

# THE CENTURY FOUNDATION

formerly known as the TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND, the organization was founded in 1919

NEW YORK OFFICE

Send 2-3  
GC prelim ideas  
Meet 21st  
2 pm

Professor George Gerbner  
234 Golf View Road  
Ardmore, PA 19003

Called 6/17/99  
May 17, 1999

Agmt Tues 2 pm  
conferenced

Dear Professor Gerbner,

It was good to speak with you on Friday, and especially to learn about the specific recent work you have been undertaking in the field of how specific groups and issues are represented in the media. These studies are clearly the necessary building blocks for converting general theories about the effect of the media into sensible and effective public policies.

As promised, I am sending along some materials that explain a bit more about TCF and our current areas of interest. We might explore areas of possible collaboration within our program area of "Governance, Politics, and the Media." (Our ongoing work in this field is described on p.22 of the enclosed annual report.) This area includes studies of various national and regional media, notably television and the Internet. We also sponsor groups and publications that are studying the place of the Constitution in the contemporary United States. Knowing of your work on the First Amendment and the media (which Alexander Meiklejohn, for one, would definitely applaud), there may be potentially fertile grounds for collaboration along these lines. *new study?*

As you see, we fund a considerable number of book proposals. The approval process is quite competitive and often fairly drawn out, in part because our Trustees must approve all these projects at a meeting. Our staff has more leeway to endorse shorter papers, and we have been producing more works of shorter length in recent years. Partly for reasons of resources and partly for philosophical reasons, we tend not to sponsor projects that require extensive data-gathering and empirical analysis. Rather, we focus on supporting books and other initiatives that attempt to translate recent social science findings for policymakers and for the general public, with a strong preference for work that leads to specific arguments in favor of new policies.

We have also recently received funding approval from our Trustees for a proposed task force on public television and digital technology, a project that Dr. Gregorian has been instrumental in getting off the ground. He may have already shared information about this project with you. A main focus of this work (on which The Century Foundation expects to collaborate with Carnegie and other foundations) is to examine the possibilities of creating a non-profit alliance that would try to strengthen public television in a new digital age. Wendy Berry is the principal program officer here who is working on this project, and she can be reached at (212) 452-7701 or at <berry@tcf.org>. *11 Pacific*

Talked on phone 6/8/99 at noon.  
See e-mail

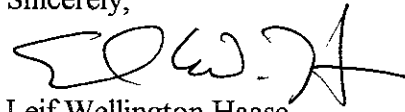
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Washington, D.C. Office: 1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036 • 202.387.0400

Good luck with the business of your current trip, and we look forward to speaking with you at more length on your return.

Sincerely,



Leif Wellington Haase  
Program Officer

(212) 452-7725

(212) 535-7534 (fax)

<haase@tcf.org>

"HAZI"

# The Century Foundation

formerly the Twentieth Century Fund  
Who We Are and What We Do

About The Century Foundation:  
our mission, our areas of  
research, and contact info.



## A New Name for a New Millennium

The Twentieth Century Fund was founded in 1919 and endowed by Edward A. Filene. On July 1, 1998, the Twentieth Century Fund changed its name to The Century Foundation.

## Who We Are

The Century Foundation was established to help bridge the gap between the world of ideas and the world of affairs. A not-for-profit, nonpartisan institution based in New York City, we have been at the forefront of research and writing about progressive public policy. We focus our attention on six primary areas of research: aging in America, economic inequality, U.S. politics and policy, the economy, American foreign policy, and media and society. We produce books, reports, and other publications, and convene task forces of citizens and experts - all with an eye toward finding fresh approaches to the major issues of the day. In order to enhance our efforts to inform the debate over these important public policy matters, we established an additional office in Washington, D.C. in 1997.

## Areas of Research

### Aging in America

Many of the debates over the future of government programs that serve the elderly often have been clouded by confusion and misleading information. These projects are intended to add depth and balance to the discussions of the future of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other government activities that affect the elderly. They share the virtue of conveying often overlooked facts that suggest the nation may, with the help of sensible policy, survive the retirement of the baby boomers after all.

*Act + Women in Medicine; SAO*

*Army on TV*

### Economic Inequality

Recent debates over welfare, housing, immigration, antidiscrimination, and other social policies have been characterized by political positioning and inflammatory, divisive rhetoric rather than substance. Projects in this area explore new approaches to these controversial issues in order to assure that those in need receive assistance that genuinely improves their lives and strengthens the nation's social fabric.

