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INTRODUCTION

This double issue of Progressive Librarian features two of the papers delivered at a challenging program, “The New Information Technologies: Hidden Agendas, Institutional Power and the Fate of Librarianship,” which took place at the 1992 American Library Association’s annual convention under the auspices of the Progressive Librarians Guild and ALA’s Social Responsibilities Round Table. Exploring the mythologies of the “information society” Theodore Rozsak and John Buschman both suggest that cultural development dominated by the market-driven dynamics of the infotech industry in no way assures democratic cultural empowerment and, in fact, has powerful inherent tendencies undermining that project. Their outline of the embedded “hidden agenda” of technologies of information and of concealed, technologically rationalized forms of censorship and limitation of access we hope will encourage further critical reflection and debate about the meanings and effects of apparently “neutral” forms of information mediation. A feminist perspective on some of these issues by another of the panel’s participants, Sarah Pritchard, will appear in the next issue of this journal.

PL co-editor Henry T. Blanke’s “The Mass Culture Debate: Left Perspectives” is a contribution towards understanding library and information issues in the context of critical theories of culture and society, in particular those theories associated with the Frankfurt School, which emphasize the transformation of the cultural sphere into a crucial instrument of manipulation and domination under “late capitalism.” His essay surveys the key themes of some of this century’s seminal cultural/political debates which continue to haunt current discussions of modernity and post-modernity in most disciplines but which, because of the hegemony of a narrow, positivist framework over much of our field’s professional research, scarcely ever inform any discussion of library issues. The piece is also a kind of rejoinder to Mike Harris’ “No Love Lost” in our last issue which adopted an attitude towards popular culture very much different from that of the group of radical critics who trace their lineage to the tradition Blanke wants to draw to our attention.

Progressive Librarian’s editorial viewpoint is predicated on
the notion that librarianship is an occupation situated at the intersections of several disciplines and practices, most importantly the conjuncture of education and communications. Therefore readers should find it no surprise that we are presenting in this issue materials relating to the field of popular/critical education inspired by the work of the radical Brazilian educational theorist/practitioner Paulo Freire. The "comic book" we reprint here, in translation, the work of visiting Freirians and Brazilian Worker's Party (PT) activists Eleonora and Joao Paulo Castano Ferreira, is the model of material currently being developed by them for an experimental worker's education program in New York City which they are carrying out under the sponsorship of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. This example of "critical literacy" material deals in an exemplary way with issues raised in the last Brazilian presidential campaign (a campaign which PT candidate "Lula" narrowly lost), issues which have relevance to workers everywhere. This is followed by a brief bibliography of items illuminating some of the theoretical premises and practical applications of this kind of cultural work.

Finally, in our Documents section, we are pleased to present a speech given by labor historian Grace Palladino to members of Local 2910, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, at the Library of Congress about the implications of LC's new closed stacks policy on historical research, and the text of an American Historical Association resolution on the same issue.

POLITICS OF INFORMATION AND THE FATE OF THE EARTH
by Theodore Roszak

As a writer and teacher, I value information as much as the next person. Unless, that is, the next person is a computer hacker, a Cognitive Scientist, an Artificial Intelligence expert, or an advertising executive in charge of the IBM or Apple account. Then I begin to feel as if I've strayed into a strange cult where all about me I find people worshipping light bulbs. No question but that light bulbs are useful devices. I wouldn't want to live without them. But I never would have thought of them as objects of veneration.

So too with information. I grew up in a time when this non-descript word was rarely used for anything more exalted than requesting a telephone number ("Information, please"). But in the years since World War II, I have seen it progress to the status of a godword, enjoying the mystique once reserved for Reason, Faith, Grace. As such words often do, it has steadily broadened to cover more and more intellectual territory. These days it is no surprise to find information elevated to the Be-all and End-all of existence. In a recent book, two renowned cosmologists (John Barrow and Frank Tipler), pondering "Life and the Final State of the Universe," conclude that everything human beings do, not just their thinking, is purely and simply a form of information processing. It follows that every conceivable thought and action of any possible form of life is ultimately constrained by the physical laws governing the processing of information.

Accordingly, they predict a time when we may have to recruit fundamental matter itself (in the form of positronium atoms) to pack away all the information we have collected. Finally, when some superintelligent species has "stored an infinite amount of information, including all bits of knowledge which it is possible to know," we will have reached "the Omega Point," the evolutionary terminus of the cosmos. One wonders what the protocols will be for logging on to a database as vast as the mind of God.
Somewhere behind this apotheosis of information there lies a curious and ironic episode in the cultural history of our time. Through the late sixties and seventies, during the heroic age of the personal computer, many of the now semi-legendary hackers of that first high-tech generation were guided by a great ideal. They were confident that the new information technology they were fabricating, like so many cyberpunk renegades working out of attics and garages or in clandestine all-night sessions at the nation's computer labs, would one day serve as the basis for a democratic renaissance. Computer networks and bulletin boards, they idealistically predicted, would one day bind the people of the world together in one nonstop electronic town meeting, a global village in which the citizenry would find all the data it needed for intelligent discourse and enlightened political participation.

That is not the way things seem to be turning out. Instead, we find ourselves in the paradoxical position of having at the same time both too much and too little information. Whether we own computers or not, we are all vividly aware these days that there is a great deal more information buzzing about us than these sources ever provided. The mass media we share are themselves more and more dependent on highly sophisticated forms of data processing and telecommunications that span the globe. Governments, corporations, campaigning politicians now routinely inundate us with a flood of facts and figures that can easily discourage criticism. "Data glut," as it has been called, can be confusing; it can also be subtly coercive, and perhaps in no respect more so than by convincing us that information is the indispensable ingredient in political affairs. Not wisdom, character, common sense — but data, usually meaning lots of inscrutable numbers.

There are high tech enthusiasts who assure us that, if the computer has helped create the problem of information overload, it is the very tool to provide the solution. All we need is a little high tech hair of the dog. After all, a database exists to organize data, does it not? True, but there is not just one database; there are hundreds, each using different protocols, renting on different terms, operating with varying degrees of reliability. These days, keeping the organized facts "organized" is now a project in its own right. We need databases to help us keep track of the databases.

And then there is all the free-wheeling data that builds up in every large computer system by way of electronic mail, duplicated files, outdated messages, office chit-chat, in-house persiflage, and the inevitable, endless on-scrolling anthology of light bulb jokes. Open a conference on your computer, and you may never be able to turn off the flow. File a simple query on the network, and you may get a hundred answers, not counting wise-cracks. One can set up a neat little business these days flushing the sludge out of overloaded computer systems, a sort of electronic roto-router service. Anterior Technology in Menlo Park, California has done just that. Its service, the "In Moderation Network," will monitor your clogged and overflowing databank, purging the "information sewage" of inane, repetitious, and irrelevant material for a yearly fee of $720. This janitorial function is, incidentally, performed by natural intelligence: namely, people.

Thanks to the computer, we now have exotic new species of information undreamt of in anybody's philosophy a generation ago. Because of their speed and prodigious memory, computers can build exquisitely baroque statistical cathedrals by compiling and articulating existing information into ornate new configurations.

Consider, for example, the sort of matching programs that can network data from government agencies, credit bureaus, educational, legal and medical files, zip codes, subscription lists, law enforcement records.... The resulting compilation — a demographic mountain built out of molehills of once inaccessibly scattered data — represents a category of information that could never have been assembled a generation ago. Perhaps we need a new word: "hyperfacts," which might be graded into classes depending upon the number of matches that went into making them. Thus, the answer to the question "What are the names and addresses of all recently divorced, college-educated males between the ages of 24 and 45 living in the Beverly Hills zip code area of Los Angeles County, earning above $100,000 a year at firms that have downsized in the past twenty-four months, driving BMWs and seriously close to the end of their Gold Card credit line, who have undergone major surgery in the past twelve months?" would be a Class Twelve Hyperfact.
This might seem to be information we never knew we needed; indeed information that answers questions we could never have imagined asking. But provide the data and a use will surely be found — say, to write one of those customized form letters we receive these days with our name at the top and a pitch that begins, “having trouble meeting your alimony payments after all those expensive days in the hospital, Mr. Thorndike?”

At this level of usage, the global matching program is a mere annoyance. But consider substituting a few different terms in the example above: for the salary, a political affiliation; for the BMW, a list of petitions signed over the years; for marital status, a radical publication. Then place the program in the hands of the FBI, which of course is already well-equipped with such powers. At once the technology takes on another, more ominous character.

True, the right hardware equipped with the right software can perform data-processing miracles. But when the computer does solve the problem of data-glut, say by way of a well-managed on-line information service, for whom — primarily and most efficiently — does it do so? An instructive example might be drawn from the world of finance, one of the most data-intensive areas of daily life. Think for a moment how computers have come to function in the international money market. Programmed investing — or “high leverage financial decision-making” as the age-old practice of arbitrage is referred to these days — did not exist until there was a machine that could process enormous quantities of data at the speed of light. Those who can afford such “silicon agents,” as they are known in Artificial Intelligence circles, are in the position to manipulate entire economies to their own advantage in obedience to programs which are their property, using databases that they can far more easily afford to create or rent than the individual investor. As a result, financial power has become more tightly concentrated and more esoterically wielded than ever before.

Or imagine a would-be presidential candidate who had a large enough bankroll to afford exactly the data-processing technology he needed to define his demographic terrain with pinpoint accuracy. Imagine the candidate owned a satellite communications system and a nationwide telephone bank equipped to record, store, and manipulate the phone number of every party that calls. Would he not enjoy a formidable advantage based largely on his ability to mine information? Perhaps enough to be able to outflank primary elections and party nominations...?

For the first time in history, information is well on its way to becoming a proprietary benefit available only by license from those who own it and for whatever fee they care to place upon it. In times past, a book which contained information might be a commodity with a price upon it; but a book is cheap. If it finds its way into a public library, it is free. And whatever it contains — say, the definitions in a dictionary, the thought in an encyclopedia, the statistics in an almanac — is in the public domain. Nobody collects a fee each time you look up a word in Webster’s or consult the Britannica.

These days more and more information is being locked away in commodities called databases located inside commodities called computers which can be accessed only with the permission of those who own the programs and only by those who have the machinery to do the accessing. And more and more large databases are being concentrated in fewer hands. Indeed, there is reason to believe that buying up big, lucrative databases is a high priority among those corporative elements that are out to oligopolize as many publishing and media assets as they can.

When we speak of information as a commodity, we must bear in mind that there is the owning side of the question as well as the selling side. Both introduce a political and financial dimension into our discussion of the technology. What some sell to make money, others now own and use in ways that present a serious challenge to what precious little is left of the world’s democratic institutions.

There is, in short, a politics of information. And in that politics so far there has been no significant voice raised in behalf of the public interest. Instead, we have an ongoing heated effort to sell hardware and software to the most lucrative markets: corporations, governments, the universities — and beyond that perhaps to as many well-heeled individuals as can afford to own the equipment, rent time on a
It is a striking fact that in the discussion of information, the library is so rarely mentioned. America's city, county, and state libraries represent the best-developed reference and reading service available to the general public. There may be an understandable reluctance on the part of the computer industry to call attention to that fact. The data merchants, after all, are out to sell their wares, both hard and soft. Let the consuming millions know that information is freely available through a public utility, and the millions will not buy. Library sales count for little compared to the prospect of putting a privately owned microcomputer into every home or on every office desk. If computers — or at least access to them through a specialist's skills — were readily available free of charge in the library, that might dissuade some potential customers from buying.

