

THE MANTLE OF LITERACY:
THE NEED FOR CULTIVATED AND CRITICAL FACULTIES
AS THE BEDROCK OF DEMOCRACY AND AS
COUNTERWEIGHT TO CULTURE INDUSTRY DOMINANCE

By

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The Mantle of Literacy

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‘Critical’ and ‘cultivated’ literacy, as defined by Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy*, are the bedrock of democracy. Without them, ‘communities of dialoguing publics,’ as defined by C. Wright Mills in *The Power Elite*, which, writ large, comprise that democracy, cannot form. This thesis begins, in Part One, with a one hundred and fifty year canon of cultural theory, beginning with the Victorians, Romantics, and Transcendentalists, who argue that a democracy first and foremost is composed of citizens who demonstrate both the ability of critique and the ability to generate works, whether intellectual or artistic in nature, that are worthy of such critique. The thesis then, in Part Two, documents that this is not the state of the American public today, and these levels of literacy are in fact declining generally and increasingly producing a ‘mass society’ of ‘consumers’ passively purchasing the increasingly rote entertainment products of an ever more elite Culture Industry. The thesis then, in Part Three, depicts the effect this situation is having on developing countries worldwide, which are increasingly ensnared in this ever more global Culture Industry as pawns of its distribution within their local populations. The Conclusion then depicts the situation underway in contemporary America concerning the complicated role of the explosive growth of Web 2.0 and digital devices on the literacy of the American public. At the moment, two trends are at war with one another: those members of the public who, with sufficient prior exposure to the practices of critique and cultivated production, are employing those

devices properly as tools in the service of those ends, versus those members of the public bereft of those practices and who are therefore employing those devices superficially and in the spirit of worshipping them as devices themselves. In sum, this thesis shows that, while the latter camp is currently in the majority, there is nothing to guarantee that state of affairs in the future. That *future* depends on how the American public chooses to wield this incoming technology, and *that* largely depends on whether or not they can be exposed to the practice of exercising critical and cultivated literacy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the greatest perennial challenge the members of any society face is distinguishing between the novel and the ephemeral. Between a great work and the work of a fad. Between that which was *made* and that which was *imported* from elsewhere and given new particulars.

This thesis is, at its core, about the power inherent in cultivating two core human abilities essential thereto: production and interpretation. By ‘production,’ I mean the making of worthy rational *or* what Richard Hoggart called ‘supra-rational,’ or artistic works, depending on one’s personal inclinations, and by ‘interpretation’ I mean the ability to perform close interpretative readings of textual material. By ‘close interpretative reading,’ I mean the ability to identify the purpose any element of a text has in relationship to the whole. And by ‘power,’ I mean the societally transformative power these abilities yield when writ large throughout the members of society.

The thesis will demonstrate, in Part One, that the joint cultivation of these two abilities effectively undermines any power that a removed Culture Industry can hold over its audience. For ‘imported’ works, in the sense given above, can now be recognized and rejected.

However, the game is very much afoot. Textual literacy of this sort in America is in a state of monotonic decline, the statistics for which will be laid out in Part Two. Part Three will then outline the devastating effects this decline of literacy is having worldwide

and the proportionate rise in global corporate media hegemony that accompanies it. However, the Conclusion will then make it clear that this need not be the way the national and global situation must be. It will show how the prior development of critical and cultivated literacy can assist certain strata of the American public in piloting the modern digital, technological landscape with maturity, and in ways that service those faculties' continual, mutual advancement. However, it will also depict how, currently, the majority of those interacting with this landscape are not doing so 'maturely,' in the sense of Michael Tracey's 'mature society,' and thus are contributing to the Culture Industry's further rise into ever more monopolistic power. The thesis makes no prediction as to which side will triumph, but does make it clear that there is no *guarantee* of victory either way.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR LITERACY

For the past one hundred and fifty years, leading literary figures in the U.K., the U.S., and continental Europe have indefatigably argued for the advancement of literacy in the face of mounting threats to what they believed to be the solvency of their culture's existence. They argued for what Richard Hoggart termed, and will be defined and referenced below, as 'critical' and 'cultivated' literacy, that these qualities constituted, respectively, what Matthew Arnold called one's knowledge of the 'best that has been thought and said' and one's 'pursuit of perfection.' These, for Arnold, denoted an interminable ascent of one's close reading abilities as well as one's intellectual aptitude and/or artistic prowess. Together, they comprise one's practice of 'self-cultivation,' which, writ large, is the origin of 'culture.'¹ This, Arnold stressed, is the *only* bulwark against potential monopolies that over time lead both themselves and those receiving their content into realms of what Hoggart called 'basic literacy,' or the ability to take instruction only.²

Richard Hoggart elaborated on these fundamental levels of literacy in his work of 1957, *The Uses of Literacy*, and in so doing effectively charted two paths a society could tread. In establishing a society-wide level of critical literacy, which effectively equipped its citizens with the power of critique so that they could apply their own interpretation to textual forms as a gateway to a yet higher, production-based level known as cultivated literacy---or 'imaginative literacy' and 'supra-rational literacy' as he later put it---

signifying the power of creation of exposition or the “arts” and “good literature,” he was effectively spanning the divide of potential producer and receiver of cultural content in a society.³ By this I mean that, in opening the power of critique, members of a society would be able to challenge and potentially reject cultural forms produced by powers over which they otherwise had no control, and in opening the power of creation, they could conceivably create forms of their own that would stand up to sound critique. Such a society embodies what C. Wright Mills called, in *The Power Elite*, “a community of dialoguing publics,” which, for Hoggart and Mills, constitutes the foundation of a true democracy, in that citizens can collectively debate, and create, and in so doing advance as human beings and as a community as well.⁴

The antithesis of such a dialoguing society, which Hoggart believed to be anathema to democracy, was one in which there was a divide between those empowered to produce cultural content, and thus, in Karl Marx’s words, possessed exclusively the power to “think” and establish both the economic and ideological forms of power for an entire society, and those who passively received those forms without critique. Such a societal state results in an ossification of class divides and the ultimate intellectual stultification of both those empowered and those disempowered, as Hoggart warned that creation without competition would relax the creator back into a state of critical literacy, which on its own leads to pessimism and stagnation as the same forms are reproduced mechanically over and over again. To Arnold, such a “mechanization” of society was the death of culture and the birth of ‘anarchy.’⁵ Indeed, Mills would come to call it the ‘mass society,’ the uninterrupted continuation of which would lead to an undeveloped, or ‘immature---’as Michael Tracey puts it---state of being. Such a state leaves one

vulnerable to notions of value imported from without, a situation that can only be rectified by rejuvenating critical and cultivated literacy. Thus, it is not in capitalism itself, which is only a system of theoretically open trade exchange, but in those who come to benefit from it and in turn monopolize power that the challenge to a universally mature society lies. In other words, class mobility must be preserved to the point where, as Arnold sought, there effectively is no class. Self-cultivation must be ubiquitous and universal, and only in this can the divide of potential maker and receiver of artistic and intellectual content in a society be spanned.⁶

To this end, the literary figures of the Romantic, Victorian, and Transcendentalist periods in the U.K. and U.S. viewed growing industrialism as a potential threat to the development of critical and cultivated faculties. As H.G. Wells has written, ““In that time man made a stride in the material conditions of his life faster than he had done during the whole long interval between the paleolithic stage and the age of cultivation, or between the days of Pepi in Egypt and those of George III. A new gigantic material framework for human affairs had come into existence.””⁷ The key word here is *material*, for, as we shall see, it is in *how* that material is used that has consequences for literacy.

The Romantic period can be said to begin in 1798 with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, jointly written by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which redounded on themes associated with keeping to the natural world in the midst of the sudden onslaught of this material production. As Paul Lieder, Robert Lovett, and Robert Root write, “Although some of his [Wordsworth’s] poems were laughed at because of their extreme simplicity, the superb eloquence with which he set forth his credo in *Lines Written Above Intern Abbey* marked the advent of a great poet and made nature as a

source of uplift and inspiration a major subject of English poetry for the nineteenth century.”⁸

Indeed, as opposed to the preceding century of more rationalist poets---mystics like William Blake excepted---the Romantics often lived in the Northern Lake Country or traveled to wilderness areas abroad, searching for more ‘permanent’ values than the fleeting societal urbanities industrialization appeared to be promoting.⁹ They demonstrated their lack of respect for these growing societal ‘conventions’ by failing to acknowledge them in their writings, as the urbane became tantamount to the whimsical and ephemeral, lacking wholly of substance and subject to the same flights of fancy that social fads undergo. For rarely was there any challenge amongst these urban circles to the monetary values that were ushered in with the sudden wave of material progress. Verbose, obfuscating endorsement---in terms of *what* was actually being valued beyond simply the means to buy things---was more the norm, which contrasted starkly with the discussion of enduring human themes Wordsworth raised in the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*.¹⁰

Walter Pater expressed this removal from industrialization as ‘self-culture,’ resulting in a clarification of one’s existential means and ends. As he states, “‘To treat life in the spirit of art, is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment, the true moral significance of art and poetry....Not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends; but to withdraw...from the machinery of life, to fix them [our thoughts], with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man’s existence which no machinery affects....To witness this spectacle with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture.’”¹¹ Note

‘culture’ is again being pitted *against* the machine here, which is said to provide the basic material comforts of life but nothing more. They are the means. The individual must elect the end those means are used *for*. What will the individual *produce*, thanks to those means?

Culture thus becomes the milieu in which these qualities could be developed; indeed, Raymond Williams would state that “The ‘true ideal’ of man is ‘self-culture....’”¹² And as Matthew Arnold would emphasize, culture, on a societal level, naturally develops, not through revolutions, which merely exchange leadership elites and are built on marketable polemics, but through self-culture writ large. In other words, through the galvanization of communities of dialoguing publics nationwide.

Amidst this pursuit, various figures of the Romantic and Transcendentalist periods would each emphasize the deepening of one’s connection to the natural world, from which one’s values could be explored through one’s work without the shifting mechanistic fads brought on by material wealth. Consider *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869 by Matthew Arnold. For Jeff Browitt and Andrew Milner, Arnold remains “indisputably one of the central figures in the English culturalist tradition.”¹³ In its beginning, Arnold defines the nadir of culture as a state in which human beings operate by way of strictly functional-vocational labor amidst the burgeoning opportunities industrialism offered, and thus served society solely as dictated by their superiors. In such a state, their literary skills would degenerate into Hoggart’s various forms of ‘basic,’ or ‘functional’ literacy, and the pursuit of perfection would be effectively thwarted.¹⁴

Indeed, for Arnold, critical and cultivated literacy are subsumed in his famous statement that ‘culture’ is the opportunity for one to immerse oneself in “the best of what has been thought or said in the world---“that representing the critical level---and then “through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly and mechanically.”¹⁵ This central trope of freshness countering automata, or the “stock,” recurs widely amongst the Victorian culturalists. For they feared, just as Marx would, that capitalism by way of industrialism would land potential artists and intellectuals in meaningless vocational trades that would deter them from the pursuit of ever-evolving perfection requisite to actualizing culture.

For Arnold, a sufficient but not necessary path for this pursuit of perfection was through textual literature: “...one must, I think, be struck more and more, the longer one lives, to find how much, in our present society [1869], a man’s life of each day depends for its solidity and value on whether he reads during that day and, far more still, on what he reads during it.”¹⁶ And more importantly, *how* one sifts and interprets this material one encounters---namely, can one generate a worthy close interpretative reading of it?

Arnold also suggests this kind of cultivation can be done orally, through communications with one’s peers. “This [one’s method for pursuing perfection], however, is a matter for each man’s private conscience and experience. If a man without a book or reading, or reading nothing but his letters and the newspapers, gets nevertheless a fresh and free play of the best thoughts upon his stock notions and habits, he has got culture. He has got that for which we prize and recommend culture; he has got that which at the present moment we seek culture that it may give us. This inward operation is the

very life and essence of culture, as we conceive it.”¹⁷ Note the renewal of the theme that one must be at least cognizant of, and opposed to anything overly “stock.” And note the anaphoric “He” employed in delivering the essential nature of this point---that it was the agency of the “He” himself that steered his content away from the “stock” and in the direction of the “fresh,” as defined earlier. This was thus to bestow a “sweetness and light” upon each such freely interpreting member of culture, yielding “the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive.”¹⁸

This is to be strictly juxtaposed with any culture industry type-forms of commoditized meaning reduced to market value and so valued by its ability to sell on the market place and contribute to a mass society. As Arnold said, “...it [our literary encounters] must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses.”¹⁹ “Real” here has been used synonymously with “fresh---“ as something made out of one’s canon as it is modulated through the particular circumstances of the maker’s world.

Arnold is quick to illustrate how this prefabricated material is self-serving of those in power. “Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses.”²⁰ Think of the partisan voter, who never questions the incoming variations on a political theme.

These are disguised in a borrowed narrative, but to the discerning citizen they are indeed *barely* disguised.

Culture, by contrast, is built to span the divide of maker and receiver, to bring them together in consummate creative process, and thus to actualize this for all would be to render society ultimately ‘classless.’ According to Arnold, “...culture...does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of their own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely-nourished and not bound by them.”²¹ Note the agency ascribed to “ideas” themselves here, which can be taken up with the “sweetness and light” of dialoguing publics. For in such atmospheres ideas can circulate and germinate in an environment of collective engagement, rather than unilateral delivery.

This activity does not fan out into a sort of individualistic do-whatever-one-pleases, because one’s pursuit of perfection is guided by the best of what has come before. That is the true source of intellectual and artistic authority and guidance for Arnold. Indeed, solipsistic pursuits---for Arnold believes that there can be no pursuit of perfection in the absence of culture---are tantamount to ‘machinery’ and ‘anarchy.’ Thus he states: “Now, if culture, which simply means trying to perfect oneself, and one’s mind as part of oneself, brings us light, and if light shows us that there is nothing so very blessed in merely doing as one likes, that the worship of the mere freedom to do as one likes is worship of machinery, that the really blessed thing is to like what right reason [and tradition] ordains, and to follow her authority, then we have got a practical benefit

out of culture. We have got a much wanted principle, a principle of authority, to counteract the tendency to anarchy which seems to be threatening us.”²² “Freedom” as “machinery” sounds initially counterintuitive, but in Arnold’s usage, it is not. When one has utter freedom, as in no canon from which to draw and expand upon and surpass, one is open to imported culture industry messages, which represent the machine. Thus, often uncognizantly, one can begin proliferating its messages by way of having no standards by which to measure them against.

‘Authority’ is thus synonymous with cultural tradition, whereby one’s own creations can be guided, and steered away from the relativistic solipsism of mechanistic anarchy—a prediction of thinkers like Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard to come a century later. In this, “doing what one’s ordinary self likes” is indeed tantamount to machinery,²³ and in this he despises all three dominant classes of his day: the Barbarians (aristocracy), the Philistines (middle class), and the Populace (working class), as they are each following the shallow guidelines of their respective vocational superiors, which are, respectively, status quo, monetary wealth, and the gathering of simple living materials, all at the cost of advancing towards perfection. He states that those committed to the pursuit of perfection “always tend” to be made “...out of [read: opposed to] their class, and to make their distinguishing characteristic not their Barbarianism or their Philistinism, but their *humanity*.”²⁴ Indeed, they would be united in their refinement of their interpretative and productive abilities through study of their intellectual and artistic canon, which Arnold believed would help filter out all extraneous ‘practical concerns’ and provide an effective foundation upon which their own cultivated work---their artistic or intellectual products---could be made.²⁵

And in keeping with the relational nature of this pursuit---as Arnold indeed believes the pursuit of perfection necessarily involves cultivated society, or culture---those who show this higher, *humane* instinct tend to bond together, regardless of the class from whence they came, creating collectively communities of dialoguing publics. “...within each of these classes there are a certain number of *aliens*, if we may so call them, persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general *humane* spirit....in general, the extrication of the best self, the predominance of the *humane* instinct, will very much depend upon its meeting, or not, with what is fitted to help and elicit it.”²⁶ And in this a mature society, itself built of the ubiquitous dispersal of culture by way of communities of dialoguing publics, is formed.

In this, Arnold remains staunchly opposed to rebellions---those currently in power are not to be deposed by forceful means, as “the very framework and exterior order of the State, whoever may administer the State, is sacred; and culture is the most resolute enemy of anarchy, because of the great hopes and designs for the State which culture teaches us to nourish.”²⁷ For recall “anarchy” is indeed synonymous with total “freedom,” which lies outside of the state. But with collective progress towards human perfection, in which more and more people leave their “classes” to join in that pursuit, they will “come gradually to fill the framework of the State with them, to fashion its internal composition and all its laws and institutions conformably to them, and to make the State more and more the expression, as we say, of our best self.”²⁸ And in that, a natural aversion to anarchy will grow omnipresent, so committed are all societal members now to the pursuit of perfection. This itself will result in “‘a revolution,’ as the Duke of Wellington once said, ‘by due course of law.’”²⁹ Or, if judged to be humane, a collective re-making of

those laws.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, with whom Arnold was in frequent correspondence by letters and ultimately met in person in the U.K., echoed the same voicing in America. That America, as put in his celebrated “An Address” to the senior class of the Harvard Divinity School,” was increasingly falling prey to ‘vocationalism,’ to the kind of ‘self-satisfaction’ that Arnold lamented and which was anathema to the true task of humanity: that of unending self-cultivation.³⁰ Emerson wrote that this kind of vocational education, even amongst the so-called intellectual elite, was producing archivists and “bibliophiles,” not intellectuals and artists.³¹

Arnold and Emerson united on the principle that the capability for good criticism was related to intellectual and/or artistic production.³² To Arnold, the practice of criticism honed one’s clearest possible understanding of the “best that has been thought and said in society,” or one’s intellectual and artistic canon, which further enabled one’s ability to clearly understand the situation of his or her current society by relating it to the ideals upon which it was to be based. Only with this level of connection to the present state of affairs was good art possible, according to Arnold, and this he said was the strength of Goethe vis-à-vis Byron: “...the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it would be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron’s poetry had so little endurance in it, and Goethe’s so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe’s was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron’s was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet’s necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron.”³³ This connection between criticism and direct experience lies in

that one is applying a critical lens to those who presumably saw the state of their world clearly, and allowed it to modulate through their work of the time. Emerson believed that this remained the best guide for instructing one how to apply their *own* critical lens to the state of the world they themselves encounter, and through that hone their productive power.

To both Arnold and Emerson, the graduation from the critiquing realm to the intellectual and/or artistic productive one was necessary for society, lest the canon of the best that has been thought and said simply end, and criticism stagnate into a mere repetition of itself, which does not further the pursuit of perfection but merely gives way to what Emerson called ‘dilution of thought’, cynicism, and ultimately even basic literacy. Emerson, in his essay, “Prudence,” decried all such notions of vocational ‘prudence,’ or “...a prudence which adores the Rule...which never subscribes, which gives never, which seldom lends, and asks but one question of any project,-Will it bake bread? This is a disease like a thickening of the skin until the vital organs are destroyed.”³⁴

This renders a human strictly instrumental in the achieving of someone else’s end. In “The American Scholar,” in which Emerson caustically addressed the Phi Beta Kappa Society, he decried this kind of vocational emphasis as the kind of intellectual wraithing that turns the “thinking” and “doing” of a person into simply “a man who thinks” or “a man who farms” or “a man who sows.”³⁵ As he says, “Man is not farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesmen, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state these functions are parceled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his....But,

unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered.”³⁶ The metaphorical vehicle of “parceled” in particular makes vivid the alienating quality of being ascribed work of this nature, vis-à-vis *real* intellectual and/or artistic works that bring communities together by way of the dialogues that they open.

This kind of self-collapsing into vocational roleplay is anathema to both this level of criticism and production. In his essay, “Shakespeare; or the Poet,” Emerson praises true production as that which honors its legacy in the ultimate surpassing of it. In “Self-Reliance,” he exhorted all readers to identify the media by which they could achieve exactly this.³⁷

The importance of lineage for Emerson does not harken of veneration, but its opposite. Only with painstaking study of the best of what has been thought and said can the artist or intellectual fully develop, but that is not to overly imitate those authors at the expense of one’s own growth. He writes, “Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.”³⁸

This canon is indeed not to be valued at the expense of one’s personal, visceral experiences, and here, Emerson gives an eloquent rendering of Hoggart’s second and third levels of literacy. “They [books] are nothing but to inspire....The one thing in the world of value is the active soul-the soul, free, sovereign, active. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him. The soul active sees absolute truth and

utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius....The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, [at its best] stop with some past utterance of genius....if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his;-cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame....”³⁹ The anaphoric “soul” here serves to advance the creator’s agency as primary above all, even the canon that may assist him or her along the journey of self-cultivation.

