

1981 COMMUNICATION STUDIES IN CANADA

Chapter 13 TORONTO: BUTTERWORTHS

# On the Implications of Content and Structural Analyses



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*Le mérite de l'une ou l'autre des analyses de contenu et de structure pour le produit culturel est envisagé ici en tant que question de méthodologie. L'objectif visé est de retrouver le rapport entre certaines techniques d'analyse, leurs racines théorétiques et les conséquences d'en adopter une plutôt qu'une autre au niveau empirique. Le débat est fondé sur une étude en cours dans laquelle la relation est faite entre des pièces radiophoniques en langue anglaise de la CBC et leur milieu social.*

*On examine les hypothèses courantes se rapportant à l'analyse de contenu et de structure, pour arriver à une décision sur la combinaison la plus appropriée, basée sur ces hypothèses et leur relation avec le cadre théorique adopté pour l'étude. En particulier, le travail de deux experts des secteurs sociologiques de la connaissance et de la culture, Lucien Goldmann et Karl Mannheim, est examiné afin de situer chaque technique dans sa propre problématique.*

*Un texte radiophonique de la CBC a été choisi pour illustrer les implications d'adopter l'une ou l'autre technique. On observe que chacune expose la pièce à des interprétations très différentes, l'une fondée sur l'idée d'identification du contenu entre l'ouvrage et son contexte social; l'autre sur une homologie de structures entre la structure de la pièce et celle des systèmes d'idées de groupes sociaux.*

Perhaps this essay should be titled "Content Analysis: Once More Around." Anyone working in communication studies, the sociology of culture, the sociology of knowledge or related fields is familiar with the issues surrounding the long-standing debate on the nature and effectiveness of content analysis.

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Most reviews raise at least two points around which the arguments revolve: the quantitative/qualitative and the manifest/latent content issues.<sup>1</sup> On occasion these two, in turn, are subsumed under the broader topics of form and content and the relations between the two, or the relative advantages and disadvantages of content and structural analyses as techniques.<sup>2</sup>

Other issues, no less important, tend to find their way into the debate. To name but two: insofar as content analysis is associated with the social sciences, the impasse between the subjectivity of literary analysis and the objectivity of science will focus on content analysis and, within the social sciences, content analysis is at times central to clashes between empiricists and anti-empiricists.<sup>3</sup> Needless to say, the list is much longer.

In this essay, the debate is entered with a specific objective in mind. The objective is to seek the relationship between particular techniques of analysis, their theoretical roots and the consequences of adopting one or another at the empirical level. To put it another way, when a researcher is faced with an array of empirical materials, a technique of analysis is adopted as a means of sorting and understanding. In so doing, the theoretical base from which the selected technique was developed also is adopted. Indeed, few researchers would deny that techniques of data gathering and analysis are epistemologically and ontologically neutral, that is, any technique designed for data manipulation presupposes answers to questions about the nature of knowledge and reality. Unfortunately, some researchers are not very explicit about the assumptions underlying their techniques of analysis and, therefore, about the implications of adopting one or another technique.

It is the purpose of this essay to report on an experience in which, faced with a set of radio-drama plays to be understood in relation to their social milieu, decisions had to be made regarding techniques of analysis. A review of the assumptions underlying content and structural analyses was undertaken and decisions were made based on the relations between these assumptions and the theoretical framework initially adopted for the study. In the course of this essay, content and structural analyses will be contrasted by locating each in a particular problematic.

Relating each mode of analysis to a problematic means to link each thought structure of a particular set of epistemological, theoretical and methodological assumptions to a related subject matter. Only in this manner is it possible to assign each to its proper place and to better comprehend the implications of each in the research process. It is not intended to imply that content or structural analyses are inexorably tied to a particular problematic. Modifications are possible when it is understood what is to be modified.

This essay begins with a look at each mode of analysis, reviews familiar arguments, and seeks to understand the objectives of each. This is followed by the attempt to link each mode of analysis with a particular problematic. The works of the two scholars in the fields of the sociology of culture and knowledge, Lucien Goldmann and Karl Mannheim, are taken as represen-

tative of two contrasting problematics of thought structures with respect to the analysis of cultural materials.<sup>4</sup> Finally, on the empirical level, one mode is contrasted with the other in application using a selected radio-drama for illustration.

Before proceeding further, it should be noted that the overall interest here is in radio-drama as a cultural product and in uncovering the relations between the structures of these works and idea-systems associated with social groups in English-Canadian society. Radio-drama, especially CBC productions prior to the onset of television, was selected not because it was popular culture (though many would so define it) nor because it was part of the so-called great tradition (few would so classify it), but because in English Canada it was the principal training ground for the development of English Canadian theatre: literary creation, acting, directing and production. For three decades, CBC radio-drama was not only popular entertainment but also the major vehicle through which indigenously produced materials could be made public.<sup>5</sup> These productions were indeed a part of English Canada's invisible culture, invisible in the shadow of American and British literature, drama, and entertainment and, therefore, receiving little critical attention.