*Owens - poverty*

*Govt on TV*

### U.S. Politics and Policy

Since the 1960s, voter turnout, government popularity, and public participation in civic institutions have all declined dramatically. The primary focus of projects in this area is to develop ideas for reversing the trends that threaten to undermine the most essential ingredient of our democracy: an informed, engaged citizenry. Century is sponsoring work scrutinizing such issues as campaign finance, the possible impact of new technology, the role of the media, the relationship between the federal government and the states, and other governance questions.

### The Economy

At the outset of the 1990s, no one could have imagined that the misery index would plummet to the glorious lows of the 1950s and early 1960s, or that the Dow Jones would climb above 9,000. All these developments, however, have not produced a more equitable distribution of the fruits of the nation's prosperity. Century has sought ideas to help understand and manage our complex and energetic economy. Our current roster of projects explores questions related to inequality from a variety of standpoints: federal, fiscal, and monetary policy; labor market issues; education; taxes; immigration; and urban affairs and social policy.

### American Foreign Policy

In recent years, four central themes have guided most of our work in this area: (1) the policy implications of the globalization of market capitalism; (2) the reformulation of the Atlantic Alliance after the cold war; (3) the modernization of the institutional framework for the development and implementation of U.S. foreign policy; and (4) the case for continuing U.S. arms control initiatives. In addition, Century is in the process of adding a fifth cluster of projects that will focus on policy toward East Asia.

*TV*

### The Media and Society

Rapid changes in recent years in the way the media function in our society threaten to weaken the essential bonds linking the government, the media, and the people. Competitive pressures on news organizations increasingly encourage superficiality rather than substance, sensationalism rather than analysis. Century projects in this area are aimed at enabling policymakers, consumers of news, and those in the media to understand these changes and finding ways to help the media meet the highest standards of performance.

*COM*

## Special Projects

- The Social Security Network (<http://www.socsec.org>)
- The Constitution Project
  - Citizens for the Constitution
  - Citizens for an Independent Judiciary
- Policy in Perspective breakfast series
- The Basics pamphlet series

## Recent Task Forces

- **Making Justice Work**  
Report of the Task Force on Apprehending Indicted War Criminals
- **Buckley Stops Here**  
Report of the Working Group on Campaign Finance Litigation
- **Obstacle Course**  
Report of the Task Force on the Presidential Appointment Process
- **No One Left Behind**  
Report of the Task Force on Retraining America's Workforce
- **Let America Decide**  
Report of the Task Force on Presidential Debates

## Recent Publications

- **Beyond the Basics: Social Security Reform**  
edited by Richard C. Leone and Greg Anrig, Jr.
- **Inside Game, Outside Game: Winning Strategies for Saving Urban America**  
by David Rusk
- **Affirmative Action and Black Entrepreneurship**  
by Thomas D. Boston
- **Countdown to Reform: The Great Social Security Debate**  
by Henry J. Aaron and Robert D. Reischauer
- **Created Unequal: The Crisis in American Pay**  
by James K. Galbraith
- **The Way We Were: The Myths and Realities of America's Student Achievement**  
by Richard Rothstein
- **Straight Talk about Social Security: An Analysis of the Issues of the Current Debate**  
by Robert M. Ball with Thomas N. Bethell
- **Unwinnable Wars: American Power and Ethnic Conflict**  
by David Callahan
- **Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets**  
by Robert Kuttner
- **All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way**  
by Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler
- **Hard Lessons: Public Schools and Privatization**  
by Carol Ascher, Norm Fruchter, and Robert Berne
- **Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era**  
by John Gerard Ruggie
- **Top Heavy: The Increasing Inequality of Wealth in America and What We Can Do About It**  
by Edward N. Wolff

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- Add your name to our mailing list by pointing your browser to [http://www.tcf.org/About\\_TCF/Mailing\\_List.html](http://www.tcf.org/About_TCF/Mailing_List.html).
- E-mail general inquiries to [info@tcf.org](mailto:info@tcf.org) or call (212) 535-4441.
- Journalists are welcome to contact Christy Hicks, Vice President for Public Affairs, at [hicks@tcf.org](mailto:hicks@tcf.org) or by calling (212) 452-7723.
- Mailing addresses:
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  - DC Office: The Century Foundation, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036

# THE CENTURY FOUNDATION

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NEW YORK OFFICE

George Gerbner  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Communications  
Annenberg Hall, Room 06 (011-00)  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, PA 19122

August 23, 1999

*Handwritten notes:*  
called, left message  
yes, interested.  
8/3/99  
12:30 pm.

Dear Dr. Gerbner,

I wondered if you were still interested in submitting a proposal to us along one of the different lines we discussed at our meeting earlier this summer. Our decisions for the fall cycle will be made by the end of September or thereabouts.

The recent coverage by the media of the near-absence of minority actors in prime-time TV must be calling attention to your research, and perhaps has been prompted by it?