For too much of the critical, at the expense of the cultivated, renders one dull and pedantic, or worse, moralistic, and in that argumentatively or dramatically predictable and thus open to easy refutation. “The literature of every nation bear me witness,” he writes, “The English dramatic poets have Shakespearized now for two hundred years....The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakespeare...only the authentic utterances of the oracle....”⁴⁰ Even those touted as the greatest of all will invariably slip in their expression, and the creator reading them out of the true spirit of critique will see those moments and use them as lessons in the making of his or her own creations. In this, the mission of the budding intellectual or artist was to “...gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by concentrated fires set the hearts of their youth on flame.”⁴¹ Thus the university exists to house examples of past genius, and so build in every member of society an understanding of these voicings, and from entwining these with their own first-hand experiences hone their own. The best that has been thought and said thus becomes employed in the making of something potentially better.

For both Wordsworth and, a hundred years later, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, this way of life marks the difference between the ‘people’ and the ‘public,’ of culture versus the mass, respectively, in that the people are the living producers and

critics of cultural content while the mass entertain the increasing reduction of cultivated works to market value as the market slowly took over the patronage system and increasingly led to the reproduction of replicas of past work with only the variable names (for instance character and place names) changed.⁴² Williams quotes Wordsworth on the danger of this expanding market and the coming commoditization of art and intellectual product that it brings with it: ““Away then with the senseless iteration of the word *popular* applied to new works of poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell.””⁴³ For the mass sees a work on the basis of its market value, which is a function primarily of fad dynamics, and not necessarily a reflection of its intrinsic worth as a particular intellectual or artistic piece.

Indeed, intellectuals and artists in Wordsworth’s time quickly became increasingly widely opposed to this idea of the market. As Williams says, “He [Wordsworth] will continue to insist, in fact, on an Idea, a standard of excellence, the ‘embodied spirit’ of a People’s knowledge, as something superior to the actual course of events, the actual run of the market. This insistence, it is worth emphasizing, is one of the primary sources of the idea of Culture. Culture, the ‘embodied spirit of a People,’ the true standard of excellence, became available, in the progress of the century, as the court of appeal in which real values were determined, usually in opposition to the ‘factitious’ values thrown up by the market and similar operations of society.””⁴⁴ For the market remains only a tool like any other, a means, not an end, to facilitate dispersing one’s work. Any worship of the market as an end in itself is merely a prizing of trending monetary values, which are empty of meaning in and of themselves. Indeed, Baudrillard,

almost two hundred years later---at which point the market had become an industry--- would call them ‘floating values.’

Raymond Williams vigorously concurs with this position. “Sir Egerton Brydges wrote in the 1820s: ‘It is a vile evil that literature is becoming so much a trade all over Europe. Nothing has gone so far to nurture a corrupt taste, and to give the unintellectual power over the intellectual. Merit is now universally esteemed by the multitude of readers that an author can attract....’”⁴⁵ In other words, power, in terms of the ability to copy and sell sheer numbers of produced works, was shifting away from the creator and towards third-party producers charged with selling those pieces.

Hoggart would argue that this phenomenon led to the rise of mindless ‘populism:’ “...‘If ‘x’ million people b[u]y it, view it with pleasure, hold this or that opinion, then such things must be right. That is democracy.’ No: it is democracy subverted into populism.”⁴⁶ For, as he warned, “The wave of relativism – the obsessive avoidance of judgments of quality, or moral judgment – has risen higher than ever before (as in all prosperous societies).”⁴⁷ Indeed, this laze of blithely following popular values effects a transformation of citizen into consumer, for one is not questioning whether or not there is any real intrinsic worth in a cultural product---in that it reflects the self-cultivation of its maker---behind its monetary value, which by itself is nothing more than a trade value.

In this vein, Tom Moore defined culture as opposite the mob. “In this kind of argument, ‘culture’ [one of the “newly necessary abstractions”] became the normal antithesis of the market....What was important at this time was the stress given to a mode of human experience and activity which the progress of society seemed increasingly to deny.”⁴⁸ In this, artists and intellectuals became natural upholders of culture, through

simply producing their works and critiquing those of their peers in the benign, rigorous ambience of communities of dialoguing publics in an age that threatened culture's continued survival.

Williams sets up an opposition between this pursuit that is necessary to a functioning democracy and the threat of basic literacy just as Hoggart does. "The emphasis on a general common humanity was evidently necessary in a period in which a new kind of society was coming to think of man as merely a specialized instrument of production."⁴⁹ By contrast, the machine itself can be conceptualized as just that instrument, as a tool to potentially assist in one's pursuit of perfection. It is not to be overly valued in and of itself, as that, as John Ruskin said, would be a perversion.⁵⁰ This is a perennial issue---the arising of new generational tools that are to assist in the making of artistic and intellectual products that are not to be valued in and of themselves.

As both Arnold and Hoggart wrote, it is not a particular medium that necessarily provides the counterweight to the machine. "The word *Art*, which had commonly meant 'skill', [*sic*] became specialized during the course of the eighteenth century, first to 'painting', and then to the imaginative arts generally."⁵¹ It would soon thereafter come to encompass literary narrative.

But more important than the particular medium of art was the union of culture as art and culture as a way of life, and not merely as a response to industrialization. For solely opposing a viewpoint leads to argumentative routine, and could reduce the imaginative to the polemical, which remains a subset of the critical. In that, it is also dangerous to consider the artist as a "special kind of person," as if it were something that anyone could not achieve with due commitment to the pursuit of perfection in one's

chosen medium, which would lead us out of a Leavisitic divide between humanity---or those honing their intellectual and/or artistic abilities---and the masses.⁵²

In Wordsworth's *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, this covenant with cultivated expression is indeed shown to be potentially actualizable in any member of society, though their aptitude may differ in degree depending on the medium they choose. A poet's "own feelings are his stay and support....The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly?....Among the qualities...enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree...."⁵³

For when the opposite is preached, and citizens are slated into vocational positions without self-cultivation, they are wraithed into marketable consumers harboring only basic literacy. In such a societal state, the emergence of the free market can gain traction by increasingly commoditizing art, making it so "the free play of genius found it increasingly difficult to consort with the free play of the market...."⁵⁴

For Newman and Coleridge, this erected a distinction between two types of civilizations. "The proposition is in terms of the 'general health' of the mind, as in Coleridge's distinction between the 'hectic of disease' of one kind of civilization, and the 'bloom of health' of a civilization 'grounded in cultivation.'...The work of perfection received increasing emphasis in opposition to the powerful Utilitarian tendency which conceived education as the training of men to carry out particular tasks in a particular kind of civilization...."⁵⁵ This will be a recurrent metaphor---the "health" of self-cultivation vis-à-vis the "disease" of the mass society, disease meaning that one's life is

essentially fixed in that nothing can be critiqued nor created. Material can only be passively absorbed, which completes the devolution of democratic citizen into industrial consumer.

Thus, education, for Matthew Arnold, as for his father, Thomas, was to be focused on the cultivation of general interpretative and productive ability in order to create a society collectively committed to the pursuit of perfection. “Culture, then, is both study and pursuit. It is not merely the development of ‘literary culture’, but of ‘all sides of our humanity.’ Nor is it an activity concerning individuals alone, or some part of section of society; it is, and must be, essentially *general*.”⁵⁶ For democracy was taken to be culture writ large, which in turn was taken to be self-cultivation writ large that generated an ever-evolving array of communities of dialoguing publics.

Building a community around oneself that is also dedicated to the pursuit of perfection can greatly assist one on this road, both Raymond Williams and Matthew Arnold argue. “‘The fewer there are who follow the way to perfection, the harder that way is to find....’ So all our fellowmen, in the East of London and elsewhere, we must take along with us in the progress towards perfection, if we ourselves really, as we profess, want to be perfect; and we must not let the worship of any fetish, any machinery, such as manufactures or population—which are not, like perfection, absolute goods in themselves, though we think them so—create for us such a multitude of miserable, sunken and ignorant human beings, that to carry them all along with us is impossible, and perforce they must for the most part be left by us in their degradation and wretchedness.”⁵⁷ Note again the harkening of John Ruskin here, that “machinery” is defined clearly as a means, as a form of potential assistance in the making of real works,

and is not an “absolute good” in and of itself.

To disseminate these principles directly, Arnold became an Inspector of schools, alike Hoggart and Williams---who taught extramural English classes to the working class public---in order to jointly build a state of cultivated individuals. “As an Inspector of schools, and independently, his effort to establish a system of general and humane education was intense and sustained.... [leading to] the ‘harmonious’ [individual] and the ‘general’ [societal] pursuit of perfection.”⁵⁸

Discussing Wilhelm von Humboldt’s *The Sphere and Duties of Government*, Williams writes that Humboldt also shared this collective vision of pursuit and that he “used to say that one’s business in life was first to perfect oneself by all means in one’s power and secondly to try and create in the world around one an aristocracy, the most numerous that one possibly could, of talents and characters.”⁵⁹ Note the co-opting of the term “aristocracy” here, which before, for Arnold, had denote a specific class of society, one bent on preserving the status quo, and thus one subset of that anathema to democracy. Yet here it refers not to a class but to a way of being that, writ large, contributes directly to the formation of communities of dialoguing publics.

In this, John Ruskin espoused similar views. As Williams writes of him, “We must now see how his conception of Beauty directed his continuing social thinking.... ‘the felicitous fulfillment of function in living things, more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man....’ This, throughout Ruskin’s work, was to be the standard by which a society must be judged: whether in its essential order it created the conditions for such a fulfillment....In Ruskin, it will be noted...[this standard] is the *exertion* [towards this fulfillment], rather than the *discovery*.”⁶⁰ Indeed, there is no static

endpoint to which this work is aimed. It is in the production of this work, and the growth that accompanies it, that culture is made.

Ruskin elaborates widely on the kind of labor fit for this purpose of self-actualization vis-à-vis mere vocational labor. “‘A right understanding of what kinds of labour’: this is the fundamental emphasis. Not labour for profit, or for production, or for the smooth functioning of the existing order; but the ‘right kind of labour’....A society is to be governed by no other purposes than what is ‘good for men, raising them, and making them happy....[in] the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man.’”⁶¹ Again, “exertion” denotes the process of the work being done along the path as commensurate with the amount of culture one cultivates for oneself.

For Ruskin, this situation presents a bifurcating path to any would-be citizen of a culture. “‘You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both....It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves....It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure. It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than man.’”⁶² Note Ruskin’s use of the term “mass” here, as that which is anathema to culture, and which presages Mills’s like-minded usage of the term by a century.

This led to Ruskin’s ensuing commentary on wealth and ‘illth,’ the former of

which “availeth of life....Value is intrinsic because it is part of the ‘universal grand design.’ It must not, in this sense, be confused with ‘exchange value,’ which is only the price its possessor will take for some labour or commodity....Value rests properly only in the fitness of such labour or commodity as a means to ‘the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man.’”⁶³ The metaphorical verb-based vehicle for cultivation here remains for Ruskin, with “fitness” harkening of the earlier “exertion.” For it is indeed training that we are here discussing. It is nothing that is simply granted to anyone. One must continually make it for oneself.

As Williams summarizes, “This position was necessarily a fundamental challenge to the nineteenth-century system of production, and to the ‘laws of political economy’ which supported it. Value, wealth, labour were taken out of the jurisdiction of the law of supply and demand, and related to a wholly different social judgment....a society must regulate itself by attention to ‘intrinsic values’ and anything which prevented this must be swept away....”⁶⁴ This is an important distinction---that between ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ worth. Self-cultivation concerns only the former---the latter is a societally given benefit that does not affect the true value of the work. Its only boon is in its utility for providing the resources to make more work that is intrinsically excellent.

Arnold believed that, with this kind of individual cultivation writ large, a cultivated government would naturally come into existence, as an extension of the emergent community of communities of dialoguing publics. “It was the business of government, he [Ruskin] argued, to produce, accumulate, and distribute real wealth, and to regulate and control its consumption. Government was to be guided in this by the principles of intrinsic value which became apparent in any right reading of the universal

design.”⁶⁵ In this, he shared Emerson and Thoreau’s view that, in a society whose citizens were devoted to self-cultivation, only minimal traditional governmental oversight would be needed. Instead, the government would be a mirror of the populace itself.

Without a foundational populace such as this, mechanical civilization would decimate the possibility of art, according to William Morris. “...It’s [‘civilization’s’] eyeless vulgarity...has destroyed art, the one certain solace of labour....The struggles of mankind for many ages had produced nothing but this sordid, aimless, ugly confusion....The dull squalor of civilization....Think of it! Was it all to end in a counting-house on the top of a cinder-heap, with Podsnap’s drawing-room in the offing, and Whig committee dealing out champagne to the rich and margarine to the poor in such convenient proportions as would make all men contented together, though the pleasure of the eyes was gone from the world.”⁶⁶ Note the fragmentation of class that comes with the popularization of mechanical pseudo-art, just as Arnold had lamented earlier. It is akin to the fragmentation of the BBC into numerous brands, with a channel specifically pandering to the rising middle class, and another to the so-called working class, and so on. These are not pieces smacking of high intrinsic value, but popular value geared towards a populace that has come to expect only slight variations upon certain forms.

In this, Morris mourned that “a mechanical civilization had been created by a mechanical science,” and, by contrast, “It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him [the maker], a life to which the perception and creation of beauty, the enjoyment of real pleasure that is, shall be felt to be as necessary to man as his daily bread, and that no man, and no set of men, can be deprived of this except by mere opposition, which should be resisted to the utmost.”⁶⁷ This offers an

interesting play on Arnold's usage of "bread" from his description of the needs of the working classes, when it was equated with the bare material tools requisite to actualizing a life of self-cultivation that nevertheless was not an end in itself. Here, Morris has turned that usage around, and argued that a life of self-cultivation, the true end in itself, is as necessary to human existence as the sustenance needed to support it physically.

In Morris's estimation, a lack of this very kind of identification is wraithing the universities into centers of vocational training. "There are of the English middle class, today...men of the highest aspirations towards Art, and of the strongest will; men who are most deeply convinced of the necessity to civilization of surrounding men's lives with beauty" versus "[those caught in] the grasp of inexorable commerce....It is this commercialism which has destroyed even such a centre of alternative values as Oxford....Neither phalangstere nor dynamite has swept its beauty away, its destroyers have not been either the philanthropist or the Socialist, the cooperator or the anarchist. It has been sold, and at a cheap price indeed: muddled away by the greed and incompetence of fools who do not know what life and pleasure mean....Nothing should be made by man's labour which is not worth making; or which must be made by labour degrading to the makers....art is to destroy the curse of labour by making work the pleasurable satisfaction of our impulse towards energy, and giving to that energy hope of producing something worth the exercise."⁶⁸ Once again, the verb-driven sense of "exercise" connotes that this is a *process* that is to be emphasized and cultivated.

Morris concedes that the machine can be potentially helpful as a tool in undertaking this process. "If the necessary reasonable work be of a mechanical kind, I must be helped to do it by a machine, not to cheapen my labour, but so that as little time

as possible may be spent upon it...I know that to some cultivated people...machinery is particularly distasteful...(but) it is the allowance of machines to be our masters and not our servants that so injures the beauty of life nowadays.”⁶⁹ Here is a clear ordering of what John Ruskin termed ‘means,’ meaning the machine, and ‘ends,’ the work to be made---it is in the confounding of that ordering that the begets the possibility of a culture industry.

In *How We Live, The Aims of Art, Useful Work versus Useless Toil*, Morris writes, “I hope we know assuredly that the arts we have met together to further are necessary to the life of man, if the progress of civilization is not to be as causeless as the turning of a wheel that makes nothing.”⁷⁰ Note the imagistic comparing of the machine run rampant as cyclical---meaning that, instead of a terraced ascent of progress, there is instead a stagnant circling of a fixed point. The circle denoting the un-interpreting consumers who revolve around the central, nodal feed of the culture industry.

Writing half a century later, British literary critic F.R. Leavis was not optimistic about this situation. In fact, he was downright fatalistic about it, and through that proved himself ironically an instrument of the widening divide of producer and consumer he so despised. For he believed not in the ubiquitous dispersal of such a mantle of pursuing perfection, deeming a large percentage of society “unfit” to the upholding of that task, but the fracturing of society into a wholly receptive caste of ‘mass civilization’ harboring basic literacy and an intellectual elite practicing critical literacy or above. The latter, he believed, would safeguard the highest works of culture. While pragmatic in a self-enthroning kind of way, this is an inherently dangerous position, for it too easily relaxes into the kind of stagnant divide that brings the pursuit of perfection to a standstill for both

the supposed sentinels of culture and for the masses. For as stated before, it is too easy for the former to relax wholly into critical literacy in such a situation wherein they are immune from challenge from the rest of society, which Hoggart warned in *Mass Media in a Mass Society* was a situation that would decay into something “negative” and “pedantic” because critical literacy is dependent on and “subordinate to imaginative literacy.”⁷¹ For Hoggart even argued that, without the latter, without the ability to make as well as critique, critical literacy would decay into basic literacy. Specifically, he argued that the ability to critique a work well depended on the ability to make such works oneself, because without that ability the critic would be unable to empathize with those parts of the critiqued work done well and those done poorly, due to a lack of familiar experience, and would thus inevitably come to rely on the interpretations of others (resulting in a kind of replication over time, of copying, that characterizes basic literacy).

Yet, in *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture*, Leavis campaigns for exactly this kind of enduring separation, claiming that Arnold was vague and did not have to define his terms at the time of his writing and that this kind of intelligentsia preservation was the only way to triumph over the “mechanical.”⁷² As he writes, “In any period it is often a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is...only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgment.”⁷³ This is a disservice to both sides of the resulting divide, neither of which is now involved in the pursuit of perfection.

Walter Lippmann expressed a similar, fatalistic belief in his chapter, “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads,” in which he advanced the position that such an elite cadre would be a band of top-ranking political scientists, which happened to

represent Lippmann's own intellectual heritage.⁷⁴ Here both Lippmann and Leavis are claiming that only a certain substratum of society has the potential to reach a level of critical literacy or better, and that the remainder is condemned to basic literacy and thus passively responsive to whatever products the culture industry promulgates. In this manner, an entire demographic of society has to look to the "critics" as doctors of the intellect in the same way that they look to doctors for ailments of the body, as Leavis cited I.A. Richards in stating.⁷⁵ In other words, as the artist is the only one who is "concerned with the record and perpetuation of the experiences which seem to him most worth having. . . . He is the point at which the growth of the mind shows itself,"⁷⁶ a wide range of society is condemned not to grow, and in that not to be artists. They are of the "vocational" domain, enslaved to the march of the machine that Ruskin decried as 'labour without purpose.' In other words, Leavis is in accord with Arnold that "culture" is the "language upon which fine living depends," but the growth of it, if it is to grow at all, for at times Leavis sounds merely to be in the business of archiving past accomplishments rather than in any way contributing to the development of new works, is only extended to a "minority." It is therefore self-contradicting for him to bemoan the growth of "leveling-down" in the mass press—for if that entire range of society can understand nothing beyond what it is given, how could anything else be expected? Basic literacy is *that* disconcertingly widespread in Leavis's world, while a very small few keep to the critical level, and who in his darkened view practices the imaginative level is never made clear. Such an excess of critique without creation indeed quickly leads to the kind of pessimism of which Hoggart warned. As Leavis solemnly writes, "The prospects of culture, then, are very dark. There is the less room for hope in that a standardised

civilisation is rapidly enveloping the whole world....We cannot help clinging to some such hope as Mr. Richards offers; to the belief (unwarranted, possibly) that what we value most matters too much to the race to be finally abandoned, and that the machine will yet be made a tool.”⁷⁷ It is because Leavis could not find it in himself to grant this ability to society as a whole that Jeff Browitt and Andrew Milner think his later years “soured.”⁷⁸

For would it not be a sounder, and more encouraging resistance to the threat of the machine society for the potential growth of culture to be able to come from anywhere? That was indeed the nature of John Dewey’s rejoinder to Lippmann’s position, who argued that the very point of democracy was to create an environment in which that goal could be actualized.⁷⁹ Until then, “‘Civilization’ and ‘Culture’ would remain on antithetical terms.”⁸⁰

The bleakness of such a potentially divided society was laid out explicitly in 1944, when Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer published their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in which the concept of the deleterious “Culture Industry” was officially advanced. In the chapter, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” they famously declared that “under monopoly all mass culture is identical.”⁸¹ This industry, whose products were put on a common scale amidst the ever-growing ubiquity of market value, is what Patrick Brantlinger says represents a key historical shift from economic theory dominated by notions of labour value to one emphasizing consumerism and market value, in which products “... are tailored for consumption by the masses.”⁸² These masses become a “calculation of the machinery...the very word, mass-media specifically honed for the culture industry...neither is it a question of primary concern for

the masses, nor of the techniques of communication as such, but of the spirit which sufflates them, their master's voice."⁸³ In this, the two poles of the increasing class divide are shown to parasitically need each other in order to exist. "...The masses are not the measure but the ideology of the culture industry, even though the culture industry itself could scarcely exist without adapting to the masses," for these commodities "...earn a living for their creators."⁸⁴ Poignantly, Brantlinger describes this divide, which has reached a new zenith in the current neoliberal era, as vanquishing of the middle class. How symbolic that the potential bridge between the untouchable elite and the downtrodden mass would be in such a contemporary "race to the bottom."⁸⁵ Polarization in this way effects the end of a cultivated society. The bridge between maker and receiver vanishes, and all production becomes predictable in its being marketed to the masses. These works are often so templated, so 'genrified,' that they share structural elements to the degree that only the variables---character names and place names, for instance---are changed from piece to piece.