### Content and Structural Analyses

At first glance what appears to distinguish content analysis from structural analysis is neither the quantitative/qualitative nor the manifest/latent distinctions, but the type of questions addressed to cultural products and whether the investigation remains rooted in the empiricist tradition or crosses over to literary criticism. Some examples will help to illustrate the different approaches.

On the side of content analysis:

(1) In a study of daytime radio serials in the 1940s, Rudolf Arnheim asked, "Do radio serials choose the large centres of modern life as settings . . . or do they prefer small towns or the village? . . . What are the social backgrounds of the people presented in the radio serials?"<sup>6</sup>

(2) In a study of popular songs in the 1960s, the investigator noted that, "attention was paid to four selected topics, chosen not only because of their currency but because of their relevance to the youth subculture . . . love-sex . . . religion . . . violence . . . social protest. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

(3) A study of newspaper advertising in Montreal asked, "What procedures do department stores follow and what adaptations do they make in preparing advertising for a bilingual and bicultural setting? . . . How does the bicultural milieu offset management's advertising decisions?"<sup>8</sup>

(4) In a study of French-English reactions to the October Crisis, "the media portrayal of these two solitudes provides a unique opportunity for explaining in greater detail how English and French Canadians conceive of their alternate realities."<sup>9</sup>

The following are examples from the side of structural analysis:

(1) On the sociology of film: ". . . pourquoi a tel moment historique y a-t-il tel cinema? Pourquoi le neo-realisme en Italie dans les années d'après-guerre et non pas en Allemagne ou en France?"<sup>10</sup>

(2) In a study of the American western film: "[what] historical changes in the structure of myth correspond to the changes in the structure of . . . dominant [social institutions]?"<sup>11</sup>

(3) On the sociology of the novel: "The basic hypothesis [is] precisely that the collective character of literary creation derives from the fact that the structures of the world of the work are homologous with the mental structures of certain social groups. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

(4) In a study of the English Canadian novel: "Our . . . intention [is] to show the ways in which the idea of class has found expression in English Canadian novels . . . [to reveal] the ideological matrices in which the idea of class has been embodied . . . [and] suggesting how the ideological configurations underlying the novel might be related to more general ideological principles in society."<sup>13</sup>

The contrast is interesting. One set of questions, those associated with content analysis, concentrate on a moment of time and ask if certain selected categories of content (the background characteristics of characters in plays, negative or positive responses to political candidates, types of behaviour, etc.) of the observed items match those in the society at large or some segment of the society. The relationship is one of identity of content.

The set of questions associated with structural analysis is more inclined to capture totalities and ask if the structures of observed items correspond to the structures of idea-systems within the society. The relationship is one of corresponding or homologous structures rather than one of identity of the content of coding categories.

To extend the comparison further, content analysis leads to descriptions of the "isolated elements which enter into the totality"<sup>14</sup> of the cultural product(s) and matches these with similar isolated elements observed in the world external to the product.

In contrast, structural analysis places the emphasis not on the elements per se, but on the relations among them or the ways in which they are combined. The link between cultural products and their external worlds, then, is not an identity of content but a correspondence between modes of combination of elements.

In the first set of questions, the "facts" seem to speak for themselves, while in the second set the "facts" are the observed effects of "bundles of relations." In this respect, the following comments are revealing:

Direct observation does reveal to us that human beings are connected by a complex network of social relations. I use the term "social structure" to denote this framework of actually existing relations.<sup>15</sup>

When we describe structure we are already dealing with general principles far removed from the complicated skein of behaviour, feelings, beliefs, etc. that

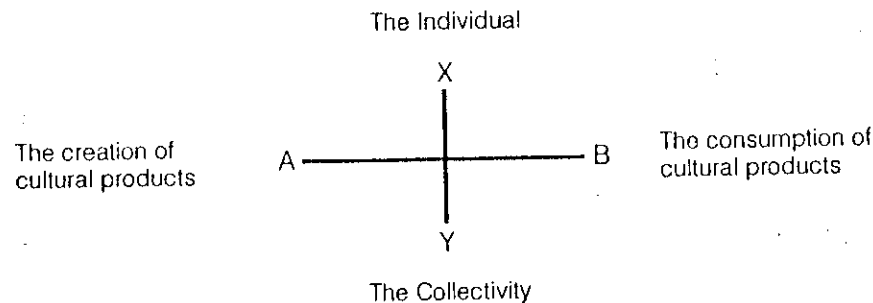
constitutes the basis of actual social life. We are, as it were, in the realm of grammar and syntax, not of the spoken word.<sup>16</sup>

Content analysis is compatible with the first statement and structural analysis with the second. The two modes of analysis are embedded in different problematics or thought structures.

