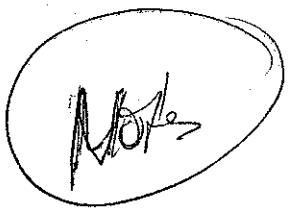

TELLING ALL THE STORIES;
a curious journey

or

Culture Wars

By George Gerbner

"As the century draws to a close, many aspects of world politics are in decline... as if pushed by a sinister urge to repeat history. Freedom just regained is quickly curtailed. Nationalists, anti-Semites, mullahs, cardinals, capitalists in the form of rampaging knights, young fascists and old Stalinists, all these characters from this damned century step out from the wings and fill the stage, fight for a place in the limelight and, dressed in liberal costumes, call for democratic pluralism and freedom of speech. They demand this only for themselves."

From a speech by Gunter Grass on February 14, 1992 at Stationers Hall, London, on the third anniversary of the *fatwa* against Salmon Rushdie.[1]

"Fifty-seven channels and nothin' on."

From Bruce Springsteen's song "Human Touch."

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1 "Offending the High Priests" by Gunter Grass. *Index on Censorship*, 6/1992, pp. 3-4.

Ten-year-olds responding to a survey could name more brands of beer than presidents. Eight out of ten could recall the Marlboro cowboy and Camel's Old Joe. — The new cultural environment blurs diverse outlooks and interests, blends perspectives into a pervasive mainstream, and bends that mainstream to the service of those who control and pay for it.

The Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher once said: "If a man were permitted to write all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of the nation."

xxx years later, United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also warned that the media -- tellers of all the ballads -- threaten democracy by replacing law as the source of authority. (Freedom Forum Media Studies Center Communique, April 1995.)

"Media" have coalesced in a seamless cultural environment that defines our life choices as much as the physical environment limits our life chances. The rapidly increasing concentration, conglomeratization, commercialization, globalization, and militarization (as I will define it) of its mainstream confronts us with an invisible crisis. It is invisible because we're born into it and know no alternative or credible challenge to it, and because received opinion denies its existence and defines it out of existence,

The predicament in which we find ourselves marks a failure of models of communication and of theories of culture and the collapse of viable alternatives. Looking over the dismal record of national development programs, Alain Touraine (1991) wrote that "...que ningu'n pai's pierda su tiempo mirando hacia las antiguas soluciones; las puertas del pasado se han cerrado y llave ha sido tirado al fondo de los oce'anos." ("...no country waste its time looking at the old solutions to its problems. The doors of the past are closed, and the key has been thrown to the bottom of the ocean.") [Alain Touraine, "La verdadera opcio'n,"

El Pais , 6 de mayo de 1991.] Even much of the language and favorite terms of political communication analysis such as free press, democracy, have been corrupted by the uses to which they have been put.

So we are launched on a curious journey. It is a journey of re-discovering the broadest and most basic terms of our field, of addressing fundamental questions in the tradition John Dewey, Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, Harold Lasswell, Kenneth Burke, Lewis Mumford, Jacques Ellul, Elizabeth Eisenstein and Dallas W. Smythe, of flying over familiar territory as if for the first time. In this essay I can only sketch the barest outlines of a perspective that will take us over vast reaches of time and explore new conceptual space.

Trendy notions of empowerment through communications technology have permeated the promotional, political and even academic discourse of the decade.

On the last day of 1989, in an editorial typical of the new media hype, the *New York Times* looked back at a decade of development in communications and pronounced it the "Age of Speed." " Whatever else happened in this decade, the 1980's have been a time of acceleration, especially in America," *The Times* declared. Telephones have become portable. Microwave ovens speed labor in the kitchen. Computers drive business, industry, transport, government, and many professions to work ever faster. The video cassette recorder (VCR) became a fixture in two-thirds of American homes. And more was still to come:

> Before cable, Manhattan residents could watch only seven channels... Today's Manhattanite can graze among 37 channels, and others are on the way.[1]

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[1] In fact, 1993 is the target date for 70 channels in Manhattan, operated by two large cable systems -- both owned by the mega-conglomerate Time Warner, Inc. The deputy mayor of New York when the first cable franchise was issued,

> Because of cable, culture now travels faster. MTV provides throbbing music day and night. There are channels for movies, channels for children, channels for talk, channels for sports. And, of course channels for news -- news that seemed to sweep through living rooms at gale force...

All this, declared *The Times*, gave viewers "control over what was watched."

Similarly, *TV Guide* (Dec. 9,1989) looked back upon what it called a "Decade of Change, Decade of Choice" and declared that "two new technologies - VCR's and cable - have forever changed the way we use our TV sets. And, indeed, the way we live."

Another opinion

These imperatives create the impetus for what Hughes calls "technological enthusiasm." That is a cultural climate of swift and seemingly inevitable change propelled by inexorable forces of science, technology and the "free market." Its speed and momentum tend to overwhelm public safeguards erected previously. Its sweep tends to disorient citizens who might form a constituency for democratic resistance and media reform.

There is no doubt that the convergence of powerful new communications technologies speed business, institutional and professional life. But does the average home user who pays the extra price really gain and exercise greater control? Do new technologies promote freedom ? Could it be (as I think the evidence seems to indicate) that the greatest acceleration in communications, in which *The Times* and *TV Guide* were both major participants, was the "age of speed" in media concentration, commercialization, and globalization and

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Richard Aurelio, became the head of Time Warner Cable New York and negotiated the second franchise running until 2003. "People who take cable," Mr. Aurelio told the *New York Times* (July 2, 1990, p. B2), "have a love affair with television."

militarization? These are the question we address in this chapter. First we shall look at the actual diversity of media sources and materials available to the vast majority of people. Secondly we shall review some evidence about the choices they make of them.

The prospect of new cultural diversity and choice has been used to support deregulation. The public interest, fairness and minority rights have been relegated to the marketplace promising abundance and freedom. Renewed emphasis on "active audiences" using media and gratifying needs in their own diverse ways obscured overarching commonalities most relevant to the conduct of public policy.

Lost sight of in the rush through the "Age of Speed" and scholarly apologia have been five crucial trends running contrary to received opinion. The first is the concentration and conglomeration of ownership behind the proliferation of outlets, company logos, and cultural brands. The second is the contraction of actual content diversity behind the media proliferation and fragmentation of established media markets. The third is the historical lesson that the market is a plutocracy, not a democracy, and that, left to itself, it tends toward economic monopoly and political hegemony. The fourth is the galloping globalization, commercialization, and militarization (as I will define it) of communications and culture. And the fifth is the convergence of research evidence about the dissolution and homogenization of authentic publics reached by global media and the anti-democratization of their outlooks, if not their slogans. The death sentence visited upon Salmon Rushdie is only the most blatant demonstration of more impersonal forces diminishing creative cultural challenge and all the facade of democracy in the West, even as the floodgates to these forces are opening up in the East.

*MAGIC

Most of what we know, or think we know, we never personally experience. We live in a world erected by and experienced through the stories we hear and see and tell. Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher once said that if he were

permitted to write all the ballads he need not care who makes the laws of a nation.

Unlocking incredible riches through music and dance, conjuring up the unseen through art, creating towering works of imagination and fact through poetry, song, tales, reports and laws -- that is the essential magic of human life.

Story-telling is my shorthand for that magic. Through that we live in a world much wider than the threats and gratifications of the physical environment, the world of other species. Through it we regulate human relationships, assume roles of gender, age, class, vocation and lifestyle; and find models of conformity or targets for rebellion. It weaves a seamless web of the cultural environment that cultivates most of what we think, what we do, and how we conduct our affairs.

That process used to be hand-crafted, home-made, community-inspired. Now it is mostly mass-produced and policy-driven. It is the end result of a complex manufacturing and marketing process.

A confluence of technological, institutional, and cultural currents has sweept away the historical bases on which assumptions about socialization, education, politics, religion, and the role of media in self-government have been based. The situation calls for a new diagnosis.

*ACTING HUMAN

Action is behavior in a symbolic context. Our language loads the word with special significance.

"A piece of the action" means cutting in a partner on your bet. (Now it's also violence or sex or some other demonstration of power. The "scene of the action" can be Wall Street, a horse race, a bar, or a ring. When a general sends his troops "into action," we know they are not picking flowers. The Buick ad used to sell "a car that's loaded with action" -- presumably not just automotive. An "activist" is not just a lively person. Your choice of food in the

cafeteria is "consumer behavior." Your attempt to change the cafeteria is "citizen action." Fractured concepts of "information" and "behavior" tend to do diminish the capacity to act.

Our project begins, therefore, with sketching the development of that uniquely human capacity. The journey st starts with a map of its territory, communication. Communication is human interaction through messages. Messages are formally coded symbolic or representational patterns of some shared significance in a symbolic context called culture. Culture itself may be conceived as a system of messages through which we define and regulate social relationships.

Information-directed behavior occurs in many forms of life but --transformed as communication -- plays its most distinctive part in building human lives and communities. The simplest organisms take energy from their immediate surroundings. They need little information except that contained in a fixed hereditary code. When the local source of life-giving energy dries up, they perish.

Higher organisms use specialized senses to receive and brains to store information. They can reach out, search a wider area, pick up signals from a distance, accumulate impressions over time, relate to each other, assume different roles, and engage in behavior based on some sharing of learned significance. But of all forms of life we know, only humans act, primarily through the manipulation of complex symbol systems. Messages and images, rather than the threats and gratifications of the moment, animate human thought and imagination. The far away and long ago plunges us into action as often as the here and now. Even the satisfaction of the most basic need for food, love and shelter are, for humans, elaborate and compelling symbolic experiences. Show me another animal that paints pictures, plays chess, conducts an orchestra or recites the Bible and I will concede that information processing behavior is on a continuum with human communication. Until then, however, I will consider human communication to have taken a different evolutionary route and role.

The last million years ended an era of many times that long during which a relatively mild climate covered long stretches of land from the Arctic Circle through what is now the Sahara Desert to the Antarctic. Arboreal existence in lush forests freed the forward limbs of some groups of mammals from having to carry the burden of the body and shaped them into strong, sure delicate instruments. A subsequent descent to the ground further enabled the forearm to explore, create and manipulate. Much of human evolution is compressed in the word "comprehend": it stems from the expression "grasp with the forehand." Exceptionally deft manipulation required an exceptionally large and complex control system -- the brain. The ability to grasp with the hand and with the mind literally developed "hand-in-hand."

