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Professor George Gerbner
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

Dear George:

Congratulations on your most recent CEM initiative. You've taken on the giants, but few could dare. If there is anything we can do to help in paradise, please let us know. A student of mine, Gina Bailey, is doing a thesis on media literary in Hawaii and may be in touch with you for advice.

Since I know of your hopefully continuing editorship of the Longman series, please find enclosed a copy of the table of contents and preface of a manuscript I have just finished on Central Asia. A biographical note and a couple of reviews of my past publications are also enclosed for your information.

As you note from the preface, the book aims at a scholarly as well as the more general audience in the business and policy-making communities. It provides an introduction to the problems and prospect of development in the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. There are a few, more specialized collections of essays on Central Asia, but no such introductory book on the post-Soviet era is currently on the market. The volume can be therefore used as a textbook in courses covering Central Asia. It begins with a theoretical chapter on "the discourse of development" before examining the problems of modernization, communication, and democratization in the region. It is based on research and a field trip taken to the area under a grant from the United States Institute of Peace. It consists of approximately 61,000 words in some 200 double-spaced typewritten pages, including tables, maps, and photographs. The manuscript is available both in hard copy and in diskette form.

If you are interested in the publication of the manuscript, I would be happy to send it to you. Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Majid Tehranian
Professor

Encls.

DRAFT: 9.12.93

THE WEBS OF MODERNITY:
Dependency, Development, and Discourse in Central Asia

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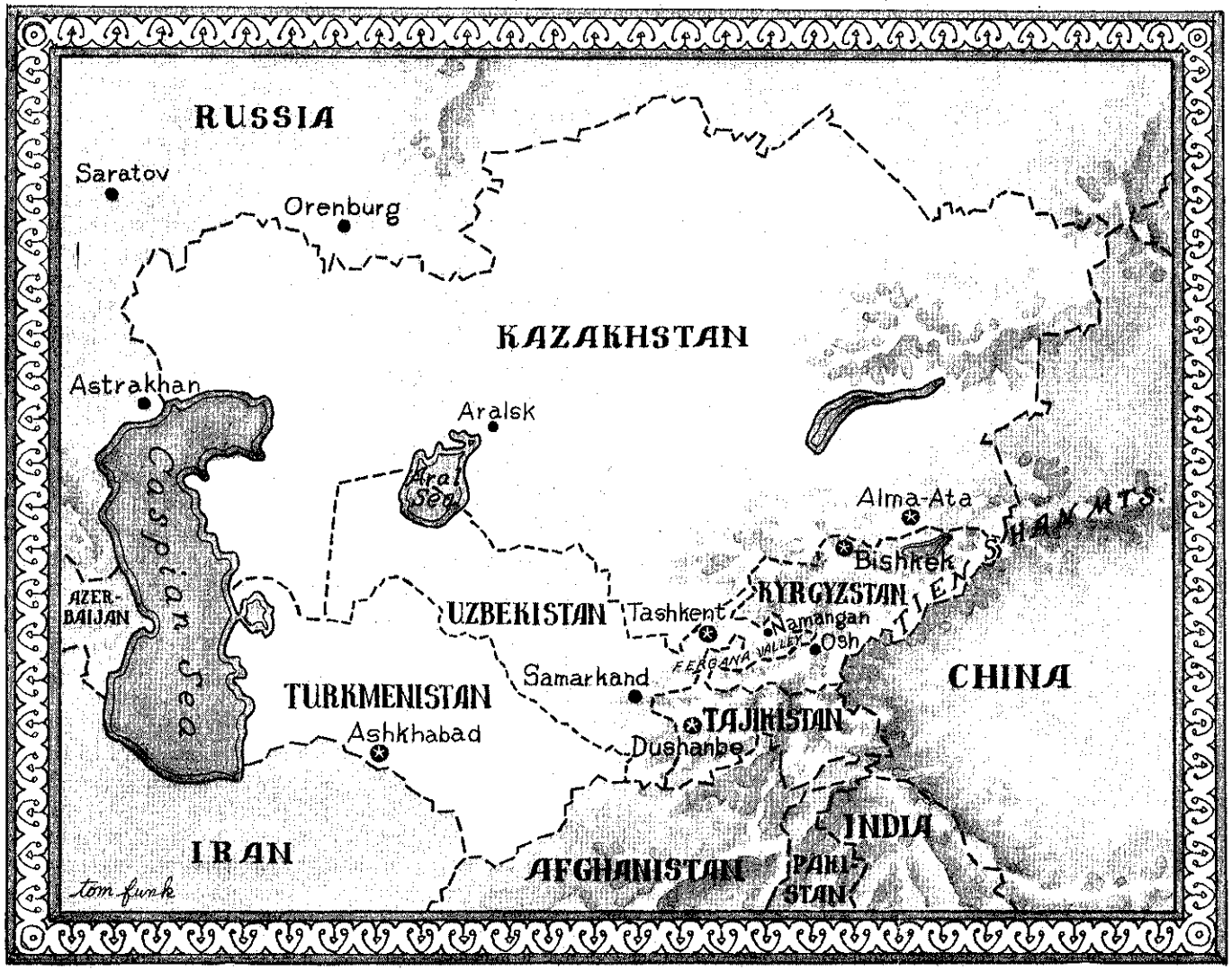