### Problematic Sources

At the most general level of theoretical assumptions, a review of related literature<sup>17</sup> reveals two axes around which these two modes of analysis appear to revolve. Particular studies may focus on the individual or the collectivity, following the (XY) axis in Figure 13-1, or on the creative or consumption process, following the (AB) axis in Figure 13-1.

Figure 13-1



In combination, which is the case for most studies in the field, the (XB) cell emphasizes the individual as consumer or recipient of communications while the (BY) cell emphasizes the functions of particular creations relative to idea-systems within the society as a whole. The (AX) cell employs a psychological analysis of the creative process while the (AY) cell generally employs a sociological analysis. Work based on the theoretical assumptions located above the (AB) axis, that is, (AX) and (XB) combinations, tends to assume an atomistic or aggregate conceptualization of society in which the individual is the focus of observation and analysis. At one level, the individual is conceptualized as the consumer of culture and knowledge, as for example, in a study which reported on the "behaviour of adolescents . . . as active agents in the selection of media and integration of materials within media."<sup>18</sup> Manifest behaviour is the locus of both observation and analysis.

At another level, the individual elements are conceptualized as the discrete elements (usually quantifiable but not necessarily) which together somehow or other make up the product consumed.<sup>19</sup> It is here that content analysis combined with attitude and opinion research, is likely to be found.

The cultural object is reduced to its quantifiable elements by content analysis, the participants are reduced to their socio-economic categories or ranged along various axes of sociological variables by such techniques as audience research, and the activities are reduced to clinically isolated simple communication flow models. . . .<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, work based on the theoretical assumptions located below the (AB) axis, that is, (AY) and (YB) combinations, assume either an emergent or a relational conceptualization of society in which the collectivity is the force of analysis. An emergent conceptualization assumes an integrated and harmonious whole. A relational conceptualization assumes a complex of elements which are at once complementary and contradictory, and the focus of analysis is on these relations.<sup>21</sup> It is here that structural analysis is found.

Wright's 1975 study of the American western film did not use categories to draw out discrete items of information from his sample of film. It did not seek the attitudes and opinions of members of an audience nor categorize audiences according to socio-economic attributes. The interest was in the structure of myth underlying the content and the correspondence of these structures with the structures of dominant institutions.

Similarly, Goldmann directs his work on the novel towards the question of the relation between the structures of creative works and the structures of idea-systems of certain social groups, especially social classes.

At the extremes, content and structural analyses as techniques are embedded in opposing problematics. The use of one or the other without modification carries along a set of assumptions about the social and cultural world. Each limits the questions posed and structures the empirical world in a manner consistent with their theoretical assumptions.

### The Sociology of Knowledge and Genetic Structuralism

In the radio-drama project, both techniques of analysis are used to answer different questions, and being cognizant of the above problem the problematic implications of each have been made as explicit as possible. For the moment at least, a combination of the sociology of knowledge problematic of Karl Mannheim and the genetic-structuralist problematic of Lucien Goldmann is used here for analysis.<sup>22</sup> This was decided through a study of various problematics addressed to questions concerning the relations between culture and social structure, an assessment of the appropriateness of the radio-drama data to each, and an exploration of particular techniques relative to each problematic.

The problematics of Mannheim and Goldmann share a common thread. Both are historicist in overall orientation. Mannheim draws from both Weber and Marx but emphasizes the historicism of the former. Goldmann draws from Lukacs, Marx and Piaget, and his historicism is rooted in the work of Lukacs. Both address the production of cultural goods and both emphasize the collectivity, Mannheim less so than Goldmann. Content analysis flows

relatively easily from Mannheim's problematic while structural analysis is the defining characteristic of Goldmann's work.<sup>23</sup>

Though Mannheim's work is derived from both Weber and Marx, Weber's thinking had the far greater influence.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Goldmann's work in the sociology of literature was clearly Marxian in orientation.<sup>25</sup>

Both Mannheim and Goldmann addressed themselves to the production of cultural materials (as opposed to effects), adopted a social determinism and rejected empiricism as valid for the human sciences. They part company where Mannheim's epistemological question leads him to define knowledge as partial and relative and to assign the search for "truth" to the detached intellectual. In contrast, Goldmann, basing his epistemology on Lukacs's notion of practice, chose to stress totalities and to assign the search to social classes and, thus, to the relations of production.

The implications of this departure are two-fold. First, each conceptualizes social class in a different way. While both accept the base/superstructure metaphor, it receives only brief and vague attention from Mannheim, moving as he does, to a Weberian conceptualization of class as stratification. Goldmann, though arguing that social groups are not always related to social classes, locates his theoretical emphasis in social classes and class struggle. This is obviously tied to his acceptance of practice as the criteria of knowledge combined with a structuralist orientation.

