

Dr. Herta Herzog
A-6105 Weidach 289 Leutasch

Elisabeth M. Perse , PH.D.
Dept of Communications
University of Delaware

Leutasch,
Sept. 29, 1994

Dear Dr . Perse,

As you will have noticed from the typos in the material I sent you a couple of days ago I was very much pressed for time trying to meet the deadline on an article and being late- I am sure you know the feeling. It occurred to me now after reading the text that you might want to have a little more detail on some points. I am sending you this now. If there other things you'd want to know let me know.

Cordially
Herta Herzog

to page 6- after first paragraph , which mentions my soap opera pilot study:

The "uses and gratifications" type more elaborate studies which have followed since have improved upon some of the flaws this first and small scale study had . It had leaned totally on self reports , was not sophisticated about the social origins of the needs audiences brought to the programs. It was not critical about the possible negative functions for the listener and/or society . And for me the major flaw : it was so taken by the diversity of audience uses to pay much attention to the constraints of the text . "Decoding " is now conceived as the important process by which the listener / viewer enters into "negotiation " with the text through identification, acting critically , interpersonal interaction , response mechanisms which will also determine whether and how a program or program type will enter into a culture . In my study of Dallas , done years later among German viewers , I have tried to consider these points .

page 6 : Lazarsfeld- Stanton Program Analyser .The device was originally invented by Lazarsfeld in Vienna to record the emotional responses of a listener to a piece of music. It had been technically perfected by Frank Stanton . The mechanism was used by the Bureau on various materials . Some of the experiments of the research branch of the War Department (described in the American Soldier, Bd 3)had been based on it. Eventually CBS acquired the commercial rights to use it and Mc Cann obtained the exclusive rights in the advertising field.

page 7 first § re use of personality tests :

A type of "projective " approach had already been used in Marienthal. For example, the Christmas wishes of the children were asked as an indicator of the range of hopes. I greatly expanded the type of projective devices (for example to ask for the drawing of the product or product in use or a brand) including the use of fairly easily administered personality tests (such as the figure drawing test originally developed by Karin Machover) to get at subjective notions of products or brands down to some insight into the type of person holding certain notions or attitudes.

In this type of qualitative research a concept proved useful that has since become general usage . Prof. Bühler.....

to page 4 : the Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle may need some more explanation as it was the prototype of the research organisations Lazarsfeld founded in the US : first the Research Center at Newark, then the Office of Radio Research at Princeton (the work was at first still handled in Newark), then the office of Radio Research at Columbia and finally the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia . Only the last was different in organisational structure - larger, thus necessarily less hierarchical.

The Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle (Research Institute of Marketing) was set up as a research center independent of the Psychologische Institut to handle the application of psychology to social and economic problems. Of the social psychological studies " The Arbeitslosen von Marienthal " became the most widely known . Lazarsfeld's introduction to the new 1960 edition indicates all the methodological concerns of the study.

Market research - the second arm of the Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle - was at the time unknown in Austria. It fitted into L's early interest how decisions, particularly the from a socio-political interest important voting choices, come about. If one advocated the use of quantitative data and statistical analysis with descriptions of choice processes, consumer choices would at first be more manageable than choices extending over a long period of time, subject to many ramifications.

And consumer purchases were a special case that fitted into a problem area important in European humanistic tradition : Handlung, action. Bühler had written a paper on language as a special form of action. The action of a purchase, the data pertaining to a purchase structure , would be an important contribution of the psychologist .For just to report that x% did something was unacceptable. The task was in fact to collect a number of relevant diverse findings and combine them into "integrating " concepts.

To obtain such findings required a number of techniques. Bühler in his "Die Krise der Psychologie " had pointed out three sources of psychological knowledge : introspection , the interpretation of cultural products and the observation of behaviour. It was L's notion that introspection could be obtained from ordinary people by means of proper questioning. It included "the art of asking why "(L wrote a paper on this after he came to the US) , i.e. the proper segmentation of the aspects entering a purchase decision. It meant using different psych. questioning techniques , in particular the open-ended question, later also referred to as " depth interview" and generally, a qualitative research approach. which I continued using and developing in individual interviews and focus groups.