There may be another reason why the public library is so minor a player in the new information ethos. Thanks to its marketing imagery, the computer has been costumed as an affluent, middle-class appliance — like the Cuisinart and the compact disk player. Its use in the library associates it with ideas of public budgeting and thrifty purchasing, a sensible investment meant to serve a distinctly low consumption populace that is addicted to the unspeakably bad habit of borrowing books — collectively owned books! — rather than buying them. This institution doesn't even pay the authors of its books royalties! Since its inception, the library has been an offense to private property. In its democratic outreach, the library contacts a clientele that may even include the genuinely poor, whom the data merchants do not regard as any sort of market at all. When was the last time you saw "information" associated with needs of the distressed and victimized? This is not the imagery or the reality with which the computer industry feels comfortable. From its viewpoint, information is upscale merchandise priced to the budget of top-dollar professionals and executive decision-makers. The electronic marketplace is well-stocked with what that public requires: market reports, tips on resorts and restaurants, dating services, satellite shopping. I suspect we will wait a long while before we have databanks called Welfarex, Pauperserve, Joblessnet.

But there are libraries that might give the project a try. They have expanded their services to include referrals, pamphlets, contacts that cover a wide range of community social needs: legal assistance, tenants' rights, unemployment benefits, job training, immigration, health, welfare, and consumers' problems. The object is to put members of the public in touch with groups and agencies that can help with daily matters of livelihood and survival. This is not the kind of information one finds in commercial databases; and while the service may overlap the function of some electronic bulletin boards, the library can make it available to those who cannot afford a computer or easily master its intricacies.

If computerized information services have any natural place in a society, it is in the public library. There, the power and the efficiency of the technology for the non-hacker majority can be maximized, along with its democratic access. In the libraries of the nation, we have an existing intellectual network spread across the society, stationed in almost every neighborhood and in the charge of experienced people who have always honored a strong ethic of public service. If the equipment for computerized reference facilities were concentrated in local libraries or, better still for reasons of economy, if every local library were linked to a generously funded regional reference center, this would be the fastest and cheapest way for the general public to gain open access to whatever benefits the Information Age may have to offer. We do well to remember that making the democratic most of the Information Age is a matter not only of technology but also of the social organization of that technology.

Finally, let me turn to one area of our life in which I believe the library now has a special and particularly demanding role to play as a citizen's reference service. In preparing my recent book The Voice of the Earth, a study of the psychological link between the planet and her increasingly vexatious human species, I reached the conclusion that the environment that most
urgently needs our attention is that environment of the mind
where all other issues must find their valid reflection. Granted
that all public debate, including environmental politics, is bound
to be a messy business in which value and emotion, fact and
fabrication struggle for expression. But environmentalism is
peculiarly data-intensive. More so than in any other arena of
conflict, environmental questions are linked in everybody’s anx-
ious thoughts with facts and figures. And never have dry statis-
tics been so filled with consequence.

Do we know for sure that the ozone is vanishing — and
why? Do we know for sure that the oceanic food chain is in dan-
ger of being depleted — and why? Can we be sure what damage
acid rain will do over the next year, decade, century? How sure
do we have to be about how many numbers before we reform
our ways?

Providing reliable information on ecological issues begins
with the honest admission that many of the most important
issues are vastly imponderable, requiring speculative extrapolations
that span the entire planet over eons of time. There is
much we cannot be certain about, much we cannot pretend to
know for generations to come. One must make this admission
even though we know that there are opponents of the environ-
mental movement who will take great advantage of that situa-
tion, as if uncertainty were a license for continuing business as
usual. And of course that is exactly wrong. Uncertainty is the
worst case, because it forces us to opt for prudence in the
absence of a clear imperative.

Confronted as they have been over the past decade with
recalcitrance, indecision, and irresponsible evasion in high
places, many environmentalists have understandably felt driven
to respond with moral hyperbole and apocalyptic exaggeration.
The goal may be a healthy sense of caution and restraint, but
the result is often a statistical smog that leaves the watching
public rubbing its eyes with bewilderment. Whom can it
believe? What is the truth of the matter?

To a significant degree the confusion arises from the organi-
zational impaction of the environmental movement itself. In
their efforts to arouse the public, environmentalists have under-
standably flooded the society with the statistics of impending
disaster. But the movement hardly speaks with a single voice in
behalf of a clear agenda. There are few organizations (like the
Worldwatch Institute, Earth Island Institute, Friends of the
Earth) that have sought to prioritize the many challenges and
changes we face. The movement at large and at the grass roots
remains disconnectedly and often competitively occupied at
every level from the planetary biosphere as a whole down to the
nearest bend in the local river. There are impassioned groups
devoted to every embattled ecosystem, every imperilled culture,
every endangered species of flora and fauna. Still others are
focussed upon the myriad sources of toxicity and pollution.
Environmentalism is quite simply the liveliest, largest, most
internally diverse movement ever to occupy the political land-
scape. Even under the best and most candid of circumstances,
the amount of data now accumulating on environmental prob-
lems that may be serious enough to threaten our survival would
be overwhelming.

But circumstances are not the best, nor the most candid. In
addition to official obfuscation, there is now the diabolically
clever corporate ploy of “green-washing” — dressing up business
as usual to look environmentally responsible, when it may be
just the opposite. One repackages the controversial product,
calls it the “environmental formula,” and surrounds it with
advertisements featuring frisky animals and Edenic landscapes.
To judge by the commercials one sees on television, the butter-
flies and the wildflowers never had better friends than Dow and
Dupont.

Worse still, a new and rougher political tactic has emerged:
environmental hardball. We have on our hands a well-organized
and funded anti-environmental backlash that is seeking to cast
environmentalists in the role of bullies and fanatics. Major cor-
porations now sponsor citizens’ groups like the Alliance for
America and the Blue Ribbon Coalition that purport to speak for
hikers, hunters, fishermen, and dirt-bike riders who merely
want to enjoy the simple, God-given pleasures of nature.
Lumber and mining corporations circulate a “Wise Use Agenda”
that legitimizes their unrestricted pursuit of profit, meanwhile
fastening to champion the little guys who are supposedly help-
less victims of elitist environmental organizations conspiring to place the wilderness off limits to the human race.

In the United States, as the cold war fades from memory, conservative elements are eagerly targeting environmentalism as their replacement adversary, casting it in the nefarious role once filled by the Marxist opposition. A green scare is replacing the red menace. The Competitive Enterprise Institute, a conservative study center that promotes "free market eco-management," announces, "There is an intellectual war taking place between pro-market and anti-market forces, to which business should be contributing a vigorous defense of its social role." The Institute rankles at the constant "poormouthing" of "grieving greenies." "Ideological" environmentalists, it charges, are "anti-human"; their underlying premise is that "every consumer product and every consumer action is inherently anti-environmental."

In brief, the environment of mind is not only overpopulated with information but increasingly polluted with misinformation and disinformation. I realize that, as the politics of the environmental movement enters this latest, contentiously ideological phase, it cannot be the job of libraries to take sides on each heated debate. But that is not what is needed. The lines of controversy have been drawn and are already well-defended. What we do need is somewhere — preferably outside the environmental movement itself — the public can look to find a balanced selection of timely materials and access to all the data available so that it can pick its way through the propaganda and partisan pleading. We need, not still another group of impassioned environmental advocates, but the help of people, who, though honestly concerned about the issues, can yet be trusted by the public as an independent source of reliable, many-sided information. We need those who can be seen as standing apart from the adversarial exaggerations and scare tactics of environmentalists as well as from corporate and official duplicity, and who are in touch with the best research, the latest findings, the many views represented in each debate. I cannot think of any institution better placed to perform that function than the public libraries of the nation.

And they might do more. They might help publicize the first international set of biospheric priorities the environmental movement has been able to produce. As disappointing and as compromised as the recent Earth Summit in Rio may have been, this landmark event left behind it a consensus on the most urgent ecological dilemmas of our time. It marked out four interrelated issues: economic relations between the rich and poor nations, global warming, the fate of the rainforests, biodiversity. Of course there was a fifth issue that absolutely everybody knows should have been on the agenda. Population. Population was so glaringly [and shamefully] ignored that it was left all but screaming in the streets of Rio. But its neglect at the Summit may actually have made the issue more prominent than if it had been given perfunctory attention. The fact that the Summit censored itself on so pressing a question served to underscore the single greatest lesson the conference had to teach the world, namely that every environmental issue is a hot political issue, more so than it is a technical or scientific issue.

Would it be possible for the libraries of the United States to adopt this epoch-making consensus as a project in public education, devoting a month to each of the issues in turn? The goal would be to draw the public's attention to the historic significance of the Earth Summit — and with respect to each of the issues make clear what libraries have to offer as independent reference and resource centers. And of course the project would address the question of why population was not on the Summit's agenda.

Though my appeal here is for the library to act as an independent, non-adversarial information resource, I have every confidence that the truth of the environmental cause will speak for itself when the facts and figures are fairly marshalled, when the most respected authorities are assembled, when the debate is rationally conducted. Moreover, once again as the keepers of our literary heritage, libraries could gracefully include in this project so much that is often squeezed out of rancorous political debate: the classic works of poetry and literature that celebrate the majesty of nature, studies of primary people in their habitats, the memoirs of great naturalists and nature lovers, the art and film that capture the splendors of the Earth. Materials like
these shape the sensibilities that give life to facts.

We need sound information and a great deal of it in our struggle to save the living planet. But that is not all we need. We need to draw on works of thought and wonder that provide the emotional context for wise decisions and compassionate policy. Who better to remind us of that than those who work each day at the sources of culture?

I had considered beginning this paper with some tempting bait: a sketch of the glorious role of librarians and libraries in our high tech future. I was then going to raise questions about the direction that future is taking. But I have come to believe that we are moving far too rapidly away from our historic professional and institutional values of print literacy, social memory, and equal access to resources for an informed citizenry, so I want to state my position up front as clearly as possible.

Henry Giroux, a critical theorist of education, argued in the early 1980's that there has been a fundamental shift in the guiding ideas behind our policies toward public institutions. He speaks about public schools, but I think his comments apply to libraries as well:

Schools [and libraries] are no longer being celebrated for their role as democratizing institutions. \[T\]he traditional arms-length relationship between \[public institutions\] and business is now being dismantled for the purpose of aligning \[them\] more closely with short- and long-term business and corporate interests. \[They\] are becoming citadel[s] of corporate ideology... (Giroux 1988, 178).

What we are losing in this process, and what I think we must create and recreate, is the role of libraries as what Giroux calls "critical" or "democratic public spheres." Again, adapting his analysis of schooling, I would describe public institutions like schools and libraries

...as democratic sites dedicated to forms of self and social empowerment. \[They\] are public spaces where \[people\] learn the knowledge and skills necessary to live in an authentic democracy. Instead of defining \[them\] as extensions of the workplace or as frontline institutions in the battle of international markets and foreign competition, \[public institutions\] as democratic
public spheres are constructed around forms of critical inquiry that dignify meaningful dialogue and human agency [and] the discourse of public association and social responsibility...recapturing the idea of critical democracy as a social movement that supports individual freedom and social justice (Giroux 1988, xxxii; see also Buschman and Carbone 1991 and Giroux 1984).