Source: The New Yorker, April 6, 1992, p. 53

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PREFACE

"If that Turkish lass from Shiraz captures my heart,
for the mole of her Hindu lips,
I would grant Samarkand and Bukhara
as my tips."
-- Hafez, 13th century Persian poet

"Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis ~~of~~ it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."
-- Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 1973, 5

For centuries, Central Asia was a major trade route through the legendary "Silk Road" connecting China and the Mediterranean. Sung all over Central and West Asia, Hafez's well-known couplet suggests not only his generously romantic heart but also his keen trading mind, typical of the urban civilization of Central and West Asia. Reaching its zenith from 9th to 16th centuries, Central Asia's great achievements in science, technology, statecraft, arts, and literature were mainly due to its bridging role facilitated by transportation and communication technologies. (Canfield, 1991, 1992; Frank, 1992) The region had historically connected the imperial systems of China, Iran, Greece, Rome, Islam, India, Byzantium, and Ottoman Turkey. The history of Central Asia thus constitutes a "missing link" in world history. (Beckwith, 1987, 193-94)

Eurasian history has been written mostly in terms of the civilizations of China, India, Iran, Arabia, and the West. Central Asian history has been thus largely portrayed as a "black hole." (Frank, 1992) But the region played a central part in shaping the evolution of the surrounding civilizations by connecting them in a recurrent cycle of tribal conquests of sedentary populations. The tribes were, in turn, sedentarized and culturally conquered by the sedentary civilizations until the next round of tribal encroachment. Ibn Khaldun (1967), the world's first historical sociologist, discovered this pattern in Islamic history. But the pattern may be considered a key also for a better understanding of Chinese, Indian, and European histories. (Latimore, 1962; Frank, 1992, 48-50)

Central Asia went into material and cultural decline roughly from the 16th century onwards. The change of trade routes from land to sea, caused by the great advances of ocean faring ships, redirected the international trade between Europe and Asia. This led to the modernization of Europe and colonization of much of Asia and Africa, a dual phenomenon that has preoccupied social theory ever since. However, the rise and fall of Central Asia as a trade route raises some fundamental theoretical questions on modernization. The prevailing theories of modernization, from Marx to Durkheim, Weber and their followers, have considered it as a uniquely "Western" phenomenon to be explained by the unique material or cultural features of the West. However, the scientific and technological achievements of the Asian and African civilizations and their rational-legal systems of statecraft at times of their effervescence, cast a serious doubt on the prevailing theories. The rise of Japan and the newly-industrializing countries of Asia raise further cultural questions. Aren't Catholic, Confucian, Jewish, Hindu, or Islamic ethics as compatible with the requirements of modernization as the Protestant ethics? That is a question currently under review by some Western and Asian scholars alike. (Tu et al., 1992)

If modernization is defined as a process of institutionalizing the habits of rational and legal thought in economic, political, and cultural decision making, it has a longer history than that of the last five centuries in Europe and North America. The webs of modernity have been spun since the beginning of human civilization. Modernization is better conceived of a historical process rooted in the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Chinese, Indian, Greek, Persian, and Islamic sciences and technologies which were handed over to the West through the intermediary of Jewish, Islamic, and European itinerant scholars. (Heilbroner, 1962) Due to propitious ecological, economic, and political circumstances prevailing in Europe in the 16th century, the torch of modernization was passed on to this continent at its most crucial moment. But Europe was building on centuries of the past, inherited knowledge. Modernization was thus closely linked with the changing transportation and communication technologies as well as new modes of production and statecraft. The European contribution to this process would be no less if we

acknowledge its sources. The adoption of the moveable type, gunpowder, and compass from China, the transfer of medical, mathematical, and astronomical knowledge from the Islamic world, the invention of the steam-engine and electricity, the discovery of the electro-magnetic spectrum, and, above all, the recapture of democracy from its Greek origins, all paved the way for the modern, democratic economy, polity, society, and culture.