As an application of the culture industry principle, Adorno discusses the mindless replication of popular music in "On Popular Music" published in his *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* in 1941. "The whole structure of popular music is standardized, even where the attempt is made to circumvent standardization. Standardization extends from the most general features to the most specific ones....Listening to popular music is manipulated not only by its promoters, but, as it were, by the inherent nature of this music itself, into a system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free, liberal society."⁸⁶ In essence, it inspires a Pavlovian effect, which is anathema to the rousing of the spirit that a cultivated

work produces.

It is interesting to hear Bourdieu, in his 1984 “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,” discuss José Ortega y Gasset’s “The Mission of the University and the Dehumanization of Art,” published in 1946, which exposes and condemns the systematization of the “individuality” of art. Gasset avows that if art becomes too “individualistic,” in that it owes not to its cultural legacy in the spirit of Arnold’s “the best that has been thought and said,” then the possibility of authentic production is effectively undermined. This results in an entire social class at the behest of university instruction who now lack this ability, and are left failing to comprehend what constitutes authentic production.⁸⁷ “One only has to read Ortega y Gasset to see...the ‘curious sociological effect’ it [this divide of interpretative ability] produces by dividing the public into two ‘antagonistic castes.’”⁸⁸ In such a world of those who understand and those who do not, Mills’s community of dialoguing publics is rendered inconceivable. For their creation requires a “classless” middle class, the engine of critique and production that renders maker and receiver of cultural content in a society one and the same.

Without a merriment of this sort, the division of society will increasingly broaden the range of the culture industry presence. As T.S. Eliot stated, “...the hypertrophy of the motive of Profit into a social ideal, the distinction between the *use* of natural resources and their exploitation, the use of labour and its exploitation, the advantages unfairly accruing to the trader and in contrast to the primary producer, the misdirection of the financial machine, the iniquity of usury, and other features of a commercialized society....We are being made aware that the organization of society on the principle of

private profit, as well as public destruction, is leading both to the deformation of humanity by unregulated individualism, and to the exhaustion of natural resources....’ Industrialism, when it is unregulated, tends to create not a society but a mob....’ A mob will be no less a mob if it is well fed, well clothed, well housed, and well disciplined.”⁸⁹ This harkens of Arnold’s declamation of the “aristocracy,” that monetary holdings alone do not smack of “true” work, but enforcement of the “status quo” only. The deliberate in-phrase repetition of “mob” here emphasizes this distinction. For as John Ruskin repeatedly stressed, means and ends continually had to be properly, mutually understood. It was in their conflation that the culture industry could gain power.

Eliot knew the ideal, developing state of society, however, could not simply be prodded into existence. “You cannot, in any scheme for the reformation of society, aim directly at a condition in which the arts will flourish: these activities are probably by-products for which we cannot deliberately arrange the conditions. On the other hand, their decay may always be taken as a symptom of some social ailment to be investigated.... The increasing organization of advertisement and propaganda-or the influencing of masses of men by any means except through their intelligence-is all against them.”⁹⁰ Note the equation of culture industry products here with “propaganda,” as opposed to works made with a sense of “intelligence.” The latter harkens of employing the best that has been thought and said en route to making something potentially better still, while the former bemoans imported work whose structures have become ossified to satisfy particular markets.

I. A. Richards wrote extensively about the importance of developing critique and production in society as a counterweight to the formation of bureaucracy that would

otherwise arise strictly out of societal inertia. "...‘We pass as a rule from a chaotic to a better organized state by ways which we know nothing about. Typically through the influence of other minds. Literature and the arts are the chief means by which these [beneficial] influences are diffused. It should be unnecessary to insist upon the degree to which high civilization, in other words, free, varied and un wasteful life, depends upon them in a numerous society....’”⁹¹ Note here the equivalence of ‘civilization’ with the pervasiveness of ‘literature and the arts,’ whereby ‘pervasive’ I mean their ability to be both produced freely, disseminated freely, and critiqued freely and without monopolistic or oligarchical intrusion.

Like Arnold, Richards is an opponent of anarchy, as culture is supposed to bring about societal ‘organization’ by way of honoring and potentially exceeding a canon in terms of the works its members produce. As Williams elaborates, “The danger of any public system is that it will waste and frustrate available energy. Social reform is a matter of liberation, through the kind of organization described, although the process will not be primarily conscious or planned. The importance of literature and the arts is that they offer supreme examples of such organization, and that in doing so they provide ‘values’ (not prescriptions or messages, but examples of a necessary common process). It is through experience of and attention to such values that the wider common reorganization can be initiated and maintained. It is in this sense that ‘poetry can save us:’ ‘it is a perfectly possible means of overcoming chaos.’”⁹² Note here the emphasis on “literature and the arts” not solely for their primary, intrinsic virtue, but their secondary effect of promoting the creation of communities of dialoguing publics.

This reorganization comes by way of the artistically or intellectually productive citizen being open to a wider range of experience than the normal person confined to his ‘stock responses,’ just as Arnold wrote, and that because of this the artist or intellectual is able to adapt to the fluidity of the times and to embody all that they deliver. By contrast, I.A. Richards elaborates on the inadequacy of such stock responses, and the limiting dangers they wring on society: “At any time certain incomplete adjustments, certain immature and inapplicable attitudes, can be fixed into formulas and widely suggested and diffused: ‘The losses incurred by these artificial fixations of attitudes are evident. Through them the average adult is worse, not better adjusted to the possibilities of his existence than the child. He is even in the most important things functionally unable to face facts....’”⁹³ Note the morphemic self-mimesis here: “incomplete adjustments” and “immature” or “inapplicable attitudes,” which represents the template-like nature of any stock response-based genre (in which forms repeat themselves with only the details changed). Also note that “immature attitudes” is even syntactically mimetic of its predecessor, which doubles this literary effect.

The insidious side of the culture industry lies in how such stock works may appear side by side with material comforts. They are the opiate that soothes its consumer into such material comforts, relaxing them into basic literacy and thus a supine state in which to consume yet more stock works. This is the vicious reinforcing cycle of opiation the culture industry banks on, which moves consumers further and further away from the producing and critiquing members of a citizenry. As Lindsey Hanley writes in the Introduction to the most recent edition of Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy*, working-class people in 1950s England never had it “so good---“ new and ample living materials that

could easily contribute to such stock notions were coming in and were difficult to resist.⁹⁴

“But while fortunes have continued generally to improve with every successive generation-higher wages, shorter hours, cheaper goods-there has remained a consistent imbalance between how popular culture is regarded by those who produce it (rubbish, but that’s what they want) and those who consume it (rubbish, but that’s what’s offered).”⁹⁵

And it was because “We are no closer to a ‘classless’ society now, he [Hoggart] said, than we ever were...,” that “With fellow critics Raymond Williams and Edward (E. P.) Thompson, Hoggart helped to create a serious academic forum for the discussion of literature and society across class lines, which came to be known as the discipline of cultural studies.”⁹⁶ Their conclusion: culture, the engine of democracy, began with community development. Communities that would, through internal dialoguing processes, assist one another with their generation of artistically and/or intellectually viable works, and assist them with critiquing the content that permeated their everyday world. It was the only antidote they saw to the increasingly oligarchical culture industry. For such an enabled citizenry would recognize such stock products as such, and reject them, *and* produce their own worthy of real critique en route to a potentially yet higher caliber of work. This is how, ideally, culture builds upon itself, growing by way of a virtuous reinforcing process.

Through such a process, Hoggart sought to equip the working classes with sufficient critical and imaginative literacy in order to shrink the class divide between them and the culture industry that would otherwise continue to grow. Hanley writes, “He saw the coming of mass affluence in a dual light: as something that would liberate the dispossessed, yet could, simultaneously and in ways not immediately visible, also

dispossess them further....He saw where new class divisions could arise [amongst the now impoverished, dependent class]...he envisaged how snobbery could become institutionalized [the culture industry class], rather than banished, by popular cultural products-magazines, tabloid newspapers, radio and television programmed among them-which sought not to stretch newly literate minds but to cater to their existing likes and dislikes....The corporate voice of these new 'classless' producers was all the more grating for the fact that their powerful position as cultural gatekeepers made them by definition part of a new, non-aristocratic, post-war ruling class....The larger a receptive audience the mass-publicists can create for their smothered-over inanities, the greater the revenue.”⁹⁷

Hoggart's widespread cultivation of working class literacy was also an attack on the relativism that had begun to spread by way of an ever burgeoning domain of market value attached to cultural products and whose correlation with real value had become increasingly difficult to identify. As Hanley states, “*The Uses of Literacy* is a powerful refutation, long before its time, of the conning force of post-modernism-or, to use Hoggart's preferred term, relativism....”⁹⁸

He reacted strongly to the increasingly trite tropes distributed by the culture industries, such as the emerging genre fiction with “its watered down manufacture of past forms.”⁹⁹ He was worried about this especially as regards young children, for as the sociocultural psychological theories of Lev S. Vygotsky had shown, youth were increasingly deviating from refracting the “aphorisms” of their grandparents and instead replaying the “telly-talk” they were hearing.¹⁰⁰ They were becoming culture industry products themselves.

This growing culture industry was thus creating the kind of class conflict that enraged Hoggart his whole life, such as his “fury at Gavyn Davies for creating BBC 3 and BBC 4, one with dreck for the masses and the other ‘cavier for the snobs’ in 2002.”¹⁰¹ By contrast, “What he [Hoggart] hopes for most profoundly is the coming of a true democracy based on individuals responding freely to what they see and experience and being able to contribute to a continuous debate that involves us all, not just those who are best equipped to use the microphone of mass media....his sympathy, his heart, is with the preservation and encouragement of individual expression....”¹⁰²

Alongside Richard Hoggart’s acute ethnographic observations, Raymond Williams, in his groundbreaking work, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*, provided a rigorous textual analysis of the premier works of writers and cultural theorists detailing the necessity of this kind of democratic culture in the Arnoldian sense. For Williams defined culture likewise in *The Long Revolution*: “There is first, the ‘ideal’, in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values [such as Arnold’s ...]....Then...there is the ‘documentary,’ in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded....”¹⁰³ Art and intellectual production, thus, in its highest expression, is a cultural mirror in that it “is closely and necessarily related to the general prevalent ‘way of life’, and...in consequence, aesthetic, moral, and social judgments are closely interrelated” in such a “mature” society.¹⁰⁴ Williams’s work thus provides an eloquent re-expression of the pre-Socratic Greek axiom of the intertwining of the good, the true, and the beautiful. His work was met with high acclaim, and Williams “effectively transformed a predominantly Conservative tradition criticizing ‘the

bourgeois idea of society' and transformed it into an agenda of socialist renewal."¹⁰⁵ For that is exactly what the free and unfettered dissemination of artistic and intellectual works can bring about.

In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E. P. Thompson also championed the making of culture as "process."¹⁰⁶ He echoed the Romantics in that literature should not be a programmatic response to industrialization or pop culture: "The whole concept of the 'Industrial Revolution,' with its absurd implication that somehow the development of industrial capitalism is an equivalent to 1776 or 1789, has been very disabling for the study of literature...."¹⁰⁷ The tendency to respond overly directly to this industrialism, however, which can render quality art or thought a predictable polemic, has to be resisted, even when the cultural industry shows such nefarious proclivities as the ABC statement quoted by Stuart Hall: "'Go for the youngsters, go for as much sex as you can, go for as much violence as you can – and we are going to succeed.' (Mr. J. Good latté, Managing Director of ABC: reported in the *Daily Cinema*, April 1963)."¹⁰⁸ For such direct resistance to industrialism would not bolster the development of culture, but merely contribute to the development of mass society by generating a whole new era of stock responses, ironically bolstering the culture industry by making resistance marketable. Once again, the only systemic, and not symptomatic, antidote, is the growth of production and critique amongst the populace.

The increasing dangers of such a mass society were outlined well by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The German Ideology* in 1970, in which they drew a key coupling between the material economic means of the ruling class, or the 'base,' and the ideology it perpetuated to justify itself, or the 'superstructure.' "The ideas of the ruling

class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it....”¹⁰⁹ This creates a society in which the rulers are operating at a level of critical or even cultivated literacy whereas those ruled are pinned to basic literacy. “The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think.”¹¹⁰ This is the class divide fully ossified--- those with the material means of power are wholly *active* in their dissemination of cultural content, and those without are fully *receptive* in their consumption of it. The result: a deepening of basic literacy in the latter.

The perverse productive work in crafting these ruling ideas is the guise by which this class supposedly represents the interests of those they govern. “For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. For Marx, for whom the human being was innately good and able to attain all three levels of literacy, this was a tragedy in the highest form, and it remains the reason that class struggle for him was the enduring “engine of all conflict.”¹¹¹ So long as this class divide persisted the majority of

any society would be trapped in the receptive confines of basic literacy, and not be able to grow in the manner befitting any human being. This is the reason behind the metaphorical vehicle of ‘engine’ here, as it directly illustrates that proletariat as the machine of the elevated class, doing all the menial work it now no longer has to do for itself because of its effective enslaving of the working class by way of what will be referred to below as the ‘free market master narrative.’

Likemindedly, Antonio Gramsci’s *Selections from Prison Notebooks* from 1971 echoes the theme that when a passively receiving subordinate class accepts without question that which comes from the ruling classes above, ‘hegemony’ is effectively accomplished. “The methodological criterion on which our study must be based is the following: that the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership.’”¹¹² The ideological content of this leadership needs to be in place in order to secure hegemony, as “...even before attaining power a class can (and must) ‘lead’; when it is in power it becomes dominant, but continues to ‘lead’ as well...there can and must be a ‘political hegemony’ even before the attainment of governmental power, and one should not count solely on the power and material force which such a position gives in order to exercise political leadership and hegemony.”¹¹³ In other words, Gramsci believed, just as George Orwell did, that soft power was in fact more potent than gross militaristic demonstrations of power. If a rising government was still giving demonstrations of its armament capabilities in Tiananmen Square, for instance, that boorish display showed a nervousness on the part of that government. But if the populace was in lock step without any such demonstrations, then it would be clear that ideological subversion had succeeded and hegemony had been

effectively achieved.

To this end, the mass media is co-opted as a governmental pawn of ideological distribution: "...the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion--newspapers and associations--which, therefore, in certain situations, are artificially multiplied."¹⁴ If these networks are coupled with economic superiority, then leadership is secured. Gramsci explicitly cites and builds upon Marxist terminology in this argument: "...one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too. This is the most purely political phase, and marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructures; it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'party....' Bringing about not only unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a 'universal' plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups."¹⁵ Note the cosmological elevation of the party narrative here to something 'universal'---deliberately phrased so as to render no alternative visions for a society. In sum, "The State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules."¹⁶ This is the key stage---*consent*. Once that brand equity is won, the party is effectively entrenched, for the populace is no longer being critical of whatever content it generates. As a result, its own standards of generation relax over time, and ossify into

increasingly structurally repetitious content. It may even become so repetitious that the details at various structural points become increasingly similar over time, so that the party relaxes from cultivated to critical to possibly even basic literacy itself. Both those in power and those without become stultified, but the difference is that the former still wields the material means of control. In other words, both ruler and the ruled become machine, but one machine dominates the other. This is the nadir of a stratified society, and the definition of a routinized autocracy. It is the antithesis of a democracy composed of communities of dialoguing publics.

Recasting and expanding this divide as not only one between economic and ideological conditions of rule but one involving public and private spheres, Louis Althusser, in his “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” from 1971, states that there are both State apparatuses, such as “Army, Police, Courts, Prisons,” which impose rule by force, and the more provocative Ideological State Apparatuses, such as the “religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade-union, communications, and cultural ISAs....It is clear that while there is *one* (Repressive) State Apparatus, there is a *plurality* of Ideological State Apparatuses....It is clear that whereas the-unified-(Repressive) State Apparatus belongs entirely to the *public* domain, much of the larger part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (in their apparent dispersion) are part, on the contrary, of the private domain. Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures, etc., etc., are private.”¹⁷ In other words, these ‘private’ modalities of control are insidious because they are, initially at least, spun as self-sovereign nodes of cultural production, endorsing the party freely. But over time, with increasingly relaxed public critique of their products, the party is able to gain ground over

their production, and increasingly directly govern their content.

In “The Culture Industry Reconsidered,” which he assembled in 1975, Theodor Adorno writes that a society exhibiting this level of acceptance is indeed ready to accept wholesale the products of the culture industry however they are presented. As he writes, “The cultural commodities of the industry are governed, as Brecht and Suhrkamp expressed it thirty years ago, by the principle of their realization as (market/popular) value, and not by their own specific content and harmonious formation. The entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms.”¹¹⁸ Just as Arnold cautioned, the true meaning of labor, the production of something embodying one’s “pursuit of perfection,” is replaced by something driven entirely by market value.

By 1975 this was indeed well underway. As Adorno states, “Ever since these cultural forms first began to earn a living for their creators as commodities in the marketplace they had already possessed something of this quality [of ‘market value’].”¹¹⁹ And with the entrenchment of these higher powers, and the expansion of their markets, they became able to increasingly produce the kind of commoditized rhetoric that the mass would in turn devour. “New on the part of the culture industry is the direct and undisguised primacy of a precisely and thoroughly calculated efficacy in its most typical products. The autonomy of works of art...is tangentially eliminated by the culture industry, with or without the conscious will of those in control. The latter include both those who carry out directives as well as those who hold the power.... Cultural entities typical of the culture industry are no longer *also* commodities, they are commodities through and through.”¹²⁰ The emerging ‘template’ for mechanically produced culture

industry products is expressed well as thus: “As soon as the film begins, it is quite clear how it will end, and who will be rewarded, punished, or forgotten. In light music...once the trained ear has heard the first notes of the hit song, it can guess what is coming and feel flattered when it does come.”¹²¹ That is the patriarchal, and patronizing pat-on-the-back those in power give those consuming their products at a level of basic literacy. It is the Pavlovian call-and-response *par excellence*.

The origins of this runaway mass dynamic became yet clearer when Michel Foucault’s poststructuralist perspective rendered the view of power as omnipresent and contingent upon local agents (Althusser’s ISAs). In this, power was ever re-conditioned and regenerated by common discourse and was not traceable to a point source. To Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality*, published in 1981, power “...must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power...”¹²² This is societal inertia well expressed. Once the mass society has been sufficiently rooted under the production of an elevated culture industry, and public critique has altogether vanished, support of culture industry products automatically comes from many dispersed sources. For that is what consumption is---automatic, and lacking altogether of any critical viewpoint. In this sense, Foucault’s vision is fully dystopic in its painting of the mechanism of such a widely automated society.

Indeed, in “The Rediscovery of ‘Ideology,’” published in 1982, Stuart Hall makes the argument that this is already happening. He makes an about-face on Marxist and Gramscian constructions of hegemony and argues that economic and ideological notions

of power can no longer be separated when looking at modern Western society—that they are in fact one and the same and should be studied as such. “The question of ideology could not be extrapolated from some other level—the economic, for example, as some versions of classical Marxism proposed....Economic, political and ideological conditions had to be identified and analyzed before any single event could be explained.”¹²³ This concept of dispersed power and market value sets the stage for postmodern confusions of value, whereby value is so constructivistically generated that its tether to its original source, that of the pursuit of perfection, is lost.

In 1984, Pierre Bourdieu had preconceptions of where this kind of thinking was headed, especially as this trend of intellectual discourse had begun to take off in the 1980s. In “Distinction & The Aristocracy of Culture,” Bourdieu describes the need for standards of aesthetics, as dictated by the quality inherent in the work itself, to stand firm against the coming tendency for relativization: “Any legitimate work tends in fact to impose the norms of its own perception and tacitly defines as the only legitimate mode of perception the one which brings into play a certain disposition and a certain competence.”¹²⁴ For the circle of postmodernism can indeed be insidious: “...the apprehension and appreciation of the work [of art] also depend on the beholder’s intention, which is itself a function of the conventional norms governing the relation to the work of art in a certain historical and social situation and also of the beholder’s capacity to conform to those norms....To break out of this circle one only has to observe that the ideal of ‘pure’ perception of a work of art *qua* work of art is....The aesthetic mode of perception in the ‘pure form....’”¹²⁵ In other words, one has to continually check oneself from simply falling into societally pervasive modes of seeing, and return

continually to one's interaction with the work itself. In this, Bourdieu distinguished between "pure taste" and "barbarous taste," a distinction that harkens of Arnold's dismissing of societally set market values as being reflective of the desires of either the aristocracy, middle class, or proletariat, and which lead one away from the "classlessness" that is at the root of the pursuit of perfection.

Similarly, in 1983, Jean Baudrillard wrote, in *Simulations*, that this kind of dangerous postmodernism actually created a sense of the "hyperreal," in which the ubiquity of market value "masks the *absence* of a basic reality; it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum."¹²⁶ It created what Baudrillard called a system of "floating values" that had no lasting significance but changed their meaning according to the ephemeral whimsies of market-driven fluctuations.