I'm sending along an article about the latest battle in the long-running war over Canada's attempt to preserve "local" content in its media. This compromise decision by the Canadian government, as you probably know, may drain advertising revenues from magazines that use a large concentration of Canadian content.

Hope you are having an excellent late summer.

Sincerely



Leif Wellington Haase  
Program Officer

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# A Run M for the Money

With a new deal, the magazine debate shifts from culture to how to keep ad dollars in Canada

By John Geddes

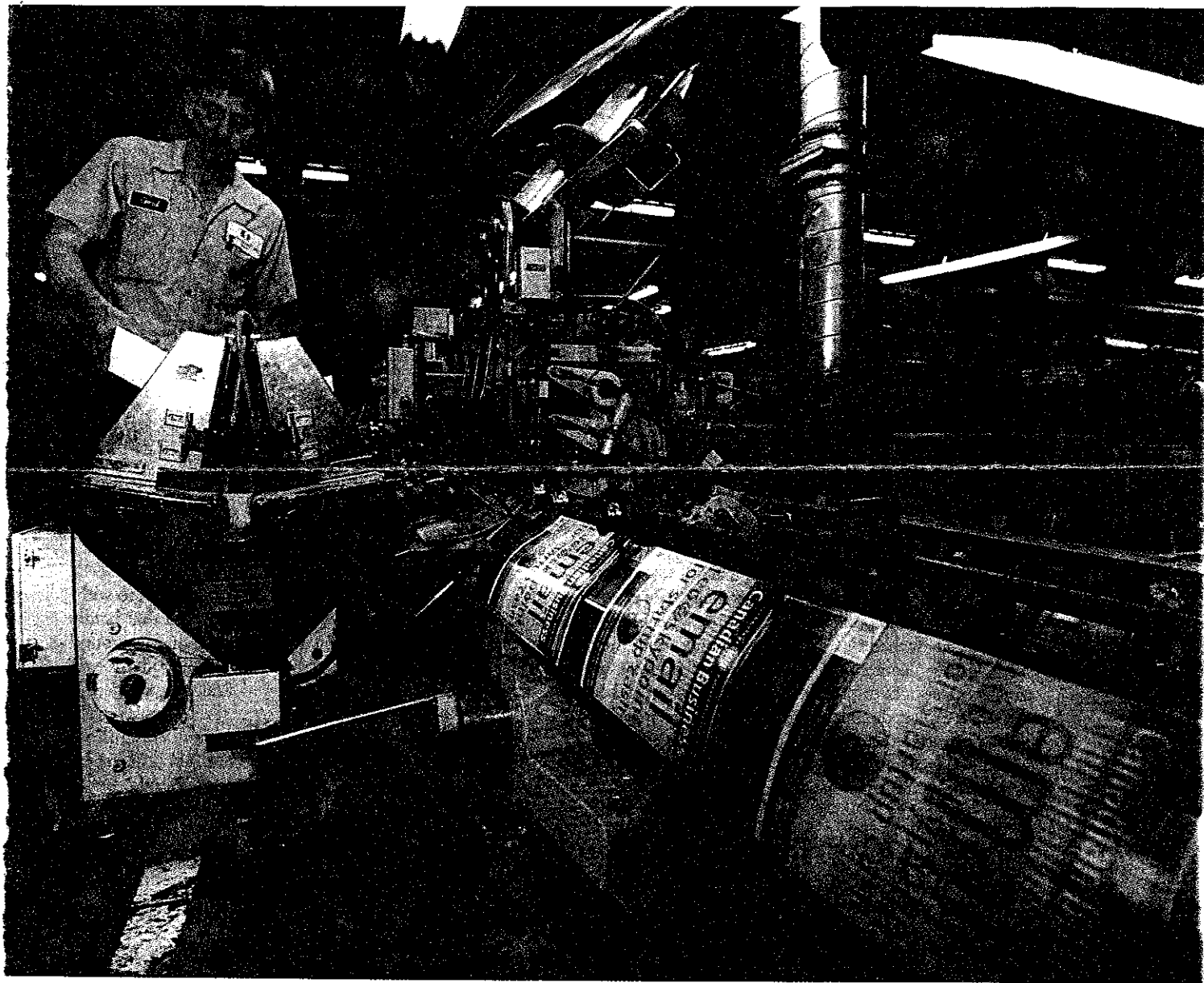
During long months of tortuous negotiations, the clash of viewpoints was bracingly clear. The Americans said the magazine business was just that—business. The Canadians clung to the position that it was something more—culture. So while Washington insisted normal trade rules must apply, Ottawa countered that special consideration was essential. But in the deal finally struck last week, those tidy statements of principle were mussed up beyond recognition. The United States seemed to have bowed—or at least nodded curtly—to the notion that trade involving culture needs its own rule book. As for Canada, the federal government will never again be able to credibly claim that its cultural policies are excluded from the sort of compromises that emerge when over-caffeinated trade negotiators engage in prolonged, high-stakes bargaining.