The three themes of this volume-- namely modernization, communication, and democratization-- are profoundly related in the complex webs of state, economy, society, and culture. If we start with Sir Ernest Barker's succinct definition of democracy as "government by discussion," it would be logical to conclude that where there is no interactive communication, there would be no democracy. The central argument of this volume is that, in the newly independent republics of Central Asia as elsewhere, the critical link between modernization and democratization is communication. Communication, both technologically mediated or unmediated, is viewed here as a fundamentally interactive process of democratic consensus and will formation. Communication takes place through at least three channels, including the *primary* channels of interpersonal networks, the *secondary* channels of organizations (bureaucracies, political parties, trade unions, and voluntary associations), and the *tertiary* channels of broadcasting (the press, publishing, radio, and television) and narrowcasting (point to point communication, cassette tapes, cable, computer networking, etc.). The expansion and effective use of these channels provide the complex, interlocking networks necessary for the development of a strong, civil, democratic society that could monitor and direct the actions of the government institutions.

However, the introduction of modern media has also led to counter-democratic communication systems in the form of one-way, non-interactive, mass media attempting to "brain-wash" their audiences into believing that their beloved dictators are wise and benevolent or, in the commercial systems, trying to narcotize their audiences into a plethora of trivial news and entertainment. A whole generation of communication scholars from Daniel Lerner (1958), to Wilbur Schramm (1964) , and Everett Rogers (1964, 1976) had assumed that the mass media

generally have a positive and democratizing impact on traditional societies. As noted in chapter I, however, these theories have undergone considerable revision and modification to account for the role of interpersonal and organizational networks. Fortunately, the mass media systems are not the only channels of communication. Other channels of communication through interpersonal or socio-cultural networks as well as the small media of communication often provide sources of cultural and political resistance against the monopoly control of the mass media by governments or commercial entities. (Tehranian, 1977, 1979; 1990a)

Central Asia provides an extraordinary example of a land dominated by the Russian and then the Soviet rule for about 135 years. The modernization of Central Asia was orchestrated by the Russians from above. The Central Asians acted as junior partners in their own modernization. They were reluctant revolutionaries twice in the history of the Soviet Union when, in 1917, the Bolshevik revolution was imposed on them and then again, in 1991, when independence was thrusted upon them without their prior approval. Yet, its dependent development could not destroy the cultural and communication networks and resistance of its people. The introduction of the modern media by the Russians added yet anther arsenal to the democratic struggles which are still going on in the post-Soviet period.

Several factors are contributing to the special need for understanding Central Asia. Due to the isolation of this area from the rest of the world during the Soviet era, the region is the least known to the West. With the weakening of the Russian hegemony, a complex of forces such as regionalism, nationalism, localism, and religious revivalism are on the rise. (Tehranian, 1993a) The next few years will be formative ones in the self-definitions of the new sovereign states. In reconfiguring themselves, internal and external conflicts are bound to increase. Threats to the peace and security of the region will be therefore real.

To make a meaningful contribution, this study has had to meander through several different fields, including peace, development, communication, regional, and Central Asian studies. The outcome is thus thoroughly interdisciplinary in character. The study provides an introduction to Central Asia to the non-specialist, while to the specialist, it hopes to suggest

some new theoretical and empirical avenues for inquiry. On the empirical side, the gaps in our knowledge of contemporary Central Asia are conspicuous by their presence in this volume. On the theoretical side, the study is borrowing from the modernization, dependency, and world system perspectives to argue that ideational and material factors cannot be divorced in an analysis of the historically and culturally specific situations such as those of Central Asia. The study thus parts company with both economic and cultural determinism. The webs of modernity consist of those historical memories and imaginaries (the imagined national, religious, or global communities) that glue an epistemic group together into the webs of significance of a given cultural and communication system. Human agency in the dialectics of modernization (defined in the first chapter as the processes of capital accumulation, political mobilization, and cultural integration) operates through attribution of meaning to human action. Ideational and material forces can be separated therefore only in the mind of the analyst. In the debate between liberal and Marxist theories of modernization on the relative importance of internal versus external factors in development, the study also demonstrates their profound interdependency in the Central Asian case. Since the theoretical bias of the study is Communitarian, and a community is defined as an epistemic web of historical memories and imaginaries, the emphasis here is heavily on a historical and interpretive approach to the problems of communication, modernization, and democratization. Caveat emptor. The normative bias of the study is for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Hence an emphasis in the concluding chapters on the requirements for regional peace.

