

The Cultural Environment Movement (CEM) is a non-profit coalition of independent organizations and individual supporters in every state of the U.S. and 57 other countries on six continents, united in working for gender equity, general diversity, and democratic decision-making in media ownership, employment and representation.

Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher once said: "If one were permitted to make all the ballads, one need not care who should make the laws of a nation." That was at a time when "ballads" - the myths and stories of a culture - were hand-crafted, home-made, community-inspired. Today, they are the products of a complex global mass-production and marketing process. Our children are born into a cultural environment created mostly by conglomerate storytellers who have nothing to tell but much to sell.

This has far-reaching implications for human socialization and governance. Channels multiply but technologies converge, media merge, staffs shrink and creative opportunities diminish. Fewer sources fill more outlets more of the time with ever more standardized and globalized fare. Alternative perspectives vanish from the mainstream.

Other distortions of the democratic process include the promotion of practices that pollute, drug, hurt, poison, and kill thousands every day; portrayals that dehumanize and stigmatize; cults of media violence that desensitize, terrorize, and brutalize; images that over-stimulate and narcotize; stories that polarize and spur the growing siege mentality of our cities but ignore the drift toward ecological suicide, the silent crumbling of our infrastructure and the widening income gaps in the richest country that already has the most glaring inequalities in the industrial world.

CEM offers the liberating alternative, working for freedom, fairness, diversity. For more information, e-mail CEM@libertynet.org, or write P.O. Box 31847, Philadelphia PA 19104.