The last million years robbed pre-humans of their "paradise." Invasions of glaciers, great floods, and geologic convulsions scattered the roving bands into all parts of the globe. The featherless and furless but warm-blooded hominoids were hard-pressed to develop their unique resources of collaboration and community through communication.

Only the hominoid brain could regulate the body, respond to changes in the immediate surroundings, and still retain the capacity and stability to hold a complex image long enough to reflect on it. This ability to integrate symbolic structures into frameworks of knowledge and to make them available in novel combinations was the prerequisite for human consciousness and communication. In its broadest "humanizing" sense, communication, then, is a source and extension of imagination in forms that can be learned and shared. It is the production, perception, and grasp of stories bearing human notions of what is, what is important, what is right, and what is related to what.

The Paleolithic hunters who survived the last glaciation appear to have succeeded in building the symbolic foundations for culture: the naming of things, visual representation, coherent organization of stories; and the ability to instruct, celebrate, reflect upon and pass on accumulated lore and imagery.

Revealing how things work means illuminating the all-important invisible relationships and hidden dynamics of life.

Stories that bring to life what may be going on behind the scenes and screens of real-life appearances are usually called fiction and drama. They make perceivable the invisible and the hidden. From fairy tales through comics, cartoons, novels, plays, and other works of art, stories of the first kind are the basic building blocks of human imagination and understanding. They show complex causality we cannot grasp or believe in any other way than by observing imaginary action in total situations coming to some conslusion that has a moral purpose and social function.

Growing up with and living through such stories confers a sense of understranding and conveys a message of power. You don't have to believe the "facts" of Little Red Riding Hood to accept the notion that big bad "wolves" victimize old women and trick little girls -- a lesson in gender roles, fear, and power -- and to begin your socialization as a person and as a consumer of crime and rape stories of all three kinds.

* Stories of the second kind: describing what things are.

These are descriptions, expositions, reports abstracted from total situations and filling in the "facts" and gaps of the fantasies conjured up by stories of the first kind. They are the legends of yesterday, the news of today, and the more warranted investigations of all times. They are selective, purposeful, and meaningful only in the total context of fantasies about life erected by stories of the first kind, which they usually confirm and occasionally challenge.

If art makes life believable, news typically makes it acceptable and science makes its propositions testable. . Every society tends to select its stories of the second kind to shore up its basic fantasies of how things work, stories of the firstr kind, which usually coincides with the interests its chief story-tellers. Their stories of what things are compose highly selective and tightly scripted scenarios that serve specific purposes and social functions.

They are presumed to have a high degree of "facticity," meaning actual correspondence to independently observable events. But that does not guarantee truth, validity, and representativeness. They can compose a scenario that is fiction by selection rather than fiction by invention, as are stories of the first kind, and just as contrived, whether true or false.

News, documentaries, biographies, history, or any description or exposition obliges the storyteller to find and weave actual events into a meaningful symbolic context erected by stories of the first kind. The provide alternatives or to challenge that world view is difficult, often dangerous, and always essential to human autonomy and social survival.

*Stories of the third kind: telling what to do

Stories of the third kind move us to action. They are stories of value and choice. They are the instructions, cautionary tales, commands, slogans, sermons, and exhortations (today mostly commercial) of the age. They clinch the lessons of the stories of the first two kinds and turn them into energy; as if to say "If this is how things work and this is what they are, here is what you should do about them." They typically present a valued person or purpose, or both, and offer a product, service, candidate, institution or action purported to help attain or enhance them. The lesson of fictitious Little Red Riding Hoods and their realistic sequels in everyday news and entertainment not only teach lessons of fear and dependence but also give added impetus to selling burglar alarms, supporting law-and-order candidates, and acting in other ways to adjust to a structure of power and to the anxieties stemming from it.

Stories create, embody, illuminate, and embroider a selective and synthetic pattern of meaning that gives life its sense of direction and purpose. They also relate the teller to the person to whom the story is told. Fairy tales, funny stories, absurd stories, histories, and those accounts not commonly thought of as stories that are told in classrooms, churches, courtrooms, election and sales

campaigns, business and professional meetings, during work and play and celebrations in all other media relate teller and told in certain ways. A scary story tends to concentrate power in the teller; a sales pitch or plea for help in the one addressed. Stories confirm authority and distribute power. Story-telling fits human reality to the social order. The process was woven into the fabric of cultures in three essentially different ways marking three different historical epochs.

*TWO HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

For the longest time in human history, stories were told face to face, memorized as rituals and mythologies, and incorporated in what later came to be called religions. religions. (If we know no other alternative, we call our fantasies just the way things are.) Non-industrial people living in tribal communities require memories and intellectual resources not demanded of today's xxxx All useful knowledge must be encapsulated in aphorisms and legends, proverbs and tales, incantations and ceremonies, and reharsed through rituals, holidays, celebrations. Aging means cumulative storing or personal knowledge to be valued, if not venerated. Writing is holy. Laboriously inscribed manuscripts confer sacred power to their lecturers (readers) and interpreters. As a sixteenth century Mexican source (cited by Elliot, 1984) put it :

> Those who observe the codices,
> those who recite them.
> Those who noisily turn the pages of
> illustrated manuscripts.
> Those who have possession of the
> black and red ink and that which is pictured;
> they lead us, they guide us, they tell us the way.

State and church ruled in the Middles Ages in a symbiotic relationship of mutual dependence and tension. State, composed of feudal nobles, was the economic and political order, church its sometimes unruly cultural arm.

The industrial revolution transformed life and society and reorganized the economic, political, and cultural orders. In capitalist societies, the political order became public government, the economic order a privately-run government, and the cultural order an extension of the economic. Behind all of these transformations, affecting all of them, was the industrial revolution in the telling of stories.

*The print era

One of the fhe first machines stamping out standardized artifacts was the printing press. Its product, the book, was a prerequisite for all the other revolutions to come.

The book could be given to all who could read, requiring education and creating a new class. Readers could now interpret The Book for themselves, diluting the monopoly of priestly interpreters, breaking up the ritual, and ushering in the Reformation.

When the printing press was hooked up to the steam engine the industrial revolution in story-telling shifted into high gear. Rapid printing created modern mass publics. Publics of created by the process of publication. They are loose aggregations of people who never meet and yet share some consciousness of value, purpose, interest.

Printing extends face-to-face story-telling and creates far-flung communities of meanings. Stories can now be sent -- often smuggled -- across hitherto impenetrable or closely guarded boundaries of time, space and status. The book lifts people from their traditional moorings as the industrial revolution uproots them from their local communities and cultures. They can now get off the land and go to work in far-away ports, factories and continents, and take with them a packet of common consciousness, the book or journal, wherever they go. That new consciousness is the modern mass public.

Publics, created by publication, are necessary for the formation of individual and group identities as new urban masses, competing and conflicting classes, and regional, religious and ethnic groups try to live together with some

degree of cooperation and harmony. Publics are the basic units of self-government, electing or selecting their representatives to some assembly that tries to reconcile diverse interests. The maintainence and integrity of publics makes self-government feasible for large, complex, and diverse national communities.

Public participation in the process of public-making, i.e. cultural policy-formation, thus becomes essential to self-government. People engage in long and costly struggles -- now at a critical stage -- to be free to create and share stories that fit the reality of their values and interests.

The way to achieve some control over the newly differentiating consciousness in a situation of unprecedented mobility and flux is to gain the right to select and publish stories (and thus create publics) stemming from different conceptions of relevance, value, and interest. Notions of individuality and of class consciousness are both rooted in the print era. Most of our assumptions about human development, education, political plurality and choice stem from the print era.

*Freedom, 1stAmdt

Rulers always define freedom as what {{they}} do. Control of communications is necessary for freedom of action of any establishment. Their freedom is the freedom to censor. Censorship is the rule, not the exception, in all societies. Democratic theory counters that imperative with the requirements of self-government in a society of conflicting interests. Application of that theory is difficult, often painful, and always incomplete. It requires acceptance of the subversive challenge, the occasional disruption, the periodic and unpleasant but vital shock of recognition that conditions change faster than myths and must be reckoned with. The First Amendment permits such dynamics of social survival but does not secure them. In fact, its current interpretation provides a shield for their evasion.

Every modern political theory includes some conception of the role of the "press" in governance. A secular press of politics and commerce was instrumental to the rise of diverse

mass publics independent of church and nobility. The press was (and is) a relatively specific and selectively used organ of the more literate of every class. Its hard-won freedom to express and advocate competing and conflicting ideologies and class, group, and political party interests was supposed to sustain the diversity necessary for self-government in a complex society. The demise of the party press in the 19th century, and the subsequent decline of ideologically differentiated political parties in the 20th, made commercial mass media the primary means of communication with voters. Parties exist today mainly to raise money for televison, allocate patronage, and maintain the illusion of choice. The principle challenge to democratic theory and practice today is the rise to dominance of a single market-driven advertiser-sponsored and ideologically coherent media system claiming to represent diverse publics and invoking Constitutional protection to preempt challenge to its controls. Many studies document the trend toward media concentration. Two wire services, one near bankruptcy, supply most world and national news. Chains dominate the daily and weekly press, with the top 10 controlling more than one-third of circulation. Only 4 percent of cities have competing newspapers. A strike can leave a city like Philadelphia without a daily paper for weeks. Magazines and books provide the most varied fare, but electronically-based conglomerates own the biggest publishing houses. Broadcasting is of course the most concentrated. The top 100 advertisers pay for two-thirds of all networks television. Three networks, increasingly allied to giant transnational corporate entities, what I called our private Ministry of Culture, control over 70 percent of the market. More importantly, they control programming for all people. "The greatest threat to journalistic independence and integrity is not the Jesse Helmses," a network news executive was reported saying, "and it's not the libel suit -- it's red ink." Entertainment -- the universal source of information for those who seek no information -- is even more constrained. Some 50 weekly series are cancelled every year, many without being given a fair chance to build a public. Many programs and films are made but never even shown. A handful of huge comglomerates, probably not much more than 40, manage the bulk of mass media output. With the current "merger mania," their numbers are shrinking and their reach is expanding

every year. Other interests, minority views, the potential to challenge dominant perspectives, lose ground with every merger. There is not much ground to lose. The high point of ideological ferment following Allied victory in World War II provoked furious reaction: loyalty oaths, witch hunts, and intimidation associated with the name of the late Senator McCarthy but aided and abetted by timid and self-serving media. Their "free marketplace of ideas" had to be "saved from communism." But it did not save unions from being "purged," radicals from being blacklisted or jailed, academic, political, and other areas of possible ferment from being silenced. The civil rights, women's, anti-war, gays, and environmental movements broke the chill of the fifties but provoked, by the seventies, the new virulence of fundamentalist and other orthodox attacks on minority rights, science, textbooks, education, and academic freedom. By then, however, the cultural mainstream itself has undergone a sea-change. To appreciate its magnitude, we shall take a whirlwind tour of history from a communications perspective.