The organization of this volume follows its arguments. Chapter I provides a broad theoretical analysis of "the discourse of development," suggesting that "modernization" itself is, through international discourse, a socially constructed "reality" that must be critically examined in the light of its practices. Modernization and tradition are not zero-sum games in which the extension of one necessarily leads to the weakening of the other. As the examples of England in Europe and Japan in Asia demonstrate, modernization can be best achieved by reconstruction rather than destruction of tradition. The example of Central Asia further demonstrates the point.

Despite the Soviet material successes in changing the face of the region, they failed in transforming the culture of Central Asia which has shown remarkable resilience. Chapter II tells the story of modernization of Central Asia in the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet eras, focusing on the patterns of dependency and the webs of tradition that have continued into the modern. Chapter III mainly focuses on the post-independent years since 1991 to outline the slow and painful processes of democratization in each republic. Chapter IV provides a broad and schematic view of the primary, secondary, and tertiary channels and networks of communication in Central Asia. Chapter V focuses on the foreign relations of the republics, the risks and opportunities, as well as the challenges facing them in new regional formations and international alliances. To conclude, Chapter VI looks at the prospects of Central Asia for regional peace and development. It also recommends regionalism and zones of peace as two possible approaches which might pre-empt potential ethnic and regional violence while paving the way for a durable peace. In the wake of their independence, the Central Asia republics may yet become a prosperous New Silk Road connecting the new rising Asia with the Mediterranean and Russian worlds. This book is dedicated to that prospect.

***

"Bad poets borrow," T. S. Eliot once wrote, "good poets steal." As a newcomer to Central Asian scholarship, I have freely taken away from the old-timers. The references are notes of my profound gratitude to them. I hope to have added enough value in fact and interpretation to provide here a fair introduction to the old and new Central Asia in the context of an emerging post-cold war world order. This study began with a partial grant from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) followed, in the summer of 1992, by a field trip to Central Asia. The trip took me through the Silk Road from Japan (Tokyo and Kyoto), to China (Beijing, Xian, and Urumchi), via a newly-established "Silk Road Train" from Urumchi to Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkemanistan, Azarbaijan, and Iran. In addition to USIP, I am grateful to the following institutions for their support of my field research: Soka University for an invitation to Japan, the Center for Peace and Development for the invitation to

China, the Global Land Authority for the Development of Peace Zones (GLADPZ), and at the University of Hawaii, the Fujio Matsuda Scholarship, the Matsunaga Institute for Peace, the Office of Research Administration, and the Office of International of Programs and Services. Hrach Gregorian of USIP, President Daisaku Ikeda and Masao Yokota of Soka Gakkai International, Mark Juergensmeyer of the University of California at Santa Barbara, and President Edna Fuerth Lemle of GLADPZ were especially supportive of the project and its objectives. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, I was fortunate enough to have the assistance of Golrokhsar Safizadeh, Tuqrul Shakerov, and Mahmoud Mostafavi Toroghi for introductions and travel arrangements. I am also thankful to the Director of the MIT Center for International Affairs, and to my good friends Ali Banuazizi and Ahmad Karimi-Hakak, for allowing me to have access to some unpublished documents. John Tehranian read the manuscript and gave me the benefit of his insightful criticisms. Anne Smith, Susan Shinogi, and the efficient staff of my department were supportive in more ways than one. Last but not the least, I wish to thank the people of Central Asia with whom I came into contact during my field research. Some obliged me with granting interviews (see list of interviewees in Appendix A). Some provided me with the celebrated Central Asian hospitality for which no measure of thanks is adequate. (See Appendix B for a few unforgettable characters.) None of the institutions and persons mentioned are in any way responsible for my errors of fact or interpretation for which, alas, I have to take sole responsibility.

The spelling of names in this volume has faced some hard choices. There seems to be a competition among the mass media and scholars to provide some of the most bizarre spellings for the Central Asian names. Russian, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Tajiki, Uzbeki, Kazakh, Turkeman, and Kirgiz sources make a variety of transliterations into English alphabet both possible and technically correct. I have added to the confusion by selecting my own preferences. There is, however, a method in the madness. I have tried to stay as close as possible to the original pronunciation of proper names. M. T.