In contrast to this vision, I will argue that the current technological trajectory of our profession and our institutions is the primary vehicle behind the shift toward aligning libraries with the technical and corporate agenda to the detriment of libraries' role as critical and democratic public spheres.

Background

To begin to illustrate my argument, let me first give some brief background upon which it rests. There is very little question that the government, corporate, and technical elite have, for some time now, provided the basis for a technological agenda on national information policies that has come to define our work and our institutions. Herbert and Anita Schiller have clearly traced the beginnings of this development back to the 1940's through the 1970's. They cite Lee Burchinal, then Director of the Division of Scientific Information of the National Science Foundation who wrote in 1977 that:

The driving forces [for the] substitution of nonprint forms of distribution...lie outside the library field and its on-line suppliers....The main impetus is derived from the dynamics of the major elements comprising the U.S. information economy. Information processing requirements of business, banking and other commercial enterprises are immense. So are those of the military and civilian sides of the federal government....[I]n effect...libraries and their on-line service suppliers are following the lead of other industries....[T]he library field will not compel rethinking or reformulation of national information policies. But the converse is true - decisions regarding national communication policies and practices will have profound effects on libraries and their operations (Schiller and Schiller 1988, 151).

Scholars like David Noble have shown that the general history of technology benefits those who invent, own, and control them (Noble 1983), and John Durham Peters has very succinctly shown that the computer was the quintessential product of the post-World War II military-industrial complex. So, by the mid-1970's, the Domestic Council Committee, chaired by Nelson Rockefeller, could state flatly that "While publicly supported library functions providing free information should not be abolished, it should be recognized that there is no such thing as free information" (Schiller and Schiller 1988, 157).

This thread has been picked up by the powerful Information Industry Association, whose primary goal, the Schillers state, "is basically incompatible with the underlying and historical, though inadequately fulfilled, principle of...library service-equal access for all to the nation's informational resources" (154). In other words, it should come as no surprise to us that information technology resources in libraries are structured toward profiting and supporting those who invented, sponsored, and still generally control them. For example, in very recent developments, the Regional Bell Operating Companies (the "Baby Bells" or RBOCs) were allowed into the information provision and electronic publishing business by an October 30, 1991 Supreme Court decision, despite the deep reservations of the presiding judge. The objections of the American Newspaper Association and several high tech companies were stated to a Congressional Subcommittee: "To be forced to rely upon one's competitor for delivery of an electronic product is ludicrous. [T]he RBOCs still totally control local phone services and have a history of well-known, substantial anti-competitive behavior" (Webb 1991, 8; see also Publisher's Weekly 1991).

As a result of the Supreme Court's decision, 2 RBOC's purchased, among other things: the rights to NOTIS (a system used by 110 academic libraries), Dynix (the world's most widely installed library system), and a joint venture with France's Minitel system to offer videotext. All this added to the RBOC's previous purchases of the rights to the OCLC LS200 and Tacoma Public Library systems (Malinconico 1992). Currently, the Baby Bells are lobbying to kill federal legislation regulating against them offering information services in areas where they provide...
telephone service. They wish to "promote" rather than "stifle" competition (Information Today 1992).

As a final example of our government's priorities, President Bush supported "a national network for information sharing...copyright statutes and business information centers" but stopped short of supporting the Omnibus Children and Youth Literacy Initiative recommended to him from the White House Conference on Library and Information Science (Library Hotline 1992). He further stated in comments published in the American Libraries, May 1992 issue that contracting out library and information services is appropriate when it will promote efficiency and lead to improved services. Private industry will work closely with Federal agencies and labs in the planning, funding, and management of the [NREN] initiative to ensure that the fruit of this research network will be brought into the educational and commercial marketplace (Bandelin 1992, 361).

Given the distinctly economic and technical agenda driving information policies, and in turn, library professional practice, what are some of the possible results to our profession and our institutions if we continue on this trajectory? I would like to explore some of the troublesome possibilities in our future in the following section, keeping in mind the vision of libraries as critical and democratic public spheres.

The Problems: A Broad View

In a broad sense, if we look, we can clearly see the economic and technical agenda redefining and restructuring our profession and our institutions. For instance, in a revealing article, Tom Gaughan, editor of American Libraries, visited OCLC headquarters - that benchmark of future directions for libraries - and found that this "non-profit utility" may be for libraries, but not of them. He goes on to describe "the corporate culture of OCLC." If OCLC is a bellweather of change for libraries, then librarians can expect:

- to work in buildings designed for computers instead of people or books. OCLC has 280,000 miles of telecommunications wiring to link and support its operations
- to work in low, acoustically padded workspaces designed for individual "private" computer use. Getting a new, upgraded computer will become the equivalent of a promotion as it is at OCLC
- to work in an atmosphere where ceiling mounted speakers will emit "white noise" to create a "private" zone in one's cubicle while individual workstations are constantly monitored for the number of calls handled, average wait for an answer, and the abandon rate of callers per librarian as they are at OCLC (Gaughan 1991).

OCLC is very concerned about marketing their products to libraries and keeping those "customers" satisfied. But their newest ventures smack more of corporate empire building and profit seeking: the First Search database service which essentially targets end users for searching and direct delivery of documents, making libraries and librarians middlemen in selling the search cards for access to the system. The Chronicle of Higher Education described this as "Bypassing the Librarian" (Malinconico 1992). I would argue that OCLC is a large indicator of where our institutions are heading.

Like OCLC, libraries of all kinds are marketing fee-based services which are primarily driven by and dependent on electronic resources. I am not going to touch the issues of equity and access inherent in this approach. They have been thoroughly critiqued by others. But Michael Carbone and I have written elsewhere that this entrepreneurial direction has consequences. While non-profit entities like OCLC and the Library of Congress are aggressively pursuing markets and fees for services [a model of entrepreneurial librarianship has taken root]. Restructuring toward fees and marketing of services may leave behind ideas of service, value, and scholarship. [James] Govan...states his fear that "libraries will cease to be enlisted in a common educational cause and will come increasingly to pursue separate goals in isolation." The public sphere and democratic traditions and values [are] not well served
by moves in this direction (Buschman and Carbone 1991, 35-6).

Let me state clearly that nothing I have read before or after we wrote that has shown anything different. Information technology-driven fee-based services in libraries are almost exclusively business oriented. In essence they are publicly underwritten research services for business — doing what one corporate library director described as the "legwork [with a] big difference in price (Rogers 1992, 36).

Where money goes, so goes collection building, the purchase of more supporting electronic resources, and human resources. Entrepreneurial management in libraries means putting public institutions like libraries on a "business footing": offering more collections and services that show a return, and fewer that don't. Money from customers or private sources does not come without strings, and the logic of marketing tells the entrepreneurial librarian to invest more in the "profitable" end of the "business" (see Buschman and Carbone 1991, Govan 1988, and Coffman and Josephine 1991).

Finally, I would like to point out that these new fee-based services are being offered in academic and public libraries in an atmosphere of stagnant budgets. Where is the money and staffing coming from? (See McMillen 1992 and Nicklin 1992, 1992a) Perhaps the most egregious example is that of the New York Public Library which is opening a "Science, Industry, and Business" research library in Manhattan at a public cost of $18.5 million (Library Hotline 1991) while the New York Times is running stories on $25 million in budget cuts and curtailing main library and branch hours for after school services to children.

Let me restate something I originally wrote about 3 years ago:

Libraries are not profitable in the cost-benefit mode of analysis, and never will be. Their good is not quantifiable and represents as much a faith and public value than a specific service.... Librarianship, like teaching, law, and medicine is not a private profession. The changes in those professions have great social importance and they are treated as public issues. Should the effects of our decisions weigh less? (Buschman 1990, 148)

I now would like to turn this discussion to some specific and disturbing possibilities for the profession of librarianship.

The Problems: Still a Profession?

Optimists about our future see librarians as information consultants, dynamic navigators (Robinson 1991) or data-surfers (Davis 1992) if you prefer the hip version, in future "virtual libraries." All print resources, past, present, and future, will be digitized and available electronically from a single central source over a national communications network. The thinking goes that the public, as well as students and scholars, will be overwhelmed by the richness of these resources - and need librarians. Therefore, we should no longer build big book warehouses, we should get on the information bandwagon now. In fact, we should have been on it several years ago. This is a composite picture from several recently published articles (Robinson, Malinconico, Smith) and I see a number of very serious issues for our profession in this vision of the future.

First, in a chapter written for my forthcoming edited monograph, Michael Winter has explored the issue of deskilling/deprofessionalization and the reskilling of librarianship in relation to technologies. I do not want to misrepresent Michael's conclusions, so I will note them up front. He contends that "deskilling" is somewhat misleading if applied across the board.... In librarianship one can find examples of downward movement [of professional skills], but these are often accompanied by an at least partly compensating upward movement; "deskilling" in other words, is often followed by "reskilling" (Winter, forthcoming).

I have looked at Winter's analysis and come to a more pessimistic conclusion. He notes that, as with other industries or professions, capital-intensive investment in technologies tends to transfer authority away from the collegial and professional control of work. The introduction of "telematics" - contemporary automation combined with telecommunications - shifts librarians' labor processes toward electronic resources, and,
inevitably brings new managerial orientations, often shifting resources away from traditional areas of librarianship... Along with this comes a new administrative elite in libraries... oriented toward national and international networking trends [and] often openly allied with outside interests. Not surprisingly, contemporary library administrators often lean toward the elite corporate culture that controls telematic technology than to the technology of print [Winter, forthcoming].

If it is based in elite corporate culture, how might management of librarians' professional work look in the future? Think back to my description of the "virtual library" - librarians as information consultants and data surfers. If all librarian work is to be mediated through computers, which is exactly what the "virtual library" holds for us, and those technologies are the vehicle for the lessening of collegial control of work and the introduction of the corporate management model, then I believe librarians will be subject to the same supervision and constraints as other white collar and information workers. For example, the Wall Street Journal ran a story on office networks: "Network management programs now allow operators of most office PC networks to peer into directories of files stored on individual PC's, letting them read, rewrite and delete files from PC hard disks" (Wilke 1992).

Further, Shoshana Zuboff, author of In the Age of the Smart Machine, states quite bluntly in an earlier article that

It is the intent of the intellectual technology at the core of the computer system to substitute algorithms or decision rules for individual judgement... Work accomplished through the medium of video terminals or other intelligent equipment can be recorded on a second-by-second basis. [This information is] available to supervisors and managers, thus limiting their dependence on face-to-face supervision but potentially increasing the amount of surveillance that can occur (Zuboff 1982, 52, 57).

Zuboff notes that jobs as diverse as that of bill collectors, airline pilots, auto-assembly plant workers, telephone company workers, bankers, and cold-type operators have all been deskilled to a greater or lesser degree. She concludes that "...there should be no confusion that firms undertake massive computer-based automation projects with labor force reduction as a primary goal" (61). In other words, information technologies have brought both deskilling and an abstracted and deprofessionalizing supervision to many other kinds of work.