"If I were permitted to write all the ballads I need not care who makes the laws of the nation." Scotch patriot Andrew Fletcher said in 1704. He may have been the first to recognize the governing power of a centralized system of "ballads" -- the songs, legends and stories that convey both information and what we call entertainment. Today we have such a system. It forms a compelling mythology reaching into every home, conferring power that kings, emperors, and popes could only dream about. To understand how this came about, we need to recall what we are and how we reached our present predicament. Humans interpret experience in symbolic context. Most of what we know or think we know, comes not from direct (i.e. non-symbolic) experience but from the stories with which we grow up and through which we live in a world far beyond the reach of our senses. There are three types of stories performing different (though often overlapping) functions. The first are stories of {{how}} {{things}} {{work}}. Usually called fiction or drama, they make the all-important but invisible structure of social relationships and the hidden dynamics of life visible and understandable. Second are stories of {{what}} {{things}} {{are}}. These are the facts, the legends, the news selected

to relate to social values and powers. They give credibility to each society's fantasies of reality and alert it to threats and opportunities. Third are stories of {{what}} {{to}} {{do}}. These are stories of value and choice. They present some behavior or style of life as desirable (or undesirable) and propose ways to attain (or avoid) it. These are sermons, instructions, laws. Today most of them are commercial messages in the media. These three types of stories, or story functions, mingle in the process that weaves the fabric of culture. That is the symbolic environment in which humans grow, learn, and live like humans. They compose, in different combinations, what we call art, science, religion, education. Until the invention of printing, all three types of stories were told face-to-face. A community was defined by the rituals and mythologies held in common. Stories memorized and recited or read and interpreted from rare manuscripts united the tribe or community into a coherent structure. Then came printing. It was the industrial revolution in story-telling, a prerequisite for all the other upheavals to come. Printing broke up the ritual, challenged sacred interpretations, extended communities beyond previous boundaries of time and space. Printing ushered in the Reformation. Religious plurality paved the way for the rise of other pluralities. Consciousness of different religious, class, ethnic, and other interests, cultivated through the right -- won after much struggle, but now again in doubt -- to tell stories from competing and conflicting points of view, gave rise to modern mass publics. These These are loose aggregations of people who never meet face to face and yet have much in common through the stories they share via media they can use for their own purposes. Modern theories of public policy formation assigne the "press" the role of maintaining a diversity of publics reflecting and preserving a diversity of interests essential for self-government. The latest transformation in story-telling is the electronic. As print broke up the central mythology and ritual of the pre-industrial age, so television short-circuits the selective potentials of previous media. It is watched relatively non-selectively, by the clock rather than the program. It is the central mass-ritual of the telecommunications age. It abolishes isolation and parochialism and erodes pluralism. It reaches the previously unreachable with its streamlined and

compelling centralized mythology. It tells "all the ballads" Andrew Fletcher wrote about, to all the children, parents, and grandparents at the same time. For the first time in history, children are born into a mass-produced symbolic environment, pervading the average home over 7 hours a day. It is no longer the parent, the school, nor the church but a distant corporation that tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time, bringing to them the message and perspective of its sponsors. We have studied that process for nearly two decades and found that television satisfies many previously felt religious needs for participating in a common ritual and sharing beliefs about the meaning of life and the modes of right conduct. It is, therefore, not an exaggeration to suggest that the licensing of television represents the modern functional equivalent of a government establishment of religion. The essence of a centralized mass ritual like television is that it reaches nearly every home in wide-spread and otherwise heterogeneous communities with the same system of messages, combining all three story functions, and bypassing family and other local channels and previous requirements for mobility and literacy. Our research has found that this process tends to blur the traditional social distinctions and class or minority interests, blend them into a more integrated perspective, and bend them to its own institutional interests. The cultural tidal wave that is television alters viewers' conceptions of reality, shifts political orientations, and -- vocal claims to the contrary -- cultivates conformity and intolerance of diferences. Provisions that had attempted to preserve fairness, plurality and public participation in broadcast policy crumble under the impact of a shift of controls to ever larger industrial combinations. This process is called deregulation and is justified by an appeal to the free marketplace. The trade paper {{Variety}} announced in its September 11, 1985 issue (p.45): "Diversity in the entertainment business, for decades the cornerstone of government policy and congressional oversight, seemingly has melted overnight into something akin to benign neglect." The last feeble remnant of broadcast fairness, the so-called Fairness Doctrine, is attacked by broadcasters as an infringement on their right to program as they (and their sponsors) please. The agency that is supposed to enforce the Doctrine decides to dismantle it because it "chills and coerces speech" -- that is the speech of

sponsors. When the state of Florida enacted a tax on advertising, those champions of the free marketplace of ideas proposed to blank out that state for national advertising, further confounding the distinction between free speech and the possible most profitable speech.

"Culture" became the political arena, contested terrirtoty, in the 1992 presidential election campaign. Public gov't lost . Murphy Brown won.

*The telecommunications era

Next comes the electronic transformation. We enter the telecommunications era. Its mainstream is television (or whatever comes through the home monitor and terminal), superimposed upon and reorganizing print-based culture.

Television has its own special characteristics. It is a centralized ritual that is distant, pervasive, and yet seemingly personal and face-to-face. It releases into the mainstream of common consciousness a stream of stories made to the specifications of a few marketing formulas intended for global markets. The functions of tribal mythologies have been transported to the national and international spheres.

For the first time in human history, children are born into homes where mass-mediated storytellers reach them more than seven hours a day. Most waking hours, and often dreams, are filled with their stories. These stories do not come from families, schools, churches, neighborhoods, and often not even from the native countries. They come from small group of distant conglomerates with something to sell.

These changes have profoundly altered the ways we grow up, learn, and live. Giant industries discharge their messages into the mainstream of common consciousness. Channels proliferate and new technologies pervade home

and office while mergers and bottom-line pressures shrink creative alternatives and reduce diversity of content. Who will own the cable that will bring all information, entertainment, advertising and other services into our homes? What happens to the free library when all of its holdings go on line for a price? Who will have access to data bases that hold information about our every call, trip, bill, purchase and soon every move?

These changes are as far-reaching as they are diverse. They sometimes appear to be a broadening and enrichment of local horizons and a sense of vicarious involvement in a common culture. But they also mean a narrowing of perspectives, homogenization of outlooks, and limitation of alternatives. For media professionals the changes mean fewer opportunities and greater compulsions to present life in saleable packages. Creative artists, scientists, humanists can still explore and enlighten and entertain and occasionally even challenge, but, on the whole, increasingly, their stories must fit marketing strategies and priorities.

*Historical

This condition did not emerge spontaneously or after thoughtful deliberation. It has been a radical departure overriding significant public opposition, a fact little noted in our history books. Its world-wide fallout and human implications have only recently been studied and are just beginning to be understood.

*Advertising

Ads are stories that sell. That involves the cultivation of identities and of a sense that one is in need, even worthy, of what is being sold. It involves values and how to buy them. It also involves avoidance or suppresion, if possible, information that may help the buyer but not the seller.

Despite being surrounded with sales messages, or perhaps because of it, a Consumer Federation of America survey concluded that "Americans are not smart shoppers and their ignorance costs them billions, threatens their health and safety and undermines the economy..." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 24, 1990.)

Media Markets

Kelvin Lancaster, an influential source of ideas about consumer behavior, asks us to consider the real world of consumer choice where the array of options is continually changing and where price provides only limited information about product quality.▯ Some products have attributes which may be observed following a relatively costless search, others may reveal their qualities only after purchase and use ("experience goods"), and others, "the hidden property goods," may not reveal their qualities even after consumption. The organization of the market makes access to information about experience goods costly. Thus, promotional campaigns may provide discount coupons as a way to reduce the costs of gathering information from experience. Hidden properties, especially if they are negative, like the cancer associated with cigarette use, rarely have producers willing to facilitate consumer access to such information. We find state action requiring warnings on labels to be a recognition of the difficulty of information search. The rational search for information about product quality which marginalist theory suggest we all pursue is not one which can be engaged in with any confidence. Far too frequently the consumer must rely upon the self-serving information provided by the producer or distributor of goods who has an interest in hiding some qualities, while placing others up front and center. A similar problem

occurs when we deal with information goods, including information about other economic or social choices. Because one cannot read the book before buying it, we rely upon advertisements or the recommendations of presumably uninterested critical reviewers. Very few reviewers tend to comment upon the long term social consequences of reading sexual violence, or screening pornographic videos. Such choices remain ill-informed by default. (Gandy, Gandy.doc)

The recognition that markets are not perfect has led neoclassical economists to develop theories of imperfect competition. However, progress in monopoly and oligopoly theory has been anything but compelling. In the view of one well placed critic, "at present, oligopoly theory consists of a large number of stories, each one an anecdote describing what might happen in some particular situation." This approach, not all together different from the methodological preference for argument through exemplification which is characteristic of much critical work in political economy, lacks generality. In Franklin Fisher's view, it tells us what may or can happen, not what must happen. "I think game-theoretic oligopoly theorists are studying the wrong thing. They are accumulating a wealth of anecdotal material about one-shot oligopoly games when when what one wants to know concerns the factors that lead the collusive to be chosen in repeated games. So far as I can see, modern oligopoly theory has made little progress on that centrally important question."