Honolulu, Hawaii, September 12, 1993

October 1993

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

MAJID TEHRANIAN is Professor of Communication and former Director of the Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace at the University of Hawaii. A political economist by education, Dr. Tehranian received his PhD and master's degrees from Harvard University and his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College. His chief areas of teaching and research include political economy of communication, peace, and development, intercultural and international communication, and telecommunication policy and planning. He also specializes in Middle Eastern and Asia-Pacific affairs. He has served at both national and international organizations, as Director of Social Planning at the Plan Organization of Iran, Director of Iran Communication and Development Institute (Tehran), Program Specialist at UNESCO (Paris), trustee of the International Institute of Communications (London), and Council Member of the Asia-Pacific Peace Research Association. He also has served as faculty or visiting scholar at Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Oxford, and Tehran Universities. He has served on the editorial boards of several publications, including *Iranian Studies*, *Communication Theory*, *Asian Journal of Communication*, *Communication and Information Sciences Series*, *Journal of International Communication*, and *International Encyclopedia of Communications*. He currently edits the Communication, Peace, and Development series of books published by Hampton Press. His own publications include *The Middle East: Its Governments and Politics*, co-edited with A. Al-Marayati et al. (Belmont, CA: Duxbury Press, 1972); *Towards a Systemic Theory of National Development* (Tehran: Industrial Management Institute, 1974); *Communications Policy for National Development: A Comparative Perspective*, co-edited with F. Hakimzadeh & M. Vidale (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1977); *Socio-Economic and Communication Indicators in Development Planning: A Case Study of Iran* (Paris: Unesco, 1981); *Technologies of Power: Information Machines and Democratic Prospects* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1990); *Letters from Jerusalem* , edited (Honolulu: Matsunaga Institute for Peace, 1990), *Deconstructing Paradise: Dependency, Development, and Discourse in Hawaii* , edited (Honolulu: Department of Communication, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1990), *Restructuring for Ethnic Peace* , edited (Honolulu: Matsunaga Institute for Peace, 1991), and *Restructuring for World Peace: On the Threshold of the 21st Century*, co-edited with Katharine Tehranian (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1992), and*Webs of Modernity: Dependency, Development, and Discourse in Central Asia* (forthcoming). His numerous articles have appeared in a variety of scholarly journals; they have been also translated into French, Spanish, German, Norwegian, Finnish, Polish, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, Arabic and Persian.

At the University of Hawaii, Dr. Tehranian has served as Chairman of the Department of Communication and a founding member of the Institute for Peace. He also has initiated and directed such programs as the Pacific Peace Seminar, "Dialog on Peace" on Channel 20, and served on the Faculty Senate and the Board of Directors of the UH Professional Assembly. He has received the UH/EWC Collaborative Research Grant, the Hawaii Interactive Television System's Curriculum Development Grant, a Presidential Citation for Meritorious Teaching, the Fujio Matsuda Scholar Grant, Soka University's Award of Highest Honor, and the US Institute of Peace grant.

Reviews

Managing Technology: Social Science Perspectives. *Edited by Liora Salter & David Wolfe.* Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990. 264 pp.

Technologies of Power: Information Machines and Democratic Prospects. *By Majid Tehranian.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company, 1990. 265 pp.

Majid Tehranian's *Technologies of Power* makes a critical distinction between: (a) technological analysis that serves the decision-making demands of the technocratic elite, and (b) technological analysis that assists in developing political decentralization, participatory democracy, and self-reliant development. *Managing Technology* and *Technologies of Power* are two books which, when examined together, illustrate the importance of that distinction. The difference between the two books lies in the authors' perspectives on *who* should manage technology and *who* should benefit from technological analysis.

Managing Technology takes the position that the Canadian technocratic sphere of social scientists and policy makers, together with the scientific community and the business community, must take a greater interest in conducting interdisciplinary research "to better understand the management of technology in order to better manage technology" (p. 10). *Technologies of Power*, on the other hand, delves deeply into the relationships between structures of power and the interests that are served by various social, economic, and political uses of technology. *Technologies of Power* calls for the de-professionalization of socio-technical decision making in favour of promoting participatory and democratic processes for technology management in order to challenge forces of technocratic domination. In contrast, *Managing Technology* calls for greater resources to be placed in the hands of social scientists in order that *they* can generate more effective public policy and thus help to manage technology paternalistically on behalf of society. As a result, *Managing Technology* fits easily into current institutional and political discourses while *Technologies of Power* challenges the central assumptions of those discourses.