Part of this mounting popular postmodernist confusion inspired Stuart Hall, the original colleague of Hoggart's at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, to write *The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities*, which was published in 1990 and which revealed that part of the mission of the developing field of Cultural Studies was to safeguard the teaching of critical literacy as a counterweight to the rise of relativization in academia and mass society. For Hall, Cultural Studies was partly "Trying to come to terms with the fluidity and the undermining impact of the mass media of an emerging mass society...."¹²⁷ It [cultural studies] had...to undertake a work of demystification to bring into the open the regulative nature and role the humanities were playing in relation to the national culture."¹²⁸ In other words, the field was charged with the dispersal of the abilities---namely cultivated and critical literacy---requisite to safeguarding value in an increasingly relativistic world.

Stuart Hall discloses that, in the beginning, he and his colleagues had to compile what they could out of the English intellectual tradition and also beseeched the editors of the *New Left Review* to translate the works of the Frankfurt school, Walter Benjamin, and Gramsci so as to build a corpus of “Ur-texts.”¹²⁹ “...from the start we said [to our graduate students]: What are you interested in? What really bugs you about questions of culture and society now?”¹³⁰ It soon became clear that “...the attention to literary language and its impact on the question of who can or cannot speak English effectively is a central matter for the future and survival of the United Kingdom as a civilized society.”¹³¹ For “...even among the so-called educated classes...a dismaying number of university graduates [were] unable to master these [literary] essentials....All this is part of Thatcherism; it has to do with a profound crisis of national identity, of the national culture; it’s about the erosion and decline of the United Kingdom as a nation-state, about the threats Britain now feels itself facing, first of all from its own regions, second of all from Europe, thirdly from America, fourthly from Japan, and fifthly-and especially-from its own population.”¹³² Thus, the discipline itself was deliberately constructed to serve as a bedrock against relativization and the accompanying decline of literary prowess. “The vocation of cultural studies has been to enable people to understand what is going on, and especially to provide ways of thinking, strategies for survival, and resources for resistance to all those who are now-in economic, political, and cultural terms-excluded from anything that could be called access to the national culture of the national community: in this sense, cultural studies still has as profound a historical vocation as it ever had in the 1960s and ‘70s.”¹³³ For it is in failing to understand these kinds of relativizing processes that whole classes slip back into levels of basic literacy. The spirit

of critique en route to production must be sustained, lest a nation's canon degrade into the template works of a culture industry. As Hall further writes, "Cultural studies thus purports to move beyond the academically isolated realms of the humanities and the arts in order to oppose Thatcherism and Reaganism, and it wishes to do so by summoning the right elements of key theoretical paradigms. It is not purely practical; nor is it purely theoretical. It is a bridge out of academia-where it lives a pariah existence in Britain and an amorphous one in the U.S. (where it can mean 'just about anything')-and into the 'big, complicated world.' Its relations with politicians are tenuous. It seeks more to engage the populace directly...."¹³⁴ For it remained Hoggart's steadfast belief, held throughout his life, that anyone with the proper training could attain high levels of cultivated and critical literacy and thus contribute to the formation of those communities of dialoguing publics so requisite to any functioning democracy.

As Duncan Webster echoes in "Pessimism, Optimism, Pleasure: The Future of Cultural Studies" in 1990, keeping this kind of critical awareness alive is crucial in the modern era, wherein runaway neoliberal commercialism has become so entrenched as to become unnoticeable to many---a typical aspect of "ideological" ascendancy that becomes "invisible because it is all-pervasive" (as stated by Arthur Asa Berger).¹³⁵ However, it has now become so popular to oppose it that a new kind of relativism is forming around the trite notion of celebrating the popular as a reflexive response to the corporate, which presents a new danger to cultural studies in that this response can become so programmatic that it deadens the critique and thus actually works to the corporate side's advantage. As Webster writes, "...a transformed and 'truly popular' culture, has been diluted to become a populist celebration of existing popular forms."¹³⁶

Cultural studies, in becoming a marketable forum, risks compromising the very kind of material it was designed to produce. Webster continues: “[John] Fiske’s [Cultural Studies] books, student textbooks ‘cashing in on a new market in America and elsewhere’, represent a ‘real threat to cultural studies.’” It is a leakage of postmodernism into the field.¹³⁷ “This isn’t seen as a particular flaw...but as a ‘worrying trend:’ ‘by celebrating on the one hand an active audience for popular forms and on the other those popular forms which the audience ‘enjoy’, we appear to be throwing the whole enterprise of a cultural critique out the window....’ This is the ‘subjectivity licensed by the postmodern ethos,’ which ‘leads to ‘the loss of fifteen years’ hard labour around the *production of meaning*....’”¹³⁸ It is the mandate of Cultural Studies--ideally to be practiced by the culture at large---to safeguard the kind of critique and artistic and intellectual production that develops and defines communities of dialoguing publics.

This indeed poses one of the greatest modern threats for modern Cultural Studies and Cultural Theory, and which Lawrence Grossberg covers in his piece, “Does Cultural Studies Have Futures?” published in *Cultural Studies*.¹³⁹ As he writes, “the question to be asked today in Britain is: how to induce people into adopting critical...ways of thinking.”¹⁴⁰ In his text, *It’s a Sin*, published in 1989, he declares that Cultural Studies, while it has gotten so popular, must indeed be careful not to fall into the same deadening postmodernist pitfall of mainstream commercial culture in softening its appraisals of cultural content. It must remain tied to the notion of cultural critique, and thus sort out which materials actually further the pursuit of perfection, and which do not. As he writes, on Cultural Studies’ success in the United States, “its recent rise has all the ingredients of a ‘made-for-TV movie,’ but it has been installed into the American academy at just the

moment when its work---especially in the US---seems to be stalled....Cultural Studies is powerful in so far as it sees theory historically, politically, and strategically, but its success threatens to restrict its theoretical mobility.”¹⁴¹

To this end, Bourdieu devised a form of structuralist constructivism as an antidote to postmodernism and its insidious effect on Cultural Studies, conceding, as it were, the external independent value of things, but not without viewing them inevitably through a constructivist lens. “By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold social genesis, on the one hand of the schemes of perception, thought, and action which are constitutive of what I call habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups, notably those we ordinarily call social classes.”¹⁴² In driving this new balancing act of critique of the work itself and constructivistic interpretation, I find it useful to return for a moment to the origins of Cultural Studies with some grounding thought from Richard Hoggart that clarifies the field’s original mission. In John Corner’s “Studying Culture: Reflections and Assessments: An Interview with Richard Hoggart,” published in 1991, the two go through a thorough modern appraisal of what Cultural Studies has become amidst its postmodernist challenges. As Corner summarizes, “In its combining of literary methods of close analysis with an enquiry into more general social meaning and social change, ‘cultural studies’ had antecedents in the work of the critics F.R. and Q.D. Leavis and members of the group associated with the Cambridge journal *Scrutiny* in the

1930s. But now it positioned itself in a fresh and direct way at the convergence point of current literary, political and social issues, not least by its engagement with questions of social class inequality and class experience.”¹⁴³ In this, Hoggart says that the cultivation of the skills of literary production and criticism remains the focal point. “My starting point, my definition of it [“common culture;” a phrase of Raymond Williams’s] was always the separation, the enormous separation between the educated and the rest in this society....It [the extramural teaching at Hull] was more than that, it was also mass culture. We were very interested, especially if we taught literature, by the fact that our pupils came and usually they learned about ‘classical’ literature in almost the Leavisitic sense, but they *lived* in another world; they weren’t separate, like undergraduates. They lived in the world of newspapers and magazines and radio (not television at the time) and pop song.”¹⁴⁴

Because of this Hoggart also recognized the class-related limitations that remained in the work of both F. R. and Q. D. Leavis. “As I’m writing it [‘yet another textbook’], I became increasingly uneasy, especially with Mrs. Leavis’s work because I was a great admirer of *Fiction and the Reading Public* but on the other hand felt there was a kind of separation from the material she was writing about which didn’t allow her to understand as well as she might have done what it really meant to people. I was much more impressed by the short essays of Orwell such as the one on boys’ weeklies or even more the one on the art of Donald McGill....[There was another] by C.S. Lewis of all people, where he talks about people being able to bring good instincts to bad literature.”¹⁴⁵ Indeed, Hoggart dislikes the “*tabula rasa*” thinking of Mrs. Leavis, which claims that working-class people have no “powers of critical judgment.”¹⁴⁶ By contrast,

Hoggart emphasizes that the working classes “weren’t just creatures of the advertisers, or the popular writers....What I was trying to show...was that if you’ve tried to develop skills as a critical reader of conventional literary texts then they are applicable to other texts too. That’s why I started the Birmingham Centre....What I was trying to do was to say that the methods of literary criticism, very often Leavisite methods, close analysis, listening to a text, feeling a text and its texture, that they were translatable into the study of popular culture; and not just the words but the images too.”¹⁴⁷

His resulting tripartite literacy scale is a direct descendant of Arnold’s vision of culture as the chief antidote to the kind of anarchy that comes with relativism. “...there’s the Matthew Arnoldian sense [of culture] meaning ‘the best that has been thought and said’ and I’m an Arnoldian in that respect...in democracies you have got to make sure as far as you can that as many people as possible are given a broad sense of critical judgment....At Birmingham, I was busy standing for the literary side of the Centre---doing critical analysis on ads, on the way politicians speak and so on...I would like to see the British reading much more in other cultures and other societies, albeit mostly in translation; we’re very poor at that.”¹⁴⁸ This was all the more important given that “The standard of reading [now] is very low, the sense of the value of books and journals is extremely low. Bookshops, with some important exceptions, have just become places which shift printed matter for consumers.”¹⁴⁹ This wraithing of the freely making and interpreting citizen into a passive, order-taking consumer was the chief concern underlying Hoggart’s creation of the Birmingham Centre.

A few of these literacy themes are re-emphasized in Jim McGuigan’s piece, “Richard Hoggart: Public Intellectual,” especially those concerning the threat of

relativism that continues to grow alongside the deepening of the neoliberal world order. As he states, “A key theme of Hoggart’s work over the past thirty years is relativism in the sense of an indiscriminating and, in effect, uncritical attitude to cultural developments in society that has become especially marked with the rise and hegemonic reach of neoliberalism...” especially when “...Hoggart was unceremoniously dumped from his position as Vice-Chair of the Arts Council at the personal instigation of the newly elected Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher....”¹⁵⁰ In response, in a talk Hoggart gave called “‘The Crisis of Relativism,’ he stated ‘[T]here is today a sizeable attack, first, on traditional definitions of art and, second, on the idea of standards in arts; ... this attack is usually made [falsely] in the name of openness and democracy.’”¹⁵¹ In like form he attacked the “anti-intellectualism, a fear of making discriminatory judgments” known to what can be called the “productionist populism” of the community arts movement. It led to his book, *The Tyranny of Relativism: Culture and Politics in Contemporary England*, which was in part a direct attack on “consumer sovereignty.”¹⁵² In his words, “‘Relativism leads to populism which then leads to leveling; and so to reductionism, to quality reductionism of all kinds – from food to moral judgments. He recognized that this was reflected in cultural studies’ unwillingness to criticize what is now most accurately called *mass-popular* culture. It led back to *Mass Media in a Mass Society*, where once again he discusses ‘relativism’, which is, to quote him: ‘The condition in which nothing really matters except those things which can be consumed without ever arising the question of whether some are better than others.’”¹⁵³

In a distinction harkening back to the Victorian culturalists, Hoggart distinguished between “the processed” and “the lived.” “Processed culture is utterly consumer-oriented

– the audience typically conceived of as a homogeneous mass, whether large or small – whereas ‘living culture...’ ‘recognises the diversity, the particularity, of all experience’ from which can grow allegiances in the pursuit of perfection en route to production that is authentic in its recognition of what came before.”¹⁵⁴ So once again we have rounded back to the idea that cultivated and critical literacy results in the production of pieces that are reflective of the individual’s unique canon and experience, which may overlap with those other members of his or her community of dialoguing public, but which remains nevertheless *sui generis*. It is the degree to which that person has developed their work that defeats the application of relativism, which would open the threat of swaying the work on account of market value, rather than its intrinsic value. As Harold Bloom writes, “...the power of Shakespeare and Whitman is palpable not only in their long line of literary heirs but also in their self-possession: the way each exhausted his precursors to unfold finally in relation to his own prior work.”¹⁵⁵ In other words, an artist or intellectual taps the zeitgeist of his or her times in the production of their own work while still remaining loyal to the best that has come before. As Bloom also puts it, “That life imitates art is an ancient realization, famously revitalized by Oscar Wilde.”¹⁵⁶

In 2004, with the publication of *Mass Media in a Mass Society*, the societal situation Hoggart had analyzed had not much changed since 1957. The ruling ideology was now what Patrick Brantlinger labeled the “neoliberal economic order” of “free markets,” whereby the economic divide between the corporate elite and the burgeoning working class grew by the day amidst a progressive disappearance of the middle class and a burgeoning of basic literacy, or, as Hoggart also called it, ‘vocational literacy.’ Hoggart lamented that, “Put simply and economically, in education today the stress on

vocationalism at all levels has become so great that the word ‘education’ itself now often seems simply a synonym for training.”¹⁵⁷ In other words, slipping into a menial role more worthy of a machine, and which serves another, rather than attending to one’s own self-cultivation.

Hoggart was also in agreement with Brantlinger that the neoliberal order sanctified a misuse of free market doctrine. In the pure version of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*, perfect open competition of all potential creators and receivers of cultural content reigned, resulting in maximal efficiency and the best possible products being produced. By contrast, the enshrining of the corporate elite by way of misquoting neoliberal free market doctrine to mask the arising of an oligarchical system has resulted in a world diametrically distant from perfect competition, in which the mechanistic reproduction of trite consumeristic content ever widens the class divide. To remedy this, Hoggart writes that, for the time being, “We have to accept the need for more democratic legislation, often adopted against the odds and against the predictable voices professing to speak for democratic freedom, and claiming that ‘the market’ can always be left to regulate itself. A false argument. Regulations are needed in any society obviously and in small as well as large matters. They are essential to ‘open capitalist democracies.’”¹⁵⁸ Note the curious paradox here---‘regulations’ are necessary to ensure ‘open’ competition. This paradox resolves itself, however, in that, ideally, those regulations are temporary. In other words, regulations are needed only until the pure kind of competition Smith had envisioned could be actualized. They provide a kind of form, much like an artist’s or an intellectual’s canon, through which the citizen can work and produce something honoring of its spirit that also taps the zeitgeist of the times and thus moves beyond it.

The steady path forward in that regard, Hoggart believed, was to cultivate critical and imaginative literacy in the public. That was the only way to grow the “classless” middle class in which communities of dialoguing publics could form, and democracy could return. He recounts one tale in particular that shows how difficult a battle this can be. “Too much is invested in unscrupulous approaches, which critical literacy will undermine, for it to have an easy passage. Some years ago [before 2004], the education officer employed (in accordance with the Act then current) by a commercial television company to devise worthwhile programmes for schools, proposed a series on ‘How to Read Advertisements....’ The television company, whose profits of course depended on advertising, sacked the education officer once the pilot programme had been previewed, with outraged advertising executives in attendance....Another of those forms of censorship which the mass society practices effortlessly.”¹⁵⁹

It is “effortless” because, as Hoggart writes, “Most [of the mass society] do not know of our past; it does not feed them, does not flow through their mental pathways. They make do in their scarce spare time with television’s recreational re-creatings and visits to heritage sites. Or with the latest bestsellers when on holiday. You could not talk to them of Lawrence or Forster or Greene. Yeats, Eliot and Auden remain in an even more securely closed box. They feel no regret or sense of missing something. They know little of the foundations of their civilisation; for them it is not a civilization but a place, a market, with which constantly to engage, usually and simply for financial gain or greater public repute and the honours which can go with that.”¹⁶⁰

So, in light of this mounting situation of global neoliberalism, where does contemporary America, the chief fount of culture industry products worldwide, rank on

Hoggart's literacy scale? Is it holding true to the democratic visions of its Founding Fathers?

As Michael Tracey states in his essay, "Literacy, Reading and the Future of Thought," "...producing cultivated individuals and through them, collectively, a cultivated community was a foundational aspiration of this [American] society, indeed of any would be free and democratic society, and for this literacy one takes to be the 'starter tool,' the sine qua non....high level literacy, cultivated literacy, provides for the opportunity to participate in the cultural, moral, ethical and philosophical systems that define a society....without mature literacy – Hoggart's cultivated literacy – that can go beyond the merely obvious and functional, the culture itself cannot mature, will be threadbare, shallow, impoverished, ignorant because it would not have the wherewithal to be anything else. If we bring this back to the case of the United States, one might reasonably argue that a mature society of active citizens was very much in the mind's eye of the Founders....Their concern was with the idea of judgment of worth and merit and the importance of there being a broad ability within the populous as a whole to engage in such judgment, to recognize that some of the content of the culture, and therefore life, has depth and merit, and some does not."¹⁶¹

To what degree has the United States been successful in that regard?

CHAPTER III

THE CURRENT STATE OF AMERICAN LITERACY AND THE FREE TRADE MASTER NARRATIVE

There are many disturbing trends associated with the current state of literacy in the U.S. And, just as the cultural theorists predicted, these trends are correlated with an unprecedented wealth gap between ever rigidified classes in America, the isolated elites of which are increasingly successfully promulgating a free trade master narrative around the country and the globe (the many deleterious effects of which will be discussed in Part III). For now it remains to describe this lamentable state of nationwide literacy, and the lulling narrative that is ubiquitously accompanying it.

Tracey reports that, according to the “Adult Literacy in America” report of 2002, a *third* of the American populace demonstrates literacy levels of basic literacy or below.¹⁶² And that’s not just for the general public. “A report, published by the [Sunlight] Foundation in May 2012 and based on the CapitolWords.org website which features the most popular words and phrases in the Congressional Record since 1996, claims that Congress speaks at about a 10.6 grade level, down from 11.5 in 2005...The report...also notes that by comparison the U.S. Constitution is written at a 17.8 grade level, the Federalist Papers at a 17.1 grade level and the Declaration of Independence at a 15.1 grade level.”¹⁶³

Furthermore, in the 2007 National Endowment for the Arts report, Chairman Dana Goya writes, “...Most alarming, both reading ability and the habit of regular

reading have greatly declined among college graduates. These negative trends have more than literary importance. As this report makes clear, the declines have demonstrable social, economic, cultural and civic implications....The nation needs to focus more attention and resources on an activity both fundamental and irreplaceable for democracy.’”¹⁶⁴

For public literacy rates are in fact decreasing in America. In the 2007 National Endowment for the Arts report, *To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence*, literacy rates are shown to be unequivocally decreasing for all age groups in the American public. The report reads that “... Americans in almost every demographic group were reading fiction, poetry, and drama-and books in general-at significant lower rates than 10 or 20 years earlier. The declines were steepest among young adults....Voluntary reading rates per age groups are in sharp decline for 17-year olds, down from 31% in 1984 to 25% in 1999 to 22% in 2004.”¹⁶⁵

Tracey gives a stirring recounting of two of the Founders themselves on the subject of the necessity of cultivating literacy: “The Founders assumed a procreative intimacy between language and Reason. The historian David McCullough has spoken of how for John Adams the greatest gift bestowed by God was ‘the gift of an inquiring mind.’ He quoted Adams pointing to the ‘wonderful provision that He has made for the gratification of our nobler powers of intelligence and reason....’ Etched into the marble of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington are his own words: ‘I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.’”¹⁶⁶ For without that, the citizen cannot determine on his or her own those products that will contribute to his or her self-cultivation, and in such a state the citizen is reduced to a

passive consumer.

This opens the door to many insidious forms of tyranny, such as the ubiquitous creep of market value into intrinsically unquantifiable aspects of human affairs, and the tacit accompanying belief, made so real by the recent mainstreaming of movements like fair trade, that we can simply “shop for a better world.”¹⁶⁷ That is just what financial oligarchs want the populace to think—it has the double whammy of opiating them in transient pleasures, as well as augmenting money velocity in an economy now built predominantly on credit. As expressed so well by Jan Nederveen Pieterse: ““In 2005 the national debt stood at \$13.5 trillion, 115 percent of GDP. In 2007 the current account deficit was \$800 billion per year and the U.S. borrowed \$70 billion per month and \$3 billion each trading day. In 2006 alone the U.S. borrowed 60 percent of all global credit. The interest on the debt is \$7 billion per week. This means that poorer countries are funding American overconsumption. It also means increasing foreign ownership of American assets.””¹⁶⁸

Yet what is harder to see is how these inequities have produced a reality in which the pop version of the American dream, or the ability to earn riches by the sweat of one’s brow, has been literally dampened. As Brantlinger summarizes, upward mobility in America is far less now than it has ever been: “...if opportunity means the chance to move out of poverty or out of the working class into the middle or upper classes, there is much less of it today than there was at the end of World War II...the poor have gotten a lot poorer since the 1980s: over forty-seven million people in the United States are currently living in poverty.... ‘Ten percent of Americans, those in the lowest income bracket, spend 40 percent of their income on debt....’”¹⁶⁹ And amidst all this, “What is

exceptional about America today is not that it lacks classes or class conflict; it is instead that the corporate mass media downplay or erase social class as a major factor in determining American values, including economic and governmental policy....This has been the main ideological victory in America's class warfare so far-the success of the media, bolstered by orthodox economics, in convincing the public of the relative insignificance of social class.'"¹⁷⁰ And the reason this shallow narrative gets widely accepted owes to the pervasiveness of basic literacy---each begets the other in a vicious, reinforcing cycle.

