What does she do?

C: She is an astronaut

D: An astronaut?

S: That's right.

M: It's a pretty big word. What's that?

BB: It's a person who goes up to space and tests /?/ for TV and everything like that.

M: Yeah!

D: Would you all like going to space some time?

C: Yeah!

D: What do you think it would be like?

C1: Fun

D: Fun?

M: What's the fun part?

BB: Flying up and down. [everybody laughs]

D: I think so too.

M: [to the astronaut] What kind of stuff do you do once you get up there?

S: We did a lot of different things [films with the astronaut in the space are shown]. We... carried... a couple of satellites.... up the space... and we.. released them, put them up... hm.. carried them up in the shuttle, and then we took them out of the shuttle... let them on their own up in the space, they are still up there now.... hm.. we run a lot of.. lot of experiments.... we had one experiment to make... medicines that you can't make... down her on.... on earth.

M: [to the children] You know, that's really going way, way, way, way, way up in the sky; you know how high that is,... going up there?

C: Yes.

M: How high do you think it is?

M: As big as a building?

C2: /A/ hundred feet?

M: A hundred feet, no!!

C2: Five hundred /?/ feet, something like that.

D: Five hundred /?/ feet /?/?

M: You know, it's higher than the tallest building... and even going higher than... than a plane, and higher than the clouds.

S: That's right. In fact..You know, when we launch, we go straight up in the air and it takes us about eight minutes to get where we are going, and after... two minutes.. we are.. already... much higher than an airplane.

D: Hum!

S: So, in about... the time I can count twenty... we're almost as high as the clouds.

G: How do you feel when you're up there?

S: It's fun.... it's.. you know what 'weightlessness' is?

Gi: No!

S: So, we... when we get up there, we are weightless, which means that we can float. We are not pulled down to the ground, like.... you and I are not being pulled down to the stairs?

Gi: Yes.

S: Ok. We've got weight. Well, up in space, we are weightless. We would just float right up above the stairs. I can... I can

take something... I can take a ball... and just let it go right
here, and it wouldn't fall. It would stay.... right here, where I
put it.

Gi: Does it feel like a balloon?

S: Feels a little bit like a balloon... it feels a little bit like..
when you are in the water and you're held up... it's fun moving
around and pushing up the walls and eating lunch on the
ceiling... it doesn't feel like anything that you can experience
... here on earth.

Gi: Is your space /outfit/ comfortable?

S: Sure, it is! You know what else we wear? We wear this for...
launch, when we are first going up, and then /?/ landing when we
come down, and... some of the rest of the time.. in pictures that
you might have seen, we are just wearing regular T-shirts and...
sometimes shorts, when we exercise....

M: And how did you exercise, if you didn't weigh anything?

S: Well, that's...──┐
                    └─How could you /?/ if...   [laughs]

M:

S: Well, that's a good question, because you really don't use your
muscles at all up there, so it's easy to move around.. you can
just push off a wall and you float across the room. So, you
don't use your muscles as much... We had a /trimming/ that we
carried, then, we had a stretch /?/ we were being pulled down....
under the treadmill and then we could run on it [film shows],and
exercise our legs that way.

WB: How did you eat?

S: Well, we carried up a lot of food that's... a lot like camping
food, some of it is just packaged as peanuts and candies, ham and
egg... that kind of thing that you just open and eat... and some
of it is dehidrated. They've sucked all the water out of it, and
we've gotta put the water back in... and we carry vegetables and
steak, and....

BB: But while you eat, doesn't it flow up in the air?

S: We wouldn't want to have peas or anything like that. If you open
up a can of peas, you know... [everybody laughs] but mashed
potatoes are good. They stick right to the can. And you can set
the tray right in front of you and just leave it there and then
take a spoon and eat it. We've got spoons that we use.

M: Oh, so... if you took the food on the spoon, it wouldn't float
off the spoon.

S: Most of the food sticks to the spoon. It's gotta be kind of
sticky... sticky food.