Remember Michael Winter's analysis that deskilling is only partially mitigated by reskilling. Is this all too farfetched to apply to librarianship? Think back further to the reference to Tom Gaughan's description of work at OCLC. Statistics are kept constantly on the number of calls, average call length, average wait, and the abandon rate. He states that "Several managers expressed concern about [the abandon rate] because it was too high.... I wondered if there's a library in the country with a phone system slick enough to measure the abandon rate of telephone reference queries (Gaughan 1991).

I contend that a form of these kinds of management and supervision are already in place at OCLC. In terms of deskilling and labor force reduction, there are right now all kinds of fledgling programs out there designed as "Intelligent Reference Systems" to "...identify and describe appropriate electronic and printed resources to meet user's reference information needs... link users to appropriate... databases [and] provide them with location information about [those resources]" (Bailey and Gunning 1990, 10). This sounds very much like a program designed to do the professional work of an academic reference librarian. Other areas of professional encroachment have been identified as well (Buschman and Carbone 1991). In the long run, I believe these developments in the library field will follow the larger social patterns of deskilling and electronic supervision already found in the blue, pink, and white collar work worlds for some time now.

The Problems: Will We Need Libraries?

What will "virtual libraries" be? There are a number of differing interpretations or glimpses at the underside of the future predicted for our institutions. Like James Govan, I think libraries will become nothing more than retailing shops for pri-
private and privatized electronic resources. In his [probably] uninten-
tionally ironic title, "Information's Brave New World," S.
Michael Malinconico states that "There are obviously a growing
number of serious competitors prepared to offer a broad variety
of library and information services" (Malinconico 1992, 38). I
find that statement interesting in several ways, but the most
important assumption behind it is that libraries need to change
and act even more as a "business competitor" to those other
"library and information services." Through this process, we are
giving up on our historical missions of service, collective social
memory, and our relationship to print.

The problem is that for libraries to install things like
electronic Book Banks (Lande 1991), is essentially putting a
library in a library! Offering current electronic resources is a
replication of the same phenomena. There is no particular
reason for all of these resources to be offered through
libraries since libraries are putting themselves on an entre-
preneurial/business footing. We will have become just anoth-
er competitor in the information marketplace, not logically,
socially, economically, or morally any better or more desir-
able than other information providers.

Still, Charles Robinson feels that, in order to "save"
libraries, we should give up our "custodial function" since
there either won't or shouldn't be any more massive collec-
tions of printed books (Robinson 1992, 54). In a privatized
environment, there is no way the full spectrum of print will
become available in a "...single comprehensive collection
including all extant current, past and future...publications"
as Eldred Smith predicts (Smith 1992, 50). None of the cur-
rent projects to digitize electronic text come close to this
goal, and as I have suggested, the selection and distribution
of those texts is the building of an electronic canon
(Buschman 1992).

Eugene Provenzo, an early supporter of what he called
the "Post-Gutenberg" era, has come to question the shape
that digitized culture is taking. He warns that digitized text
and photographs make the historical record a much more
ephemeral and manipulable thing, rendering them unreli-
able. After all, an electronic text or photograph can be
altered without any record of what the original source
said....The control and rewriting of history that
[Orwell] warned of was not really feasible
[then]....The ability to alter the past has always
been potentially possible. [But until now] it has
tended...to be enormously time-consuming and rela-
tively easy to detect [Provenzo, forthcoming].

This is no longer the case.

Lastly, there is some question that access to current elec-
tronic resources is becoming more privatized and restricted. For
instance, restricting access to the NREN is already becoming an
issue [see Wilson 1992 and 1992a]. And in an obscure confer-
cence held in Reston, VA on April 21-22, 1992, privatization of
the Internet was being contemplated and planned [Caskey 1992].
On a lighter note, Stanford University sought to censor a humor
file on their computer network [Kadie 1992]. I will only note in
passing the well-documented and continuing profit-making off
government information [New York Times 1991]. Of course,
those electronic resources that do exist are weighted heavily
forward toward business and economics. When DIALOG's 1990
database offerings were examined, my coauthor and I found that 17
of the 25 categories of subjects - covering the vast majority of
databases offered - were of primary interest to those fields
(Buschman and Carbone 1991, 27). CD-ROMs, the electronic
resource of choice in libraries, also lean heavily in this direction.
Of the 2212 CD titles available worldwide, only 13% are related
to history or the arts. This is substantial growth from 1988 when
roughly 50% of all available CD-ROM titles were scientific, tech-
nical, or business specific and only 6 were related to the human-
ities (Nicholls 1992, 72-3).

Conclusion

I have argued elsewhere that librarians are uncritically
accepting the agenda inherent in library information technolo-
gies on the premise that, by becoming data surfers, we're catch-
ing the wave of the future and riding it to the long-awaited pay
and recognition of status that we feel we deserve (Buschman
1990 and 1990a). I think that there are other aspects to those
technologies – an underside if you like – that compel at least as much examination as their wonderful possibilities. Adapting the eloquence of Maxine Greene, another educational thinker, I would suggest that "Nowhere is it written that American [public institutions] are required...to respond to the demands of the Pentagon or to those obsessed with exploiting markets overseas" (Greene 1989, ix-x). Elsewhere she writes: "In a time when so much time is spent watching...and manipulating, in a time when linear forms work in strange dialectic with the swirling images of video; we need to provide spaces...for giving voice to what remains silent amid the sounds of machines" (Greene 1985, 17).

I return to Henry Giroux’s call for critical public spheres where the capacity for learning is not reduced to economic or technical considerations... The public sphere...refers to those arenas of social life...where dialogue and critique provide for the cultivation of democratic sentiments and habits.... The principles that inform the role of state and federal policy within this context are organized around a public philosophy dedicated to the creation of an educated citizenry, capable of exercising political and ethical leadership in the public sphere (Giroux 1984, 190, 192-3).

Librarians simply must gather the intellectual courage, and political and moral will to question where our administrative, government, business, educational, and technical elite are leading our institutions and our profession. The strength of our democracy resides at least as much in providing spaces for potential alternatives, challenges, and ideas to develop as it does in the speed and manipulability of our data. Our current trajectory will make libraries places that no longer provide the spaces that Giroux and Greene spoke of that our society needs now more than ever.

In accepting the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table’s Gay and Lesbian Task Force 1992 Book Award for fiction, Paul Monette put a very poignant and human face on this issue. He said: "Libraries were, for me, one of the only safe spaces; a place where one could explore being different." I believe these are the kinds of spaces we are giving up.

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**Works Cited**


THE MASS CULTURE DEBATE: LEFT PERSPECTIVES
by Henry T. Blanke

In a provocative recent article, Michael Harris has argued that librarianship, a feminized but male-dominated profession, has been complicit in the production and reproduction of patriarchal cultural values through adherence to a rigidly hierarchical and sexist literary canon. This paradox of a profession of women promoting male-defined standards of esthetic value is expressed in the antagonism between female librarians and “the most voracious and perhaps the most literate group of American readers — those middle-class women who read what librarians like to term ‘trash’” (Harris 1992, 2). Harris cites feminist research claiming that the involvement of these women with romance fiction represents a valid though veiled protest against sexism and expresses utopian longings for a more egalitarian condition. However, given the enthusiasm with which public libraries today dispense the hottest new mass market books and videos as if they were so many Big Macs, Harris’ image of the censorious librarian guarding the canons of Western culture seems dated. Furthermore, Harris fails to acknowledge the position on these matters that is critical of both the canon as presently constituted and the products of the mass culture industries. Commercial popular culture is no less instrumental in the production of ideological hegemony than is canonical high culture.

These specific objections aside, however, Harris’ piece is interesting because of his efforts to interpret library issues within the broader context of American culture, politics, and economics. He uses cultural theory to conceptualize the linkages between library conflicts and larger social struggles. Similarly, Herbert Schiller, John Buschman, and Harris himself throughout an exemplary body of work, have explored the politics of librarianship and information as a vital site within the contested terrain of American cultural politics. How do escalating trends toward the commercial privatization of information reflect the logic of American culture and political economy? What role is played by the media, schools, libraries and other cultural institutions in the reproduction of existing distributions of wealth and power? Are mass media products irredeemably manipulative or can they be appropriated for progressive purposes?

In order for radical librarians and others struggling for substantive cultural democracy to adequately address these and other crucial questions some familiarity with the major Left theoretical perspectives on the nature of mass culture and its relationship to political consciousness may be useful. Toward that end this article will survey the work of several prominent cultural theorists beginning with the enormously influential Frankfurt School. In many ways this group set the terms for the mass culture debate in this country and their theories have been engaged by critics representing generations and ideologies ranging from Cold War liberalism to New Left radicalism. The reception of “culture industry” theory by the Frankfurt School’s contemporaries and successors on the Left, both critical and affirmative, will be discussed as will the antagonistic response of the liberal mainstream.

Culture Industry Theory: Entertainment as Social Domination

Concomitant with the technological, economic and political changes which marked the transition from the pre-industrial era to urban industrial society, there evolved new forms of popular culture geared toward the newly urbanized masses. The shift toward mass production and a consumption oriented mass market economy had its cultural counterpart in the emergence of large-scale commercial leisure activities. The growth of mass culture, as it accelerated into the 20th century with the development of popular magazines, radio, cinema, sound recordings, advertising, and eventually television, evoked the ire of intellectual commentators. The first group of 20th century intellectuals to critique popular or, in their more pejorative designation, mass culture were largely conservative, even aristocratic, in their sensibility. These writers, best represented by Jose Ortega y Gasset and T.S. Elliot, saw in mass culture a brutish trampling on esthetic and cultural values, standards, traditions, and authority, in short a vulgar degeneration which threatened the very foundations of Western civilization.

However, by the 1930s a critique of mass culture had
emerged from the socialist end of the political spectrum. Among the first radical intellectuals to seriously analyze popular culture and the mass media were those associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany. These thinkers had experienced a series of events and historical developments which shook the foundation on which they had built their hopes for the creation of a more rational and humane social order. The capitulation of the European working classes to the militaristic nationalism of the First World War, the failure of post-war revolutionary activity in Germany, the degeneration of the Russian Revolution into bureaucracy and repression, and the rise of fascism all seemed to underscore the failure of socialist theory and practice. Furthermore, Western capitalism was stabilizing and had evolved into a highly organized, centralized, and monopolistic form. All this demanded a thorough reevaluation and revision of Marxist theory, a project which was taken up with great originality by the Frankfurt School thinkers first in Germany and subsequently in the United States.

Among the more important revisions of orthodox Marxist thought undertaken by Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and their colleagues was their emphasis on commercial culture and the mass media as key institutions of ideological domination and social control. Although culture and ideology had always been a concern of theirs, immigration to the United States illustrated the centrality of the new mass media in socializing the populace away from critical thought and action and toward passivity and acceptance of the status quo. Frankfurt School theorists worked out their ideas on mass culture in many writings spanning several decades, but the most important and suggestive statements of their views on these matters are Horkheimer's and Adorno's essay “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” and Adorno's subsequent clarification “Culture Industry Reconsidered” (Horkheimer Adorno 1974; Adorno 1990).