Managing Technology's format is intimately tied to the prescriptions of the institutions which sanctioned its development. The Social Science Federation of Canada received funding through SSHRC to examine the so-called "field of the management of technology." Producing *Managing Technology* was seen as a way of promoting social science research in general while also examining "the relationship between the shape of the field and the nature of the support for research in this area" (p. 10). Not surprisingly, the collection of essays, which includes eight "state-of-the-art" papers and two introductory chapters, conveys the distinct flavour of a sales-tool directed at the major funding bodies which currently support or might support the type of research conducted by the book's authors.

Managing Technology's sales-tool flavour is enhanced by the conclusions of several of the articles in the collection, conclusions which frequently make specific research funding requests and recommendations for co-ordinating such funding according to notions of "national and strategic" (p. 16) policy directions. Despite the best intentions of the authors, one cannot help but notice that the most important target audience for the book consists of decision-makers within research funding bodies who might be persuaded to assist in the development and professionalization of the "field" of the management of technology. The editors of the book would have been wise to recognize the tensions that exist between institutional self-interest and valid research conclusions, tensions which, as Koebberling's chapter in the book warns, might adversely influence research.

Despite the pervasive sales-tool flavour, *Managing Technology* offers a relatively good, although incomplete, introduction to what is certainly a diverse and problematic area of research. The opening chapter of *Managing Technology* provides some background on the editors' efforts to delineate the "field" and this is followed by Liora Salter's chapter which provides an overview of her conception of the four paradigms within the management of technology (theoretical, business, labour process, social science) and which makes a pitch for conceiving of this research area as a distinct field in order to help to orient institutional and funding resources. These chapters are followed by Camille Limoges's paper which consists of a concise overview of research in Quebec. David Wolfe continues with two very good contributions, the first of which is a discussion of the current state of research on the management of innovation. He critically stresses the importance of the relationships between management organizational structures and work structures in technology development and adoption. Wolfe's second paper focuses largely on the corpus of Canadian research dealing with technology, innovation, and worker participation within the organization of the labour process. On the matter of making political choices in relation to such research, however, he delicately declines to show his hand. William Leiss & Richard Smith follow with a paper which ostensibly argues the value of sustained research on national R & D policy. Meric Gertler's paper analyzes the importance of geography's contribution to understanding the relationship between technology and spatial organization both in the workplace and within and between communities. Liora Salter & Richard Hawkins then discuss the poor state of research on the impact of standards on technological development. The final chapter, by William Leiss, is a concise and valuable outline of the growing research area of risk assessment.

One of the more topical papers is Uschi Koebberling's contribution which outlines the growth of the fields of technology assessment and the related areas of environmental assessment and social impact assessment. Hers is the only paper in the book which concretely addresses questions of public participation in the management of technology and makes note of the existence of participatory approaches and community development techniques. Given the current wave of public interest in more democratic and representative forms of technology management, particularly in the realms of the environment and aboriginal entitlement, it seems odd that the book should neglect generally the rise of public, non-institutional forces. The editors do not address the ascendancy of participatory research approaches, and other related approaches which grant public participants the status and privilege of the researcher and which encourage collaboration between grass-roots interest groups and institutional researchers.

In contrast to that book, Tehranian's *Technologies of Power* is concerned primarily with the democratization of the interface between technology and society. He speaks of community ownership and management, de-professionalization, citizen empowerment, decentralization, and technologies of democratic possibility. Utiliz-

ing a hybrid theoretical perspective that he labels "technostructuralist," and focusing on communication technologies in particular, he systematically outlines a case for the global and local utilization of new communication technologies in order to free up the democratic potentials of interactivity, universality, and networking capability inherent in these technologies. At the same time, he makes use of what he terms a "dual-effects hypothesis" to illustrate the parallel negative potentials of both new and old communication technologies (one-way communication, privileged access, and closed communication circuits due to institutional and technological entry barriers). He concludes that releasing a technology's democratic potential involves ongoing struggle and the adoption of strategies of empowerment.

Tehranian's case is strengthened and made more engaging by the inclusion of a variety of contemporary case studies such as the deregulation of AT&T, Indonesia's adoption of satellites, and rural radio programs in Peru. In illustrating democratic empowerment strategies he critically and thoroughly examines the history and context of both the Green movement in West Germany and the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka.

