

**THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR
COMMUNICATION**

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

3620 Walnut Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6220

July 14, 1992

Geraldine Laybourne
President, Nickelodeon
1515 Broadway New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Ms. Laybourne:

I regret that my quote in yesterday's Wall Street Journal came out as it did. In a lengthy telephone interview with the reporter, I tried to give a balanced picture of the general global viewing situation. I said that most of the stories to most of the children in many countries are told not by parents, school, or church, etc. but on behalf of a handful global conglomerates that have something to sell. This leaves out many aspects of life and has an overall homogenizing effect on audience perspectives.

Within that general situation, I tried to indicate that channel proliferation does not necessarily lead to more diversified use. In fact, it results in widely divergent patterns. Upscale viewers, who tend to be lighter and more selective viewers, may diversify viewing but may also substitute television for reading the even more diverse print media. Lower income and lower education viewers are more likely to concentrate their viewing on fewer programs available on more channels.

I also said that Nickelodeon is a bright spot on the cable horizon, an exception to the general homogenization that we have found to be the overall long-range consequence of heavy viewing. I guess that in the interest of "balancing" a mainly favorable article, only the more critical aspects of my general comments were selected and applied to Nickelodeon. That is especially unfortunate in view of the fact that I think highly of your programming and many initiatives, and will be glad to express that more directly when the next opportunity arises.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communication and Dean Emeritus