With the increasing concentration and centralization of economic forces which characterizes 20th century monopoly capitalism, culture had become integrated into the market system. The process whereby the profit motive is transferred onto cultural products which become a “species of commodity... marketable and interchangeable like an industrial product” is attributed by Horkheimer and Adorno to the workings of the “culture industry” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1974, 158). The authors coined the latter term as an alternative to popular or mass culture to make it clear that under contemporary conditions culture does not arise from the masses or satisfy their genuine needs and desires, but is imposed on them from above in the interest of profit and ideological domination (Adorno 1990, 275). The culture industry functions to directly reap a profit for its owners while, at the same time, creating an ideological climate promoting corporate capitalist society as the best of all possible worlds. Of course, the profit function and the ideological function of the media are mutually reinforcing.

The products churned out by the culture industry, although carrying a superficial air of novelty and originality, are in fact thoroughly standardized and interchangeable. Successful formulas are endlessly repeated and production and distribution techniques are mechanical and rationalized.

Not only are the hit songs, stars, and soap operas cyclically recurrent and rigidly invariable types, but the specific content of the entertainment itself... only appears to change. The details are interchangeable.... As soon as the film begins, it is quite clear how it will end.... In light music, once the trained ear has heard the first notes of the hit song, it can guess what is coming... The average length of the short story has to be rigidly adhered to (Horkheimer and Adorno 1974, 125).

The constant bombardment of entertainment of this type induces stupefaction and passivity on the part of the audience. The deadeningly uniform and trivial products of the mass media occupy all of people's leisure time leaving no space for critical reflection, independent thought, or the free play of the imagination.

The culture industry exploits real needs for relief from the drudgery and tedium of the work world. By providing temporary relief through mindless and distracting entertainment it reinforces the passive mentality required for alienated labor and militates against the kind of critical thinking and action neces-
sary for social change. Because the products of the culture industry are so standardized and mechanical and require so little effort or initiative for their consumption, they serve to reinforce the rationalized, tedious workplace even as they offer a brief but unsatisfying respite from it. Whereas the art of previous eras maintained a degree of autonomy from the social order and preserved images of the hope for greater happiness, mass media entertainments are merely extensions of an exploitative and irrational social world. The social order as it exists is endlessly reproduced on movie screens, in advertisements and throughout the mass media and thus made to appear natural and unchangeable (Horkheimer and Adorno 1974, 126-27, 137, 144-45).

Ultimately, Adorno sees the effect of the culture industry as impeding “the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves (Adorno 1990, 281). Its power derives from and reinforces feelings of dependence, powerlessness and anxiety. The cumulative message of the culture industry is one of conformity, obedience, and acquiescence to power.

Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s ideas on the role of the culture industry in the reproduction of advanced capitalist society are supported by their colleague Herbert Marcuse. For Marcuse a society based on alienated labor requires repression of the individual’s instinctual orientation toward pleasure and sensuality. During the early development of capitalism what little leisure time people had was dulled by the length and routine of the work day necessitating a purely passive recouping of energies for the next day. However, the expanding realm of free time allowed for by the greater productivity of advanced capitalism now threatens to overthrow the limits on pleasure required for labor discipline. Consequently “the technique of mass manipulation developed an entertainment industry which directly controls leisure time...” (Marcuse 1966, 47-48).

In his “one-dimensional man” analysis, Marcuse posits a view of contemporary industrial society in which all segments of the population, including potentially oppositional elements, have been manipulated and integrated into a total system of administration, efficiency, and relatively comfortable domina-

tion. He sees the culture industry as a central agent of social control and integration, its “irresistible output [transmitting] prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly...to the whole [social system]” (Marcuse 1964, 12).

Whereas great art traditionally had a subversive potential because it preserved images of freedom and happiness denied by social reality, today art has become a commercial product indistinguishable from other commodities and thoroughly absorbed into the system. Thus the traditional antagonism between artistic ideal and existing reality has been flattened out. The commodity form of mass culture reinforces capitalist values, integrates its consumers into the social order and militates against a critical sensibility.

Not all of the theorists and critics associated with the Frankfurt School were so pessimistic in their evaluation of mass culture, however. In his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” one of the School’s peripheral members, Walter Benjamin, argues with some degree of ambivalence for the emancipatory potential of mass culture. Benjamin is interested in the changes wrought on the production of art by technological innovation. In particular, the reproducibility characteristic of photographs and films destroys the sense of uniqueness and authenticity (“aura”) traditionally associated with art. The origin of art in magical and religious practices imbued it with a quality of authority, awe, and distance from the people. These qualities continued to be associated with artistic productions in later secular movements which romanticized the artist and his work. However, now

for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual.... From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the “authentic print” makes no sense. But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice — politics (Benjamin 1969, 224).
Benjamin sees film in particular as having progressive political potential through its ability to invite a mass audience to critically scrutinize the hidden details of the social environment and to comprehend both "the necessities which rule our lives" as well as "an immense and unexpected field of [political] action: Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices...and factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison world asunder..." (236).

Although recognizing that at present the film industry promotes "the phony spell of a commodity," he feels that film techniques such as montage and the conditions of mass audience viewing erodes the traditional solitary, passive contemplation of art. The collective experience of cinematic "shock effects" leading to a "hightened presence of mind" could promote critical thought and collective action (231, 238).

Ironically, Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will premiered in the same year (1936) as the original publication of Benjamin's essay. This film was politicized art in the service of a passive consumption of mystical aura and mass spectacle. It showed how easily film could be used for purposes precisely the opposite of those Benjamin hoped for. At the same time a film industry was developing in the United States which 'promoted not critical distance and scrutiny of everyday life, but escapism, the aura of fantasy and emotional identification.

Some leftist critics of subsequent generations would draw inspiration from Benjamin in their appreciation of the progressive possibilities of popular culture. But it was the pessimistic formulations of Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse which had the more significant initial impact. Their influence on American cultural criticism is evident in the first major anthology of its kind published in the United States. In Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America (1957) there appear essays by Bernard Rosenberg, Dwight Macdonald, Clement Greenberg, Irving Howe and others strikingly similar to culture industry theory. Adorno himself contributed a content analysis of some popular television programs and his Frankfurt School colleagues Leo Lowenthal and Siegfried Kracauer were also represented (Rosenberg and White 1957).

The Frankfurt School's influence is most clearly evident in Dwight Macdonald's essay "A Theory of Mass Culture." Macdonald distinguished mass culture from folk or popular culture, the former being "solely and directly an article for mass consumption." Whereas folk art was a spontaneous expression of the people intended to suit their own needs, "mass culture is imposed from above... It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audience are passive consumers" who don't participate in the creation of their culture. The purveyors of mass culture exploit the needs of the people in order to make a profit and to maintain their privileged class position (Macdonald 1957, 59-60). For Macdonald, as for the Frankfurt School theorists, the effect of the culture industry is to integrate the masses into an exploitative system, thus serving as an instrument of political domination and control.

However, Macdonald shared not only the political radicalism of the Frankfurt School, but also its elitist cultural sensibility. At the risk of oversimplification, the differences between conservative and radical critics of mass culture can be boiled down to the fact that conservatives blame the masses themselves for despoiling high culture while the radicals see the masses as being manipulated by those who own and control the media for the sake of profit and control. At times, however, this distinction becomes blurred by a common elitist sensibility. Thus, in terms reminiscent of Ortega y Gasset, Macdonald decry's the disastrous cultural consequences of the "eruption of the masses onto the political stage." The situation would not be so bleak if there was a clear boundary between Kitsch for the masses and high culture for the elite, but Kitsch obliterates all cultural values and distinctions and threatens to drown out high culture "by its sheer pervasiveness, its brutal, overwhelming quantity" (61). For Macdonald the question of which came first, the mass demand for a trivial and debased culture or the stimulation and satisfaction of that demand for profit and domination, is unanswerable. What is important is that people are now caught in the inexorable workings of a self-perpetuating cultural machine.

The Cold War Liberal Polemic

Given the ideological climate of the United States in the
late 1940s and 1950s, a critique of American capitalist culture as trenchant as that of the Frankfurt School and the more radical of the *Mass Culture* contributors could only meet with a hostile reception. In a sharply polemical review of the *Mass Culture* anthology, Edward Shils attributes the Left critique to the frustration and disillusionment of radicals in the face of the proletariat's refusal of the revolutionary vocation which they had assigned to it (Shils 1957, 590-91). He accuses them of romanticizing the organic folk culture of pre-industrial society and of overestimating the meretriciousness and vulgarity of contemporary popular culture.

According to Shils, changes brought about by economic progress and "the efforts of liberal and humanitarian reformers" of the 19th century have allowed the majority of the population to escape from the degraded life it was condemned to in the past. Only now do most people have the opportunity to become full members of their society and to exercise some degree of cultural taste. "Only the frustrated attachment to an impossible ideal of human perfection, and a distaste for one's own society and for human beings as they are, can obscure this" [604, 606]. Presumably, however, the 19th century reformers championed by Shils did not accept people and society as they were or they would never have mustered the efforts to change it. For the Frankfurt School theorists accepting the status quo precludes the possibility of a higher mode of human existence and a better society. Ideals of human and social perfection serve as normative standards by which to critique existing conditions and which can inspire action towards their realization.

Shils repeatedly excoriates the radical critics for blaming the masses for not embracing high culture (606, 608). While the elitism of the mass culture critics does seem to open them to this charge, Shils does not address the central tenet of the culture industry thesis which blames rich and powerful elites for manipulating and dominating the masses in order to further their own interests.

Similar liberal affirmations of American culture would recur in subsequent years. For instance, Herbert Gans, in his 1974 defense of cultural pluralism *Popular Culture and High Culture*, rejects the mass culture critique on grounds similar to Shils'. The critique overestimates the negative effects of mass culture, it romanticizes pre-industrial folk culture, it is out of sympathy with the tastes of ordinary people who, for the first time, are fully integrated into their society (Gans 1974, 55-60). While briefly noting the division between conservative and socialist camps among the mass culture critics, he emphasizes their similarities and downplays the significant distinctions between their respective analyses. He does mention Marcuse's distinctly radical analysis only to reject it on the grounds that the mass media has little real impact on the behavior and attitudes of people and that even a revolutionary popular culture would not inspire them to eliminate social ills (48-49).

According to Gans' easy pluralism, people have a right to the cultural artifacts appropriate to their own economic and educational levels and all levels of culture are equally valid. Culture industry theory would argue that social-economic stratification should not be so easily accepted. Also, people are not free to choose the culture which they enjoy but are subject to the logic of a system which manipulates their desires and imposes on them a narcotizing culture.