Technologies of Power is, most importantly, a good and stimulating read. It would make an excellent discussion text for advanced communication courses because its theoretical positions are well integrated with rich empirical case studies. Tehranian's pervasive use of tables and diagrams adds to the overall accessibility of the text. Above all, it is a book which challenges students of technology and society, as well as students of communication, to engage in actions which may lead to the realization of democratic potentials within technologies. *Managing Technology*, in contrast, generally offers technocratic analyses of technocratic problems for technocratic colleagues.

Don Richardson, University of Guelph

Everyday Understanding: Social and Scientific Implications. *Edited by Gun R. Semin & Kenneth J. Gergen.* London: Sage Publications, 1990.

This collection of original essays is concerned with people's everyday understanding of the world. Within the past decade, social scientists have produced a considerable body of research investigating the nature of this process. The intriguing issue raised in this edited book is the extent to which lay and scientific understandings converge. The conventional thinking has been that scientists have a privileged position because their methodology enables them to explain the previously unarticulated conceptualization of the layperson. However, reflecting the shift away from traditional positivist thought, greater significance is now attached to the similarities rather than the differences between lay and scientific understanding.

The editors, Gun R. Semin & Kenneth J. Gergen, have been in the forefront of the new scientific movement and they have assembled a group of contributors from both North America and Europe. There is a diversity of views and approaches represented, and in fact not all of the contributors are committed to non-conventional models. The editors have succeeded in producing a coherent volume which nicely illustrates how lay understanding can be conceptualized and examined.

Four theoretical perspectives are represented. Understanding as cognitive representation is the traditional approach and is guided by the notion that the individual

growing body of literature on the media in sub-Saharan Africa. By his own admission, "the book is not meant to be, nor should it be understood to be comprehensive on the subject..." Even as "the tip of the iceberg," I strongly recommend this first edition to the active researcher, particularly for its wealth of information, its usefulness in identifying key media issues in the Third World, and for its potential in stimulating (and guiding) insights on additional media research on that region.

CORNELIUS B. PRATT
Associate Professor of Communication Studies
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

TEHRANIAN, MAJID. *Technologies of Power. Information Machines and Democratic Prospects.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex. 1990. 272 pp. $45 cloth. $24.95 paper.

➤This is a book that you want to like at once. It is an unabashed appeal for the realization of what to some might seem a utopian dream—communitarian democracy, made possible by the continued development of the technologies of communication. No, this is not the latest in a series of blue-sky fantasies spun out by yet another techie futurist. This is the work of an informed realist who refuses to give up his dreams, and still finds hope in the current moment of a cyclical pattern of pro-democratic political and cultural tendencies.

You want to like this book because it is so well informed by a set of critical social theories. You will find useful insights drawn from Foucault, Giddens and Habermas, which the author reconfigures into his own version of structuralism. You also want to like this book because it it so well written. The language is clear, and careful, and yet successfully finds just the right point at which to draw fine distinctions.

Most of all, you want to like this book because of its promise as an aid to instruction. With the technique and skill of presentation like that which Denis McQuail revealed in his Theories of Mass Communication, this book is filled with classificatory schemes, models and lists which impose a structure on the complexity it seeks to represent. Although this style undoubtedly overwhelmed the resources of the folks responsible for the design of books at Ablex, the dozens of charts, tables and figures will undoubtedly prove useful to teachers of upper level undergraduate, and introductory graduate courses exploring new communication technology. I liked this book a lot.

Technologies of Power is organized into two parts. The first, primarily theoretical, lays out the author's position as occupying a newly defined conceptual space. This book is different from those many other books or articles about communication or information technology, where information technologies are either seen with the eyes of the pessimists [technophobes] as leading to concentrations of power; or from the perspective of the optimists [technophiles], who see information technologies dispersing power; or from the vantage point of communications consultants [technoneutrals], who will say whatever their clients seem to favor. Tehranian offers us a fourth position, that of the technostructuralists, who recognize that technology leads to both concentration and dispersion, depending upon the concrete historical [contextual] situation into which they are introduced.

A chapter that seeks to provide a theoretical basis for understanding these contradictory tendencies does a highly creditable job of reviewing competing perspectives on the relationship between communications and democratization. While the evolutionary and emancipatory perspective of Habermas is given a central role, and is presented in a generally favorable light in this section, Tehranian notes that Habermas' vision still "calls for an injection of some Foucaultian skepticism" which "encourages us to adopt a critical and deconstructionist strategy for unmasking power." Another of the blocks of the theoretical foundation is a chapter that dissects, and then discards the notion of post-industrialism and the information society. For Teheranian, what is striking about the current age is not that the production of information has become more extensive, or more important, but that it has become increasingly commodified and associated with the pursuit of profit.