Some communications markets are imperfect in their creation because the regulatory infrastructure limits the number of organizations which can provide service within a jurisdiction. While arguments about the existence of "natural monopolies" are found

wanting in the face of technological alternatives, there is unlikely to ever be a "large number" of suppliers of telecommunications in a particular geographic market. And, because of a continuing, and perhaps structurally determined tendency toward merger and acquisition, large conglomerates seem likely to dominate the communications industry. Thus, because communication and information markets tend to be highly concentrated and unstable, neoclassical scholars are especially burdened by the underdeveloped state of theory.

Public goods, especially information generate critical distortions

Robert Babe's radical challenge to telecommunications policymakers utilized the relatively well known, but troublesome attributes of information as an essence, a natural resource, a product of labor and, perhaps ultimately as a commodity to demonstrate the difficulties its status as a public good represents for economic analysis.

As a public good, information presents considerable challenges to the idealized neoclassical marketplace. Consumption of information is non-rivalrous to the extent that consumption by one does not significantly reduce the possibility of consumption by another. These same attributes make it difficult to exclude non-payers from enjoying the direct benefits of consumption, especially as the ease of reproduction makes acceptable copies readily available. Indeed, because the cost of additional copies or exposures approaches zero at some scale, and because the demands of efficiency in a fully competitive market would move market price to cost, information markets without constraints would be doomed to fail.

As with a great many goods and services, the production or consumption of information goods and services may generate costs or benefits for others not part of the market transaction. We are all familiar with the example of pollution where the upstream producer is able to assign costs to the trout anglers downstream. And, because the anglers are unaware of what is causing their increasingly terrible "luck," they are unable to pay (or threaten) the polluter in order to get him to desist. Similar externalities abound with regard to information goods and services. Broadcasters seeking to produce a male audience for sale to advertisers of razors and shaving cream may provide an endless supply of programs with scantily clad "damsels in distress." The social costs in terms of male perceptions, female self images and the relations between the sexes are unlikely to be included in the accounting models used by the audience producers.

Benjamin Bates discusses the external or "ancillary values" as largely remaining"external to theoretical models." Yet these externalities are seen to result in an oversupply of material with negative consequences, and an undersupply of those with positive social consequences. The extent to which externalities, positive and negative, represent unmeasured, indeed unconsidered influences on the valuations by rational actors, both producers and consumers of information, neoclassical economics is unable to recommend strategies which would produce a superior market result.

Critics of neoclassical orthodoxy are quick to add that problems in the marketplace are not easily corrected by tinkering. Because there is a well ordered set of requirements for the market to produce its most efficient, or Pareto optimal outcome, the absence of

any one condition may lead to a result which is actually worse than that which obtained before any intervention. Policymakers at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and within the Department of Commerce (NTIA) have debated the consequences of moving toward greater competition within the US telecommunications market while European competitors retain substantial state involvement.▯ In their view, American firms would be competitively disadvantaged▯. And, as the boundaries of the relevant market are expanded by globalism, the number of actors, public and private with the power to influence the market increases dramatically. Efforts to establish regional trade zones, with their own regulatory regimes complicates the problem still further.▯

Institutions, not individuals, are the dominant forces in the political economy

Another key element in the institutionalist critique is the claim that large firms, transnational conglomerates rather than small entrepreneurial firms dominate the modern capitalist economy. At one level this is a critique which is linked to the assumption of autonomous rationality. These firms are represent decisionmaking by committee, a process which is nowhere represented in the theory of the firm.

Challenges to assumptions of profit maximization do not fully deal with the problems of decision making which involve the identification of goals and strategies which is marked by conflict, coalitions and indirect influence▯. Recent work on coordination between firms▯ describes the way [see more in Gandy.doc]

Advertising is also the principal form of media patronage. For the first time in human history, children are born into and learn from a compelling media environment of stories that come not from parents, schools, church, or

community but from a group of conglomerates with something to sell.

Viewing of commercials is the work performed by audiences in exchange for this
entertainment. Exploitation of the surplus value is said to be generated when audiences

That marketing process, as we have noted, shapes the cultural mainstream. It is based on hidden levy included in the price of advertised goods. The money is used to support commercial media in exchange for exposing an audience to stories that sell the advertiser's goods, services, ideas, values, and policies. Media are of course free to ignore or oppose all that and to go broke. No major media can meet the cost of production and make a profit without advertising subsidy or other tie-in promotional income. That income comes from the hidden levy that some call taxation without representation. The consumer, as citizen, has little or no say about or control over the process and no choice but to pay the levy and play the role, irrespective of using or liking the media service. Citizens pay whan they wash, not when they watch. The money included in a bar of soap pays for the "soap opera" that sells it, along with its style of life and values. The system is shored up by legislation that makes advertising a tax-deductible business expense and thus fully available for media support.

As advertising comes under public pressure, funds are channeled into direct promotion, the placement of products as props in movies and on television, and into sponsorship of events associated with the products. Traditional media subsidy now accounts for less than half of all advertising expenditures but it supports most of media. The other promotional activities extend the sales message into hitherto more diverse aspects of life and help to integrate them into commercial media culture.
Contrived environment. Theme parks world.

Advertising and almost everything sandwiched between them are designed to the specifications of a marketing plan built around the basic formula of "cost per thousand." That is a measure of the value of the commodity. It indicates the cost of attracting audiences in units of one thousand. That yardstick of value rewards cutting costs and boosting mass-appeal; it punishes other qualities. The entire operation is funded by a levy hidden in the price of goods we buy, assessed on everyone who uses any advertised product (without representation, one must say), whether or not we need or like or use the media that it finances.

The theoretical groundwork for confronting these trends has been laid by Dallas W. Smythe (see e.g. 1977, 1981, 1986) in his work on the commodity form in advertising-driven mass-produced communications he called the "consciousness industry." The primary commodities created and sold in such production are not editorial or program content but "audience power," wrote Smythe. It is audience power that mass media assemble and sell to advertisers. The price for that commodity varies according to the size and "quality" (i.e. propensity to buy) of the audiences (called "markets"). Audience power is deployed to sell products, policies, and candidates for office. Editorial and program content is the supportive context, the "free lunch," "loss leader," or "bait" that, in the argot of the trade, "delivers" the audience, preferably in the mood to buy.

*Taxation

Of course, ultimately <u>we</u> pay for it as consumers and but have no voice as citizens. We pay when we wash, not when we watch. The price of a bar of soap includes money to pay for the "soap opera" that plugs the brand of soap and a style of life.

For citizens, this is taxation without representation. For advertisers, it is tax-deductible business expense that buys the right to tell the stories we hold in common. For society it is a way of preempting alternatives, limiting freedom of press to those who own it, divorcing payment from choice, and

denying meaningful public participation in cultural decision-making.

Economy - taxation taxpayers. See heavy viewers.

US taxes modest in international perspecxtive; far below 6 indsutrial
countries. Litle more than half of Sweden. Politically unacceptable.
"Read my lips!" Walter Mondale's truth about taxes sent his pres
campaign to defeat. Mentality of millionaires. Media persuade vs
interest. Trickle=down sham, "voodoo economic" said Bush while in
opposition. As pres, "economic growth package" Yet there is no
relationship between low taxes and econ growth, either in time in US or
in international compoarisons. See Newsweek 4/13/92, p 48 in Taxes.

When the state of Florida enacted a tax on advertising, industry's champions of the free marketplace of ideas threatened to blank out that state for national advertising, further confounding the distinction between free speech and profitable speech. Florida quickly reversed itself and the experience slowed the desire of other states to tap a rich vein of potential revenue.

*CONCENTRATION

Most people make their choices from what is made most readily available to them. The long-term trend in the availability of media materials -- both information and entertainment --has been a rise in volume, a reduction in original sources and a decline in the diversity of content.

The facts of media concentration and homogenization have been known for a long time. Yet they have been obscured or ignored by proponents of the new "powerful audience"

theory. Media and academic voices both cheer the "revival" of diversity purportedly made possible by media proliferation. They see "power" in whatever residual choices and interpretation audience members are able to make among media choices available to them. This apologia undermines analysis of the political economy of media and distracts attention from what is going on behind the scenes.

Unreported by mainstream media and concealed by novelty and the appearance of diversity is a transformation of unprecedented speed and scope. The novelty of appeals and styles suggests constant change. Retaining individual names and logos acquired by a few conglomerates hides media concentration behind a facade of corporate differentiation. Together they help make the sea-change in the manufacturing and control of the cultural environment not only unreported but virtually invisible.

The dismantling of public protections in banking facilitated the largest known financial ripoffs in the country's history, the Savings & Loan (S&L) and the Solomon Brothers Wall Street scandals. Violations of law and their coverup in high places allowed Iran-contra criminals to operate with virtual impunity, as well as Congressional immunity. The evasion of regulations and of the force of national sovereignty itself made possible the world-class scam by the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). Such processes of rampant commercialization, concentration, globalization and "deregulation" permit less publicized but for a democracy even more dangerous changes in the structure of cultural choices and the process of choosing.

Concentration

Many studies document the trend toward media concentration. Two wire services, one in bankruptcy, supply most world and national news. Chains dominate the daily and weekly press, with the top 10 controlling more than one-third of circulation. Only 4 percent of cities have competing newspapers. Magazines and books provide the most varied fare, but a few conglomerates, largely electronically-based, own the most and biggest publishing houses.

Broadcasting is of course the most concentrated. The top 100 advertisers pay for two-thirds of all network television. Three networks, increasingly allied to giant transnational corporations -- our private "Ministry of Culture" -- control the bulk of production, lead in censoring what they don't like, and set the trend for the cultural mainstream. Some 50 weekly series are cancelled every year, many without being given a chance (or the time-slot) to build a public. Many programs and films are made but never shown. A handful of huge conglomerates, probably not more than 40, manage most media operations. With the recent "merger mania," their numbers are shrinking and their reach is expanding every year. Other interests, minority views, and the potential of any challenge to dominant perspectives, lose ground with every merger. As Anthony Smith (1991) wrote in his study of *The Age of Behemoths*, "Politics, not markets, still seem to be the only effective saviours of minority cultures." (p. 5) And politics in "the age of Behemoths" is the politics of domination by markets.