Secondly, this stance of Goldmann is consistent with his holistic position, a position which does not allow him to take cultural products as discrete items which reflect (in the sense of a mirror image) the ideologies of social groups or the more general social context. Rather, cultural products are themselves elements of social structures, the products of social groups *as subjects*.<sup>26</sup>

For Goldmann, the analytical task first is to penetrate and depict the structure of the world of a cultural product (such as a radio-drama), to show the relations or combinations of elements within the product, elements being symbolic materials structured into interrelated themes. This first step yields an understanding of the product. Its re-insertion into the broader social structure, the level of *explanation*, requires a search for homologous structures located in the world visions of significant social groups. In other words, "analysis is directed towards instances of formal or structural homology between a social order, its ideology, and its cultural forms."<sup>27</sup> The process is less dependent on the immediately observed than on a structural and historical analysis "in which general form has become apparent, and specific instances of this form can be discovered, not so much or even at all in content, but in specific and autonomous but finally related forms."<sup>28</sup>

Mannheim takes a different route. His relativism, combined with the notion of partial knowledge and the methodology of detachment (as opposed to practice), leads to a view of cultural objects or knowledge as discrete items reflecting the ideologies and utopias of social groups. In this framework a cultural product carries three levels of meaning: (a) an immediate objective

meaning, (b) an expressive meaning which directs analysis to the individual author or creator, and (c) a documentary meaning which is the essential character of the product and, as such, a meaning not necessarily available to the individual creator.

The documentary meaning is close but not identical to Goldmann's structural world vision. The difference is that Mannheim calls for an ideal-typical rather than a structural analysis in order to extract the meanings at each level. The process adopted by Mannheim is one in which single expressions (i.e., constructed as ideal-types) and records of thought are traced back to specific world views also described in ideal-typical terms.

Thus Mannheim's statements, if his problematic is carried to the empirical level, describe an identity of content between specific world views and cultural products. Goldmann's search for homologous structures between the world of specific cultural objects and the world visions of social classes takes quite a different direction. With this established, a partial and illustrative analysis of a selected radio-drama follows below.

### The Radio-Drama: A Synopsis<sup>29</sup>

A brief synopsis of the play will help orient the reader to the analysis which follows.<sup>30</sup> The main characters in the drama are Roy and Jean Manley. Among the others are two women who work in a flower shop, Roy's secretary Ruth, Jean's mother, Paul Chasik the cabinet-maker and his wife Judy, Jean's Uncle Harry who is a minister, and Roy's business associates, Ballard and Peter.

The action takes place over the months from Mothers' Day in May to the following Christmas Eve. Music and sound effects create the visual counterpart for scene, tone and mood. Music with a college football flavour signals Roy's presence. Jean's musical theme—she is at times very lonely and troubled—is distinct in itself. Musical changes and sound effects also bridge and indicate shifts of scene including the flower shop, the Manley home, the business office, stag party and restaurant.

On one occasion, Jean goes to visit her mother who lives in the small town of Wilbury, a quiet and peaceful place where people are "never too busy to stop and talk. . . . There's no hurry, you know."<sup>31</sup> The language and characterizations of the drama are modern and realistic.

Using the drama of motherhood, the author heightens the tension of the play. Jean decides to leave her husband Roy, after eight years of marriage, and shortly after she learns that she is pregnant with her first child.

The author makes use of a modern-day parable told by Jean to her uncle. We are born at the edge of a wood and life's passage or living is finding our "way through the wood." On the way, there are many distractions—beautiful glades, inviting and comfortable clearings, mossy banks where the warm sun filters through.

These distractions entice and seduce, and most people do not make it

through the wood. They stop at the comfortable clearings, unwilling to venture beyond the darkness into the unknown. The lesson of the parable is that it is possible to pass through the wood and pass up what is seemingly comfortable. There is a light beyond, a light of truth. The journey to the light is a searching one: by probing, searching and questioning, the individual matures, and finds strength, independence and freedom.

Jean is the character in the play who articulates the parable and is prepared to go through life seeking and questioning. With human life stirring within her, Jean's dissatisfactions surface. She is not willing to settle for the material comforts of her home and safety of marriage. Her questioning stance brings forth the illusions, the half-truths and the stereotypes her husband cherishes.

Jean's values are reflected in her attitude towards mothering and her own mother. It is not the physical conditions of the home that matter to Jean.

I don't think of the home as a dear little thatched cottage set in a clearing in the wood . . . or a ten-room mansion with a four-car garage. To me a home should be a place where the warmth comes from the parents' love and understanding, and where the children's hours are lighted by the glimpses of the truth which their parents show them. . . . Parents *can* do so much harm, Uncle Harry.<sup>32</sup>

Jean cherishes close personal relations. She is searching for truth, based on experience. She questions her uncle, a minister, on the meaning of faith and belief, especially in her world of the 1950s, when "moral standards all seem to be changing."<sup>33</sup> For Jean, religion means one's own personal faith and belief, not merely church-going. She stresses the value of the well-being and happiness of the individual, putting a high mark on feeling as opposed to rationalism. She believes that behaviour is caused and can be changed and perfected. Jean is cast as the character of high ideals who is willing to risk the safety and comforts of her married life to face the unknown. She is sure that the way through the wood is the way to truth, emancipation and growth.