BB: Could you see New York from the space /?/?

S: Um, um!.... it's possible to see New York.. We don't go quite
high enough in the space shuttle to see the whole earth. You
might've seen pictures of the earth which just looks like a big
ball. We don't get quite that high. But we can see... all of the
United States just looking out, in front of us.. and it looks....
you can see all the colors.. you can see blues in the ocean and
greens, and reds on the ground.... it is really pretty!

M: I sure would like to... go up in space. How about you,
/Bob/? [addressing one of the children]

D: I would.How many here would like to go up space with Sally in the
next ride? [children raise their hands]. You're going up
again? [to Sally]

S: I'm going up again.

D: You'd like to go up again, right?
S: I'd like very much to go up again.
D: Listen, no problem if we all go up with you?
S: No problem!
D: You can arrange that?
S: Sure. You can all come!
D: How about we all going up space with Sally next time? How
   many wanna do that? [everybody raises their hands] Ok. We got a
   deal. It's Ok if we all go, right?
S: Sure, no problem. Ok.

TEXT 8
THE OLD WOMAN AND MOTHER GOOSE

M: [on the telephone] Hello... yeah, this is Mother Goose.
   Oh, Peter Pumpkin /?/ How are you?
MG: Yeah... I can't talk right now. I'm... busy composing a poem for
    THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE
    Oh, Ok. I'll catch you later! Ah, my best to little woman, Ok?
    [hangs up the telephone] Right! Ok, Let's see what I get oh
    yeah... hm...
                    THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE
                    SHE HAD SO MANY CHILDREN
                    SHE... BUY A CAR...
    No, it do doesn't rhyme!
OW: HOOOO! MOTHER GOOSE! [goes into Mother Goose's office with
    her children]
MG: Come in, come in! [children speak and shout]
MG: Hi, ah.... Hi, Old Woman!
OW: Hello, dear, hello.
MG: Listen.. I'm not quite finished with the poem yet.
OW: Oh no, really?
MG: Yeah, ah..maybe... see... you can help we out, Ok?
OW: Sure.... just read out, dear. I'll see if I can help you with the
    ending. [children make noise]
MG: Ok. Now, you be quiet kids.,.. Because I'm gonna start....
    working on this poem again, Ok?
CH: Ok!
MG: HERE WE GO.. THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE
    SHE HAD SO MANY
    CHILDREN
    ... THAT'S THE PART THAT...
    SHE HAD SO MANY CHILDREN....
OW: SHE WAS NAMED 'MOTHER OF THE YEAR'
    How is that?
MG: NO, YEAR... YEAR and SHOE don't rhyme...
    [children start making a mess of Mother Goose's office]
    Would you cut that out?... Leave that paper alone! Don't touch
    that picture! Ok.... please, stop it! Ok, let's see.... Ok, what
    rhymes with shoe?
OW: GLUE.
MG: GLUE, ... Oh, yeah! or STEW?
OW: ZOO! [noise continues]
MG: ZOO...ZOO!! Hey [interrupts again] were you guys... boys and

girls... All right, quiet now
OW: Yes, ZOO, ZOO!
MG: ZOO rhymes with SHOE
OW: That's right.
MG: Ok. Here we go! Be quiet, boys and girls! Listen, ...
THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE
SHE... [noise interrupts her again]
THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE
SHE HAD SO MANY CHILDREN,
SO SHE TOOK THEM TO THE ZOO!
OW: Oh, yes, let's.
MG: Ok, good, that's it. The poem is finished. Let's go to the zoo...
Get your hats and coats... [but the children do not want to go
to the zoo]
I guess the poem is not finished.
OW: No?
MG: No, they don't wanna go to the zoo!
OW: No!... Hm... let's see...
MG: Ok, let's see... what else... come on... hey, BOYS AND GIRLS!
This is my office! I paid for this place!
Oh /?/ can't you do SOMETHING?
OW: My dear, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
MG: DO? ... DO?
OW: DO!!
MG: Oh, I got it! I got it! Here we go!
THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE ...
SHE HAD SO MANY KIDS
SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!
OW: Oh, that's lovely
MG: You got it!
OW: I love it!
MG: From me, to you!
OW: Thank you, dear, now... I got the poem, dear, you got the kids.
MG: I what?
OW: See you later! I've got /?/ to do! Bye.
CH: Bye, mummy!
MG: Hey, come back!
OW: [comes back] ah, dear, they like a hot lunch at about one. Bye,
bye.
MG: I can't.. I'm too busy! I can't take care...
[telephone rings, children cry and make a big mess. Now it is
Mother Goose who does not know what to do].