In one of the few studies of content diversity, Dominick and Pearce (1976) analyzed trends in network prime-time programs over a twenty-year period. Their "diversity index," showing the number of program choices available to viewers, declined from over 60 in 1953 to under 20 in 1974. Their "homogeneity index," tracing the similarity among network schedules, showed that the tendency to clone doubled during the same period. "In other words," they concluded, "the symbolic structure has become more redundant and audiences have been presented with fewer and fewer alternatives." (P. 80.)

The media proliferation of the 1980s strained some traditional client relationships (such as network advertising) and sharpened competition for existing markets. But it did not increase the supply of original sources of ideas or productions. On the contrary, the apparent market fragmentation was accompanied by an unprecedented new wave of mergers, acquisitions, cutbacks, and bottom-line pressures. The drive for ratings forced the same dramatic appeals on news as on fiction, lead to "reality shows" fronted by journalists and, ironically, involving dramatizations. Bizarre plot configurations popular on soap operas were

recreated by "real people" on "trash TV." "The greatest threat to journalistic independence and integrity is not the Jesse Helmses," a network news executive was reported saying, "and it's not the libel suit -- it's red ink."

Trying to finance their growth and still return a profit, giant conglomerates cut costs, reduced staffs, curtailed risky experimentation and limited or totally abandoned specialized, minority, and public affairs programming.(For a report see Donahue, 1989.) They seemed to be secure in the knowledge that large and otherwise diverse groups of media consumers exercise new media choices along existing lines. These are tastes and preferences cultivated mostly by television.

*Television

Television is a centralized system of story-telling. Its drama, commercials, news and other programs bring a relatively coherent system of images and messages into every home. That system cultivates from infancy on the predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other "primary" sources and that are so important in research on other media.

Transcending historic barriers of literacy and mobility, television has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (mostly in the form of entertainment) of otherwise heterogeneous populations. Many of those who now live with television have never before been part of a shared national culture. Television provides, perhaps for the first time since preindustrial religion, a daily ritual that elites share with many other publics. The heart of the analogy of television and religion, and the similarity of their social functions, lies in the continual repetition of patterns (myths, ideologies, "facts," relationships, and so on) which serve to define the world and legitimize the social order.

Television is different from other media also in its centralized mass-production of a coherent set of images and messages produced for total populations, and in its relatively non-selective, almost ritualistic, use by most

viewers. Exposure to the total pattern rather than only to specific genres or programs is what accounts for the historically new and distinct consequences of living with television: the cultivation of shared conceptions of reality among otherwise diverse publics.

We do not minimize the importance of specific programs, selective attention and perception, specifically targeted communications, individual and group differences, and research on individual attitude and behavior change. But primary concentration on those aspects and terms of traditional media effects research risks losing sight of what is most distinctive and significant about television as the common story-teller of our age.

Compared to other media, television provides a relatively restricted set of choices for a virtually unrestricted variety of interests and publics. Most of its programs are by commercial necessity designed to be watched by large and heterogeneous audiences in a relatively non-selective fashion. Surveys show that the general amount of viewing follows the style of life of the viewer. The audience is always the group available at a certain time of the day, the week, and the season. Viewing decisions depend more on the clock than on the program. The number and variety of choices available to view when most viewers are available to watch is also limited by the fact that many programs designed for the same broad audience tend to be similar in their basic make-up and appeal (Signorielli, 1986).

In the typical U.S. home the television set is in use for almost seven hours a day. Actual viewing by persons over two years old averages more than three hours a day. And the more people watch the less selective they can be (Sun, 1989).

The most frequently recurring features of television cut across all types of programming and are inescapable for the regular viewer. Researchers who attribute findings to news viewing or preference for action programs, etc., overlook the fact that most of those who watch more news or action programs watch more of all types of programs, and that, in

any case, many different types of programs, including news, share similar important features of story-telling.

Various recent technologies such as cable and VCRs have contributed to a significant erosion in audience share (and revenue) of the three major broadcasting networks and have altered the marketing and distribution of movies. However, there is no evidence that viewing choices are affected by the source of programs and that proliferation of channels has led to substantially greater diversity of content. On the contrary, rapid concentration and vertical integration in the media industries, the absorption of most publishing houses by electronic conglomerates, and the habit of time-shifting by VCR users (recording favorite network programs to play back more often and at more convenient times), suggest that the diversity of what is actually viewed may even have decreased.

Viewers may feel a new sense of power and control over their viewing fare, derived from the ability to freeze a frame, review a scene, zip through commercials (or zap them entirely) and so on. The availability of prerecorded cassettes and films may also give viewers an unprecedented range of choices. But again there is no evidence that such a sense of power and choice has changed viewing habits or that the content that regular VCR users and heavy television viewers watch presents world views, values, and stereotypes fundamentally different from most network-type programs (Morgan, et al., 1990b).

The overwhelming fact of cultural life is that television has become the common everyday symbolic environment into which children are born and in which they live and learn from cradle to grave. The set is on an average of 7 hours a day in the average American home. Viewing is a relatively non-selective daily ritual. It fits styles of life, income, education, and work. Most viewers watch by the clock and not by the program. The content preferences and "predisposition" so important to selectively used media do not apply to the over-arching patterns of the world of television.

*Production, syndication, agents, agencies

Behind centralized network control and increasingly consolidated advertising control is the system of "packaging" at the source by a handful of Hollywood agencies who control most actors, writers and producers. The agency delivers to the network a "package" consisting of star, script, director, producer and other ingredients needed for the production assembly line. For that service the packaging agent will probably earn more than the creative team whose talent and often years of effort gives the "package" its value. Veteran writer and producer Danny Arnold (whose credits include "Barney Miller" and the new series "STAT," calls it "a license to steal." ["Commentary," The Caucus Querterly August 1992, pp. 14-15.] In fact, the huge markets and high stakes create a feeding frenzy on creative talent, further diminshing freedom and driving costs to astronomical heights. (TV syndication revenues alone ran $5.4 billion worldwide in 1989.)

Here is how it works. A "hot" talent gets a network offer for a new series or television movie. The agent who markets talent in the first place sells the "property" to a production company for "packaging," and demands a percentage of the license fee the network pays for the show, instead of the usual percentage of the artist's pay. So instead of getting 10 percent of a writer's $100,000 paycheck for an episode, the agency gets 10 percent of a $1 million license fee. The William Morris agency was reported to have received a $60 million percentage stake from the Cosby show just for having sold it to a production company for "packaging."

Why do they do it? According to Kathryn Harris who described the system in Forbes Magazine "The talent goes along for fear they'll lose plum jobs; networks and production companies want the hot projects...Programming executives are under the gun to deliver ratings. Job security is not a network perk." "As gatekeepers," Harris comments, "agents skillfully play on these anxieties." [Harris, Kathryn. "Feeding Frenzy; Hollywood f lesh peddlers exploit yet another way to cash in on talent who can draw TV ratings." Forbes Magazine, April 1991. reprinted in The Caucus Quarterly August 1992, pp. 12-13.

The trend towards concentration of agency power and control rides the waves of mergers, buyouts, and general consolidation in the media (and other) industries. In 1986 more than half of the regularly scheduled top network series were "packaged" by a few agencies. Of the comparable programs for the 1992-93 season, two-thirds have been developed and sold by packaging agencies. [Haber, Bill. "A look at television packages" and "Gorg and Mung, a sequel." The Caucus Quarterly August 1992, pp. 16-21.

NBC

General Electric paid $6.4 billion in 1986 for NBC and its parent RCA. It employs about 5,000 worldwide. More deep staff cuts are coming -- but "not to ready the network for sale, Robert C. Wright told NBC employees... There has been speculation that GE ... want to reduce the nwetwork's staff to make it attractive to a buyer, possibly a Hollywood studio." (AP story, PI 8/10/91, p 7-C)

*FCC ownership

FCC Aug 6, 1992 raised the number of radio stations a single company may control from 12 to 18 AM and FM stations each. Originally wanted to raise it to 30! But Congrss and small stations objected. More than half of th e 11,000 stations are unprofitable, and scvores are closing. Minority concerns were h it especially hard. Now 5,200 owners. FCC anaqlysis says 166 companies can end up owning them all. [Ramirez, A. F.C.C. Eases Radio-Station Ownership Limits.(1992) NYT Aug. 6, 1992., P. D1]

*Dereg, pub serv

The Federal Communications Commission grants licenses free of charge in exchange for a promise to use the airways as a public trustee, broadcasting in "the public interest, convenience, and necessity." Never clearly defined or enforced, the concept of public trusteeship was virtually abandoned during the "deregulation era," largely because the FCC accepted the claim that new technologies make the license-holders monopoly over scarce frequencies obsolete and

diversity of content an inevitable consequence of market competition. Despite experience to the contrary, it has become increasingly difficult for community groups to challenge a broadcaster's failure to live up to any standard of public service and program diversity, or even of reporting. In turning down such a challenge to six commercial television stations serving Philadelphia, the FCC affirmed its elimination of quantifiable service or diversity requirements and only admonished a station for not even providing a publicly available file of its performance. ("Memorandum Opinion and Order" released June 29, 1990.)

At the same time the era of "deregulation" has resulted in a 51 percent decrease of issue-oriented public affairs programs that may provide opportunities for education about alcohol (Donahue 1989).

Donohue, James "Shortchanging the Viewers: Broadcasters' Neglect of Public Interest Programming." Washington, D.C.: *Essential Information*, P.O. Box 1945, 1989.

*Aud. Select, divers

The more viewers watch (and the more electronic media they own the more they seem to watch) the fewer basic content choices they have. This fact is obvious if we compare what is available through electronic media with what is available through print. But it is also true for electronic media choices themselves.