However, not all liberal scholars during the great American celebration of the 1950s were as sanguine about the state of American culture as Shils (and, later, Gans). In *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, Daniel Boorstin offers a perceptive critique of mass culture in this country. Like Shils, he rejects the idea that the masses are manipulated by capitalist culture, but for him that culture is anything but benign and he blames the American people themselves for this fact. According to Boorstin, America's great wealth and technological achievements have had the unintended consequence of grossly inflating our expectations of the world and experience. Because the real world simply cannot satisfy our craving for exciting news, novelty, heroism, and adventure, we have fabricated an illusory world of pseudo-events, spectacles, and celebrities. Boorstin traces the technological wherewithal necessary to create such a culture of pseudo-events to the advent of what he calls the Graphic Revolution of the mid-19th century. Revolutionary developments in printing were followed by photography, radio, motion pictures, sound recordings, and television. The development of
these mass media had the effect of both momentarily satisfying and further stimulating a growing national appetite for spectacular happenings and easily digestible art and entertainment to the point where "making illusions...has become the business of America" (Boorstin 1961, 5).

From the perspective of the present moment of MTV and infotainment periodicals and television, Boorstin's tour of American mass culture seems prescient. Journalists, desperate for stories to fill daily papers and news programs, use the spotlight of media scrutiny to manufacture events. Politicians conform to the needs of the media with the result that vital matters of public policy and debate are distorted around the conventions of nightly news programs. Where once society honored its heroes for their courage and monumental deeds, increasingly in this century the public clamors for details of the foibles and latest sexual escapades of celebrities (defined by Boorstin as "a person who is well-known for his well-knownness" (57). At times Boorstin interprets these developments as a lamentable, but acceptable, consequence of the American democratic and egalitarian ethos. For instance, the laudable goal to make art, literature, and music accessible to all has resulted in a situation where great art is abridged and popularized and cultural products are created according to marketability. In short, Americans expect more novelty, greatness, and strangeness than there is in the world and, in trying to satisfy these exaggerated expectations, the mass media has fabricated a world where image and pseudo-event overshadow real experience.

The Image is far more critical of mass culture than the qualified affirmations of Boorstin's fellow Cold War liberal Edward Shils or the simple pluralism of Herbert Gans. In fact his descriptions of the American cultural scene often converge with those of Leftist critics. His entire chapter on contemporary developments in art, literature, and music accessible to all has resulted in a situation where great art is abridged and popularized and cultural products are created according to marketability. In short, Americans expect more novelty, greatness, and strangeness than there is in the world and, in trying to satisfy these exaggerated expectations, the mass media has fabricated a world where image and pseudo-event overshadow real experience.

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American mass culture works, or what is the relationship between capitalism and the media. The Image is entirely bereft of any analysis of the political economy of the mass media. Boorstin pretends we are all in this mess together, as if everybody from corporate CEOs and those in the upper echelons of government to the average worker are all equally responsible for and victimized by the sorry state of American culture.

Throughout his book, Boorstin glosses over class, racial, and gender divisions as well as inequities of power and wealth, by repeatedly referring to the entire spectrum of American society as "we" and "us." "It is we who keep them [the mass media] in business and demand that they fill our consciousness with novelties." He blithely rejects the idea that changes in American culture reflect the shifting imperatives of capitalist and elite class interests as being "oversubtle." After 260 pages of describing a culture that could easily be interpreted in terms of economic manipulation and social control, Boorstin concludes weakly, "While we have given others great power to deceive us...they could not have done so without our collaboration. If there is a crime of deception being committed in America today, each of us is the principal, and all others only accessories" (9, 59, 260).

The New Left Revival of Radical Cultural Theory

Boorstin's book, critical of American culture, yet ultimately pulling its punches, was followed by an explosion of scholarly activity by a new generation of intellectuals associated with the New Left movements of the 1960s. Stanley Aronowitz's far-ranging study of working class history and culture, False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness, is representative of the kind of radical analysis that marked the end of the virtual moratorium on critiques of capitalism (outside of the work of the Frankfurt School and other mavericks, such as C. Wright Mills) characteristic of the 1950s. An earlier generation of Western Marxists had tried to account for the failure of socialist revolution in Europe despite the presence of objective factors Marx believed necessary for such events. They found an answer in subjective factors, specifically the ways in which the values and assumptions of capitalism are reproduced in the conscious-
ness of the proletariat through cultural institutions.

In analyzing the American context, Aronowitz follows the lead of his European predecessors by examining how institutions such as the school, church, family, and especially the mass media have historically functioned to prevent the development of a revolutionary consciousness among workers. He explains how late 19th century advances in industrial technology necessitated a more educated and disciplined labor force at the same time as it rendered child labor superfluous. While the enactment of child labor laws and the establishment of free compulsory education did have a humane effect, schools were used to socialize children according to the needs of changing socio-economic circumstances. In addition to reading, writing and math, children learned discipline, respect for authority and hierarchy. While schools promoted an ideology of social mobility through education, they also used tracking to inculcate in working class children a sense of their place in the division of labor (Aronowitz 1973, 72-76).

Aronowitz traces the development of advertising and mass culture in response to the demands of an increasingly consumption-oriented economy for new markets and for the stimulation of new consumer needs. Furthermore, the mass media developed to occupy an increase in leisure time generated by more highly developed forms of production. By the post-World War II period, traditional working class institutions and patterns of life had eroded and been replaced by a mass mediated consumer culture. According to Aronowitz, the media have superceded the family and schools as primary agents of socialization (95).

Consumerism supplies spurious replacements for the creative satisfactions denied in the authoritarian workplace. The spectacles provided by television, movies, spectator sports, etc. distract people from social injustice and inequality as they reinforce feelings of political impotence, atomized individualism, national chauvinism, and material affluence as a reward for social obedience. Much of this territory had already been covered, with even greater theoretical sophistication, by Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, but Aronowitz counterbalances the highly abstract approach of the latter theorists with a greater attention to empirical detail. His close reading of the middle class biases in the TV program “All in the Family” and his examination of the conservative views of human nature depicted in popular movies such as “Straw Dogs” and “A Clockwork Orange” are excellent. So is his demonstration of how even children’s games become infused with capitalist values as elements of hierarchy, seriousness and competition replace spontaneous joyful play.

Finally, False Promises is especially insightful because of its author’s insistence, in disagreements with his Frankfurt School forebears, that popular culture is contested terrain where moments of creativity and rebellion struggle against commercial and ideological exploitation (118-124). Adorno and Horkheimer saw mass culture as irredeemably meretricious and imposed from above on a hapless populace. Aronowitz shares much of this evaluation, but, echoing Benjamin, he also recognizes the adversarial vitality and utopian aspirations in current popular forms which preserve the future hope of a truly liberated culture. This ambiguity with regard to the political effects and potential of the media is characteristic of much New Left thought. For instance, while former SDS president Todd Gitlin claims that television aims “to narrow and flatten consciousness — to tailor everyman’s worldview to the consumer mentality,” he criticizes Marcuse for failing to “show how one-dimensional forms could generate at least the seeds of their negations,” for missing “the ambiguity of television’s effects” (Gitlin 1972, 351).

Even more optimistic in his assessment of the progressive possibilities of popular culture is the German critic Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Enzensberger claims that, with the exceptions of Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht, Marxists have seen only the capitalist manipulations of the mass media and have been blind to its oppositional and emancipatory potential. Seeing the media only in terms of manipulation reflects a sense of impotence and leads to defensiveness and defeatism. Enzensberger indict both the older and New Left for a culturally archaic and puritanical refusal to appreciate the extent to which the consumerist and hedonistic esthetic of the media addresses, albeit in distorted form, the legitimate needs and desires of people (Enzensberger 1974).

The Left’s fear of cooptation and refusal to work with the messy contradictions of popular culture has ceded the important
sphere of media experimentation and innovation to apolitical avant garde groups. Enzensberger calls for a socialist strategy which addresses the contradictions between the technological and social potential of the mass media and its present constitution under capitalist control. Such a strategy should focus on the enormous power of the media to mobilize people for collective social action. "For the first time in history, the media are making possible mass participation in a social...process" (97). The present concentration of political and economic power in monopoly capitalism is reflected in media monopolies which broadcast their programs to a passive, atomized audience. The current constitutions of the media allows for no feedback and thus no real communication. Technically, however, there is no reason why every media receiver can't also be a transmitter. A decentralized system of interactive communication and feedback is prevented only by political considerations.

However, the prospect that anyone can become a media producer is not enough to release the democratic potential of the mass media. As long as media experimentation remains at the level of "individual tinkering" it is apolitical and socially irrelevant. "Any socialist strategy for the media must, on the contrary, strive to end the isolation of the individual participants from the social learning and production process" (Enzensberger 1974, 109). A subversive use of the media demands and facilitates self-organized collective action. The presence of decentralized, collective media activity at all sites of social conflict would be a highly effective means of political education and would serve to promote a more democratic and equitable society.

While Enzensberger imagines a radical transformation of the media and communications system, another New Left critic, Douglas Kellner, argues for an appreciation of the oppositional and subversive elements within mainstream media culture (Kellner 1982). Kellner also favors radical alternative media activity and revolutionary art but, because the situation in the United States is far from revolutionary, he argues that moments of critique and protest in popular culture as presently constituted should be taken seriously. Kellner blames the influence of the Frankfurt School for the Left's scorning of popular culture as uniformly manipulative and stupefying and for failing to recognize its emancipatory aspects.

Blues and folk music, people's theater, radical newspapers and other forms of traditional popular culture always contained elements of protest against oppression. It is crucial "to appreciate the ways in which these traditions...remain alive within the contemporary productions of the electronic media" (Kellner 1982, 405). The anarchic comedies of Keaton, Chaplin and the Marx Brothers, the cinematic alienation of James Dean and Marlon Brando, the erotic energy of rock music all express protest against authority and repression. By the 1970s television, perhaps the most conservative medium, was producing realistic and critical programs which challenged idealistic depictions of American life.

Kellner analyzes several documentaries which expose poverty, racism, and corruption in government and business, and failures of American foreign policy. He shows how contemporary miniseries "have dealt with class conflict, racism...imperialism, and oppression.... They have often sympathetically portrayed the ...poor, minorities, and workers, and presented capitalists... as exploiters [thus] reversing the usual content of television codes." Recent television comedies (especially Norman Lear's) have introduced controversial issues, engaged in social satire, and used humor and irony "to suggest that something is profoundly wrong with current society" (412, 418).

Kellner recognizes that most television and other mass media products function ideologically to reproduce and reinforce the status quo. Even the most progressive mainstream TV programs rarely, if ever, treat social problems as endemic to the capitalist system or propose alternative social systems. Furthermore, audiences may interpret critical and progressive content in apolitical or conservative ways. Nonetheless, given the centrality of the electronic media in the everyday lives of most people, the Left must support critical elements when they surface. The Left must find ways to intervene in popular culture, using traditional dramatic and comedic forms if necessary, in order to communicate subversive and emancipatory content to large audiences.

In a critical reassessment of culture industry theory, Kellner
argues that the media "reflect, express and articulate social reality" and thus must portray "an often nasty and conflicted reality in order to gain an audience and credibility." Consequently, the culture industry may "unwittingly engage in social critique and ideological subversion" (Kellner 1984, 203). Failure to appreciate this process left culture industry theory unable to account for the upheavals of the 1960s when a generation raised on the mass media revolted against the status quo. Today the logic of the culture industry compels it to desperately pursue profit by increasingly targeting marginal audiences and thus undermining social homogenization and opening up space for alternative perspectives.