Roy Manley, Jean's husband, is a character whose traits and values oppose Jean's. But, "Roy is a good man. He is a respected man. . . . He is a type of Canadian man in whom much of the strength of the country lies."<sup>34</sup>

Roy's response to the news of his wife's pregnancy is one of great pleasure. There is pleasure too at the thought of having a son. "It's got to be a son," he says.<sup>35</sup> As his surname symbolically suggests, the meaning of having a child for Roy is closely tied to his sense of manliness. Roy sees his son as an extension of himself. One of his first actions was to go out and buy a pair of boxing gloves "just made for baby's hands."<sup>36</sup> Of course, Roy would initiate his son in the "Manley" way: boxing gloves and stag parties. "I want him [my son] to be a man, to believe in the right things. . . . We're going to be pals, my boy and I."<sup>37</sup>

Roy is sure about his beliefs.

The basic things—the fundamentals. First, the family, the home. Destroy the family and you destroy the nation. Second, religion—faith in God. Going to

church is an old Canadian custom. See where I'm getting to now? The fundamentals.<sup>38</sup>

He sees no contradiction in tying his fundamental beliefs to the commodity he is selling. He is preoccupied with his business—Domestic Fuels—and a pending advertising campaign.

I want our advertisements to express our belief in these things—sell that belief. As a matter of fact, it's an idea that ties in very well with our product Domestic Fuels—we sell to the home. And we're going to picture the home, the family, as a fortress against Communism.<sup>39</sup>

As Jean notes, he has a "blind faith in things—motherhood, the Canadian people, things like that."<sup>40</sup> Anyone or anything else, such as Communism, is suspect. Roy is filled with half-truths, stereotypes of agnosticism, Canadianism, Communism, foreigners, women, mothers and children.

Roy is obviously distressed at his wife's decision to leave him. He is left momentarily confused and powerless, retreating into boyhood dreams of success, fights and stag parties. However, it does not take Roy long to reconsider. He asserts,

To hell with clever women. Instinct, Ruthie—that's what it is. Instinct. Some women understand men . . . some don't know what makes 'em tick. . . . You know what a man is, Ruthie?<sup>41</sup>

Roy finds comfort in Ruth, his secretary, who is so kind, so humble.

You're comfortable—no, that isn't right . . . comforting. . . . I hadn't noticed it before—but you got that instinct to comfort a man—when he needs it.<sup>42</sup>

The questions that confront Jean and Roy Manley go beyond their lives. The author directs the parable to all Canadians—after all, Jean and Roy are "typical." The probing light reaches beyond the surface of Canadian society to the institutions of family and church, the market economy, home and motherhood: husband-wife relations, male-female roles, and beliefs. Jean challenges all.

### The Analysis

Content and structural analyses each require an identical point of entry insofar as each must, at the level of observation, deal with what is given, that is, the surface content. The cutting-up of the play according to a set of categories (ideal-types as per Mannheim) or to thematic elements (as per Goldmann) requires a definition of coding units.

A content analysis would tend to adopt units based on the speeches of individual characters and/or the role content of the actions of characters, that is, units which are amenable to quantification. Since the major interest here is in structural analysis where themes are the basic elements and the relations between themes take priority over the frequency of appearance of any single

one, what are best described as "units of dialogue" are used here. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that a unit of dialogue is an exchange of statements made in an interaction situation in which an exchange of propositions is completed.

The following example, extracted from the play, will serve to illustrate these units. Each unit is numbered, the numbers referring to the structural analysis that follows.

Each unit is coded indicating the scene (first two digits), the sequence (next three digits), and the theme (last two digits).

*Extract from "The Way Through the Wood" <sup>41</sup>*

*Music: Up and out*

GIRL: (Assistant in flower shop) Will that be all then, Mr. Manley?

ROY: Yes—I think so. Two dozen red roses. Mother likes them. Funny how all women go for red roses, isn't it?

GIRL: Do they?

ROY: Sure they do. Every time. I sometimes wonder how you florists have enough red roses to go around every Mother's Day.

01001-11

GIRL: Oh, we manage. Shall I send the bill to your office?

ROY: Yes, do that. (Going) Try and see that they get there first thing in the morning, eh?

GIRL: We'll do our best, Mr. Manley.

ROY: Okay. Good-bye.

GIRL: Good-bye.

01002-11

GIRL: Well, he's done his duty for the year.

GIRL 2: (Slightly off) What's that, Mary?

GIRL: I say he's done his duty for the year. I'd like to know if he ever does anything for his mother in between. And I bet he'd even forget Mother's Day if his secretary didn't remind him.