Both sides toasted the deal with the customary claim that it was a win-win outcome. But the truce announced on May 26 in a dispute stretching back to 1995 can just as easily be regarded as lose-lose. After all, the Americans accepted limits on their access to Canada's magazine advertising marketplace, a potentially troublesome precedent for the next time Washington tries to pry a foreign market open to U.S. entertainment exports. In Canada, though, the problems are more immediate. Canadian magazine publishers find themselves stripped of much of the cultural protection armour that Ottawa had

promised—until very near the end—never to give up. Women's magazines, in particular, were left vulnerable to an onslaught of thick, glossy U.S. rivals vying for Canadian advertising. "It's not about culture any more," said Brian Segal, president and chief executive of Maclean Hunter Publishing Ltd., Canada's biggest publisher of magazines, including *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*. "This deal says we're now in an environment based on pure business principles."

Politicians tried hard to cast the outcome in less stark terms. "There is nothing inconsistent about a vigorous and open trade policy and an equally strong defence of one's own culture," insisted Trade Minister Sergio Marchi. Maybe not. But judging from the unwieldy bundle of policies that ultimately put the conflict to rest, reconciling cultural and trade considerations was no easy feat. The deal opens up at least three avenues for U.S. publishers to make incursions into the Canadian magazine sector. In return, millions in new federal subsidies are promised for the Canadian publishers—a solution the industry has always said it did not want, and one that runs counter to the tide away from government handouts. The amount to be made available and how it might be divided remains far from clear. "We've barely begun to talk about the money," admitted one weary senior federal official.

Precisely which magazines will end up needing an injection



*Canadian Business on the press: the magazine industry is upset by a pact that opens the door to huge U.S. publications*

of assistance will depend on how U.S. publishers decide to exploit their new access to the Canadian marketplace. The most likely strategy will be to keep shipping the same magazines already widely sold in Canada, but to start scooping up Canadian advertising profits, too. American magazines will be allowed, after a three-year phase-in period, to sell up to 18 per cent of their ad space to Canadian advertisers—without being required to spend a cent on Canadian articles or photographs. For three decades, Ottawa banned this sort of publication, known as a split run, and allowing them now is a major concession. Copps said the 18-per-cent limit would preserve advertising for homegrown magazines. But Canadian publishers warned the impact could be severe. They noted, for instance, that if the 13 most popular U.S. women's magazines sold the allowed 18 per cent of their ad pages to Canadian clients, they would grab the equivalent of 70 per cent of all the ads now run in Canada's seven biggest women's magazines.

A more ambitious strategy for U.S. publishers would be to set up new versions of their magazines in Canada. New York City-based Hearst Corp. suggested it might launch northern spinoffs of magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*. But under the new rules, more than half of the edito-

rial content in these issues would have to be produced by Canadians, or be specially commissioned for this market. Industry insiders doubted U.S. publishers would be tempted to assume such high editorial costs. "I predict there will be very few magazines that will establish here by putting in an investment proposal and committing to 50-per-cent Canadian content," said Ron Atkey, a Toronto lawyer who represents publishing and entertainment giant Time Warner Inc. in Canada.

A third option for U.S. publishers is to find Canadian partners. And all indications are that at least some of the Canadians are eager to talk. Up to now, foreign companies have been limited to owning 25 per cent of Canadian magazine publishers. The new guidelines will permit them to buy as much as 49 per cent.

No sooner had the magazine ceasefire been announced than Canadian publishers began musing about linking up with the U.S. powerhouses. The opportunities range from U.S. investors buying bigger shares of Canadian publishers, to joint ventures in which the Canadian player would hold the majority stake and the U.S. partner would bring well-known magazine titles. The advent of such arrangements need not spell the end of familiar Canadian publications,

Segal said. "If one looks at potential for joint ventures and other opportunities, that doesn't mean *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* and *Flare* and all of our magazines won't be operating," he said. "It's not substitution. It's a question of where are there opportunities for growth?"