TEXT 9
LITTLE GIRL AND SUPER GROVER

NARRATOR: Presenting the further adventures of everybody's favorite
hero; the man who is faster than lightning, stronger than
steel, smarter than a speeding bullet. It's SUPER GROVER!
SG: /?/
NARRATOR: And now, on to our story.
SG: Yes, on to our story.
NARRATOR: Super Grover was flying /?/ Metro City when he heard
familiar sounds... of someone... in distress.

LG: Oh, no!

SG: Unh... What's that I hear? It's a familiar sound of someone in distress! NEVER FEAR! SUPER GROVER IS ON THE WAY!

LG: Oh, my computer isn't working! Something is wrong. Nothing is happening! [hears a sound] oh, oh.... What's that? A bird? A plane? ... [Super Grover falls on the floor] Oh, It's Super Grover. [disappointed]

SG: Oh, oh, oh, oh.... Where are you? Oh, oh, ... my /?/ hurts. [recovers] Oh, Little Gir, hello, dear... it's SUPER GROVER to save the day.

LG: Oh, do you know ANYTHING about COMPUTERS?

SG: Yes, yes... I do. I know that I do not know ANYthing ... about computers!

LG: Oh, well, THIS ... is a computer. And it is not working.

SG: Where? Where?

LG: It's here.

SG: Oh, that's cute!

LG: Well.. when I press the keys...─┐
                                    └hä, hä...
SG:

LG: Nothing happens!

SG: Oh, it's something, /?/, right?

LG: Right, right!

SG: Well, have you tried.. running on circles and screaming at the top of your lungs?

LG: Oh, that wouldn't do any good!

SG: Well, it couldn't hurt.. could it?

LG: No, no.

SG: Yes, Let's try... Hu! hu! hu! [shouts]

LG: That's not working!

SG: Not working?

LG: No!

SG: Well, I know that.. I can see. I have Super Eyes! Hm, ... of course it's not working /?/ .... what I will do /?/ is ... I will /?/ up and down, and yell UBA UBA ... UBA!, UBA!, UBA!, UBA!, UBA! u

LG: [S.G. continues saying 'uba' 'uba'.Wait a minute... look at this switch! It says: on and on. Ha! Ha! Oh, Silly of me... I forgot to turn on the switch!
Oh, Super Grover!─┐
                  └Unh!─┐Uba, Uba!
SG:
LG: └It's working! It's WORKING!

SG: What, what, what, what... what?

LG: It's working!

SG: Oh, excuse me, I'm sorry... I'm so excited! Step over here .. I want to see it.

LG: I just turned on this switch and... [a drawing appears on the screen] Oh, look at that!

LG: It's working!

SG: HA!, Super Grover again, saved the day.. No, do not bother to say thank you. I must be off. I must be off to save other little girls and boys in distress. ADIOS! [looks for a door]. Do you have a door?

LG: Yeah. [he tries to open the door making use of witchcraft again. Little Girl looks at him, as if saying: 'no way!']

TEXT 10
MARIA AND LOUIS

[Maria and Louis are in the shop where they work. Maria reads, while Louis works]

M: Louis.. this book I'm reading, look at this: 'The Adventures of Captain Swashbuckle'. It's so exciting that I just can't stop. But I'm almost finished.