Mass Media: Instruments of Control or Tools of Liberation?

Much of the mass culture debate on the Left has oscillated between the antagonistic positions established by Adorno and Benjamin. Enzensberger and Kellner are representative of a growing contingent of radical critics who, following the lead of Benjamin, see progressive, even revolutionary, potential in the mass media. They reject, albeit to varying degrees and with qualifications, the Frankfurt School view of the culture industry as monolithic and intractable. However, beginning with Benjamin, there is an element of wishful thinking in the way these critics overestimate the extent to which advancements in media technology and isolated pockets of critical media production can effectively challenge the system. It is almost as if they believe that the mere existence of advanced technology (photography and film for Benjamin; cable TV, video recorders etc. for Kellner) can revolutionize art and society regardless of the ways that dominant values are built into the very structure of technology in a capitalist society.

Moreover, the impact that small disorganized elements of critical and progressive media production (both within and without mainstream culture) can have on mass social consciousness should not be overestimated. This is especially true given the importance of both the form and context of media messages as well as the conditions of audience reception. Kellner advocates using conventional mass media forms (TV melodrama, situation comedy, music videos) to advance radical content without sufficiently considering the influence that standardized commodity forms have on audience interpretation of content. Even the most radical content when surrounded by the inexorable flood of standardized mass produced images may simply blend in and dissolve. Furthermore a politicized social climate must exist for audiences to recognize and properly interpret radical messages. Political and countercultural media and art had some impact during the 1960s because the overall atmosphere of social conflict and political debate made clear the different positions and worldviews being advanced.

It may be true that cultural freedom has expanded and that there is more diversity, presence of marginal social groups and realistic treatment of controversial issues in mass culture since the period when Adorno and his colleagues formulated their theories. It is also the case, however, that there has been an increasing concentration of corporate ownership of the mass media. The last decade has seen an acceleration of the process whereby most television, films, radio, records, books, magazines, and newspapers have come under the ownership and control of a handful of transnational conglomerates (Bagdikian 1989). This development alone should be enough to dampen the hopes of even the most optimistic of radical cultural theorists and activists. In fact, the corporate colonization of everyday life has accelerated to the point where the present postmodernist culture of image consumption, commodity aesthetics, and global spectacles (coinciding with new, more fluid, high velocity forms of transnational capital accumulation) bears a similar relation to Adorno's culture industry, as MTV bears to a '50s television series. Still, the core insight of culture industry theory, concerning how the imposition of the commodity form on cultural products (standardized production of art and entertainment for market exchange rather than for aesthetic meaning and use) in itself reinforces the system of alienated labor over and above whatever specific messages the capitalist media wishes to impart, continues to be of crucial relevance.

Even the relatively marginal sphere of librarianship has not escaped the steady infiltration of market forces into all areas of social and cultural life. Partly because of its social marginality and partly because of a principled adherence to the ideal of
information as a public good, historically the library has somewhat escaped the process of cultural commodification. However, the increasing prominence of information as an economic resource, so characteristic of post-industrial social developments, have generated forces which are changing the nature and role of libraries. The privatization of public information, entrepreneurial library management strategies, the uncritical embrace of costly new information technology, and the cozy alliance between libraries and the commercial information industry all signal the logic of commodification as applied to librarianship. We are now witnessing the annexation of the library by the culture industry.

While the essentials of the culture industry analysis remain valid, efforts at critique and revision have been necessary to correct the exaggerations, theoretical blind spots and biases of Adorno et al. Any critical evaluation of the Frankfurt School must take into account the fact that its foremost theorists had witnessed fascism's use of the mass spectacle as an instrument of totalitarian control. Upon emigrating to the United States at a time when mass culture was proliferating and a rabid Cold War mentality was about to seize the country, they were bombarded by the products, often put to reactionary political purposes, of the capitalist entertainment industries. The shock of these experiences may account for their profound pessimism and for the sense of overkill in their writings which describes the mass media in terms of an "iron system," an "absolute master" which dominates individual consciousness and imposes a "ruthless unity" on all aspects of cultural and social life (Horkheimer and Adorno 1974, 121, 124). Certainly the events of the 1960s contradict this view that advanced capitalism is a total system which neutralizes all social conflict and that its culture industries have created a population of completely passive, narcotized consumers.

Adorno's infamous (and uninformed) attack on jazz reveals an esthetic sensibility utterly out of sympathy with any forms of popular culture. With the exception of Marcuse during his brief appreciation of the 1960s counterculture, Frankfurt School theorists were too categorical in their dismissal of culture which did not meet the lofty standards of Schoenberg, Kafka, Beckett and their other favored models of autonomous art. Consequently they were unable to make distinctions among the very diverse artifacts and expressions of popular culture. For them, presumably, the music of Tin Pan Alley hacks and that of the Beatles, the most banal soap opera and a program such as "Roots," supermarket romance novels and Toni Morrison's bestseller Beloved are all equally debased and stupefying.

This esthetic narrowness and elitism prevented Horkheimer, Adorno, Macdonald et al. from understanding the genuine gratifications provided by popular culture and from appreciating the vitality, expressiveness, joy, and rebelliousness of, for instance, blues music, jazz and rock. By seeing in the mass media only ideological domination and social control, they failed to recognize the extent to which popular culture is disputed ground on which authentic, vital, and sometimes subversive popular expression (often originating from marginal and oppressed groups) comes into conflict with the commercial and ideological imperatives of the corporate capitalist media. Consequently culture industry theory did not analyze the positive relationship between progressive popular culture and mass political consciousness and mobilization. It did not develop strategies by which a subversive and emancipatory popular culture could be forged and the conservative and oppressive effects of the culture industry could be countered.

The Left today can ill afford not to take advantage of whatever subversive possibilities may exist within mass culture. Constructive engagement with mass media as well as the development of alternative, experimental approaches to media is vital given the powerful socializing effects of mass culture in contemporary society. A politics of the media and mass culture should be a part of any Left strategy in the United States today. However, Leftists engaged in media politics must be aware of the limits to such an approach. They must be aware of the various and complex ways in which the mass media trivialize and disarm radical messages. Cultural theorists and activists must understand how the mass media tolerates some degree of dissent, giving the impression of being open and pluralistic, only to absorb and neutralize it. The culture industry theory of the Frankfurt School continues to be an indispensable source for
such an understanding of the workings of mass culture in contemporary society.

Works Cited


ADDED ENTRIES:

LULA AGAINST THE ALAGOAS MAHARAJAH

Have you seen the news on the T.V.? Collor said he is going to arrest all the corrupt people of the government, if he is elected!

Andy you believe that Collor is against Sarney's government? You think that everything he says is the truth?

Yes, I do believe that! Collor is a young guy who has nothing to do with these old thieving politicians.

You think that Collor is a new politician? You are mistaken. Collor was born, was raised and has succeeded in the same kind of politics.

The family of Fernando Collor de Mello is of old sugarcane industrialists from the northeast, the famous "Colonels" who have always dominated the politics in this region.

Their richness and power came from the exploitation of the men, women and children who work in the sugarcane plantations.

In 1968, when he was 16 years old, Collor was always taking part in the fashionable events sponsored by the first lady, the Dicocrats' wife.

Fernando Collor de Mello was born and raised in luxury and enjoying the privileges of power.

Do you mean that Collor was a government toady since he was 16 years old?! What a contemptible guy!

When Collor was amusing himself in the palaces, the police attacked the people in the streets. Many were arrested, tortured and killed.

The military government shrunk the workers' salaries, repressed the labor leaders, nominated thousands of maharajas, and created the monstrous foreign debt that crush the people to this day.

In all this period, Collor was living in luxury, enjoying the privileges of power. He was a follower of the military regime, never denounced the government's corruption, and never defended the working class.
Collor didn't make any important project for the people of Alagoas. He only sold some positions to bankrupt the sugar cane because he was the son of a sugar cane producer. The state of Alagoas is in ruins today.

The number of relations for Collor is 26. The family has a business and positions in banks and government. The people of Alagoas have been suffering for years.

Collor's family is from an extreme rich family. His two sons are from an extreme rich family. His wife is the owner of the company. Collor is from the party of the president of the National Confederation of the Industry. Senator Alagoas Front, Collor's family is from an extreme rich family. His two sons are from an extreme rich family. His wife is the owner of the company. Collor is from the party of the president of the National Confederation of the Industry. Senator Alagoas Front.
You are right. I was a fool. To believe in color. Of course he is a Mahabharata. And the rich always defend the rich of themselves.

But can we trust any candidate? There is only one candidate who is really on the same side of the working class. Because he defended the workers' rights.

Lula fights for the people since 1975. When he was director of the steelworkers' union of S. Bernardo do Campo. In 1980, Lula and other labor leaders founded the Workers' Party, the PT.

Lula is not a professional politician like Collor. To defend the workers' rights, it is necessary to put our people in the government.

But how can we be sure that Lula and the PT are not going to become thieves when they come into power?

Lula and the PT congressmen made the congress approve many laws to benefit the working class:

- The right to go on strike.
- Maternity leave of 40 days.
- Working week of 44 hours.
- Vacations with more than 1/3 of the salary.
- 50% more for extra working hours.
- 20 hours a day for some workers.
- Salary of retired workers with correction.

And don't think that Lula is enjoying the politicians' privileges! He lives in the same workingman's house in S. Bernardo, when he is in Brasília, he stays in an apartment with other PT congressmen.

But there is only one way: the people have to have control over the government and the government has to render account of its actions to the people.

In the city of São Paulo, it is the councils of parents, students and teachers that discuss and determine the government's educational programs.

When the civil servants of the city of Campinas went on strike for better salaries, the PT mayor, Jâco Bittar, showed the city's accounts to the civil servants' unions.

Lula voted against the raise of the congressmen's salaries, and is not accepting this money from the government.
AND THEN THEY DISCUSSED THE SALARY RAISE THAT THE CITY COULD GIVE, AND SETTLED THE WAGES.

THE PT IS ALSO GOING TO ORGANIZE THE COUNCILS OF PUBLIC SECURITY, TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AND CRIME. THIS IS ONE OF OUR MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE POVERTY AND ABANDONMENT OF MILLIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNGSTERS.

THESE COUNCILS WILL HAVE REPRESENTATIVES OF DWELLERS' ASSOCIATIONS, SCHOOLS, UNIONS, CHURCHES, ETC., OF EACH NEIGHBORHOOD.

WE NEED MORE PATROLS IN THE STREETS!

MANY STUDENTS WERE ROBBED NEAR MY SCHOOL!

THE DRUG DEALERS ARE USING EVEN CHILDREN TO SELL DRUGS!

THEY ARE GOING TO DETERMINE THE BEST WAY TO FIGHT CRIME, THE NEIGHBORHOOD, DISCUSSING THE PROBLEM WITH THE POLICE AUTHORITIES.

NOW I UNDERSTAND! THE RIGHT THING TO DO IS TO VOTE ON A CANDIDATE WHO IS GOING TO GOVERN WITH THE PEOPLE! THERE IS NO BIG LEADER WHO IS GOING TO RESOLVE ALONE ALL OUR PROBLEMS!