This is the engine by which mass deception is so easily achieved. With such widespread counts of basic literacy, a master narrative that would otherwise be discerned is casually, increasingly accepted until the culture industry producing it manages to assume a lofty, nearly untouchable ground. That master narrative is essentially one of free trade, laissez-faire, the inviolate invisible hand of the market, the old American dream, even when the present situation is one of unprecedented oligarchy. Sung in such a societal condition it is tantamount to hypnosis. It is the road by which potentially literate citizens are wraithed into consumers under the guise that material wealth is not instrumental in achieving "happiness," but happiness itself. In sum, the ideology is codified as: "The way to democratize the world is through the American corporate interests by way of free trade among the nations of the world, exporting American ideologies and ideals to foreign countries for adoption by the local peoples. This, in turn, intensifies globalization worldwide, thus equating the notions of corporate interests to democracy, democracy to free trade, and free trade to globalization. It is the hope of the

elite press to reduce globalization into this simple equation for the general public, offering the most basic understanding to garner support for this chaotic process.”¹⁷¹

And this is what makes hegemony voluntary. Because, due to a lack of criticism, this new status quo is simply accepted, and shows of state power—which would demonstrate a state to be weaker than one operating under invisible Orwellian ideological dissemination—are not needed because there is no visible resistance.

It is only within this widespread realm of basic literacy that relativism—the belief that it is wrong to criticize the worth of cultural products because they all have equal worth depending on one’s point of view—was made possible. It is the gateway to invisible hegemony. With critical skills enabled, such dross would be identified and rejected. Or at least worthy debate would be spurred. In other words, the real meanings of hegemonic rhetorics such as “liberalization,” “privatization,” and “free market” would be rendered visible when confronted by enabled citizens. Those transparent statements would not have the chance to become dogma under the aegis of reactionary ideologues touting them as tantamount to political and economic freedom.

For instance, T. S. Eliot sees right through this master narrative by examining it critically, and is correct in positioning any elitist notions of cultural organization as re-expressions of oligarchical free market thumping. As Williams writes of him, “His instinct, in this, is right: the theory of élites is, essentially, only a refinement of social *laissez-faire*. The doctrine of opportunity...is a mere silhouette of the doctrine of economic individualism, with its emphasis on competition and ‘getting-on.’”¹⁷² That kind of “limited programme,” in Eliot’s words, when pressed into vocational outlets, leads only to stratification and “disintegration.”¹⁷³ These divisions, once they ossify, and even

if they are based on merit, which we know is reflective of original opportunity, becomes, over time, “Orthodoxy...[which] is now so general...that it is even difficult to communicate one’s meaning when one says that a stratified society, based on merit, is as objectionable in every human term as a stratified society based on money or on birth. As it has developed, within an inherited economic system, the idea of such a society has been functionally authoritarian....”¹⁷⁴ Eliot is also keen to foresee that such class ossification simply leads to a deepening of class-based vocationalism over time, with the élites playing an administrative role such as the Leavisitic high culture guardians.

Those with the capability of social critique---a skill that as Hoggart said can be learned by *all*---are accurately perceiving this delusion. Take the walk-out staged by Harvard undergraduates that occurred all the way back in 1992, when this situation was not nearly as pronounced as it is today. Brantlinger, who earned his doctorate at Harvard, reports, “Classes by economists who offer alternative views [to Mankiw’s ‘free-marketism’], such as Stephen Margin, are not required-hardly a free market in intellectual wares...Michael Perelman quotes the 1992 complaint by four Nobel Prize economists about ‘intellectual monopoly’ in their field: ‘Economists will advocate free competition, but will not practice it in the marketplace of ideas’ To Mankiw [author of the bestselling *Principles of Economics* textbook and instructor of Ec10 at Harvard]...[70 undergraduates] wrote, “Since the biased nature of Economics 10 contributes to and symbolizes the increasing economic inequality in America, we are walking out of your class today both to protest your inadequate discussion of basic economic theory and to lend our support to a movement that is changing American discourse on economic injustice.””¹⁷⁵ In like form, Bourdieu describes Milton Friedman and the “Chicago boys”

as promulgating “scientistic madness,” and that “It [neoliberal economics] has become mainly a rhetorical gloss to depict financial oligarchy as if it were populist economic democracy.”¹⁷⁶

This kind of rigorous critique en route to cultivated production is crucial amidst the runaway postmodernism and omnipresent dissemination of market value that so dominates American and, by its extension of influence, global society today. Douglas Kellner’s and his colleagues’ text, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, published in 2001, reads, “Today, in our high tech and global capitalism, ideas that promote globalization, new technologies, and an unrestrained market economy are becoming the prevailing ideas-conceptions that further the interests of the new governing elites in the global economy... These ideologies appear natural, they seem to be common sense, and thus are often invisible and elude criticism. Marx and Engels began a critique of ideology, attempting to show how ruling ideas reproduce dominant social interests trying to naturalize, idealize, and legitimate the existing society and its interests and values.”¹⁷⁷ For amidst burgeoning basic literacy amongst the American populace, this master narrative is going increasingly unchallenged, resulting in a simplification over time of the rhetorical disguise within which the power elite disseminates it. It is resulting in an ever-increasing global wealth gap between the increasingly isolated elite and the ever-expanding culture industry audience, as many foreign sovereigns begin to partake in its leadership and facilitate its growth throughout their home populi.

CHAPTER IV

THE GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FREE TRADE MASTER NARRATIVE

So what happens when this free trade master narrative is exported around the world? In short: the phenomenon of global corporate media hegemony, which is one of the premier topics of contemporary media studies scholarship. For the economic and political effects on developing countries who assimilate into this narrative can be devastating in their effective enslavement to American and transnational corporate interests.

For these countries, the marketing of these products as a vague international template set in regional color is making it more difficult to track down the true sources of power—as Foucault said it would. “This dynamic, when coupled with the ‘leap frogging’ effect of the media (the notion that electronic media allow societies to ‘leap’ over important social conditions such as attaining literacy for the development of an informed citizenry and public sphere) suggests that the kind of democracies evolving in various locations are oriented first and foremost toward consumerism....”¹⁷⁸

To make it globally attractive, the rhetorics become disguised; the ideology becomes sufficiently vague in its phrasing so as to minimize any “countercultural” feelings it might arouse in different nations around the world. Instead, it amorously blends in by way of general phrases being colored with local expressions and in this way insidiously substitutes itself for particular cultural patterns, in the process commoditizing values once thought to be ‘externalities.’

Such culture industry templates exemplify what Stuart Hall called ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding.’ Through a consistent arraying of tropes in a simplistic, imported plot structure, which a basically literate audience will actually derive programmed pleasure from predicting the outcome of, the hegemonic discourse is passively absorbed by the basically literate audience and only decoded as such by those functioning at a level of critical literacy or above. In this, W. F. Santiago-Valles argues that refugees who have fled countries at the hands of globalization with the knowledge of these discourses at hand could assist those still in their countries decode the messages inseeded into these tropes.¹⁷⁹ In so doing, it can be exposed how these products of the culture industry are simply the manufacturings of their chief master narrative marketers.

For, “...as Artz and Murphy (2000) observe, ‘hegemony exists only when dominant social forces represent and incorporate some very real material interests of subordinate groups into their social relationships.’”¹⁸⁰ For Gramsci’s notion of hegemony is indeed voluntary, and this regional ‘hybridization’ of products is part of what gives them so much local appeal amongst basically literate audiences. “Recently, joint ventures between international media and their African partners have inserted African languages, scenes, and cultural markers into standardized formats and genres in radio, television, and film—creating a foundation for new cultural hegemony...”¹⁸¹ In this way, ‘voluntary coercion’ can be more covert, and longer lasting, than physical coercion, as ideology and political economy march hand in hand and no resistance is offered to them.

The full interactive dynamic of the global and local, as it manifests itself in these receiving countries, is indeed multifaceted. Ece Algan describes it as “a complex process of global/local interaction, where many contrasting elements, such as nationalism,

ethnicity, regionalism, diversity, homogenization, imperialism, and domination exist simultaneously and in contest.”¹⁸² To deconstruct these elements in turn, the concepts of “realization,” “hybridity,” “glocalization,” and “hegemony,” arise, and the latter in particular “assists us in understanding the complex process of globalization and the contestation between the global and the local.”¹⁸³

For when they are dressed in hybridity, these new media forms are more disguised. “The amateurish propaganda of formerly state-run media systems has been shoved aside by the more ideologically sophisticated commercial media systems,” says Lee Artz.¹⁸⁴ And, perversely enough, part of the master narrative they promulgate includes the dismissal of “public media...as tantamount to government media, as if private broadcasters better represent the public good. Privatized media systems appropriate global domestic and cultural offerings into ‘glocalized’ commodities for sale to culturally distinct regional audiences....”¹⁸⁵ In this way, privatization becomes the engine of the glocalization process---the process by which generically structured works become peppered with local variables so as to market a generic free market master narrative message to local audiences around the world.

Indeed, in “Globalization, Media Hegemony, and Social Class,” Artz summarizes that “We undoubtedly live in a world that has grown smaller, while national boundaries remain, and nation-states continue to structure life for their citizens, as governments energetically advance the tenets of the market, while leading corporations use partnerships, joint ventures, and mergers to recruit regional capitalists who direct their respective governments to make structural adjustments favorable to ‘free trade.’” Consequently, as individual state regulations remove obstacles to international

production, distribution, and consumption, transnational corporations have expanded operations. Informational, instructional, symbolic, and ideological changes within each country (and internationally) have facilitated and justified the political and economic structural changes necessary for the globalization of free market capitalism....In other words, contrary to claims that capitalist globalization has superseded the nation-state...in each case governments have promoted global capitalism and legalized its activity within state boundaries.”¹⁸⁶ Once again, we find that global corporate media hegemony, by way of the term ‘hegemony’ itself, is a *voluntary* activity. State actors know the products they are promoting, because they themselves operate with critical literacy, and they also know that the bulk of their audience lacks that critical faculty. It is this divide of abilities itself that enables the easy transmission of the glocalised narrative, which over time secures themselves as the elite regional representatives of the global culture industry.

This kind of rampant free market activity has led to privatization movements all around the world, the result of which is the effective capitalistic enthroneing of government-partnered transnational corporations (TNCs). As an example, Artz states that, “In Mexico, following NAFTA and the privatization of public industry and increased foreign direct investment, some two dozen Mexican capitalists became billionaires....In short...elites have not circumvented the nation-state, but instead have prospered because the government-whether PRI or Fox-licenses, protects, and promotes their interests nationally and globally....The logic of global capitalist production and distribution recruits national, regional, and local participants according to the pragmatics of profits, efficiency, and corporate use. Transnational capital plays a pivotal role in the globalization process-representatives of the transnational corporations (TNCs) provide

the political leadership that spearheads the deregulation and privatization of public transnational services, including the telecommunications and the media.”¹⁸⁷ Just as Mills predicted in *The Power Elite*, the corporate elite is thus increasingly directing the actions of the political elite, who increasingly serve only to sanction their actions with legislation that enables privatization.

Indeed, the first line in Emile G. McAnany and Kenton T. Wilkinson’s edited volume *Mass Media and Free Trade* (1996) reads, ‘(s)ince the end of the cold war, trade has taken over from ideology as the focus of global attention....’ Such a declaration by critical communication scholars registers a shift away from questions of ideological hegemony and toward a preoccupation with market forces-though they are indeed equivalent-intangible assets (concepts and brand names), virtual companies, borderlessness, franchising, et cetera; in short, the power and presence of an emerging global [market] sphere....it is also indicative of a discourse advanced by new age, ‘invisible hand’ libertarians....namely that free markets disperse ideological control as economic exchange....”¹⁸⁸ It is interesting to see such terms as “free” and “control” so often and so closely rhetorically juxtaposed, but that is the message at work here. Free trade in an oligarchical system means control, in the form of further enthroning the culture industry by way of voluntarily purchasing its products.

It is the mechanism by which more and more of the world’s activities and practices are being commoditized and subjected to the same “floating values” of the market that Baudrillard noted, and which may not be linked to any sort of deeper value grounded in Arnold’s concept of the pursuit of perfection. For a basically literate audience cannot distinguish the worth of a product by itself but needs the market value

price tag to make that decision for them. They are consumers, not citizens, and the culture industry thrives on their replication throughout the world. As Patrick D. Murphy continues, “Through a mixture of marketing, telecommunications and art, cultural norms, practices and activities are transformed into commodity forms. This social marketing dynamic draws on a human economy embedded and enmeshed in institutions, economic and noneconomic, to cultivate an ideological base for consumer culture in countries rich and poor throughout the world. And while the market place’s cosmological reordering may not be materializing with uniformity from country to country or region to region, it is nevertheless pervasive enough even in its diversity to indicate that the notion of hegemonic ideology...warrants critical attention.”¹⁸⁹ For it has effectively opened the door to the emergence of global culture industries that “benefit from transgressed politics and devalue social experience, as they transform the cultural capital of even the most defiant, marginalized, and socially stressed communities into capitalist currency...”¹⁹⁰ For the more elements of life that can be assigned values of ‘currency,’ the wider the potential reach of the culture industry marketers, and the deeper the free market master narrative can go in a society. And, of course, consequently, the more unreachably powerful the culture industry can become.

In a most Foucauldian tone, in *Global Culture Industry: The Mediation of Things*, published in 2007, Scott Lash and Celia Lury detail that this is the modern extension of a theme that has grown in register since the Enlightenment. “...Enlightenment’s dialectic turned emancipation into domination. Enlightenment’s enabling power was changed into a new darkness of power as domination. *Savoir*, or knowledge, became linked to *pouvoir* [or “ability”].... Enlightenment for critical theorists was an emancipation of outer nature,

of inner nature and of social nature....The point for critical theorists was that a previously autonomous or relatively autonomous sphere now itself came under the industrial principle. This meant that culture, once a space of freedom, came under the principle of instrumental rationality, became instrumental in the hands of Hollywood and the emergent monopoly concentration of capital in publishing, recording and advertising. It meant that culture, previously a source of edification, the *Bildung* of human potential, turned into a machinery of control, whose main goal was the expenditure of resources in the interests of the financial profitability of corporate oligopolies. Culture took on the same principle of accumulation already widespread in the capitalist economy.

Metrification-now the logic of the factory colonized the dream factories of the culture industry....The implication for Horkheimer and Adorno was that...the heterogeneity---the grain of the artwork---is reduced to identical units of utility; the qualitative, internal values of things are reduced to identical units of exchange-value and quantities of money....Industrialized culture, for Horkheimer and Adorno, is homogenized culture. In homogenized culture one unit is like every other. One unit, in its nature as commodity and instrumentality, is identical to any other. This was the principle of identity that Horkheimer and Adorno deplored. It was the principle against which critique was to be launched.”¹⁹¹ If this kind of “atomization,” or reduction to market value, invades culture, all potential for an Arnoldian pursuit of perfection is lost, creating what Marcuse (1991) later called ‘one-dimensional man.’”¹⁹² For that one-dimensional consumer is bent on one purpose: consuming those products the culture industry markets to him or her. There is no room for self-cultivation in such a world---the consumer is simply “cultivating” him or herself on the basis of the statements of another. And those statements are never

critically examined, granting the culture industry an undue immunity in its mass production efforts.

As previously stated, the discipline of Cultural Studies was fashioned to expose this enslaving activity, as Patrick Brantlinger writes in *States of Emergency*. "...the cultural studies movement, developing out of labor history and the culture and society tradition in Britain, has served as a counter-discourse to orthodox (capitalist) economics....[in which] inauthenticity is often said to be a defining characteristic of postmodernity....Instead of revolutionary values, the new masses were the bearers of no values whatsoever-José Ortega y Gasset's mindless millions in *Revolt of the Masses*, T.S. Eliot's 'hollow men,' Karl Capek's 'robots.' These valueless...'masses' are no different from...Jean Baudrillard's postmodern 'silent majorities.'"¹⁹³ For no products are being made that contribute to self-cultivation in such groups, and so there is no potential for the formation of communities of dialoguing publics that promote the development of cultivated and critical literacy.

As Brantlinger continues, "...it was...a picture that helped Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, and many others understand how emergent democracies gave way to totalitarianism, as in the case of the Weimar republic....This is similar to what Gianni Vattimo, in *The End of Modernity*, calls the postmodern 'dissolution of truth into value:' 'Truth...reveals itself to be a 'value which dissolves into itself,' or, in other words, no more and no less than a belief without foundation.'"¹⁹⁴ For the foundation is simply the predictable script of the culture industry marketer promulgating the free market master narrative. Namely, that laissez-faire, that trickle-down, is the only ticket to ensure freedom and the possibility of infinite monetary ascent for every person, even when the

system is more oligarchical than it has ever been (a small point the basically literate person misses). As Jacques Derrida said: "...‘darkness is falling on the value of value....’ Derrida...insists that, even though Francis Fukuyama might in the 1990s declare ‘the end of history’ via the triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy, neither the need for social critique nor the goal of social justice has even remotely disappeared. Derrida echoes the Frankfurt theorists when he asserts that, like Marxism, deconstruction is ‘heir to a spirit of the Enlightenment which must not be renounced....’”¹⁹⁵

Indeed, in a way, the spirit of critique has no easier target than the wealth inequalities that have resulted from oligarchical capitalism. As Brantlinger writes, “the wealthiest 1 percent already owns over 33 percent of the nation’s [America’s] wealth, and the richest 20 percent owns 83 percent of it....A 1997 comparison of corporations and nations revealed that over half the top one hundred economic powers were corporations [of which Wal-Mart is currently the 19th biggest economy in the world]...A 1982 study of the five hundred largest corporations in the United States found that 23 percent of them had been convicted of criminal activity over the past decade....it [global capitalism] has brought prosperity to some, it has brought increasing poverty and even catastrophe to many others. The number of those who, worldwide, now live or try to live on less than \$1 per day has mushroomed....Capitalism [in its current oligarchic form] works best for a small minority of the world’s people, condemns hundreds of millions to exploitation, and a stunted existence, and leaves billions, particularly in the Third World, in a state of poverty by way of crippling developing countries in usurious debt squabbles by way of the WTO, IMF, and World Bank....Harvey, Ehrenreich, Pieterse, Hudson, and Krugman are all saying the United States is rapidly achieving, through its national version of ‘the

race to the bottom,’ the same level of inequality and poverty that characterizes Mexico or Guatemala.”¹⁹⁶ In this analysis, Artz exposes a wondrous trick of the free market master narrative: activities outside of consumer capitalism---such as potential working-class political organization (which, again, Arnold spoke so vehemently against because they cannot effect the same kind of long-term societal development and eventual political change as the spread of the ability to critique and produce)---become ““special interests.”¹⁹⁷ That is, their members become marketing targets for the culture industry elite.

This is part of the “glocalized” emphasis of manufactured cultural industry products, as they are taken from a generic mold and fitted to individual cultures on the ground, simultaneously linking them in their pursuit of consumer capitalism while also dividing them as uniquely advertised markets. Uniqueness becomes specifically, deliberately marketed to. This is the nature of what Artz calls “a simulated democracy in the form of individual consumer choice.”¹⁹⁸ Note the reference here to the “simulacrum” of Baudrillard, for such products will only be differentiable in terms of floating market value, given their lack of intrinsic value.

In this, ‘hegemony’ transcends mere ‘ideology’ in that it attempts to construct new patterns of life, patterns of ‘common sense’ decreed softly from above. “...the hegemonic process builds consent by discursively aligning the public interest with the interest of the elite....,” and in this aligns itself with the principle of agenda setting in that it sets acceptable realms of discussion in the media. In principle, “This process leaves only a limited number of choices for public response-choices that have been filtered and approved by the dominant ideology---from which the public then forms an opinion.”¹⁹⁹ It

is anathema to the formation of communities of dialoguing publics, which do not set borders to their discussions.