L: Yeah, listen.. that the delivery arrived from the hardware store, and we have to bring the boxes and put the supplies up. It's a job for both of us!

M: Ok!

L: Ok. [Louis starts working and Maria continues reading] Maria!.. I thought we were gonna do this together!

M: Yes, I am. I am.. going to help you right now.

L: Come on! [Maria does not stop reading]
Maria, would you give me A HAND? [angry]

M: I'm sorry... Yes, I will.. I'm closing the book right now, see? And I'm putting it down.

L: Good! [points with his finger, indicating where Maria should go. As Maria does not stop reading, Louis stops working and watches her]

M: THE END! WHAT A GREAT BOOK! I'm.. [realizes Louis is upset] Oh.., I just finished the book. What do you want me to do? Do you want me to pick something up and carry and...⌐

L: ⌐ No, no, no ... that was the last box.

M: Oh, I'm sorry, Louis. I didn't mean to let you do the work all by yourself. It's just that I got so wrapped up in this book! It's ... [Louis takes the book from Maria and reads the tittle aloud]

L: 'The Adventures of Captain Swashbuckle!'

M: I know, but that doesn't matter. Look, I know that it's better when we work together and when we do the job together. I'm really sorry!

L: Maria, don't worry about it. That's o.k. We can still do the job together.

M: How's that?

L: Well, hm... I brought the boxes in, while you read. So.. now, you can put the SUPPLIES up, while I read. [Maria looks upset]

L: COOPERATION! [revengeful]

TEXT 11
MARIA, TELLIE AND CHILDREN

T: All right... hm one in Spanish is .. hm .... hm [scratches his neck, showing uneasiness] hm... well, let's see.. move on to 'two'. THAT'S EASIER. Two in Spanish is hm.. hm.. hm.. two in Spanish...

M: [arrives]. Hi, everybody! What's going on?

C1: Nothing.... There's something bothering /?/ the monster, I guess, Tellie Monster. There is something wrong with him. He can't tell ...

T: Oh, no. There's nothing wrong with me. It's just, I'm supposed to

teach counting in Spanish and... and I don't know how. I just
don't know how...
M: Well, Tellie, I can help you! If you wanna teach counting in
Spanish, just ask someone who speaks Spanish....
T: Yeah.. who?
C2: Me!! I speak Spanish..
M: You speak Spanish?
C: I speak Spanish.
M: Tellie, Tellie, Yo hablo español also! I'm Puerto Rican, I speak
Spanish. How long have you known me? Do you want me to teach you
how to count in Spanish? [background music starts]
T: Yes, please.
M: All right. Now, just listen closely, Ok?
T: Ok. I'm all ears.
M: Uno, dos, tres, quatro, cinco, seis, siete, otcho, nueve, diez.
T: └Yeah. Yeah   └Yeah,
Ok.
M: I'll tell you what, Tellie. I say first, and then you repeat, all
right?
   Just watch my mouth uno dos tres quatro cinco
T: └Ok! └uno └dos └tres └quatro └cinco
M: seis siete otcho nueve diez
T: └seis └siete └otcho └nueve └diez
M: [singing] You will count in Spanish
              If you take your time
              Just follow me, and you will see,
              You will do just fine!
T: Ok, Ok.
M: You got that, Tellie?
T: Yeah!
M: Now, I want YOU to teach the kids, Ok?
T: No... No, I couldn't....
M: Yes..? You say, and they will say, and
   you say once more, Ok? YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, NOW!
T: Yeah... uno, dos, tres, ... quatro, cinco, seis, siete, otcho,
   nueve, diez [everybody repeats after Tellie]
T: [when it finishes] WAAL! I DID IT!
M: All sing together now, Ok? [they all sing together]
T: Yeah... Ok!
   Ok! Wanna try that? Here we go... uno, dos, tres, ... diez.
M: One more time! Uno, dos, tres.... [everybody together]
   ALL RIGHT, TELLIE! You did it!
T: um, hum! [starting to show frustration again]
M: I'm so proud of you!
T: Well, you know... I'm proud of me too, Maria. Ha, ha! Waal, that
   was great! Ha, ha.... Maria! [serious]
M: Yeah?
T: Maria!
M: Yeah?
T: What if someone asks me to count in Russian, or Portuguese, or
   Bangalese... Oh, oh, Maria, I'll be in big trouble! I couldn't do
   that!
M: Oh, oh! [very frustrated].