Reviews of selective exposure research reflect a general lack of treating television as a unique medium that contributes to forming, maintaining and perpetuating individual dispositions, perceptions, beliefs and values that are required for selective concept. Such "predispositions", as discussed by a number of researchers, are not acquired independent of the medium. Many studies have shown that television often competes, usually successfully, with other sources of information and socializing agents such as parents, schools and churches, and contribute to development of personal values, tastes and habits.

Television as a unique medium also implies that television viewing is largely non-selective both from the perspective of programming and the viewer. Programming, driven by social, economic and political pressures, has been shown to display a certain homogeneity that caters to prevalent values and paints a consistent, if distorted, picture of social reality. Television also differs from other mass media in that it is accessible and viewed by almost all members of the society in a non-selective fashion.

As Neilson reports, less than 4 percent of prime time viewers switch channels during programs and 7 percent switch during commercials. The data suggest that selecting to view or not to view a program is quite independent of program offerings. Availability viewing hypothesis also suggests that nontelevision activities determine the size of total network viewing and that behavioral assumptions about how viewers determine what to watch are quite irrelevant (Gensch and Shramn, 1980). Rather than first selecting programs and then organizing other activities, individuals decide first of all whether to watch or not and then what to watch. So selectivity even on the viewers' part becomes quite secondary. Indeed, the argument that television presents a homogeneous system of messages, so pervasive as to override mechanisms of selectivity, is at the heart of the arguments of media effects.

In studying the act of television viewing, researchers have also raised questions about the relationship between awareness and choice and availability and selection. Can viewers be truly aware of what a program offers without first seeing it? Is more limited information sufficient to cause a kind of selective avoidance? On what basis do viewers decide what they like and what they dislike? What is it that is available for viewers to select? Unfortunately, as McQuail concluded, the relationship between content categories and audience needs is far less tidy and more complex that selective exposure proponents have thought" (p. 62). Theories that wish to observe patterns of program choice bear some systematic relationships to program content displaying a troubling lack of clarity and empirical support. .+
The Study

For years, the cultivation studies have repeatedly demonstrated that the medium has presented a relatively small set of stable common images. Viewers who watch relatively more (heavy viewers) tend to adopt "mainstream" attitudes across demographic characteristics, where light viewers will differ, and that heavy television viewers' world views tend to be shaped by tv to a greater extent than are light viewers regardless of what they select to watch and what they say they watch.

This study has focused on the limits of selective viewing and tested on opportunities of selectivity for light and heavy viewers. This paper reports on the analysis of relationships between and among some thematic terms and character variables in terms of selective viewing. What there is available that viewers can select and how total viewing limits the opportunity of selective viewing are the research questions for the investigation.

The analysis is based on the data focused on nationally distributed network dramatic programming transmitted in prime time (8 pm to 11 pm each day) generated annually between 1969 and 1985 for the CI project. Our sample for this study consists of 1151 prime time dramatic programs and 3667 major characters. Twelve thematic categories of the programs were defined and selected for the analysis. They include close relationship between men and women (description of and/or emphasis on sexual interactions between men and women), family (description of and/or emphasis on family relationships--marriage, children, older age etc.,), business (description of and/or emphasis on industry, business organizations and labor force), violence (description of and/or emphasis on violent actions), science (description of and/or emphasis on science and technology, scientific invention and engineering processes), nature (description of and/or emphasis on animals, natural resources and other elements), crime (description of and/or emphasis on criminal activities, illegality and corruption), schools (description of and/or emphasis on educational activities--schools, teachers, students and studies), religion (description of and/or emphasis on religious customs, rituals and clergy), politics (description of and/or emphasis government

administration and legislation), army (description of and/or emphasis on military organizations, armed forces and wars), supernatural (description of and/or emphasis on mystical ideas, superstition and astrology). The selection of those categories and variables was based on the availability of the data through the years, the relative high frequencies and high degree of emphasis. The categories are different yet not mutually exclusive. They are, to a great extent, interelated and overlapped. Yet it is these interrelations and overlappings that the study had looked into. Themes also imply a broad idea of areas and activities. While others are more substantive areas, violence and sex are more like activities. The justification for selecting those categories and variables was based on the theoretical interest in avoidance or selection of violence and sex.

We first looked at the thematic structures and compared them with lengths of viewing. The investigation of the themes revealed that exclusive selection or total avoidance of any specific content was quite unrealistic. The most frequent themes, coded by our project, were close relationship between men and women and family life. Both occurred in about 85 percent of the total programs we had observed. Business was next to those two themes in proportions but by no means in degree of emphasis. Violence was observed in 72 percent of the total and the first highly emphasized theme. In 597 out of 824 programs (72 %), violence was either the major theme or shown significantly. While other themes were less common, they were by no means infrequent. For example, science, nature and crime appeared in about 60 percent of the programs and schools and religion in nearly 50 percent of the programs. Politics, military affairs and supernatural presentation were less common attention and emphasis measurement developed by the CI project, we had a more comprehensive understanding of the themes for the prime time programming (See Figure 1). Table 1 presents a comparison of these two weights measuring the themes we had coded. Close relationship between men and women, families and business were the first three frequent themes, yet they were not often emphatic. The most prominent themes were crime and violence. They were frequently the major themes of the stories and strongly presented.

As the results of the analysis show, what type of content the viewer will see depends, to some extent, on when he sits down and watch and for how long. Themes varied considerably with viewing slots for one-hour programming. Close relationship between men and women, business deals and criminal activities were far less between 7 pm and 8 pm as compared with other viewing slots. In 47 percent of the programs between 7 pm and 8 pm, some relationship between men and women was observed, whereas the theme was covered in 90 percent of programs between 9 pm and 10 pm and 92 percent of programs between 10 pm and 11 pm. Business was observed in 79 percent of late hour programs as compared with that in 47 percent of the programs between 7 pm and 8 pm. While crime was a theme in 79 percent of the programs between 10 pm and 11 pm, it appeared in only 60 percent of the programs between 7 pm and 8 pm. Themes like nature and supernatural dropped greatly between 10 pm and 11 pm.

As the amount of viewing increases, the differences decrease. The largest difference for the theme of close relationship was 13 percent for the two-hour viewing slots and 3 percent for the three-hour viewing slots. There was merely a 7 percent difference for the two-hour viewing slots and with almost no difference for the three-hour viewing slots. For example, crime had a over 30 percent difference for one-hour viewing slots, whereas the difference for two-hours' was 14 percent and for three-hours' was only 5 percent.

The rapid reduction of differences with increasing length of programming is further supported by the statistical analysis of variances. For one-hour viewing slots, 9 out of 11 themes were statistically different (close relationship, business, violence, crime: $p<.001$; science, religion: $p<.01$; nature, politics: $p<.05$). The analysis for two-hour viewing slots obtained 6 significant tests (close relationship, crime: $p<.001$; business, violence: $p<.01$; science, religion: $p<.05$). For three-hour viewing slots, there was no significant test at $p<.001$ or $p<.01$. In other words, viewers may be exposed to more differences in themes if they watch less than they would if they watch more (Compare Tables 2, 3, 4). Virtually there was no significant difference when we compared three-hour viewing slots. Viewers encounter a more general mix of

themes in programming if their consumption extends to three hours or over.

To put it simply. For a viewer who watches three hours in prime time, he sees an average of 8.25 programs. Out of 8.25 programs, 6 to 8 programs show close relatioship between men and women, 7 to 8 programs family relations, 5 to 6 program business, 5 to 6 programs violence, 5 to 6 programs science, 5 program nature, 4 to 5 programs crime, 3 to 4 programs schools, 3 programs religion, 3 programs politics, 2 programs army and 2 programs supernatural themes. Programming of such nature leaves viewers very little opportunity for substantial selective viewing, either escaping sex or avoiding violence for example.

With increasing lengths of viewing, these limited differences that light viewers might possibly see are considerably reduced. As Table 5 indicates, the difference is somewhat less with two-hour viewing slots and almost evened out in three-hour sets of programming. That is to say, viewers who watch prime time programming for relative less time may be exposed to more "diversity" than viewers who watch more even though such diversity may be just superficial.

A more realistic concept of selective activity is then how much the viewers choose to stay with television. From the aspect of available programming, it seems that the more programming the viewer sees the more likely that he catches bit of everything. Again the viewer may prefer this or that, but quite often this or that, as our analysis shows, does not exist.

Secondly, such limited choices is even less for heavy viewing. The differences in quantities that light viewers may be able to see are necessarily reduced with the increasing lengths of viewing. Such reduction of differences further suggests that total viewing is very important for the opportunities of selective viewing. As the length of viewing increases, not only heavy viewers see more programming but also they are offered a more general mix of programming. For light viewers, watching one or two hour programming, some differences may exist. If they choose, the messages they

consume can be significantly different, at least in quantities. But heavy viewers do not even have such opportunities for selective viewing.

The findings are consistent with the cultivation hypothesis that the amount of viewing is essential for studying the perceptions and beliefs about social realities cultivated by television. As viewing accumulates, the differences in programming that light viewers may be able to select are evened out over time bringing forth some commonality in television. It is such commonality, averaging or mainstreaming that heavy viewers are particularly exposed to. Therefore it is quite likely that they would give answers closer to one another and closer to the world of television. Their views may thus more likely converge with the mainstream by more consistent messages.

With television penetrating into American homes and viewing becoming a daily activity, never before have so many of us participated in such a "shared" cultural life so nonselectively. Almost no one who views television drama can possibly, either consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, "escape" absorbing or dealing with the recurrent patterns supplied by the medium in some quantities. Should these recurrent patterns be considered more than the limited selective possibilities?

It is, then, a political myth and intellectual conceit to assume that diverse audiences are clamoring for varied ideas, new knowledge and fresh experiences. Often ignored by promoters of new technologies is the fact that cultural enrichment and diversity come from investment in education, art, science, and talent in general, and from resources devoted to the abolition of barriers to creative work such as minority status or assembly-line dramatic and news formulas. In the decade of media explosion, the proportion of resources devoted to such social investment has declined.