These carefully placed obfuscations in the media occlude otherwise obvious phenomena like the dropping of trade barriers around the world by which the transnational corporations and the transnational media conglomerates are ensuring the spread of the free market master narrative. Artz states that "...while national boundaries remain, and nation-states continue to structure life for their citizens, as governments energetically advance the tenets of the market, while leading corporations use partnerships, joint ventures, and mergers to recruit regional capitalists who direct their respective governments to make structural adjustments to 'free trade.'"²⁰⁰

Artz also lays out the reasons why these borders, especially in the developing 'South,' are so easy to penetrate by the moguls of consumer capitalism. "Throughout the global South, military governments have continually assured elite control through force, as in South Korea, Indonesia, Paraguay, Colombia, and elsewhere. Even in those nation-states averred to be newly democratic (e.g., Brazil, Nigeria, Indonesia), civilian regimes function as instruments of elite rule with little concern for the working poor....It should be no surprise to find governments adopting regulations that continue to favor national elites who have hopes of entering the global free market, including in media, the culture industry, and telecommunications."²⁰¹ It is a buy-in to the kind of authority they believe they will receive from partnering with the culture industry. "Similar accounts of national governments servicing corporate elites, in media and other industries, occur on every continent, both in industrialized and developing countries. States are not withering in the face of unfettered freedom, rather the new hegemonic imperative directs them to obey the

logic of the market.”²⁰² Note the old command metaphor here, re-emerging right on cue--to “obey” is to re-enact the old master of machine dynamic that Ruskin had detailed as much as a hundred and fifty years earlier. For that is the ultimate manifestation of the maker-consumer divide: one of machine master and machine.

Furthermore, lest these developing governments be alienated from what they see as the dominant global political-economic system, “...national governments adopt market-driven policies of deregulation, privatization, and commercialization...complicit in the dismantling of public enterprises, including the media and culture, or at the very least regulating away viable public media and cultural independence.”²⁰³ For “the third world has a large number of nouveau riche who are able to buy and sell in the global economy, creating vast fortunes that match or rival many in the first world....That’s what they want, by adopting this narrative, to become this ‘nouveau riche....[And yet] One third of the world is unemployed or underemployed.”²⁰⁴ In other words, it is not just the American wealth divide that has reached unprecedented levels because of the spread of the free market master narrative, but the global wealth divide as well.

Rephrased again, it is not that trade has taken over for ideology, as McAnany and Wilkinson write in *Mass Media and Fair Trade* (1996)²⁰⁵, but that trade, in the specific form of oligarchic capitalistic competition---the engine of the wealth divide---has *become* ideology. “Within this environment democratic participation has come to look more and more like consumer [purchase], as media conglomerates claim to be just ‘giving people what they want....’ This trend in consumer democracy continues to gain momentum despite the fact that with the growth of mega-media corporations and thus fewer sources of information, it is becoming less possible to think of it [even] as a real market...In the

name of democracy and opening markets, ‘global media’s news and entertainment provide an informational and ideological environment that helps sustain political, economic and moral basis for marketing...and for having a profit-driven social order....’²⁰⁶ In particular, it disseminates the ideology that material acquisition equates to progress itself for all cultures, rather than as a step that can assist with self-cultivation. As Patrick Murphy writes, “...make no mistake, global capitalism and multiculturalism are effective, albeit strange, bedfellows....it [corporate capitalism] diffuses the threatening or challenging aspects of difference and voice by camouflaging preexisting social imbalances and marginalization under the participatory veneer of consumer democracy.”²⁰⁷ The fundamental dynamic of effective “colonialism/imperialism” has not much changed in its morphing into “transnationalism/globalization.”²⁰⁸

According to Gerald Sussman, “Between 1984 and 1990 alone, the Third World suffered a net transfer of \$178 billion in loan repayments to commercial banks...,”²⁰⁹ the primary keeper of which was the World Bank. “Private and public lending began to overtake government assistance programs as the main source of foreign currency in Third World economies, lending to a reverse flow of dollar investments-from the Third World to the First World.”²¹⁰ In other words, AID, or the Agency for International Development programs, which are designed to set the hook of “dependency,” have been increasing, amidst a drop in DFI, or Direct Foreign Investment programs, which are increasingly selective in the countries they reach.²¹¹ And programs that could actually alleviate poverty, like education, are not the ones that reach them, as it, in Sussman’s words, remains a “highly protected U.S./Western asset.”²¹² The neoliberal wealth divide this creates globally is staggering: “Belgium, with 10 million people, has as large a GDP as

all of sub-Saharan Africa, with over 650 million people. Of the largest 100 economic entities in the world (a list including corporate assets and national GDPs), more than half are transnational corporations. The [“Global”] South as a whole has nearly 80% of the world population, but only 20% of world income, 10% of its patents, less than 15% of its telephone line, and 30% of the world’s newspaper output. As of 1999, fewer than 400 Americans had over \$1 trillion in assets-more than the income of half the world’s population.”²¹³ Take a moment with that. Four hundred Americans have more wealth than over three billion people. That’s how big the global neoliberal wealth divide has become---and it is growing.

In an attempt to quit this situation of the Global South by way of accession to the EU, Turkish politicians believed they required a capitalist consumer culture and thus inaugurated a new era of privatization.²¹⁴ As Algan writes, “Print media and radio [in Turkey] aimed to construct a Western national-cultural identity based upon the principles of a secular life---as opposed to traditions---in areas of education, family, health, body, clothing, and so on.”²¹⁵ As a result, corporate media monopolies have quickly spread to Turkey. As Ece Algan reports, “Today [2003] more than 60% of the media in Turkey are owned by two conglomerates, the Dogan group and the Sabah group, while some 80% of the media are owned by only 5 corporations....Other major media groups have similar dominant individuals or families.”²¹⁶ Once again, consolidation accompanies an ossifying wealth divide built on promulgation of the free market master narrative.

The pressure to expand this oligarchical ownership in Turkey is significant from abroad. “The European Union has insisted that Turkey lift restrictions on international investment, and the IMF is withholding needed credit unless Turkey privatizes its entire

telecommunications system. In the fall of 2001, the Turkish government obliged domestic and international capitalists by raising individual ownership restrictions to 50% and opened the bidding on government holdings.”²¹⁷ For it is indeed a get-rich-with-us or get-left-behind type choice that is presented to the sovereigns of developing countries, and most of them are acquiescing to the pressure, as they are already relatively increasingly impoverished, and so opt for the former option not realizing it will often ensnare them in debt.

Prior to 1994, when the law limiting ownership of media companies to corporations was introduced, “...nonstate media in Turkey enjoyed an unregulated, independent broadcasting climate with large urban audiences seeking democratic public discourse. A political consciousness was forming, and many civil society organizations were gathering around issues such as human rights, women’s rights, the environment, and labor issues....Before the mid-1990s, nonstate radio in Turkey was crucial in aiding the people to question the essentialist identity that the state and its institutions dictate by offering a forum for audience expression and conversation as well as sanctioning the [popular] taste in music.”²¹⁸ For the purpose of media is not just to convey information to the public that they cannot access for themselves, but to provide a channel through which they can popularize their intellectual and artistic creations and so also gather communities around their work. In that, it becomes a crucial narrative component of communities of dialoguing publics, linking them together when they cannot actually convene in person and share their productions.

By contrast, corporate media fosters hegemony by pandering to those relegated to basic literacy and by directly impeding the formation of dialoguing publics by restricting

the publicity options of the public sphere. They “...do not function as public broadcasting channels, as they once claimed. Indeed, most of these stations exclusively emphasize the values of a consumerist culture and promote a lifestyle that is practiced in the capitalist West.”²¹⁹

In other words, where once there was a forum for the advancement of citizenry, now there is marketing of the corporate master narrative. “What undercut and strangled the diversity, creativity, and independence of the new media was its commercialization by monopolies willing to broadcast any style attractive to advertisers seeking particular audiences.”²²⁰

This kind of media hegemony is insidious because it is indeed often more effective---in that it generates less resistance because it is less initially detected by those only exhibiting basic literacy---than explicit coercion, as was the case in 1990s Turkey. As Algan writes, “...there is a growing market for...*sentez* (synthesis) music. This contemporary synthesis of music differs from the crude, state-directed, pro-Western synthesis of cultures from years before. In other words, the music industry has accomplished *hegemonically* what the Ottoman elite failed to secure *coercively*.”²²¹ In summary, “...by meeting the cultural preferences of the Turkish people on some elementary level, commercial media have managed to rapidly establish their hegemony over the cultural scene in Turkey....This new communications space that has been opened up in Turkey with the help of global communication technologies [has played an important role in the empowerment of marginal or forgotten groups and voices, and their integration into the global system]....Yet, at the same time, this space makes Turkey susceptible to corporate media hegemony and cultural homogenization because it

promotes commodity fetishism, mimicry of global culture and products, and consumerism.”²²²

In Latin America, America’s two primary private media outlets, CBS and NBC, have had advertising footholds for American products as early as the 1930s.²²³ By the 1960s, products of the culture industry, championing consumer capitalism, were flooding these areas, growing potential markets for America’s increasingly export-based economy.²²⁴ And those not marked as such targets developed none of the American-aided communications infrastructure others enjoyed. “The 29 OECD countries have 15% of the world’s population, 71% of the world’s telephones, 90% of the world’s mobile telephone users, 95% of all computers, and 97% of Internet host domains (two-thirds in the United States and Canada)....The United States and Canada alone have more than 98% of global Internet protocol bandwidth, with the United States acting as a hub of global Internet traffic.”²²⁵

You can still feel the effect of this lack of infrastructure in some parts of modern cities, especially Hong Kong, with its segregated mall-like financial district and its outlying local street markets. “As Anthony Hopkins noted... ‘Communications were designed mainly to evacuate exports. There were few lateral or inter-colonial links, and little attempt was made to use railways and roads as a stimulus to internal exchange....’”²²⁶ The communication networks draw many of the surrounding populace into areas of work, but the work is often not by choice. Many workers are compelled to these areas as urban-based agricultural conglomerates take over surrounding farms, leading to a population explosion in many cities of the Global South. “By the year 2000, these seven cities [Lagos, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Bombay, Calcutta, Manila, and

Jakarta] alone were estimated to have added 30 million people, a 30% urban population increase in just five years....Twenty of the world's 25 largest cities are in the South.”²²⁷ This is the origin of the burgeoning outsourced labor market, which not only displaces workers in the home countries of the TNCs, but ensnares the now landless lower classes of the colonized countries in menial work with an effectively useless wage. In this, once again global corporate media hegemony can be shown to have become a kind of neocolonialistic driver of global wealth inequality. And telecommunication links, now increasingly privatized to spread consumer capitalistic values and spread potential market bases, do not reach out of the capitals into the colonized countries, but are organized primarily between the host capital and the home country to orchestrate the hegemonic game.²²⁸ As Arum Kundnani demonstrates, “Repeating the old capitalist mythology of the nineteenth century, the networkists present the market as a free arena, open to anyone....[Yet] In telecommunications, the top 10 firms now control 86% of the world market....In computer software and manufacture, the dominance of a handful of players is even greater.”²²⁹ Indeed, “...the knowledge economy does not dispense with the dirty side of [oligarchical] capitalism; it merely displaces it to the poorer parts of the world, where it becomes invisible....”²³⁰

Indeed, it is ensnaring the developing countries in a kind of indentured servitude to the U.S. In the words of Gerald Sussman, “The problem of cultural invasion is not simply one of contact with foreigners, inasmuch as all societies have experienced some degree of assimilation of external cultural values, but rather the extremely unequal terms of exchange on which these contacts are organized and the weak financial and technological foundations for developing modern endogenous arts and media.”²³¹ Local

communities of dialoguing publics never have a chance to gain a foothold in such climes. He cites the Brazilian telenovela as one example of this. "...with few exceptions Brazilian television reinforces and helps internalize and globalize these values by creolizing them with a thin veneer of local color..."²³² This is again what Artz means by 'glocalization' by the hand of 'free trade.' The transparency of these shows prompted, "As one response, government officials from 19 nations, including Mexico and Brazil, [to] me[e]t in Ottawa in the summer of 1998 at the invitation of the Canadian government to discuss the threat of free trade to the preservation of national cultures, particularly targeting what are seen as incursions by U.S. entertainment industries upon the independence of their broadcasting systems, book and magazine publishing, and film production."²³³

The activation of new mechanisms of global corporate media hegemony comes often through bodies allegedly designed to serve the needs of all countries. "...the United Nations and its specialized agencies...have served as platforms for the furtherance of the political, economic, and cultural interests of the major world powers-with the cooperation of domestic elites representing their particular developing nation-state....In 1998 the ITU [International Telecommunications Union] changed its constitution to admit private corporates as members with rights equal to nation-states....the ITU's most recent broadcasting satellite plan for Africa, which was adopted in 2000, is aimed at facilitating the delivery of direct satellite TV broadcasting to all countries on the continent....Of course, with the exception of South Africa, none of the 53 African countries have the legal framework, infrastructure, resources, or economic base to support such satellite broadcasting. Thus, most of these channels will eventually be leased or granted to

multinational media conglomerates that will use them to deliver programming content from the United States and Europe to African countries.”²³⁴

In the same vein, Lyombe Eko writes that “Most recently, the ‘good governance’ programs of the IMF and the World Bank called on African countries to create legal frameworks and privatize their telecommunications infrastructure and industries with the goal of making them attractive for foreign investment. Indeed, in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and other countries with a potential mass market for consumer goods, multinationals invested in the mass media, but the influx of foreign capital has done little to improve the lot of the Africans served by the media—and nothing to improve media access by African middle classes, working classes, or the millions of disenfranchised. Rather than providing a forum for African free speech, these foreign-supported media are purely business concerns that serve as conduits that introduce American and European programming to the African mass audience.”²³⁵ These programs, as always, are glocalized to the hilt. They continue to promulgate manufactured templates fitted with local variables---local speech, local dress, local inflections, while the arc of the larger plot points remains the same.

Part of the rise of global corporate hegemony machinery owes to the spread of ‘technopoles,’ or those places of rapid mobile application development. In the case of Ottawa, this kind of development has been directly sponsored by the government: “...the Ottawa case confirms what other technopole research has demonstrated: the nation-state has been crucial to the deregulation, commercialization, and internationalization of media and technology production.”²³⁶ In this way, technopoles are overt cases of political

economy, and of tying the mandate of the university to commercial interests.²³⁷ It is yet another way by which “friction” to free trade is removed.²³⁸

The glocalization dynamic this runaway corporate activity inspires can also be seen in Southeast Asia amidst the spread of MTV Asia. “...the programming includes VJs...of Southeast Asian descent, Asia’s Top 20 Hitlist...and the promotion of Asian bands both in commercials and in airplay....MTV Asia is...a cleverly repackaged and disguised form of Western narratives of class, culture, values, and consumerism....”²³⁹ This is especially important, given that this intimation of music “...is not just the affectation of the single individual, but also creates group identity.”²⁴⁰

One of the resulting effects of these glocalized and glocalizing products is the homogenization of diverse lingua-ethnic groups. A compelling example of this trend is found in the mass-produced programming for American Hispanic audiences. “Concentration, consolidation, and oligarchy in media are often accompanied by a recognizable process of cultural homogenization.... The Spanish-language television show, ‘*Sábado Gigante*’ is a prime example of this trend.”²⁴¹ Indeed, “The history of electronic communication is strikingly similar in each country of Latin America: ruling elites either monopolized the media with government protection or the state operated broadcasting directly. Meanwhile, with considerable approval from national governments, NBC, ABC, Disney, and other U.S. media investors occasionally established separate networks dedicated to entertainment and supportive of the status quo....”²⁴² Think O Globo in Brazil and Televisa in Mexico.²⁴³ “In short, joined with O Globo and Univisión [the American counterpart, annexed by Televisa in 1993], Televisa

dominates and defines Spanish-language television from the Canadian border to Tierra del Fuego.”²⁴⁴

And sometimes resulting class divides become so pronounced that actual tyranny, not just voluntary tyranny in the Gramscian sense, becomes possible, and when this happens the former voice of the now “masses” is not only obviated through vacuous culture industry production but overtly eliminated. “One striking indication of ‘*Sábado Gigante*’s’ alignment with cultural practices that meet the needs of international and domestic elites is Kreutzberger’s [the founder, renamed Don Francisco in the program] accommodation to the Pinochet government, which eliminated all television that allowed ‘participation-representation of the masses’ because they were considered ‘demagogic, political or subversive....Participation and cultural expression was negated in the national civil society....’ And all the while ‘*Sábado Gigante*’ thrived....40 years from its first broadcast, ‘*Sábado Gigante*’ has a weekly audience of over 100 million people worldwide.”²⁴⁵

Sábado Gigante is globalized television *par excellence*, as the template of its construction is a transparent display of culture industry architecture. As Janet Cramer writes, “The program [*Sábado Gigante*] has an entertainment format designed to distract....contributing to a sense of sameness among Spanish-speaking people that shows feature participants, singers, and television stars from different parts of Latin America. But guest or celebrity, they dress and speak alike regardless of where they are from....The new economic order needs millions of consumers to purchase highly standardized products. This imperative of global capitalism creates the need for culturally homogenized audiences acting as consumers.”²⁴⁶ Whereas they might have needed local

variables to succeed at the outset, now culture industry officials don't even require them to win their consumer audiences. The template can be more and more lazily explicit, much alike an unending series of Marvel Comics blockbuster sequels.

In Africa, the increasing explicitness of this template has gone in hand with its increased ease of distribution. Lyombe Eko writes that, "...from the moment they obtained independence from their colonial overseers in the late 1950s and early 1960s, virtually all African countries were connected to the nascent international communication system: literally via purchased and 'free' European programming, and more figuratively, via systems and practices inherited from the former colonizers.... Their desire to belong to the family of nations led them to join the International Telecommunications Satellite Consortium (INTELSAT), the U.S.-based organization that controls virtually all international nonmilitary satellite communications in the world.... Thus inhabitants of African capitals found themselves in constant and instantaneous contact with points around the globe. Ironically, communication within and between individual countries in Africa remained tenuous at best, a situation that remains only slightly improved today."²⁴⁷

In the case of Africa, part of this effect is actualized by the following strategy: "...media across the continent engage in a certain cultural eclecticism, a practice that promises to preserve African culture and values while popularizing the Western messages that inundate the African media market. Such a method cannot hope to successfully preserve 'Africa' in a globalized world, unless African governments and social movements foster the growth of indigenous broadcasting and resist the slide towards commercialization and privatization that drives current global media activity.... Indeed in

many African countries it is easier for political reasons for international broadcasters to obtain broadcast licenses than Africans. In a bid to take advantage of this historic opening up of the African media landscape, many Western international broadcasters have lined up affiliates and are actively seeking others to broadcast or rebroadcast their programming to African audiences. In short, global media have mentored local partners as a means of entry to the African market.”²⁴⁸ And “In the Ivory Coast, Gabon, Senegal, Benin, Mali, and other countries, international broadcasters were granted FM licenses before Africans.”²⁴⁹

Amidst all of these glocalized, “Africanized” cultural forms have come a few examples that are driven by the local people actually creating them. “Over the years, it [Nigeria] has developed a booming home-grown video production industry that has, with the support of local entrepreneurs and sponsors, drawn from the country’s rich African oral culture and village theater tradition.”²⁵⁰ But this is counterpoised with the fact that “...Africans are daily barraged by the messages and values of advertisers, global media interests, and even international governmental broadcasters, such as Voice of America. Likewise, the telecommunications sector---including Internet access---is now controlled by a handful of multinational corporations.”²⁵¹ To survive, “The airwaves must be filled with independent African broadcasters representative of diverse social constituencies, uncurtailed by advertisers, investors, and government bureaucrats. To flourish, authentic African cultural practices must have the opportunities, resources, and environments that emphasize democratic participation in each country and across the continent.”²⁵² To facilitate lateral exchange, many countries that are the object of globalization are fostering what John Downing calls “horizontal,” or “radical” media. “Technologically

they may take a huge variety of forms, from the nontechnological or virtually nontechnological...daily newspapers, Web sites, alternative video projects, and low-power radio.”²⁵³

But such channels are in the minority, and this is because the basic, undergirding link between the TNMCs and the WTO, IMF, and the Free Trade Association of the Americas has not yet been effectively challenged, and a deepening situation of international debt has arisen in Africa and developing countries worldwide.²⁵⁴ As John Downing writes, “I propose that indeed the primary economic dimension of globalization is the ever-increasing ascendancy of transnational corporations operating in a marketplace, a marketplace that offers no rules or stability beyond those crafted for such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund and the European Union. These rules quite frequently are out of sync with each other, given their framing by different organizations, but aside from their extra irrationality, what most often characterizes them is their authoritarian bent....Defenders of these bodies, especially of the World Trade Organization and the World Bank, will throw up their hands in holy horror at the thought that their sacred mission to open the world to freer exchange of goods across frontiers and to dissolve the rigidities of states’ regulation of their economies, might be accused of a new global authoritarianism.”²⁵⁵ That is their rhetorical weapon, and it strikes a bitter chord in most developing countries---to accuse all enemies of free trade, even in a system dominated by oligarchical players, of “authoritarianism.” As Downing so aptly puts it, “Free trade between equals has everything to be said for it. But where are these mythical equals?”²⁵⁶

Could the situation be countered by more Independent Media Centers, which Downing reports now “number about 50 around the globe,” and they were not simply counterhegemonic like the anti-WTO unit in Seattle that preceded them?²⁵⁷ These radical media units, of which *Le Monde Diplomatique* is one example, offer “one way to keep abreast of world events with the benefit of a large slew of highly intelligent correspondents, mostly from the nations under discussion.”²⁵⁸ When used well, these channels can be effective means of author-audience interaction. “Russell identifies the Zapatista Internet experience as one....that computer-mediated communication’s....reconfiguration of notions of proximity...facilitates international participation and alliance building among supporters of the movement. The decentered author and interactivity encourage online users to engage with material more critically and to add their voices to the discourse by posting material.”²⁵⁹ Such organizations believe that the salience of the local message under discussion will encourage appropriate posting.