TEXT 12
AMANDA AND ERNEST

E: Hi, dear eagle!
   [to the camera] oh, well.. you know what I love? I love this
   boat.... hm.. I really do.. I really love this boat! I mean, if
   you're gonna talk about something that I love.. /?/ talk about
   this boat.. BECAUSE THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE.. /FOR/ ANY PERSON..
   FOR ANY BOAT.. THAN I HAVE.. FOR THIS BOAT HERE!
A: [arrives] OOU! OOU!! Good morning, Ernest! [excited]
E: Oh, good morning, Amanda. You know what I love?
A: Oh, what do you love.. Ernest?
E: AMANDA...⌐   I LOVE..⌐   I LOVE.. THIS BOAT!
A: └─Yes?   └─Yes?
   Oh! [disappointed]
E: I really do.. I really love this boat!
A: Oh.. oh, well... I love this boat too!
E: You do?
A: Oh yes, I ADORE this boat!
E: Oh, oh...
A: I'm CRAZY about this boat!
E: Oh, good.
A: In fact, /?/ with LOVE FOR THIS BOAT!
E: Oh, yeah.. oh, oh.
   [sketch continues. Other characters come and talk about their
   love for the boat]

TEXT 13
SUSAN, BIG BIRD, GORDON AND LOUIS

S: It's so nice out tonight!
BB: [arrives] good evening, everybody!
G: Big Bird, what ... What're you doing up so late?
BB: Oh, well, I used to go to bed earlier, you know?
S: Um, hum ... [ironical]
BB: But you guys always stay up real late. And so I thought..I mean,
   [laughs] Radar thought, ha... that we should stay up and keep
   you company .. hm .. right, Radar?
S: Ha!.. that's very nice, honey. MAYBE you wanna go back to bed!
   [caressing him]
BB: Oh, but I'm not even tired! come on! Can I stay up a little
   while? Please!... Please, please, please...
S: Oh, all right. But Big Bird, just for a little while, Ok?
BB: Ok.
L: [looking to the sky] I wonder if we'll see another one.
BB: Another what?
L: Another shooting star.
BB: Who did it shoot? [People laugh]
L: Nobody, Big Bird. It's just what we call... you know.. a star,
   when we see it fly through the sky. A shooting star!
S: Yeah.
BB: See, Radar... we've never seen a shooting star, have we? No...
S: Boy, when.... when Gordon an I decided to get married, do you
   remember that night? [to Gordon].

G: Um, hum!
S: There was a big full moon just like this. Do you remember that?
G: That's right!
BB: What's it full of?
G: [laugh] nothing, Big Bird. You see.. there are times when we
    can see a part of the moon. And then, there are other times when
    we can see the whole thing, like right now. And that's what they
    call it full.
BB: I never knew that either! Did you know that, /?/ Radar? Hm, good
    idea coming out here!
S: [Big Bird yawns] Ok, Ok, come on.. let me walk you back to bed.
G: Yeah...
BB: But why, why, Susan?
S: But you're falling ASLEEP'
BB: Oh, I'm, I'm... right away!
S: Look at him!
    ... [more conversation]
S: Ok, that's it, Big Bird. Come on, come on!
BB: But I'm not even tired, yet! [yawns again]. That wasn't me. That
    was Radar. That was Radar yawning... Oh, look! I think that was
    ... another of those shooting moons!
S: That was radar yawning [ironic]
G: That's STAR, Big Bird!
BB: Oh, yeah!