GIRL 2: You sound bitter, dear.

GIRL: I'm always bitter on Mother's Day. Did you hear him? "Funny how *all* women go for red roses." How does he know?

01003-25

GIRL 2: That's just one of those handy things men make up for themselves. Saves a lot of trouble—and keeps the price of red roses up.

GIRL: And helps to pay our wages. Oh, here's another. This one's yours.

GIRL 2: Okay.

*Sound: At "our wages" above the traffic noise swells as a customer enters.*

GIRL 2: Yes, sir—can I help you?

MAN: (Slight fade in) Yes . . . er . . . I'd like a couple of dozen red roses.

01004-14

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## Content Analysis

As noted above, Mannheim's schema draws attention to three levels of meaning: the objective, expressive and documentary meanings. The expressive level, which leads us directly to a consideration of the author's and producer's "intended" meanings, is a problematic rejected in this essay. In so doing, Mannheim's concept of the worldview of a cultural object is altered.

The objective meaning is the meaning of the observed or objective content arrived at through an ideal-typical analysis. Simultaneously, the documentary meaning can be discerned either through the construction of the ideal-types (the categories of analysis), from observations of the society at large or through the matching of such observations with ideal types constructed from a reading of the play, in much the same way in which sociologists place specific communities along a rural-urban continuum. The point is, at the level of documentary meanings, the result is an identity of content.

A selected reading of the play points to any number of types which could be constructed around definitions of male-female roles: husband/wife, son/mother, daughter/mother, son/father, daughter/father, male dominant/female dominant attitudes towards male-female roles in the family, and in the work setting, attitudes towards specific social institutions, and so on. Even a cursory reading of the play points to the utility of any set of categories which depicts some aspect of male/female relations with an emphasis on the problem of women in society.

A careful analysis based on some such set of categories would reveal the struggle of a woman to liberate herself from the intellectual and moral tyranny of a male-dominated social setting, a setting acutely present in Jean's relations with her husband and the actions of their respective supporting characters. The resolution reveals the continuity of a male-dominated society, with extreme loneliness, if not ostracism, awaiting Jean. These results, in turn and by imputation, may be taken as related to (in the sense of an identity of content) the attitudes of and conflicts in the suburban middle classes of the 1940s and 1950s over the role of women.

## Structural Analysis

A structural analysis proceeds from a different set of questions. Following Goldmann, the interest here is in structural homologies. The *relation* between

the cultural object and the social world of which it is a part in and of itself (not a mirror image) is the focus of analysis.

Referring back to the extract from the play, the first step is a simple coding of all units of dialogue by scene and sequence as recorded in the first five digits. The next step, which involves the reconstruction of the themes, is at the level of analysis. At this point each unit of dialogue is placed on an index card. The cards are then sorted into themes. This requires a judgment which only can be made through a constant shifting between the content of the play and a knowledge of the social world in which the play is rooted. The resulting themes are no longer observational units or samples of manifest content but clusters of relations among these units.

Theme 11 (the last two digits) is a combination of units which expresses a particular set of values with some coherence running through the work. Theme 25 expresses another such set. The themes do not, of course, appear in sequence. The units of each are scattered throughout the play. In the case of the illustration, the first and second units are linked together as part of theme 11, the third unit is a member of another theme, and the fourth of yet another. The relations among the units within each theme are simply relations of identity of meaning.

Two major themes interact in a specific manner throughout the play. Theme 11, identified with Roy, is a value set which in the popular social science of the day was characterized as "1950s suburban middle class," most often associated with mobile white-collar, professional and managerial occupations.

It is a set which places a high priority on a romantic idealization of family and community, an idealization which contained specific prescriptions regarding the respective behaviours of males and females, based on male dominance and aggressiveness. The emphasis on family and community contained an exclusiveness which encouraged negative attitudes towards "out-group" members. The values tended to be politically conservative as opposed to liberal. Male aggressiveness was a psychological correlate of free enterprise and competition.

Theme 25, identified with Jean, though nonetheless "middle class," was characterized as influenced by existentialism but more concretely expressed in an empiricism (one believes only what one sees) and individualism. It is anti-conformist and skeptical of values surrounding family, community and nation. In this sense it is more open and tolerant. It tends to be politically liberal to left-liberal. Little value is placed on collectivities, while considerable value is placed on the individual. The individual here is not the aggressive free-enterpriser but the open, feeling individual who seeks solutions to social problems in perfecting interpersonal relations.

The remaining themes are sub-themes of one or the other value sets. Two of these characterize, at the concrete level, the personifications of the two major themes primarily through the characters of Roy and Jean. An addi-

tional three refer to the sources and institutional supports of the basic themes; e.g., Roy's theme finds its source in the United States media and Jean's in Europe via immigration. Roy's themes, the church and the economy, are mutually reinforcing.