Talk of opportunities could not disguise the deep gloom that fell over the Canadian magazine sector. Among the daunting changes, the industry faces losing a large part of a key tax advantage designed to help sell ad space. Advertisers can deduct the full cost of placing ads in Canadian magazines. Under the new regime, they will also be able to deduct half these costs in any foreign periodicals that sell advertising under the 18-per-cent threshold. The same 50-per-cent deduction would apply to any new foreign-owned publication launched in Canada that complies with the majority Canadian content rule. And if any foreign-owned magazine ever manages to provide at least 80-per-cent Canadian content, the full deduction would be allowed. Privately, federal officials admitted the erosion of the tax advantage will almost certainly be fatal for a few magazines. "We're not going to pretend that every Canadian magazine now being published is go-

## Other cultural industries watched nervously as the magazine saga unfolded

ing to be there five years from now," said one senior bureaucrat, who spoke on the condition he not be identified.

Marchi told *Maclean's* he believes the outcome for Canadian magazines could have been much worse. Had negotiations broken down entirely—as they threatened to do more than once—the U.S. vowed to retaliate with trade sanctions against Canadian steel, textiles or plastics. "Then the business community would have heaped a lot of pressure on the government and its backbenchers," he said. "We may have had to go back to the negotiating table in the middle of a trade war, and who knows what kind of an arrangement we would have been able to cut."

But could the result have been more favourable? Ottawa's critical misstep—made with enthusiastic support from the magazine industry—may have come in 1995. That was when the Liberal government imposed an 80-per-cent tax on the ad revenues of split runs, a punitive levy designed to outlaw the Canadian edition of Time Warner's *Sports Illustrated*, which was launched in 1993. Many trade experts doubted from the outset that the tax would withstand a U.S. trade challenge, so it was no big surprise when it was ruled illegal by a World Trade Organization panel in 1997. When Ottawa responded in 1998 with a new measure—a ban on advertising sales in split runs—the Americans predictably cried foul: Canada was refusing to comply with the spirit of the WTO decision. This



Marchi: a balance was struck in a deal that could have been much worse

substitute law, Bill C-55, was more cleverly designed to withstand the technicalities of a trade challenge, but that hardly mattered. Washington rejected the notion of another round at the WTO. And the blunt threat of a costly trade war replaced nuanced debate on the niceties of trade law.

Canada's other cultural industries watched nervously as the magazine saga moved towards its unsettling conclusion. "We've always felt that Canadian ownership is critical to generating Canadian content," said Roy MacSkimming, policy director of the Association of Canadian Publishers, the book industry's main lobby group. "That's been a cardinal rule in book policy and it was in magazine policy—until now." While Copps reassured other cultural industries they need not worry about being dragged into the magazine slipstream, fears abound. MacSkimming calls the move to let foreign magazine publishers set up shop in Canada, even with Canadian content requirements, a "troubling departure."

Yet he finds a silver lining in a little-noted detail of the new federal policy. The authority to approve or reject all future changes in foreign ownership of Canadian cultural enterprises is being transferred from Industry Canada's investment review branch to the Canadian heritage department—a key consolation prize for Copps. MacSkimming is confident Heritage will prove tougher than Industry in demanding cultural benefits when Canadian subsidiaries of global entertainment conglomerates change hands. U.S. trade insiders view Heritage as Ottawa's main bastion of cultural protectionism. Bill Merkin, a veteran Washington-based trade consultant who was the second-ranking U.S. negotiator of the 1988 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, said the move is "the big sleeper" in the resolution of the magazine dispute. Atkey termed it "a power grab" with "huge implications."

For Canada's magazine publishers, however, anything Copps's department can salvage from the collapse of its magazine policy is no solace. A glum Michael Rea, chairman of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association, said it is impossible to predict which U.S. magazines will move first—only that they are bound to move. "There is very easy money on the table," Rea said, "so I imagine they will take it." And in this case, easy money for the Americans means harder days ahead for their Canadian rivals. **m**

# A lost cause

Copps calls it bargaining, others see a messy retreat



Copps with Chrétien in Parliament: butting heads with confidants and colleagues

By Bruce Wallace

It is not in Jean Chrétien's nature to spend much time worrying about the sensitivities of his cabinet ministers. So when he woke up in Calgary one morning last week and, after listening by phone to his daily briefing on Kosovo, asked aides in his Ottawa office, "How's Sheila doing?" it was a measure of the soft spot he retains for Heritage Minister Sheila Copps. The day before, Copps had performed one of the most unpleasant tasks in politics: publicly explaining why a clear climbdown from a position of principle was, in fact, nothing less than a wise and winning compromise. The Prime Minister was wondering how she was holding up.

The Copps pirouette came over Bill C-55, legislation she introduced to protect Canadian magazines from American incursions into the Canadian advertising market. It was a bill she had loudly and aggressively defended as essential to the Canadian industry's survival. She insisted that Washington's threats of mas-

sive retaliation were nothing but bullying—diplomatic trash talk to be ignored. The Liberals, as it turned out, could not ignore it. And Copps's high-wire act left even friends "scratching our heads at why she let herself get so far out on a limb without any way back," as one put it. The result was the messy retreat that was widely seen as a personal defeat.