COLETA IS VERY HANDSOME, AND TALKS VERY WELL, BUT THIS IS NOT GOING TO HELP ME, AND IT'S NOT GOING TO HELP MY CHILDREN!

THERE IS ONLY ONE CANDIDATE WHO IS NOT A FRIEND OF BARNEY AND OF THE POWERFUL AND RICH. LULA IS THE WORKING CLASS CANDIDATE! WE CAN TRUST ONLY LULA!

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GLOSSARY FOR LULA COMIC

Alagoas — state in northeastern Brazil; major industry is sugar production; long known among Brazilians for its particularly corrupt politicians (Keck 1992, 5).

Arena Party — National Renewal Alliance; established in 1966 by the military junta as the ruling party (Third World Guide 1990, 237).

Collorde Mello, Fernando — appointed mayor of Maceió by the military dictatorship, later became governor of Alagoas; elected President of Brazil in 1989 (the first direct presidential elections since 1960) with 42.75% of the vote; in May 1992 accused by his brother of corruption; impeached by Brazil’s Congress in late 1992 (Keck 1992, 5; Third World Guide 1990, 239).

Da Silva, Luis Inácio (Lula) — son of poor farmer, at 11 went to work in São Paulo factories; imprisoned by military; became President of the Metalworkers Union in 1975; one of the founders of the Workers’ Party; ran for President against Collor in 1989, received 37.86% of the vote (Hinchberger 1990, 4; Third World Guide 1990, 239.)

Maceió — Capital of Alagoas.

Maharajah — Brazilian political slang for corrupt politicians.

PDS — Social Democratic Party; Collor’s party when serving various offices in Alagoas in the 1970s and ‘80s.

PT — Workers’ Party; founded by labor leaders in 1980 and consisting of “people with diverse ideological perspectives: progressive Catholic church activists, independent socialists, Trotskyists, trade-unionists... ex-Communist Party members...” [Alves 1989, 16].

Sarney, José — following a U.S.-backed military coup in 1964 Brazil was governed by a military junta which appointed the country’s presidents, Sarney being the last; appointed in 1985 during a period of decline in the military’s power; responsible for democratization of Brazil’s political system which led to constitutional reform and direct elections (Third World Guide 1990, 238-9).

Works Cited


CRITICAL EDUCATION / POPULAR EDUCATION
Suggested Readings


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Giroux, Henry. Theory & Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition, Granby MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1983; 0-89789-031-0, $42.95; 0-89789-032-9, $17.95.


Glossary and reading compiled by Elaine Harger

62 Added Entries
CLOSED STACKS AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS:
A HISTORIAN RESPONDS
by Grace Palladino

Sometime last spring I watched a show on the local PBS station that showcased the Library of Congress and its rich research collections. While magicians Penn and Teller marveled at the prospect of working with Harry Houdini's very own books, a number of celebrity authors spoke excitedly about another kind of magic, the magic that somehow put unsuspecting researchers directly in touch with the very books they needed, although they didn't know they needed them at the time. I think it was the author of the Whole Earth Catalogue who described how certain books just seemed to call out to him from the stacks, and he praised the LC's open-stack policy for making this serendipitous process of discovery possible. Watching this show, one would think that the Library was proud of its efforts to foster creative research. The show, however, aired just about a week after Librarian of Congress James Billington cut off researchers' access to the stacks.

When I first learned of this decision, I had just returned home from a vacation, so I had missed the Washington Post's expose of thefts at the Library that led to the decision, and all the hoopla on the local news. But friends in touch with the situation assured me that the move was only temporary, and that, in time, the Librarian would relax his stand. Relieved that the situation did not seem to be as dire as I first expected, I decided to send a letter to the Librarian outlining what seemed to me to be important research-related considerations. The decision to close the stacks, I argued, may have solved some problems, but it raised other more serious ones, particularly for social historians. My thought was that if I presented the researcher's problems in a coherent fashion, pointing out that those who did history "from the bottom up" and who tried to document the everyday lives of everyday people would find it increasingly difficult to do their work, the Librarian would naturally agree that this was indeed a legitimate concern. I also thought that if I made some suggestions as to how security could be improved - since all of us know there was no security at all up to this point - that a real effort would be made to preserve access for researchers while still protecting collections. But of course, the Librarian never answered me, and it was weeks before one of his underlings sent me a form-letter reply.

By that time I had grown rather rabid on the subject, since closing the stacks directly affected my ability to do my job well. As a labor historian and the primary researcher for the Samuel Gompers Papers, a documentary editing project based at the University of Maryland, it is my job to research the life histories of rank and file labor leaders, and to provide details on local and national strikes, grass roots social organizations, and various national, state, and local agencies that are mentioned in the documents we publish. That means I might start with only a name like Jose Villa Lou, or an organization like the Topeka Rat Printers, or an episode like the Dayton Car strike, and it is up to me to provide significant details, dates, whatever is needed to flesh out the story.

Sometimes the search is easy, sometimes it's hard, and many times it seems impossible. And that's where stack access comes in handy. When I have exhausted all possible leads, and examined all the books that seem likely, sometimes the best thing to do is to check the indexes of remotely related volumes, or to go through the tables of contents of the many obscure journals the Library has collected over the years. I learned a long time ago that research is more an art than a science, and that the information I seek is rarely in the book I search for, but instead in the oddly-titled one shelved nearby. It's not a process that is easily explained or replicated, for I don't always have a good reason for picking up the books that I do. All I can tell you is that it worked for me, and that I used to be pretty good at it.

The powers-that-be contend that closing the stacks should not interfere with my ability to ferret out little known facts, for I can now search the shelf-list available on microfilm for pre-1966 books and the CD-ROM disk for post-1966 publications, and then request all the books on a given subject from LC staff. Seriously speaking this is just not practical for people like me who must meet strict publication deadlines in order to keep their grants. For example, there are well over 1,000 books on a
place like Philadelphia, any one of which might contain a reference I need. Or take the case of Jose Villa Lou, a Cuban activist not mentioned in mainstream sources and who I found by absolute chance as I browsed the stacks. To find the same information, it would mean ordering hundreds of books — on Cuba, on the Spanish American War, on imperialism, you name it — just to browse the index and then return them for shelving. Not a good use of my time, not a good use of the Library's time, and certainly not a good use of taxpayer money. Luckily I found Jose before March 31, 1992. I doubt very much that I would find him today.

When it became clear to me that the Library not only had no intention of addressing my concerns and was actively using the *LC Gazette* to promote a less than accurate view of the situation, I decided to appeal to higher authorities. I wrote numerous letters to professional organizations, to the Joint Committee on the Library, to various Congressmen I thought might be interested, but nothing happened. It was only when the *Post* published a piece in the "Sunday Outlook" section — and that after about three tries I think — that I got any response. And then that response was gratifying — Congressman Rose wanted to call hearings, researchers I had never met wanted to get involved, and even one well-placed library employee called me anonymously and urged me to take legal action. I was especially heartened by the many librarians who let me know they agreed with my position, for I have worked here for almost ten years and really did not want to burn all my bridges behind me. But even if the momentary publicity the *Post* piece got did encourage the Library finally to meet with a committee of historians, and even with me, ultimately nothing has happened. And, as far as I can tell, nothing will, unless the Library finds itself in the public eye again.

I wish I knew what the next step should be, I'm still writing letters, still working with a group of researchers, still complaining to anyone who will listen, but that's obviously not enough. It certainly might help if the people who have offered their private support for this issue could be more public, but that may be asking too much since jobs are concerned. Still, I think a concerted letter-writing effort, or maybe a petition to the Joint Committee might get some attention, not as much as a picket line, I know, but Congressman Rose will be chairman of the Joint Committee and in a position to help. I hope today we can make some plans for action, if only to keep the question alive. The people who are hurt most by the closed-stack decision are the "little" people — the independent researchers, public historians, library employees — and as individuals we don't have the prestige or the clout to impress the Librarian of Congress. But maybe working together we might attract "Eye Witness News" and get the process started again.

*Speech delivered at the Library of Congress, November 2, 1992*
RESOLUTION ON THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
by the American Historical Association

Whereas, the effectiveness of the Library of Congress as a center for scholarly research has been diminished by the recent restrictions on stack access, closing of the Manuscript Reading Room on Saturdays, and reduced hours for use of all research facilities; and

Whereas, the Library of Congress has served as the storehouse for over a century of this country's knowledge and contains unique items that cannot be found elsewhere; and

Whereas, the Librarian of Congress made a unilateral decision to close the stacks following unfavorable publicity in the press and refused to consider implementing an improved security system that might protect collections from theft and damage but still allow screened researchers access to their sources; and

Whereas, there is conclusive evidence that the Library of Congress failed during the last ten years to enforce even rudimentary security measures; and

Whereas, there has been no evidence in reported thefts implicating any researcher engaged in a bona fide scholarly historical research project, and

Whereas, stack access made it possible for researchers to pursue their work rigorously and efficiently and at a level of detail that is not easily achieved through standard finding aids,

Whereas, since May 16, 1992, the Manuscript Reading Room of the Library of Congress has been closed on Saturdays, and

Whereas, Saturday closings of the Manuscript Reading Room place a hardship on both out-of-town scholars and Washington residents, for whom Saturdays are often their only opportunity to use the manuscript collection; therefore,

Resolved, that the American Historical Association urges the Librarian of Congress to recognize that closed stacks, Saturday closings of the Manuscript Reading Room, and reduced hours for use of other research rooms severely imperil the research of some scholars and urge the Librarian to reopen the Manuscript Reading Room on Saturday, to reopen the Library on Tuesday and Friday evenings, and to seek a middle ground on access to the stacks that would reflect the needs of both security concerns and scholars; and

Resolved, that the American Historical Association will inform periodically the Senate and House of Representatives' Joint Committee on the Library on research conditions at the Library of Congress; and

Resolved that the American Historical Association will encourage its members to communicate with their Congressional representatives regarding the threats to scholarship represented by the Library of Congress' current policy of Saturday closing of the Manuscript Room, reduced hours for other research rooms and a rigid policy of no access to the stacks by any scholars.

Adopted by the Council of the American Historical Association on December 30, 1992.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Henry T. Blanke is a reference librarian at Marymount Manhattan College in New York City and co-editor of *Progressive Librarian*.

John Buschman is collection development librarian at Rider College in New Jersey and is editor of the forthcoming (October 1993) Greenwood publication *Critical Approaches to Information Technology in Librarianship: Background and Perspectives*.

Eleonora and Joao Paulo Castaño Ferreira are Brazilian artists and popular educators specializing in worker education. They worked for many years as community organizers in the slums of Rio de Janeiro and produced educational materials for grass roots organizations, schools and universities using the methodology of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. They are presently involved in the education programs of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in New York City. Their new book, *Making Sense of the Media: A Handbook of Popular Education Techniques*, will be released in July 1993 by Monthly Review Press.


Theodore Roszak is the author of several works of fiction and nonfiction, among them *The Cult of Information* published by Pantheon Books which focuses on the role of the library as a citizen's reference service in the high tech era. Last year he published *Flicker*, a novel which reveals "the secret history of the movies," and a new edition of his latest work, *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*, has just been released by Touchstone Books. He is professor of history and chair of General Studies at California State University, Hayward.
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