The next and final step is concerned with the relations among the themes. It is this level of analysis which yields the structures that can be examined in relation to structures of idea-systems within the larger society. The procedure is to place the units of dialogue sequentially along a horizontal axis while at the same time organize them thematically along a vertical axis.<sup>44</sup> For purposes of illustration, eight themes, numbered from 1 to 8 are used. The resulting simulation of the play would look something like the diagram below:

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1 . . 4 . . . .
1 2 . . . . .
. 2 . . . 6 . .
. 2 . . . 6 . .
. . . 4 . . . 8
1 . . 4 . . . .
. 2 . 4 . . 7 .
etc.

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By reading from left to right, the manifest content or story line is obtained. By reading from top to bottom, the thematic content is revealed, but one step removed from observation insofar as the themes consist of the units of dialogue ordered not in sequence but by theme. The way in which the themes are related is arrived at by examining the interaction between 1, 2, 4, via the story line.

The two major themes stand in opposition to each other, with Roy's theme in a dominant position and Jean's in a subordinate position. There is no resolution to the tension in the sense of a new thesis. The play concludes with Roy's theme in a dominant position, though in the middle sequences Jean's gains a temporary ascendancy.

This article begins the first set of "successive approximations" as called for by Goldmann. This first approximation must now interact, as it were, with approximations of appropriate social structures, such as social groups. As a final note, however, a hypothesis is advanced with respect to this operation.

The hypothesis is that the structure of the play as revealed in its first approximation is homologous with the mental structures of particular factions of social classes in the same time frame insofar as the manner in which these factions are related to each other. The relationship between the two major themes corresponds to the relationship between the ideologies adhered to by two factions of the middle class during the 1940s and 1950s. This is the tension between the old middle class (rural and urban independent commodity producers and merchants) and the new middle class (professional and



managerial personnel). The latter category is objectively a part of the proletariat but subjectively identifies with the capitalist class.<sup>45</sup>

Evidence suggests that the former faction was beginning to lose its dominant position to the latter after 1940. The ideology of the former grouping, though frequently associated in the popular social science literature with the organization man, corresponds to that described as theme 11. The relationship between theme 11 and theme 25 corresponds to the relations between these two factions. This hypothesis would guide further inquiries, inquiries which would require a structural analysis of these ideologies.

### Recapitulation

It appears that content and structural analyses lead in different directions. A content analysis is inclined to portray the play as a discussion of the role of women in society and the futility of assuming a resolution other than a continuation of the status quo. A structural analysis leads to a set of interrelated themes structured in a fashion homologous to the ideologies of particular factions of particular social classes. In this analysis the play does not reflect a particular aspect of class struggle, it is itself a part of that struggle expressing a correspondence in origin and development between its combination of themes and the combination of themes within the ideologies of the competing factions.

Content analysis leads to positing a relation between a cultural product and the social world which is best described as an identity of content. In contrast, structural analysis leads to probing relationships between the two which are best described as structural homologues. It is implied here that "a cultural phenomenon acquires its full significance only when it is seen as a form of general social processes or structure."<sup>46</sup> The underlying assumption is that a cultural product is not ephemeral as in a mirror image but is itself a reality. In contrast, Mannheim's relativism and concept of partial knowledge emphasizes social context, a context which knowledge or culture somehow represents or reflects.

Furthermore, Goldmann's problematic, in which the criteria for knowledge are to be found in practice and class struggle, defines the social group, not the individual, as the *subject*. Mannheim's problematic locates the criteria for knowledge in the detached intellectual shifting the emphasis to the individual as subject, leaving the social group as *context*.

The objective of this essay was to contrast content analysis with structural analysis by locating each in a particular problematic and to follow through with an illustrative analysis of one item. It was, however, the intention to use both modes of analysis. The selection of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge thesis permits the adoption of a content analysis without entirely violating the Goldmann problematic upon which this work is based. This is possible because of the similarities found in the two.

However, content analysis is adopted in a very limited way and as a

means for initially sorting the volume of scripts on hand. The scripts will be sorted by time period, author and producer. Within each of these categories they will be submitted to a content analysis based on an ideal-typical mode, consistent with Mannheim. This will yield the "objective meanings" of the works and serve to guide the formulation of a subsequent structural analysis. It will be from this latter phase that conclusions are drawn about the relations between the materials and the society at large.