*Cable, video

More than 60 percent of all American homes are wired for cable but most cable companies that engage in any new production compete for the most popular network-type fare. (And also charge for it, and increasingly also carry advertising.) The more specialized channels, appeal to upscale light viewers for whom they duplicate and compete with similar content on other (mostly print) media.[1]

Video production has of course been fully integrated into the new electronic system dominated by a few major players. Pre-recorded video-cassette buying, renting, and copying (illegal but widely practiced, costing the industry an estimated $500 million a year) concentrate on the most profitable titles. For example, more than half of all VCR owners intended to buy, rent or copy that violence-saturated celebration of the martial arts, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." (*Variety*, June 27, 1990, p. 47.) Popular videos also specialize in "adult" fare and other features that are more likely to imitate and even exceed some of the most exploitive aspects of standard productions than to offer alternatives or challenges to it.

The failure of video to realize its purported promise of cultural diversity led the Rockefeller Foundation to set up

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[1] For example, *Broadcasting* magazine reported on June 18, 1990 (p. 53) that 40 percent of the viewers of four cable networks earn more than $40,000 a year, compared to one-third of broadcast network viewers. Over one-fourth of the Arts&Entertainment and Headline News networks earn more than $60,000, compared to about 13 percent of broadcast network viewers. Although the total number of cable viewers is still much less than that of the broadcast networks, and most cable viewers watch more television than non-viewers, the upscale character of a larger proportion of cable than broadcast viewers is used by cable operators to convince advertisers that putting together a commercial package aimed at four or five of the upscale cable networks is a good way to reach specialized audiences. That policy is most likely to drain advertising support from magazines (as well as from broadcasters), already hard-hit by mergers and competitive media.

the National Video Resources project. NVR's objective was to help find outlets for hard-pressed independent video producers and special interest quality productions.

NVR studied video retail stores to discover how manay are active or prospective buyers of quality special interest titles including independent features, cultural classics, foreign productions, documentaries, the arts, public service, and even New Age videos. It found that only about 10 percent of all video stores are interested in anything but bluckbuster productions. A survey of these stores (reported in *Video Software Magazine*, June 1991 issue) found that even among stores known to have carried or expressed interest in "alternative" work, such titles represent a small portion, typically less than 10 percent, of inventory. The stores also reported that they no longer buy some categories of non-blockbuster programming. Advertising, celebrity endorsements, and other promotion least affordable for independent and special interest quality products generate more customer interest than any quest for alternatives. Investment in promotion is more important to commercial success in film and video than it is in broadcasting to an already assured basic audience. (Within three months of the NVR survey, 150 of the stores had gone out of business.)

Choices

Under these circumstances, the entry of new communication technologies into the home means, on the whole, increasing polarization and contrast between the minority upscale information-rich and the rest of the population who may now be called the "entertainment rich."[1] For them more

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[1] I do not mean to contrast information and entertainment as functionally different. Information-seeking is usually for specific purposes and uses. Entertainment is sought for its own rewards. It is, however, as informative as, and not necessarily less valid than, what is called information. Entertainment is the information of those who seek no information. Rewarding for its own sake, it may even be more easily integrated into a framework of knowledge than propositions explicitly presented as information.

channels means more time spent on the most popular types of electronic entertainment delivered by a greater variety of means. The new orchestration of mainstream media has fewer players handling more instruments playing fewer tunes for audiences who want more of what they already know and like.

Audience research from many countries confirms the fact that media diversification and novelty, as such, do not create new audience interests. On the contrary, they provide more means and styles (and markets) through which existing interests can be more single-mindedly exploited and pursued. (See, for example, Becker and Schoenbach, 1989, p. 354.)

Just as video rentals gravitate toward the "block buster" product, two-thirds of those who record programs on their VCRs tape popular network fare to view more often and at more convenient times. The A.C. Nielson Company reports that instead of diversifying viewing patterns, most VCR users provide their own "reruns." "Grazers" change channels frequently but relatively aimlessly. They are more creatures of chance than of choice. There is no evidence that their choices differ from those who watch by habit.

Viewer inertia and repeat viewing are the rule, eclectic and diverse choices the exception. These facts need not be interpreted as denigrating audiences as "passive" and "powerless." Respect for audience choices comes from a recognition of the cultural context in which they are made. Given a particular cultural situation, audiences use their powers as they, not wishful thinkers, like to use them. In his summary of audience behavior Comstock (1980, p. 11) concluded that "Viewers do watch programs they are familiar with and like, when they can."

Most cable homes watch more television and have more channels to pursue their preferences. Although VCR and remote control use led to a decline of viewer inertia (staying with the same channels through program changes), most cable and VCR users seek more of the same content types through a greater variety of outlets. Cable penetration even increased channel loyalty among those who stay with standard channels (Walker, 1988). A network-supported study reported

in *Variety* (June 27, 1990, p. 52) also found that viewers are twice as likely to change channels when watching cable channels as when watching broadcast networks By staying with regular station and network schedules, many of these "loyal" viewers may actually see a greater variety of programs than the "volatile" viewers or "zappers" who can pursue more limited preferences through the availability of more channels.

Evidence that this is indeed happening comes from several large-scale media market surveys. Neuman (1989) examined these data looking for diversity of viewer perceptions and choices. He was disappointed. Audience perceptions of program themes and motivations for viewing are strikingly similar across gender, income, educational and age groups. Furthermore, the correlations of actual viewing patterns with perceptions are also similar in the different demographic categories. The highest positive correlation is with "relaxation" and the lowest (negative) correlation with program perceived as "informative," or "sophisticated."

"People like television to be funny and action-filled," Neuman concludes. "That is true for the teenager and the grandmother, the construction worker and the tax lawyer...The overwhelming pattern is one of rather uniform motivation and choice."

Even newspaper preferences and interest differences among different social groups are slight (an average of less than 5 percent). These, Neuman notes, "are not likely to inflame the souls of targeting marketeers or those whose financial investments are based on the narrowcasting concept." .

VCR's allows viewers to see missed network programs and, ion that sense, makes reruns less popular. In fact, two-thirds of viewers who use VCR's record network programs thus increasing the size and limiting the scope of broadcast program vieweing. [A.C. Nielson, "1990 Nielson Report," (Northbrook, Ill.: A.C. Nielson, 1990).] VCR owners are more frequent rerun viewers. [Litman, Barry R. and Linda S. Kohl. Network rerun Viewing in the Age of New Programming Services. (1992) Journalism Quarterly 69(2) Summer 1992, 383-391.]

*Movies

Movie theaters, once an endangered species, now adjust to and reap record profits from the convergence of new technologies. Industry analysts report that "The box-office surge has been helped along by broadcast TV, cable TV and home video. . . Producers are using sales of foreign, cable TV and home video rights to virtually guarantee a film's profit before it even reaches theaters." Movie marketers are singing praises of the new technologies as efficient ways to promote movies that appeal to the largest audiences. (Walley, 1989, p. 80)

*COMMERCIALIZATION

*Privatization

In European brodcasting, this means the erosion of public participation. In 1990, Italian Parliemt authorized Finninvest, private net, to broadcast news in competition with RAI (which has given multi-paty news). "While the conduct of RAI "is subjected to the instructions and controls of the Parlkiamentary Commission of Vigilance (an organ ... elected by the Italian Parliament) " the private networks are not subject to rules "ensuring conformity to ethical standards. The viewer (the market) and obviously the owner are the main points of reference for the commerciallyu employed reporter. In the case of the public service journalist, however, 'ownership' is embodied in the complex system of Italisn political parties, with all its demands for pluralism, guarantees, representation, and negotiation. [Mancini, Paolo. (1992) Old and New Contradictions in Italian Journalism. *Journal of Communication*, 42(3), 42-47.

*GLOBALIZATION

*US film abroad

American films from major studios garnered 85% of box office revenues in 1991. Rising advertising costs due to the private stations and aggressive US strategy driving German

indeopendent productions out of business. "Percetage-wise, the major here open a film with many more copies than in the states." says Theo Hinz, head of Filmverlag der Autoren, a small independent distributor. "There are 10 times the cinamas in the U.S. thn here. Tghe majors start films with 400 to 500 copies here. If they used the same ratio in the States, they would have to open their films with4,000 to 5,000 copies. And it isbad for everyone. The public is gettng used to the idea that there are only a few films to choose from. And if there's ever a gap, if none of those few films happen to be blockbusters, [people] won't go to the theaters. Everyone will suffer." [Hansen, E. (1992) Yank Majors Dominate Distribution Scene. Variety, Sept. 14, 1992, p. 43.]

*NEWS

"The Comercualization of News. Economics ... has eroded between journalism and the profit-making business of selling audiences to advertisers.." p.21. News had a relativelky p;rivileged place until 1980s. Bevcause ample propfits and "lifeline" to 1st amdt. When local news become an important profit makers, it became "far too importrant to the bottom line... to be left under the control of jourtnalists. It has since evolved ionto a powrful hybrid of news and show business." p.12 Tabloids the model -- see election camp, candidates on entertt (MTV, etc.) programs. [Hallin, Danial C. (1992) The Passing of the "High Modernism" of American Journalism. *Journal of Communication*, 42(3), 14-25.]

*CREATIVE

While media outlets proliferate and consolidate, the numbers of writers, directors, journalists, and other creators of information and entertainment shrink. Media sociologist Muriel Cantor (1990) reported that in the late 1960s there were 25 program production companies; some twenty years later there were 13. During the same period, the eight major studios' share of all prime-time programming increased from 40 to 75 percent. (*Variety*, June 27, 1990, p. 60.)

With the loosening of the long-standing FCC rule against the networks producing and syndicating most of their

own shows instead of contracting with the production companies (a rule nicknamed "finsyn" for financial interest and syndication, designed to preserve a modicum of diversity), another wave of mergers and vertical integration is inevitable. "WALL ST. SEES FINSYN CHANGES TRIGGERING MEDIA MERGER SPREE" was the *Variety* headline of June 27, 1990 (P. 3.) Michael Hill of the *Baltimore Evening Sun* foresees "A few media giants who would tower over all aspects of the entertainment and information business." (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 4, 1990, p. 7D.) Their expanding control over production would also enable these media giants and electronic conglomerates to enlarge their stranglehold over the global market and its extension into the hitherto limited territories of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

*CI,Cult

Our "cultivation analysis" of television viewing (Gerbner et al., 1986; Signorielli and Morgan, 1990) also shows the erosion of traditional differences in different generations born into television homes. The more viewers watch television, the more they share common conceptions of reality regardless of other group differences. Cable, VCR, news viewing or other program preferences and selections do not significantly alter the basic "mainstreaming" pattern. Diversified media holdings and investments also imprint the book publishing business with their homogenizing tendencies.