Not that the scrappy Hamilton MP would accept that interpretation. Her hardline stance had been nothing more than positioning—"basic Negotiating 101"—Copps told *Maclean's*. "I'm from Steeltown and steelworkers know how to negotiate." Those critics who said she was happily taking Canada into a trade war with the United States were "crazy," she said. "I had no interest in a trade war; I wanted a deal. I've been elected in every election since 1984 and it was not by being a political idiot."

Yet it is hard to think of a minister less likely to fit with Chrétien's cautious governing style than Copps. The Prime Minister likes his politics without bumps. Copps seems to steer for them.

"I'm not saying she picks fights," says friend and former policy adviser Andrew McDermott. "But when one lands in her lap, her attitude is: damn the torpedoes."

Employing that confrontational style through a series of battles has left Copps ever more isolated among her Liberal colleagues (cabinet ministers may have originally blessed Bill C-55 but they scrambled to distance themselves from its radioactive fallout). The magazine fight rattled her. Her dare to the Americans brought her into head-banging conflict with two of Chrétien's confidants: his nephew, Raymond Chrétien, who is Canada's ambassador to Washington; and longtime adviser Eddie Goldenberg. Both men were appalled at the thought of a trade war's damage and fought her all the way. Washington also drew blood by proposed retaliation on the steel industry, the heart of Copps's Hamilton base. "Believe me, Sheila really felt the pressure," said her spokesman Jacques Lefebvre.

That Copps plowed ahead signalled her belief in the cause—and a conviction she had the Prime Minister's backing. "When the PM says in cabinet, 'I've heard the arguments and I'm with you,' it is human nature to think you are on the right track," said a Copps adviser. But in the end, Chrétien also recognized the need to deal. With trade officials on both sides locked in a death grip, the Prime Minister took the issue to a higher level. In Washington this April for the NATO summit, Chrétien raised the magazine dispute and the spectre of a trade war with U.S. President Bill Clinton. Clinton told Chrétien he had never heard of the problem. It wasn't on the American political radar.

With negotiators still spitting at each other in May, Chrétien again went around them by calling Clinton (furious at reports she was excluded from the final push for a deal, Copps repeatedly insisted: "It was my suggestion to call the President"). With everyone instructed to bend, a deal was finally reached. "If I hadn't been so strong, we would not have gotten what we did," Copps claims. "And I would not for a moment," she adds, "have done it differently." ■



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George Gerbner  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications

Sept. 27, 1999

Leif Wellington Haase  
Program Officer, The Century Foundation  
1755 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Suite 400  
Washington D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Haase:

Our draft proposal follows. Also going by e-mail. Would appreciate your advice on any corrections and additions before I mail hard copy.

Thanks.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'George Gerbner'.

George Gerbner,  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication  
Temple University, Philadelphia  
Tel/fax 610 642 3061  
E-mail: ggerbner@nimbus.temple.edu

# Cultivating Age: How Television Portrays Aging and the Elderly

## Chapter One: The Age of Television

Demographic information about the elderly in America. Viewership information and other media consumption related information about the elderly. Cultural values placed on age in US society.

Why this book examines TV rather than other media - its pervasive existence in every home on every day is unlike movies or literature, and makes it the strongest socializing force. Review of the literature on portrayal of aging and elderly on TV.

## Chapter 2

The institutional realities of TV programming. How commercial broadcasting works in the US.

What sort of images make money: sex, violence etc. and how elderly are not included. TV as a socializing medium; cultivation theory and what it means for elderly audiences and for other audiences getting values of what it means to be old from TV. How this most especially has an impact on the socialization of children. The role TV plays in the life of heavy television viewers, and the development of a belief that the world is "mean".

## Chapter 3

What this study is about. The methodology. Describing the television data set, providing the description of categories in the coding instrument, especially those relating to the areas of this study.

## Chapter 4: Aging on Television

This chapter will provide basic data trends to show how TV portrays aging both quantitatively (numbers proportions, and starring roles for elder characters) and qualitatively ( quality of life, fate, victimization by violence, success of characters in goals).

Chapter 5: The „Prime of Life%0 is not on Prime-Time What images of aging and elderly does prime-time entertainment programming put forth?

- sexual interaction
- comical or serious characters
- professional life
- major or minor character
- good or bad characters

- socioeconomic status
- sickness and death
- victims or victimizers

#### Chapter 6: Gender and Aging

Aging does not occur in the same way for female characters and male characters. Figures show a disparity for older women in many ways: quantitatively in the number of roles, and qualitatively, in their lack of importance in the world that television portrays, in their lack of power in society, and also as being meaner, less heroic, and less sexual than older men.