### NOTES

1. For example, see: O. R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley, 1969); George H. Lewis, "The Sociology of Popular Culture," *Current Sociology* 26 (3) 1978.
2. For example, see: Ibid., pp. 26-31, Hugh D. Duncan, *Symbols in Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 3-15; Lucien Goldmann, *Toward a Sociology of the Novel* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1975), pp. 158-160.
3. For example, see: Robert E. Spiller, "Value and Method in American Studies," *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien*, Band 4, 1959, p. 18, as cited in Duncan, op. cit., and John Shepherd, "Music and Social Control," *Catalyst* 13 (1959): 37-46.
4. Goldmann, op. cit.; Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955).
5. The Concordia University Radio-Drama Archives provide the data base for the project. The archives contain two sets of materials: CBC English language radio-drama scripts produced between 1933 and 1961 and ancillary materials composed of administrative and production correspondence, memoranda, notations, etc. from the CBC central registries in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. The script material is indexed and stored on computer tapes permitting ready access to the materials according to title, producer, original author, date and location of production, and a content description. The Archives are open to interested scholars. Information may be obtained by writing Professor Howard Fink, Radio-Drama Project, Concordia University, Sir George Williams Campus, 1455 Maisonneuve Boulevard West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3G 1M8.
6. Rudolf Arnheim, "The World of the Daytime Serial," *Mass Communications*, edited by Wilbur Schramm (2nd edition, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 392-393.
7. Richard R. Cole, "Top Songs in the Sixties: A Content Analysis of Popular Lyrics," *Mass Communications and Youth: Some Current Perspectives*, edited by F. G. Kline and Peter Clarke (London: Sage Publications, 1971), p. 89.
8. F. Elkin and M. B. Hill, "Bicultural and Bilingual Adaptations in French Canada: The Example of Retail Advertising," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 2 (May 1965): 135.
9. Gertrude J. Robinson, "The Politics of Information and Culture during Canada's October Crisis," *Studies in Canadian Communications*, edited by G. J. Robinson and D. Theall (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1975), p. 142.
10. A. Goldmann, "Quelques problèmes de sociologie du cinéma," *Sociologie et Sociétés* 8 (1976): 72.
11. W. Wright, *Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 14.
12. Lucien Goldmann, op. cit., p. 159.
13. J. Paul Grayson and L. M. Grayson, "Class and Ideologies of Class in the English



- Canadian Novel," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 15 (1978): 279-280.
14. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *The Structuralists from Marx to Lévi-Strauss*, edited by R. de George and F. de George (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1972), p. 174.
  15. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (London: Cohen & West, 1952), p. 190.
  16. Meyer Fortes, *Time and Social Structure and Other Essays* (New York: Humanities Press, Inc., 1970), p. 3.
  17. Lewis, op. cit. James Carey, "Communications and Culture," *Communications Research* 2 (1975): 176-189. James Anderson, "Mass Communications Theory and Research: An Overview," *Communications Yearbook* 1, edited by Brent D. Ruben (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1977), pp. 279-289. Paul Cappon, ed., *In Our Own House: Social Perspectives on Canadian Literature* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Ltd., 1978). Mikel Dufrenne et al., eds., "Aesthetics and the Sciences of Art," *Main Trends of Research in the Social and Human Sciences* (Part 2, Vol. 1, Paris: Mouton & UNESCO, 1978).
  18. Serena E. Wade, "Adolescents, Creativity and Media: An Exploratory Study," *Mass Communications and Youth*, pp. 39-50.
  19. Arnheim, op. cit.
  20. Bryn Jones, "The Politics of Popular Culture," *Working Papers on Cultural Studies*, No. 6, p. 25, as cited in Shepherd, op. cit.
  21. Jean Piaget, *Structuralism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 6-10. L. Goldmann, op. cit., pp. 157-158.
  22. We have also attempted to incorporate a modified version of Northrop Frye's archetypal literary criticism. See Howard Fink et al., "Literary and Sociological Approaches to the Analysis of CBC English Language Radio-Drama," paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Ethnological Society, Montreal, March 1980.
  23. This section is based on Greg Nielsen, "Problematics for a Sociology of Cultural Products," unpublished MA Thesis, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University, 1980.
  24. Peter Hamilton, *Knowledge and Social Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 121.
  25. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 138. Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1976), pp. 32-34.
  26. L. Goldmann, op. cit., pp. 159-160.
  27. Williams, op. cit., p. 106.
  28. Ibid., p. 105 (emphasis added).
  29. The synopsis was contributed by Rosalind Zinman in Fink et al.
  30. "The Way Through the Wood," CBC broadcast, December 9, 1951. Written by Alan King, produced and directed by Peter McDonald. Music composed by Lucio Agostini and directed by Samuel Hersenboren.
  31. Ibid., p. 24.
  32. Ibid., p. 11.
  33. Ibid., p. 10.
  34. Ibid., p. 12.
  35. Ibid., p. 4.
  36. Ibid., p. 13.
  37. Ibid., p. 18.
  38. Ibid., p. 7.
  39. Ibid., p. 8.
  40. Ibid., p. 11.

41. Ibid., p. 44.
42. Ibid., p. 45.
43. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
44. See, for example: Lévi-Strauss, op. cit. *ff. 20, 14*
45. See, for example: Carl J. Cunco, "A Class Perspective on Regionalism," *Modernization and the Canadian State*, edited by D. Glenday et al. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978), pp. 132-156.
46. Williams, op. cit., p. 105.