In the last of the theoretical chapters of the first section, Tehranian focuses on the political and ideological aspects of democratization. He is aware that he may cause some consternation among his readers by suggesting that there ever was, or could even ever be, something called a communist democracy. But, here Tehranian is discussing the theoretical ideals of the intellectuals who helped shape world history. He evenhandedly suggests how structural realities have shortchanged the democratic ideals of both liberal and Marxist thinkers as, over time, concentrations of power in the hands of corporate, party and bureaucratic elites took their toll on the best laid plans.

In four chapters of the second part of the book, a series of partial case studies are used to illustrate the contradictory tensions between technology and structure. Unfortunately, his illustrations come primarily from advanced industrial nations, and almost exclusively from the United States.

The promise of teledemocracy, a technocratic solution to the problem of declining participation in politics, considers electronic plebecites, electronic town meetings, legislative teleconferencing, and examples of grass roots community participation—all potentially made possible through telecommunications. Tehranian concludes, somewhat reluctantly, perhaps, that the "new interactive media have mostly created an illusion of participation in a declining 'public sphere.'" Teledemocracy remains little more than an optimistic promise. And, former optimists like Kenneth Laudon are seen as having finally "come to repent" for their sins in the face of the recognition that "cable is increasingly controlled by the same players as broadcasting with the same fundamental objective of profit maximization from the same cultural and political products—entertainment and entertaining news and information."

These same cable and videotext system are the focus of a chapter which explores the sort of Orwellian dystopias made possible by electronic surveillance and the correlation of transaction—generated information with sociodemographic descriptors. Political Action Committees and religious fundamentalists are seen to have captured what democracy has lost, as their influence is spread via electronic media. Here, Tehranian finds yet another structuralist contradiction. The fundamentalist political movement is not only "wedded to the same economic and social forces that breed the permissive values of an affluent, capitalist society. It also uses some of the same this-worldly values and tactics to achieve its astounding success."

A chapter that focuses on the democratic prospects at the "centers" of the world system details the threats to democracy represented by the Reagan administration's information policies. The policies of information control — explored in detail in a recent book edited by Richard Curry (Freedom at Risk, 1988) — include creating a new classification of "sensitive" information; the weakening of the Freedom of Information Act; and the privitization of the library system. The expansion of sources and options in the information marketplace, occasioned by a brief period of deregulation, and then followed by a rapid, and curiously patterned reregulation, is seen as being temporary at best.

The prospects at the periphery are ultimately not much better. Tehranian presents his model of development, which moves in evolutionary [revolutionary?] fashion from crises to crises, depending upon the sociopolitical strategies that are adopted by the leadership in these countries. Again, we are faced with the structuralist indeterminancy in that "high accumulation" strategies work in some countries, and fail miserably in others. The same is seen to be true for those that favor "high mobilization". The best we are offered here is the adage, "time will tell." It is in this chapter that Tehranian's dependence upon *The Economist* as a source of examples and evidence becomes a bit overwhelming. He presents a table that compares countries on the basis of different development indicators (which include climate, as well as health, culture and politics), but then warns us to "watch out for the biases of *The Economist* staff!" Watch out indeed!

The final chapter uses the example of the Green Movement in West Germany and the Buddhist Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka as examples of quite different communitarian movements. It is not at all clear how either movement is meant to serve as a model or guide book for other communitarian efforts. But then again, illumination, rather than instruction or guidance, has been the purpose of this book.

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Other Publications

BABE, ROBERT E. *Telecommunications in Canada: Technology, Industry, and Government.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 363 pp. $50. (Can.).

➤"A chief aim of this book is to explore what Roland Barthes has termed 'the soiling trace of origin or choice' to current issues in Canadian telecommunications." Babe's main sections are devoted to the new telegraph, the telephone, broadcasting, and new technologies.

CHAKRABORTY, PHANI BHUSAN, and BROJEN BHATTACHARYA. *News Behind Newspapers: A Study of the Indian Press.* Calcutta: Minerva, 1989. 142 pp.

➤The authors state that the general trend in newspapers has been disturbing, especially in a number of cases where the own-