But when such choices are not present, and, in the sense of Daniel Bell’s *The End of Ideology*, audiences are ‘refracting’ what they are given, we are left at best with a hybridity of the hegemonic and subaltern. As Robbin Crabtree and Sheena Malhortra write of this situation in India’s media climate, “Highly articulate and deeply ambivalent about the new media in India, young and middle-class audiences remarked on the effects of globalization and commercialization, providing evidence for hybridity as an alternative model of global media effects.”²⁶⁰

Yet this hybridity of course contributes to the increasingly elitist isolation of the hegemonic culture industry. “India’s state television network, *Doordarshan*, is

scrambling to compete in a rapidly changing television/market landscape including increased commercialization and entertainment orientation. In the latest spin-off of Modernization Theory, globalization and commercialization of media in India increased the gap between the elite and the periphery, posing consumerism as the road to development.”²⁶¹

The situation in India is complex, as hegemony and foreign media mogul infiltration is also spurring a rampant growth of homegrown entrepreneurial commercial media-which are increasingly being bought out by foreign media investors-to challenge the governmental *Doordarshan* network that was originally modeled after the BBC. “...while one aspect of this [globalization] trend shows Indian broadcasters becoming prominent both nationally and regionally, creating a real challenge to the *Doordarshan* state monopoly, we see the co-occurring trend of global media convergence, wherein fewer and fewer large corporations control the majority of information and entertainment production and distribution....”²⁶² Meanwhile, the usual dynamic of a network linked to distant power centers at the expense of lateral regional linkages is present. “While media corporations are finding Indian television networks attractive partners and gaining access to the largest consumer market and middle-class in the world, the interests of working-class urban and poor rural Indians are likely to go unserved.”²⁶³

Amidst this climate, the culture industry template appears at its most blunt: “...one programming executive at a new private commercial television [in India] said: ‘Every time you are given an idea for a show, if he’s undecided about it, [the Vice-Chair] says, ‘is there a precedent in the West?’ That’s exactly how he asks-in plain terms, unabashedly....And he says, ‘can that just be dubbed into Hindi? Why do we need to go

through the whole experience of creating something else?’ Discussion in production and programming meetings reveal a tendency to mimic American series by merely substituting names and dialogue and making minor plot adjustments.... Thus, we argue that the influence of foreign programming on the domestic television production industries [in India] is in fact more insidious than the more direct influence of imported or satellite-fed foreign programming on audiences. The above examples also demonstrate the ways media hegemony works through a process of consent and cooptation rather than outright dominance.”²⁶⁴ For this is often more effective in securing an audience than direct coercion, as Gramsci repeatedly noted, as it lowers the chance for direct rebellion to the new manufactured content.

And meanwhile, like the BBC, Doordarshan (DD) has been impelled to adapt to the new burgeoning marketplace to sustain its audience. “...DD Metro [like the BBC’s fragmentation] bears marks of influence from STAR-TV and the other commercial stations in its slick new programming and attempts to appeal to a young, urban, middle-class audience. Increasingly, DD uses commercial financing to supplement its public broadcasting budget, which is insufficient to the task of competing with foreign and local commercial programming.... In the global climate of deregulation and privatization, state-funded public television in the West has been diminished (in funding and quality) and become more conservative; the same trend can now be noticed in India.”²⁶⁵

Ideology, in this way, can become ‘normative’ when it achieves a certain level of popular infiltration. “An examination of new programming on commercial networks in India illustrates the growing normativity of capitalist values, lifestyles, and dreams. While India’s Constitution defines it as a socialist country, these ideals are increasingly

being replaced by a consumerist capitalist ideology.”²⁶⁶ For instance, in many of the template-cut shows DD airs, “...the Indian protagonist has evolved from the poor or lower-class Indian, someone referred to in the popular imagination as the ‘common man’ whose ‘goodness’ derived from his values and his virtues, to an upper middle-class or wealthy man who gains respect for his power, and that power is derived from his wealth.”²⁶⁷ Interestingly, most female roles in these shows remain relegated to traditional household activities, whereby only about one in ten work outside the home.²⁶⁸

This “incursion of transnational media systems” bent on disseminating consumeristic values is thus the new wave of “neo-imperialism that has replaced the older, cruder, and obsolete methods of colonialism.”²⁶⁹ In particular, “The increased presence of multinational companies...along with their coexistence with the new commercial media, causes local artisans and manufacturers to compete on an uneven playing field....”²⁷⁰ But it is important to turn this lens reflexively back on America as well. “Whether or not this capitalist culture is characterized by the global dominance of Western culture almost becomes a moot concern when compared to the commercialization, consumerism, and commodifying practices that threaten all cultures, including those of the West....the effects of globalization [glocalization] do indeed weaken dominated and dominating cultures alike.”²⁷¹ For in an oligarchical capitalist system, “...current critiques of globalization identify a growing gap between the few beneficiaries and the many who are marginalized or victimized by the process....[corresponding with] an increasing cultural divide....”²⁷²

This increasing wealth divide is making it easier and easier to distribute these increasingly templated products worldwide. However, it is important to note a few

locations that are offering some potent forms of resistance. Eungjun Min writes that, while Hollywood attempts to maneuver its trite motifs into Korean audiences with the usual glocalizing flair, “South Korea is one of only a few countries that have resisted Hollywood’s hegemony-or an asymmetrically negotiated relationship of power-with some success. Yet ‘Hollywood’ is a palpable presence in South Korean culture, and substantial fears about Hollywood’s cultural influence still exist.”²⁷³

Min positions the Korean film industry arising in the 1980s and ‘90s as one possible counterexample to Hollywood hegemony. Though some of their films reflect the dominant tropes, others “indicate an autonomous ‘voice’ or artistic sensibility....”²⁷⁴ And one of their effects may be the formation of a Gramscian ‘national-popular,’ or “the alliance of interests and feelings among social agents like intellectuals, the working class, and the peasantry.”²⁷⁵ In that it is not simply reactionary but the forging of a genuinely different voicing drawing on South Korea’s own artistic and intellectual legacy as well as its current situation.

But South Korea stands nearly alone on this. In the Caribbean, debt has been one of the chief mechanisms by which dominant powers have catalyzed privatization throughout the region, for many of the subaltern governments sell formerly public enterprises as payment thereof.²⁷⁶ This is often a pathway to TNMC monopolies, by which culture industry template reconstructions are promulgated. As W. F. Santiago-Valles writes, “...the media merchants flood the market with ‘world music’ pieced together from appropriated popular culture forms and with slick, highly stylized cinema and television programming....these dual tasks of hegemony---providing cultural leadership while excluding positive alternatives---have multiple agencies: transnational

corporations, including media companies (e.g. PanAmSat, Univisión, AT&T) and Caribbean elites, operating through national governments funded by private advertising (e.g. Caribbean Broadcasting Company in Barbados).”²⁷⁷

Public reactions to these trends have been largely polemical, but by speaking of these developments in terms of “counterhegemonic” discourse, the reactionary flavor these speeches take actually makes these publics easier marketing targets for TNMC executives. “Bertelsmann, Time Warner, and others use the profits generated by the creativity of the [popular] to recruit and subsequently market a handful of individual creative artists. Seduced by the illusion...of greater access and creative control turns many cultural critics of globalization into world music icons, but invariably, once in the recording studios of the cultural industries, incisive analysis disappears into exoticized entertainment....”²⁷⁸ This is because these publics are “predictable,” and thus more easily made into “merchandise,”²⁷⁹ and it is yet another example of why Arnold spoke out against revolutions and polemical phrasings—that the only true way to actualize communities of dialoguing publics was to foster the making and dispersion of critical and cultivated works throughout a society.

As stated in the Introduction, the straw-man punchline from this lamentable world situation is to fault capitalism. But capitalism, like industry in the nineteenth century, and technology in the twentieth and twenty-first, is merely a tool. At its core, as defined by Adam Smith, it is merely a system of trade by which citizens can attempt to publicize their intellectual and artistic works. It is no different from the printing press, or the iPhone. It is how one employs this tool that matters.

As Sussman noted, fixing arbitrary median wealth values, as is done in socialist countries like Cuba that boast such mandated societal gains as universal healthcare, only leads to low per capita income.²⁸⁰ This is because, no matter the political system in place, without critical and cultivated literacy, a citizen merely accepts imported values from without and solidifies into a state of basic literacy. Instead of selecting those works that reflect the intrinsic value of the self-cultivation of their makers, merely those works with high market value are sought after. For they have forfeited the ability to interpret them on their own. In essence, one becomes a victim to fads, and experiences a dissolution of status from that of an active citizen into that of a passive consumer, and the gap between the producers of such vapid content and their docile recipients ever widens and eventually produces monopolies, mergers, and oligarchies. Whether the ruling system was capitalist or socialist before this happened, the effect is the same.

In summary, Artz states that "...global information networks on the whole have had profoundly negative effects on national and cultural sovereignty, economic distribution, and urban sprawl."²⁸¹ In this way, "...cultural imperialism has not ended...[but] leading global media have found hegemonic persuasion more cost-efficient and politically effective."²⁸² This goes hand in hand with colluding governmental actors: "Throughout the world, deregulating reform of the media has accompanied the parallel political reform of governments, reflecting the intimate connections between civil society and the state....Brazilian telenovelas...Nigerian juju videos...green pop in Turkey....when controlled and represented by corporate media, most advance and none challenge the basic individualist, consumerist tenets of the capitalist market."²⁸³

Only emergent generations of freely interpreting and freely producing citizens can

reverse the momentum of such a culture industry. Only in returning to the study of the best that has been thought and said, and in that re-entering the pursuit of perfection in terms of generating intellectual and artistic works of merit, can those citizens naturally form new communities of dialoguing publics that reject mass-produced tripe and so offer the only true challenge to the global oligarchies---the making of their own material on the basis of their canon and their situation, and the rejection of imported forms produced by the culture industry. Provided that humane spirit remains, citizens around the world will rise out of philistine behaviors, and these monopolies will inexorably wane and flounder.²⁸⁴

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

THE CHALLENGE OF AUGMENTING CULTIVATED AND CRITICAL LITERACY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Parts One through Three of this piece demonstrated the need for literacy if the principles of democracy are to endure. Now it remains to show that the cultivation of early literacy in particular can be effective in helping people employ the current boon of social media technology productively and in the direction of deepening nation-wide literacy and democracy and thus closing the divide of producer and receiver of cultural content in the U.S. In this, the cultivation of literacy effectively helps to stave off those uses of new media and Web 2.0 that would further contribute to the mass society. But is much of the American public, especially its youth, using these tools well, and to those ends?

Beginning with the sociocultural school of psychology begun by Lev. S. Vygotsky with his foundational work *Mind in Society*, published posthumously in 1978, it has become apparent that children, in their development, can proceed down the same two roads open to society at large. If advanced textual literacy, which requires sustained attention on a single task, is inculcated in them first, and preferably (though not necessarily) during their early years, they often grow to use digital devices in a mature manner, leading to fruitful contributions to textually rich Web 2.0 sites like Wikipedia. If

this ability is not first instilled, then premature introduction of digital devices and the Internet often overwhelms them, leading to the loathsome, and to Henry James, unnatural state of ‘chronic partial attention,’ whereby diagnoses of ADD/ADHD and vapid uses of textually weak or visually dominant Web 2.0 sites occur in turn.

Emphasizing the importance of this kind of early literacy education, Jay Blanchard and Katy Hisrich write, in “Digital Media and Emergent Literacy,” published in *Computers in the Schools: Interdisciplinary Journal of Practice*, in 2009, that the specific type of early literacy instruction contributes to the extent of later literacy development. “Three-, four-, and five-year-old children throughout the world are surrounded by opportunities to develop and use emergent cognitive and linguistic skills. These opportunities are as diverse in function, form, and purpose as the cultures and peoples they represent. Each opportunity acknowledges the multiple linguistic, cognitive, and socio-emotional resources that preschool children have available in their particular daily lives that enable naturally emerging skills. In particular, these opportunities include watching, listening, and using language. The quality and quantity of these linguistic opportunities, whether in the home, the preschool or kindergarten classroom, the neighborhood, or the community, play a critical role in language development.”²⁸⁵

One of the main ways textual literacy can be effectively cultivated in young children is by ‘scaffolding,’ one of the founding theories of Vygotsky and which involves “the use of tools or techniques to allow a child to achieve a goal that would otherwise be beyond his or her unassisted efforts.”²⁸⁶ As Michelle Neumann and her colleagues detail in “The Scaffolding of Emergent Literary Skills in the Home Environment,” published in the *Early Childhood Education Journal* in 2009, from the age of 0 to 4, this kind of early

intellectual buttressing is greatly helpful. “Vygotsky’s...socio-cultural perspective provides a natural framework within which to view parent-child literacy interactions. Parents can play a key role in fostering positive early learning opportunities that have an important impact on their child’s emergent literacy skill development prior to school entry....”²⁸⁷

These kinds of scaffolding practices often go beyond simply reading to children. “While many parents engage in daily storybook reading with children, formal literacy teaching is more relevant in children’s literacy acquisition....Joint writing activities have also been found to be more effective than storybook reading in facilitating the development of emergent literacy skills in young children....”²⁸⁸ Parents can help their children learn the old writer’s maxim that “in order to read, you must write, and in order to write, you must read.” For in learning to produce one’s own material, the cultivated level of literacy, you learn to recognize those places in others’ writing where they have gone awry, and where they have succeeded. You learn to read them as a fellow writer, and not just an in-taker of content. This is why the critic needs the cultivated---without it, the critic will not be able to engage fully with the content. And it is of course up to the child, and the student in general, to decide whether or not they wish to produce and critique intellectual or artistic wares, or both.

New technology platforms can assist students in this pursuit, provided some of this basic textual training is in place beforehand. Oftentimes this comes by way of pre-existing cultural capital in the student’s environment. According to Michael Bittmann and his colleagues in “Digital Natives? New and Old Media and Children’s Outcomes,” as published in the *Australian Journal of Education* in 2011, oftentimes these opportunities

for early literacy instruction are correlated with the cultural capital present in the household. “Parental socio-economic capitals had significant ($p<0.001$) association with language acquisition and literacy. In contrast to children with a history of consistent low time spent in reading, those with a history of mixed or consistently high time spent reading had higher language and literacy scores. The improvement in the scores was monotonic. The effect size of a pattern of consistently high time spent in reading over the four-year period was almost 50% higher than the effect size for the children with a mixed pattern of reading.”²⁸⁹

Part of the way this cultural capital manifests itself is in the educational attainment level of the parents, as that is directly correlated with how much they are likely to oversee their children’s reading efforts. “For the 1999 birth cohort at age 8 years, family resources, time spent reading and the parental context of the child’s media use continued to be significantly related to the child’s mastery of vocabulary....Similarly, each extra year that the child’s mother spent in education increased the child’s PPVT score by about 0.2 points in both cohorts, while a \$10,000 increase in annual household income (adjusted for family size) was associated with an increase of between 0.3 and 0.4 in PPVT scores for each cohort. Conversely, time spent reading had a powerful effect in the early years. In the older cohort, a sustained pattern of time devoted to reading significantly affected PPVT score at age 8....”²⁹⁰

Bittmann and his colleagues explain that, with this kind of familial culture capital in place, digital media can be effectively used alongside more traditional forms of literature to enhance the resulting literary aptitude of children. “Our findings indicate that among preschoolers, perhaps, any dose of media is safe provided the protective factors—

a stimulating home environment provided by sufficient family income, combined with interactive demonstration of vocabulary associated with high stocks of cultural capital and importantly, a supportive parental context for the use of media (especially television)—are all in place.”²⁹¹

Indeed, part of what such family interaction helps to guide is what Bittmann and his team call, “ the developmental sequence,” which pertains especially to digital media use. “Taken together these findings are consistent with the idea that there may be distinct developmental stages in the ability to use digital devices. Firstly, our data indicated that use of computers in infancy appears to be negligible and therefore plays no part in explaining the development of receptive vocabulary (although their parents’ use of the internet does seem to be positively related to the child’s acquisition of vocabulary). Second, the growth of vocabulary as the child develops appears to be unaffected by old electronic media (television) and more by the parents’ education and participation in their child’s media use. Third, computer access (but not computer games) at later ages was associated with increased traditional literacy. The timing of the effect of computers suggests a developmental sequence....This pattern again seems consistent with Vygotsky’s...scaffolding theory of learning. Even co-viewing television with parents seems to promote verbal abilities, especially when parents have significant cultural capital and material resources available to transfer. Our results raise the intriguing prospect that it is not ‘exposure’ to media that harms language acquisition and development of traditional literacy, but the absence of age-appropriate, ‘guided interaction....’ By parents.”²⁹²

This is especially important to understand because children, and young children in particular seem to take to digital media and especially touch-screen tablets because of the ease with which they can manipulate them kinesthetically. Bittmann and his team indicate that “...early exposure to digital media presents a potential learning opportunity for emergent literacy development and how digital tools can help pre-schoolers learn communication skills. Young children find digital forms of print interesting ...and actively engage with digital devices to creatively express themselves, draw, read and incorporate digital activities into their dramatic play...”²⁹³

This is a potentially constructive finding given that exposure to this kind of digital media is now so high. “Preschool children in developed nations of the world, and some developing nations, live in digital media-saturated homes and communities....In the United States, the Kaiser Family Foundation study *Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants and Preschoolers*...documented the degree to which young children are immersed in digital media. For example, 70% of all children four to six years of age had used a computer (11% under two). These children spent an average of a bit more than one hour per day in computer use (two hours for all screen media). Fifty-six percent had used a computer by themselves (27% of zero- to three-year-olds), 64% could use a mouse to point and click, and 40% could load a CD-ROM by themselves. A follow-up study, entitled *The Media Family: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers and Their Parents*....updated and enlarged the scope of the earlier survey data. The recent *EU Kids Online* report...found that 75% of European Union (E.U.) children were using the Internet, more at home than at school.”²⁹⁴

However, despite these potential positive benefits, it is important to keep in mind

that, as explained in “Books, Toys, and Tablets: Playing and Learning in the Age of Digital Media” by Erica Hateley and Helen Nixon, “...according to a 2009 survey of over 2000 Americans aged 8 to 18 funded by the Kaiser Family Foundation...the use of every type of media increased in the decade 1999-2009 with the exception of the reading of print media.”²⁹⁵ So, even if digital media can indeed be used to bolster early literacy education, that kind of practice has not yet hit the mainstream and is most likely confined to households with significant cultural capital.

Indeed, whether or not this cascade of digital media impacts positively or not on the net child linguistic development in America and beyond depends on the shows these children watch and the materials they read, which itself is related to the prevalence of cultural capital in their household. The study of this overall effect is akin to the myriad studies once done on the impact of television programs on children’s development, a significant volume of research that is presently expanding to include digital media. “The research on educational television programs for young children tends to be positive for specific, well-designed programs (e.g., *Between the Lions*, *Sesame Street*, *Super Why?* *WordWorld*). Young children who watch educational programs appear to have better school entry skills, including social skills and emergent literacy skills. In addition, these early skills appear to yield long-term benefits....Kirkorian and colleagues...noted that ‘there is strong evidence that children older than two learn from educational media, and there is moderate evidence that exposure to educational television during the preschool years is positively linked with various measures of academic achievement even ten years later.’”²⁹⁶

Indeed, “...from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) to study

the development of vocabulary and traditional literacy in children aged from 0 to 8 years; their access to digital devices; parental mediation practices; children's use of digital devices as recorded in time-diaries; and, finally, the association between patterns of media use and family contexts on children's learning...the analysis shows the importance of the parental context in framing media use for acquiring vocabulary, and suggests that computer (but not games) use is associated with more developed language skills...[taking into account] these factors, raw exposure to television is not harmful to learning."²⁹⁷ This bodes well on the whole, considering that one of the key forms of cultural capital in modern households is digital media. In "An Examination of Touch Screen Tablets and Emergent Literacy in Australian Pre-School Children," published in the *Australian Journal of Education* in 2014, Michelle Neumann writes that "...a similar sized survey of households with children aged between 0 and 6 years undertaken in the United Kingdom in 2004-2005...reported that some children were engaging with the electronic media as part of their 'play' from the first months of life. This study found that most children in the sample had first watched television between the ages of 6 and 11 months and had turned it on by themselves by the age of two. Of those in the sample who had used a computer mouse to point and click, most had done so by the age of three. In short, by 2005 young children were 'growing up in a digital world and develop[ing] a wide range of skills....These studies suggested relatively high levels of exposure to electronic and digital media among children aged between 6 months and 10 years, with over 50 percent of all children over 8 years having exposure to mobile and 'personal' media."²⁹⁸

Children who grow up with traditional literacy skills coupled with this kind of digital aptitude are contributing substantially to the growth of educational Web 2.0 sites

like Wikipedia, which currently ranks as #2 in usage amongst all Web 2.0 sites. In “The Wiki as a Web 2.0 Education Tool,” William Beasley and Lih-Ching Chen Wang cite “...the use of a class wiki to help build community within a large, diverse student body and structure discourse within a ‘writing to learn’ environment (this was a college Shakespeare course). Whether the two years was long enough for wikis to become more of a known quantity, or whether other factors were at work...[there was] a successful outcome spanning four semesters. He [the researcher] was pleased with both the community of learners and the ‘writing to learn’ artifacts created by the participating students.”²⁹⁹ Indeed, it has become commonplace for researchers of all levels and types to use Wiki articles as academic sources and as gateways to other sources, and the entire system constitutes a superb example of the potential boon of an open-source movement driven and governed by textually literate citizens.