#### Chapter 7: Aging in Daytime Programming

Basically the same as the previous chapter. There are more older characters on daytime drama than on prime-time. As well there are other clear differences in the portrayal of older characters.

#### Chapter 8: Showing Aging to Children

Images of elderly in children's programming. Children are socialized by TV. What picture of the elderly exists in this specialized form of programming.

#### Chapter 9: Television Sells Age

The elderly in commercials: what are they portrayed as doing? Is there a segregation of elderly in the products they are shown using?

#### Chapter 11

What some dramatic programming that features older characters say about aging. How specific programs are appreciated by the public via ratings, and reactions to cancellations. What number of such programs exist today compared to the 80's, 70's and 60's and 50's. Is TV really younger than other times?

#### Chapter 12

What can be done and what has been done to change the cultural environment.

## Aging And Television

A research proposal submitted to the Century Foundation  
by  
George Gerbner  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications, Temple  
University

with the assistance of Brian Linson

We propose to write a book on *Aging With Television*. It will present the findings of our ongoing research on the portrayal of aging in television drama and summarize other related research on the subject.

Television is the universal story-teller. A child is born into a home in which television is on an average of 7 hours and 41 minutes a day. The typical viewer sees each week about 353 characters in prime time dramatic programs alone, and 139 characters in Saturday morning children's programs. Rarely, if ever, does a person encounter as wide a range of ages and human types as in the world of television. That is the context in which aging as a social role is learned.

### Chapter 1: The Age of Television

Television is the strongest common socializing force in our culture. No other medium pervades most homes an average of more than seven hours a day. No other medium provides the such pervasive and persistent images and messages on aging from cradle to grave. This chapter reviews the literature on television as a socializing force and provides demographic information about mid-life and older Americans and their media consumption patterns.

### Chapter 2: Images of aging as business

The institutional realities of television programming. How commercial broadcasting works in the U.S. What types of images make money for sponsors, and, hence, broadcasters. How does the "cost per thousand" formula work out with respect to images of gender and aging. What do we know about effects on viewers, including children?

### Chapter 3: How the research was conducted

The methodology of the study. Samples, units of analysis, categories of analysis. The instrument of analysis.

### Chapter 4: Aging on Television

Basic data and trends to show how TV portrays aging both quantitatively (numbers proportions, and starring roles for older characters) and qualitatively ( quality of life, goals, success or failure, fate. ) The moral force of fiction is its ability to show motivation and outcome.

## Chapter 5: The Prime of Life on Prime-Time

Characterizations of different age groups, including:

- humorous or serious characters
- professional
- major or minor character
- good or bad characters
- socioeconomic status
- sickness and death
- victims or victimizers

## Chapter 6: Gender and Aging

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Daytime drama, designed for a largely female viewership, differs from prime time in some important respects, described in this chapter.

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The image of aging in television commercials. Are there important differences among different product lines, including those designed for older viewers?

## Chapter 11: The good and the bad

Examples of programs that feature older characters. Reviews, ratings, our analysis. Trends over the last three or four decades.

## Chapter 12: Don' t just agonize -- organize!

What has been done and what can be to change the cultural environment.



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George Gerbner  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications

Total 3 pages

Oct. 22, 1999

Leif Wellington Haase  
Program Officer, The Century Foundation  
1755 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Suite 400  
Washington D.C. 20036  
Via fax 212 535 7534

Dear Mr. Haase:

Our proposal for distribution follows. Also going by e-mail. I would appreciate confirmation and advice on any corrections and additions that might be useful.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner,  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication  
Temple University, Philadelphia  
Tel/fax 610 642 3061  
E-mail: ggerbner@nimbus.temple.edu

**Aging On and With Television**  
A proposal for distribution submitted to the Century  
Foundation  
by George Gerbner  
Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications, Temple  
University  
with the assistance of Brian Linson

We propose to distribute our forthcoming book *Aging With Television*. We have received offers for distribution from two well-qualified firms:

Steege/Thomson Communications, Philadelphia, PA, is a full-service marketing communications and public relations firm with expertise in communications planning, media relations, creative concepts, publications, and advertising. The client list includes the University of Pennsylvania (Wharton School, Aresty Institute for Executive Education, the Joseph Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies, the National Center on Fathers and Families, and the School of Nursing); Pew Charitable Trusts; Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America; National Philanthropic Trust; Public/Private Ventures; Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Lehigh University; and the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University.

James P. Murphy, Marketing and Opinion Research, Malvern PA, directed by a former Ph.D. candidate of mine, reliable and creative PR and distribution firm.