All that does not mean the death of diversity. Credit should be given to those creative people who manage from time to time to produce thoughtful, magnificent works. Restive pockets of resistance and challenge exist side-by-side with pervasive homogenization and "mainstreaming." But it is clear that the global spread of mass marketing in all media, new and old, will not permit, let alone foster, genuine diversity and choice.

The proliferating electronic discharge of massive content configurations into the mainstream of the cultural environment, and of their ever deeper penetration into the

dynamics of opinion-formation and choice, confronts communities all over the world with a major new social policy problem. The mass production of homogenized "masses"

dissolution of authentic publics that can tell stories from their own points of view and thus cutivate their own interestrs different from those of global marketing

challenges any concept of popular self-government. A "revolt of the masses" as commodities, the building of an international constituency for democratic media reform, is needed to confront that challenge. A citizen constituency participating in and supporting the development of new and freer cultural policy-making is the imperative of the "information age." A new environmental movement, dedicated to the cultural environment that will shape and guide those who survive the degradation of the physical environment, is needed to tackle that task.

Our long-standing "Cultural Indicators" research on network television content and the consequences of exposure (Gerbner, 1986, 1990, Signorielli 1986, Signorielli and Morgan, 1990,) demonstrates that many of the most typical over-arching content patterns of life on television -- action structure, casting, social typing, and fate -- are common to most types of programming and news. They are remarkably stable and repetitive from year to year and they are inescapable. Exposure to them depends more on how much than on what the viewer watches. Independent stations and syndicated program originators cater mostly to the same markets and audience expectations and follow the same basic production and programming patterns.

We have found that the cultural tidal wave that is television cultivates viewer conceptions of reality, shifts political orientations, and -- vocal claims to the contrary -- generates conformity and intolerance of differences. Public interest protections that had attempted to preserve some fairness, plurality and participation in broadcast policy-making crumble under the impact of a shift of controls to ever larger industrial combinations. This process is called deregulation and is justified by an appeal to the free

marketplace. The trade paper *Variety* announced in its September 11, 1985 issue (p.45): "Diversity in the entertainment business, for decades the cornerstone of government policy and congressional oversight, seemingly has melted overnight into something akin to benign neglect." The last feeble remnant of broadcast fairness, the so-called Fairness Doctrine, is attacked by broadcasters as an infringement on their right to program as they (and their sponsors) please. The agency that is supposed to enforce the Doctrine decides to dismantle it because it "chills and coerces speech" - by requiring broadcasters to air controversy fairly. A survey of studies by Aufderheide (1990) shows that while news and public affairs were cut for economic reasons, the Doctrine itself did not chill debate nearly as much as its absence does. Nevertheless, when Congress tried to restore the Doctrine President Bush vetoed the bill giving the same reasons.

The Federal Communications Commission grants licenses free of charge in exchange for a promise to use the airways as a public trustee, broadcasting in "the public interest, convenience, and necessity." Never clearly defined or enforced, the concept of public trusteeship was virtually abandoned during the "deregulation era," largely because the FCC accepted the claim that new technologies make the license-holders monopoly over scarce frequencies obsolete and diversity of content an inevitable consequence of market competition. Despite experience to the contrary, it has become increasingly difficult for community groups to challenge a broadcaster's failure to live up to any standard of public service and program diversity, or even of reporting. In turning down such a challenge to six commercial television stations serving Philadelphia, the FCC affirmed its elimination of quantifiable service or diversity requirements and only admonished a station for not even providing a publicly available file of its performance. ("Memorandum Opinion and Order" released June 29, 1990.)

*CEM
*Neglect

The Cultural Environment Movement is concerned with such distortions of the democratic process and their consequences. These include the promotion of practices that drug, hurt, poison, and kill thousands every day; portrayals that dehumanize and stigmatize; cults of violence that desensitize, terrorize, and brutalize; the growing siege mentality of our cities; the drift toward ecological suicide; the silent crumbling of our infrastructure; the widening resource gaps and most glaring inequalities in the industrial world; the "information explosion" that is also spreading mass-mediated ignorance and misanthropy; the costly neglect of vital institutions such as public education, criminal justice, the arts, and the financial system; our make-believe economics thriving on wasteful consumption but hiding long-term consequences; our image politics and sound-bite elections which are corrupting the democratic process; and the media-events contrived to make instant history.

Invisible - crumble

"It is no less than obscene that more Americans are killed by handgun
in one day than in Japan in one yea; that Ameruican taxpayers will pay
$500 billion to bail out the savings and loan scandle; than one in
every five children lives below the poverty level; that two million
Americans at the top earn as much income as 100 million Americans at
the bottom; that... leaders... dare niot articulate the sacrifices
that...must be made to solve the problems. [NYT Letter to edit by
Harold E. DeBona, A p 20, 92, p A16.]

*Heal

How can we heal the wounds of all the stories that are hurting and tearing us apart? How can we put culture-power to liberating ends and break the constraints that distort and debilitate? How can we make freedom of press and other media to work more for those who use than for those who own it?

The new cultural environment demands a new approach. We must mobilize to act as public citizens as effectively as commercials have mobilized us to act as private consumers. We invite comments, suggestions, and contributions to the following proposals for action:

* Building a new coalition and constituency. The Cultural Environment Movement should involve existing media-oriented networks and councils in the U.S. and abroad; teachers, students and parents; groups concerned with children, youth and aging; women's groups; minority organizations; religious, educational, health, environmental, legal, and other professional associations; consumer groups and agencies; associations of creative workers in the media and in the arts and sciences; independent computer network organizers; and other organizations and individuals committed to broadening the freedom and diversity of communication.

* Opposing domination. We must resist censorship, both public and private, and extend the First Amendment beyond its current use as a shield for the powerful and the privileged; work to reduce concentration of control of and by media; include in cultural decision-making the less affluent more vulnerable groups who, in fact, are the majority of people.

* Cooperating with groups in other countries that work for the integrity and independence of their own cultural decision-making. Learning from countries that have already opened their media to the democratic process. Opposing aggressive foreign

ownership and coercive trade policies that make such developments more difficult.

* Working with journalists, artists, writers, actors, directors, and other creative workers struggling for greater freedom and diversity in media employment and content.

* Promoting media literacy, awareness, critical viewing and reading, and other media education efforts. Collecting, publicizing and disseminating information, research and evaluation about relevant programs, services, curricula, and teaching materials.

* Placing cultural policy issues on the social-political agenda. Supporting and if necessary organizing local and national media councils, study groups, citizen groups, minority and professional groups and other forums of public discussion, policy development, representation, and action. Moving toward a realistic democratic media agenda.

"...que ningu'n pai's pierda su tiempo mirando hacia las antiguas soluciones; las puertas del pasado se han cerrado y llave ha sido tirado al fondo de los oce'anos." (That no country waste its time looking at the old solutions to its problems. The doors of the past are closed, and the key has been thrown to the bottom of the ocean.) Alain Touraine, "La verdadera opcio'n," *El Pais* , 6 de mayo de 1991.

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*Tech

> *Communication now occupies a central place in strategies whose object is to restructure our societies. Via electronic technologies, it is one of the master instruments in the conversion of the major industrialized countries. It accompanies the redeployment of powers (and counterpowers) in the home, the school, the factory, the office, the*

> *hospital, the neighborhood, the region, the nation. And beyond this, it has become a key element in the internationalization of economies and cultures..It has this become a stake in the relations between peoples, between nations, and between blocs.*
>
> Armand Mattelart and Michele Mattelart. *Rethinking Media Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992, p. xii.

Becomes a virually seamless cultural environment organized by a few centers that define their freedom as having no political limits, human inhiobitions and recognizing no political, institutuional or national national boundaries. McLuhan's global village comes about not as a community of intimate strangers facing and meeting and perhaps feuding but, at any rate, interacting with each other but as an electronically-based

*Tech

New Way to Store More data

A.T.& T. Describes Breakthrough in Lab

By John Markoff
(Special to The New York Times. 8/6/92, p. D1

San Francisco, August 5 -- A team of researchers at American Telephone and Telegraph's Bell Laboratories said today that they had demonstrated a new computer data-storage technique that can hold nearly 100 times more data than a compact disk and 300 times more data than current magnetic storage systems.

The data-storage technology could help make possible a variety of new products, ranging from high-definition television to entertainment systems that combine computer graphics, video images and sound.

In a Murray Hill, N.J., laboratory the team of scientists achieved storage densities as high as 45 billion bits of information per inch, they said.

If that much information were in the form of recorded music, it would take a disk the size of a quarter eight days to play it all. If it took the form of compressed high-density television programming, a palm-size disk could hold 17 hours' worth.

For the more literary minded, the researchers said that their technique would make it possible to store two copies of "War and Peace" in an area about the size of the head of a pin.

The data-storage densities said to have been reached by the Bell Labs team far exceed other experimental developments in United States and Japanese labs. In 1989, for example, researchers at I.B.M. laboratories in California said they had developed experimental magnetic disks that were capable of densities up to one billion bits per inch. And using conventional optical storage technology researchers at Hitachi have achieved densities of about two billion bits per inch.

The new storage approach is also similar to existing magnetic-optical storage systems that work by using a laser to change the polarity of tiny magnetic spots on a rotating disk. The polarity of a spot, corresponding to the north or south pole of a magnet, can be translated into the ones and zeroes of all digital information.

But instead of using a lens to focus the laser--as is done with current compact disk technology--the researchers have achieved a vastly smaller spot size by stretching a fiber-optic cable until it breaks, leaving a microscopically fine tip. by shinning a beam of laser light through the fiber-optic tip, the scientists have been able to write data on spots as small as 60 nanometers--about 1,000 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair.

*DEMOCRACY

With the free press being a cornerstone of democracy and a delusion, we reached the bankruptcy of the concept of democracy itself. Ther very terminology we use is deceptive.