The book to be distributed presents findings of our research on the portrayal of aging in television drama and summarizes other related research on the subject. It is based on the premise that television is the universal story-teller. A child is born into a home in which television is on an average of 7 hours and 41 minutes a day. The typical viewer sees each week about 353 characters in prime time dramatic programs alone, and 139 characters in Saturday morning children's programs. Rarely, if ever, does a person encounter as wide a range of ages and human types as in the world of television. That is the context in which aging as a social role is learned.

The outline of the book follows.

#### **Chapter 1: The Age of Television**

Television is the strongest common socializing force in our culture. No other medium pervades most homes an average of more than seven hours a day. No other medium provides the such pervasive and persistent images and messages on aging from cradle to grave. This chapter reviews the literature on television as a socializing force and provides demographic information about mid-life and older Americans and their media consumption patterns.

#### **Chapter 2: Images of aging as business**

The institutional realities of television programming. How commercial broadcasting works in the U.S. What types of images make money for sponsors, and, hence, broadcasters. How does the "cost per thousand" formula work out with respect to images of gender and aging. What do we know about effects on viewers, including children?

### **Chapter 3: How the research was conducted**

The methodology of the study. Samples, units of analysis, categories of analysis. The instrument of analysis.

### **Chapter 4: Aging on Television**

Basic data and trends to show how TV portrays aging both quantitatively (numbers proportions, and starring roles for older characters) and qualitatively ( quality of life, goals, success or failure, fate. ) The moral force of fiction is its ability to show motivation and outcome.

### **Chapter 5: The Prime of Life on Prime-Time**

Characterizations of different age groups, including:

- humorous or serious characters
- professional
- major or minor character
- good or bad characters
- socioeconomic status
- sickness and death
- victims or victimizers

### **Chapter 6: Gender and Aging**

Aging does not occur in the same way for female and male characters. As might be expected, women bear the brunt of the burdens of aging on television.

### **Chapter 7: Aging in Daytime Programming**

Daytime drama, designed for a largely female viewer ship, differs from prime time in some important respects, described in this chapter.

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### **Chapter 9: Aging for Sale**

The image of aging in television commercials. Are there important differences among different product lines, including those designed for older viewers?

### **Chapter 11: The good and the bad**

Examples of programs that feature older characters. Reviews, ratings, our analysis. Trends over the last three or four decades. say about aging. How specific programs are appreciated by the public via ratings, and reactions to cancellations. What number of such programs exist today compared to the 80,s, 70,s and 60,s and 50,s. Is TV really younger than other times?

### **Chapter 12: Don' t just agonize -- organize!**

What has been done and what can be to change the cultural environment.

X-Sender: haase@mail.tcf.org  
Date: Mon, 25 Oct 1999 09:38:10 -0400  
To: ggerbner@nimbus.ocis.temple.edu  
From: Leif Wellington Haase <haase@tcf.org>  
Subject: your revised proposal  
Mime-Version: 1.0  
Status:

Dear George Gerbner,

I received your revised proposal, and will circulate it here.

Thanks,

Leif

Leif Wellington Haase  
Program Officer  
Twentieth Century Fund/The Century Foundation  
41 East 70th St, New York, NY, 10021  
haase@tcf.org  
212-452-7725 (phone) 212-535-7534 (fax)

To: Leif Wellington Haase <haase@tcf.org>  
From: George Gerbner <ggerbner@nimbus.temple.edu>  
Subject: Re: your proposal for distribution of "Aging on and with Television"  
Cc: Brian Linson <Blinson@aol.com>  
Bcc:

X-Attachments:

Dear Mr Haase:

Thank you for the consideration and the good wishes.

Sincerely,

George Gerbner.

>Dear Dr. Gerbner,

>  
> Since speaking with you, I've circulated your proposal to Greg Anrig Jr.,  
>our Vice-President for Programs, and several other colleagues who work on  
>aging and on media. While all of us were interested, we very much regret  
>that we will be unable to fund the distribution of your book. This decision  
>has less to do with the book's intrinsic merits than with our standard  
>foundation practices; we rarely if ever sponsor the distribution of a book  
>that we haven't been party to conceiving at the outset, in dialogue with  
>the author. This was what I suspected when we spoke on the phone, but I  
>wanted to give us the maximal opportunity, in-house, for making an  
>exception. I'm sorry to have to convey this bad news to you, and I hope  
>that the original work you and your colleagues are doing gets the kind of  
>positive exposure it deserves.

Sincerely,

Leif

Wellington Haase

>  
>  
>Leif Wellington Haase  
>Program Officer  
>Twentieth Century Fund/The Century Foundation  
>41 East 70th St, New York, NY, 10021  
>haase@tcf.org  
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