Likewise, in the policy brief, “Learning 2.0---The Impact of Social Media on Learning in Europe,” it was reported in Section 2, which covers Web 2.0 usage that, when properly harnessed, Web 2.0 can be an ample educational asset. “Within formal Education and Training...a great number and variety of locally embedded Learning 2.0 initiatives have been identified across Europe, which illustrate that social media can be, and are being, used by Education and Training institutions to: facilitate access by current and prospective students to information; making institutional processes more transparent and facilitating the distribution of educational material; integrating learning into a wider community; reaching out to virtually meet people from other age-groups and socio-cultural backgrounds; linking to experts, researchers or practitioners in a certain field of study and thus opening up alternative channels for gaining knowledge and enhancing

skills; supporting the exchange of knowledge and material and facilitating community building and collaboration among learners and teachers; increasing academic achievement with the help of motivating, personalised and engaging learning tools and environments; implementing pedagogical strategies intended to support, facilitate, enhance and improve learning processes....social media allow learners to access a vast variety of (often freely available) learning content, which supports learning and professional development in a lifelong learning continuum; contributes to equity and inclusion and puts pressure on Education and Training institutions to improve the quality and availability of their learning material. Secondly, social media allow users to create digital content themselves and publish it online, giving rise to a huge resource of user-generated content from which learners and teachers can mutually benefit, also encouraging more active and pro-active approaches to learning. Thirdly, social media connects learners with one another, and to experts and teachers, allowing them to tap into the tacit knowledge of their peers and have access to highly specific and targeted knowledge in a given field of interest. Fourthly, social media support collaboration between learners and teachers on a given project or a joint topic of interest, pooling resources and gathering the expertise and potential of a group of people committed to a common objective. These four dimensions (content, creation, connecting and collaboration) have been labeled as the four C's of Learning 2.0 in IPTS research.”³⁰⁰

Thus, just as industrialism was initially pitted as the foe of literacy in the era of the Romantics and the Victorians, as TV and pop culture was for Richard Hoggart and his colleagues, digital devices and social media are, per se, also red herrings. It is the *use* of these tools, for tools they remain, that slots them as allies or enemies to the growth of

literacy, and democracy. In this, societal ‘means’ and ‘ends,’ as Ruskin employed those terms, must be kept clear.

However, for the majority of the American public at present, especially its youth, this distinction is *not* understood, and these tools are indeed abused, resulting in literacy rates that are on the whole declining. In this, the majority of the American public youth are not being exposed to sufficient cultural capital before they are introduced to these tools, and thus they are using them in all kinds of ways that are distracting and not related to self-cultivation---ways that are promoting what will be cited below as ‘chronic partial attention.’ “Literary reading declined significantly in a period of rising Internet use. From 1997-2003, home Internet use soared 53 percentage points among 18- to 24-year-olds. By another estimate, the percentage of 18- to 29-year-olds with a home broadband connection climbed 25 points from 2005 to 2007....The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds reading literature had declined from 60% in 1982 to 53% in 1992 to 43% in 2002.”³⁰¹

The primary reason for this is a lack of self-discipline, which has mainly taken root because so many not accustomed to the practice of engaging with literature have been bombarded by so many electronic and online devices. As the report states, “Even when reading does occur, it [often] competes with other media. This multi-tasking suggests less focused engagement with a text....58% of middle and high school students use other media while reading....Students report using media during 35% of their weekly reading time....20% of their reading time is shared by TV-watching, video/computer game-playing, instant messaging, e-mailing or Web surfing.”³⁰² One has only to notice the litany of ads now lining the margins of online news dispensaries like the New York Times to see marketers capitalizing on this unfortunate situation.

To complete the reinforcing vicious feedback cycle of this situation, the onslaught of Web 2.0 and analogous electronic media---which I will also take to be TV, video/computer game-playing, Iming, e-mailing, and Web surfing---is also effectively decreasing the amount of time family members spend on reading. The report states that “American families are spending less on books than at almost any other time in the past two decades....Although nominal spending on books grew from 1985 to 2005, average annual household spending on books dropped 14% when adjusted for inflation....Over the same period, spending on reading material dipped 7 percentage points as a share of average household entertainment spending....The number of books in a home is a significant predictor of academic achievement.”³⁰³

The illiterate (in terms of cultivated and critical literacy) public’s increasing usage of Web 2.0 and similar electronic media also relates to the further decline in their literacy because the former often involves instant updates in the form of abbreviated, truncated speech. Using this kind of speech renders one even more prone to the detrimental habit of ‘multitasking---’ or a literal attempt to complete multiple tasks at the same time. Sometimes this multitasking directly involves reading, or academic work, and sometimes it does not, but regardless, the habit itself fosters what has come to be known as “chronic partial attention,” a phrase coined by writer and former Microsoft executive Linda Stone in 2007 and which aptly captures the folly of multitasking.³⁰⁴ It is the antithesis of sustained, disciplined attention, which is necessary not only for reading and other academic duties but for mature writing and the actualization of Hoggart’s aim of a societally widespread level of critical and cultivated literacy, without which the public is stranded in basic literacy.³⁰⁵ It also helps to explain why Twitter and Pinterest are #s 3

and 5, respectively, on the top 15 Web 2.0 site list earlier referenced.

There is a multitude of literature from the neuroscientific and other related academic communities that have demonstrated the futility of multitasking in recent years. An apt summary is provided in “The Myth of Multitasking,” by Christine Rosen, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and senior editor of *The New Atlantic*, where this piece is published, which begins with a quote from Lord Chesterfield in 1740: “‘There is time enough for everything in the course of the day, if you but one thing at once, but there is not time enough in the year, if you will do two things at a time.’”³⁰⁶

As Rosen writes, the choice to focus on the former becomes a mark of one’s self-discipline, the kind of self-discipline requisite to critical and cultivated literacy. “To Chesterfield, singular focus was not merely a practical way to structure one’s time, it was a mark of intelligence. ‘This steady and dissipated attention to one object, is a sure mark of a superior genius; as hurry, bustle, and agitation, are the never-failing symptoms of a weak and frivolous mind.’”³⁰⁷

Indeed, the rise of multitasking has resulted in the advancement of a new clinical condition in modern neuroscientific circles. Rosen writes that, according to “Dr. Edward Hallowell....[multitasking is] a ‘mythical activity in which people believe they can perform two or more tasks simultaneously.’ In a 2005 article, he described a new condition, ‘Attention Deficit Trait,’ which he claims is rampant in the business world. ADT is ‘purely a response to the hyperkinetic [and clipped text] environment in which we live....In the business world, where concerns about time-management are perennial, warnings about workplace distractions spawned by a multi-tasking culture are on the rise.

In 2005, the BBC reported on a research study, funded by Hewlett-Packard and conducted by the Institute of Psychiatry at the University of London, that found, ‘Workers distracted by e-mail and phone calls suffer a fall in IQ more than twice that found in marijuana smokers....One study by researchers at the University of California at Irvine monitored interruptions among office workers; they found that workers took an average of twenty-five minutes to recover from interruptions such as phone calls or answering e-mail and return to their original task....Discussing multitasking with the *New York Times* in 2007, Jonathan B. Spira, an analyst at the business research firm Basex, estimated that extreme multitasking-information overload-costs the U.S. economy \$650 billion a year in lost productivity.’³⁰⁸

The inherent dangers of multitasking and its societal ramifications were detailed by William James, from whose words the title of that report was taken. Rosen writes that, “William James, the great psychologist, wrote at length about the varieties of human attention....To James, steady attention was thus the default condition of a mature mind, an ordinary state undone only by perturbation....Like Chesterfield, James believed that the transition from youthful distraction to mature attention was in large part the result of personal mastery and discipline---and so was illustrative of character. ‘The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again,’ he wrote, ‘is the very root of judgment, character, and will.’”³⁰⁹ For if you think about it, that is exactly what critical and cultivated literacy entails. In order to carefully critique the work of another, and produce work worthy of critique, this ability is assumed. Without it, neither will ever be completed, and one will fall into a state of basic literacy whereby only instructions can be granted, leading to the burgeoning gap of maker and receiver of

cultural content in a society.

In “The Multitasking Generation,” published in *Time* in 2006, Claudia Wallis offers a stunning vignette of this kind of discipline’s utter dissolution. “Somewhere, on the screen there’s a Word file, in which Piers is writing an essay for English class. ‘I usually finish my homework at school,’ he explains to a visitor, ‘but if not, I pop a book open on my lap in my room, and while the computer is loading, I’ll do a problem or write a sentence. Then, while my mail is loading, I do more. I get it done a little bit at a time.’”³¹⁰

This process of work by interrupted fragments is an apt description of the very fear Lord Chesterfield and William James had of the stunting of human intellectual and artistic growth by loss of self-control and resultantly overextending oneself. As Wallis summarizes, “Human beings have always had a capacity to attend to several things at once....But there is no doubt that the phenomenon has reached a kind of warp speed in the era of Web-enabled computers, when it has become routine to conduct six IM conversations, watch *American Idol* on TV and Google the names of last season’s finalists all at once.”³¹¹

One of the simplest places to observe this detrimental effect of Web 2.0 and other potentially multitask-promoting electronic media such as Iming is in college youth, as academic performance is an easily gauged effect of these technologies.

In “Electronic Media Use, Reading, and Academic Distractibility in College Youth,” published in *Cyber Psychology & Behavior* by psychologist Laura Bowman and her colleagues, it was found generally that “Activities that require intense, focused

attention, such as reading novels, are decreasing among young people, while those that require the division of attention, such as instant messaging (Iming), are on the rise. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation (KEF) study of 2,032 young people aged 8-18 found that, ‘As new media technologies...become available, [young people] don’t...(or can’t) increase the number of hours they spend with media-so they are becoming media multitaskers, Iming while doing homework and watching TV.’”³¹²

The problem with this approach, as with all multitasking, is that it invites interruption to the steady completion of a rigorous task, an ability neuroscientists declare humans evolutionarily unable to handle. “Iming creates multiple interruptions and multitasking demands that might put stress on cognitive processing....‘Advances in computer technologies...allow people to perform multiple activities at the same time. However, people’s cognitive capabilities have not increased.’”³¹³

Indeed, the habit is actually producing a cognitive condition. Bowman writes, “Teens are reporting difficulty with concentrating on their schoolwork, with 15-year-olds experiencing more difficulty concentrating than 10-year-olds....the multitasking that young people are doing is taking a toll on their ability to focus attention on one activity in depth....‘Habitual multitasking may condition their brain to an overexcited state, making it difficult to focus even when they want to.’”³¹⁴

In sum, Bowman and her team conclude that, as stated before, it all depends on how one uses this technology that counts. Does one use it in service of sustained activities that promote critical and cultivated literacy, or does one superficially bounce about and so lapse into a disenfranchised state of basic literacy? “When examining the

correlates of students' self-described distractibility for academic reading, our hypothesis was confirmed. The amount of time they spent Iming was significantly related to more distractibility for academic reading, while amount of time spent reading books was negatively related to distractibility....In addition, distractibility during IM sessions was positively related to their likelihood of responding right away when Imed....There are three ways in which Iming might interfere with academic reading: (a) displacement of time available for study, (b) direct interference while studying, and (c) development of a cognitive style of short and shifting attention....All three are confirmed. The distracting, multitasking nature of Iming was apparent. Most (63%) responded right away whenever they received an instant message and were Iming three or four people at the same time. The majority were involved in other activities while Iming, with 30% doing academic work at the same time....The findings are also consistent with the third possibility, that Iming helps to create a cognitive style based on quick, superficial multitasking rather than in-depth focus on one task such as reading. The idea that cognitive style may be shaped by experiences with fast-moving media has found support in research on children who watch a great deal of television and/or watch it from early in life. Levine and Waite found that the more television children watched, the more likely their teachers were to rate them as impulsive and inattentive in the classroom.”³¹⁵

Columnist Thomas Friedman describes this phenomenon of superficial attention well in his *New York Times* piece, “The Age of Interruption,” and links it directly to the loss of critical and cultivated literacy in society. “It is the malady of modernity,” he writes. “We have gone from the Iron Age to the Industrial Age to the Information Age to the Age of Interruption. All we do now is interrupt each other or ourselves with instant

messages, e-mail, spam or cellphone rings. Who can think or write or innovate under such conditions? One wonders whether the Age of Interruption will lead to a decline in civilization.”³¹⁶

Numerous cognitive scientists are advancing that indeed it does. In “Distractions, Distractions: Does Instant Messaging Affect College Students’ Performance on a Concurrent Reading Comprehension Task?,” written by psychologist Mary Crawford and her students and published in *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, it is shown how “Participants in the present study...completed a reading comprehension task uninterrupted or while concurrently holding an IM conversation. Participants who Imed while performing the reading task took significantly longer to complete the task, indicating that concurrent IM use negatively affects efficiency....Additional analyses revealed that the more time participants reported spending on IM, the lower their reading comprehension scores. Finally, we found that the more time participants reported spending on IM, the lower their self-reported GPA....We found that average daily IM use was negatively related to performance on the reading comprehension test....GPA also was negatively related to time spent on IM.”³¹⁷

Tragically, it was also found in this study that poor academic performance and rampant Iming can lock a student in a vicious cycle of poor performance and increasing inattention. As Crawford and her students write, “...poorer students spend more time in online communication with others, and the more time spent Iming, the lower the scores on the reading comprehension test.”³¹⁸ And as stated before, and indicated in this quote, it is those students who often grew up in a desert of cultural capital, with the least financial resources, and who are most at risk of falling into this kind of self-defeating behavior

because the discipline to handle those devices well and in service of critical and cultivated literacy had not been set before their introduction to those devices.

Furthermore, in “Perceived Academic Effects of Instant Messaging Use,” published in *Computers & Education*, sociologist Sheila Cotten and her team report that, “... multitasking can impede the learning process through a form of information overload....[and] college students use instant messaging at high levels...they multitask while using instant messaging, and over half report that instant messaging has had a detrimental effect on their schoolwork. Higher levels of instant messaging and specific types of multitasking activities are associated with students reporting not getting schoolwork done due to instant messaging.”³¹⁹

Cotten classifies Iming and blogs---the latter of which is an example of Web 2.0--as an example of ‘ICT,’ or Information Communication Technologies. Concerning the rise of ICT usage and its impact on attention, she summarizes that, “General Internet use and specific applications of the Internet have dramatically increased among college students and young adults. Jones and Fox (2009) reported that between 2005 and 2008, the percentage of young adults online has increased by 6–7 percent for those aged 12–24. The Kaiser Family Foundation (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010) found that computer use had increased 27 minutes per day on average between 2004–2009. Specifically, 15–18 year olds spent an average of 26 minutes per day on social networking websites, 17 minutes per day playing games, 15 minutes per day on video websites (like YouTube), and 11 minutes per day on instant messaging (Rideout et al., 2010). Findings from others support the Rideout et al. (2010) results. For instance, Salaway, Caruso, and Nelson (2007) found that students spent an average of 18 hours per week on online activities

while Junco and Mastrodicasa (2007) found that college-age instant messaging users typically spent an hour and 20 minutes each day actively chatting....We found that students multitask while using IM a great deal and the majority of the sample reported that using IM was detrimental to their schoolwork.”³²⁰

And this media-induced degradation of a student’s academic experience carries over to their performance in the classroom as well. In “The Wired Generation,” published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, sociologist Renata Forste and her team report that “A particularly important finding related to multitasking is that 62% of the respondents report using some kind of nonacademic electronic media while in class, studying, or doing homework....This multitasking likely increased distraction, something prior research has shown to be detrimental to student performance....For every hour of electronic media exposure reported by students on average, GPA was reduced between 0.05 and 0.07 points....Supportive of our hypothesis and consistent with prior research, our findings indicate that [this type of use of] electronic media use is negatively associated with grades.”³²¹

Thus, Web 2.0 usage mirrors the same difficulties that were and still are associated with TV viewing in America’s contemporary youth. To serve as the link between this “chronic partial attention” and language use and development in young children, these findings on ICT-usage are concordant with research on the effect of TV viewing on young children. According to the High Audiovisual Council in 2008, “[Certain types of] Television viewing hurts the development of children under three years old and poses a certain number of risks, encouraging passivity, slow language acquisition, over-excitedness, troubles with sleep and concentration as well as

dependence on screens....”

Indeed, in “Longitudinal effects of television on children’s leisure-time reading,” by Tom Koolstra and A. van der Voort, published in *Human Communication Research*, it was found that, “...a sample of 1,050 Dutch elementary schoolchildren who were in Grades 2 and 4...were surveyed three times, at 1-year intervals. Structural equations analysis suggested that....Book reading...was found to be reduced by television viewing over both measurement periods. The data suggest that two causal mechanisms underlie television’s reductive effect on children’s book reading: (a) a television-induced deterioration of attitudes toward book reading, and (b) a television-induced deterioration of children’s ability to concentrate on reading.”³²²

Likewise, in “Television viewing and attentional abilities in fourth and fifth grade children,” published in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* by psychologist Laura Levine and her colleagues, it was shown that, “There was a clear relationship between fourth and fifth grade children’s ability to pay attention in school, as assessed by their teacher, and the amount of time they spent watching television.”³²³

This ability to concentrate indeed influences language development. As shown in “How Social Contexts Support and Shape Language Development,” published in *Developmental Review* by psychologist Erika Hoff, “The human potential for language is based in human biology but makes requirements of the social environment to be realized.

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These kinds of results are generalizable beyond TV to screen media in general. In “The Impact of Screen Media on Children,” Dr. Mary Burke writes that “Screen media

present highly arousing, abnormal sensory input to the brain's activating system.

Downstream effects of arousal include the release of catecholamines, increased vigilance and irritability, motor behavior problems, a decreased attention span, and sleep problems....The risk of receiving an attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder diagnosis at age 7 increase with every hour of television watched at 1 and 3 years.”³²⁵

This poses a serious societal problem, for as summarized in this year's article “The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families,” by Dr. Gwenn O’Keeffe, “According to a recent poll, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media site more than 10 times a day, and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day. Seventy-five percent of teenagers now own cell phones, and 25% use them for social media, 54% use them for texting, and 24% use them for instant messaging....Thus, a large part of this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on the Internet and on cell phones....Because of their limited capability for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure, children and adolescents are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media....problems that merit awareness include Internet addiction and concurrent sleep deprivation.”³²⁶

Thus, in the same way that the Romantics feared a growing societal obsession with the products of industrialism, there is alive today in America this unwarranted idolization of social media communications technology. While those who grow up in households of cultural capital are showing greater maturity in its usage, and thus contributing to sites like Wikipedia ranking as the #2 most popular Web 2.0 website, there is a disturbingly burgeoning demographic of those for whom these sites are

promoting undue multitasking and a shortening of focus. George Gissing provides a stirring description of the effects of this lack of ability to sustain attention, which provides another capable definition of basic literacy. “....the young men and women who can just read, but are incapable of sustained attention. People of this kind want something to occupy them....As a rule they care for no newspapers except the Sunday ones....No article in the paper is to measure more than two inches in length, and every inch must be broken into at least two paragraphs.”³²⁷ For only the passive consumer, rendered so here by a lack of attention, desires ‘entertainment,’ which further induces a state of passive consumption---the active citizen desires great works worthy of critique that will assist in the creation of their own works worthy of critique.

Whether or not these new “digital natives” ultimately find a way to balance this kind of superficial attention given to ICT with traditional literary and academic tasks remains to be seen, but for now the numbers do not bode well—they in fact pose a substantial threat to critical and cultivated literacy and thus democracy in this country. And it is only the survival of critical and cultivated literacy that will keep our society out of the thicket of inattention, relativism, and the accompanying master narratives that are decreed from a culture industry ever untouchably above, and move us toward crafting communities with whom we can share our critiques and cultivated works (whether intellectual or artistic). It is only in that continued making and sharing that more and more of our society can join in that pursuit, and this country can have the chance to live into the mantle set for it by those who founded it. New ways must be found to get more cultural capital into the hands of people before they are ensnared by mere technology-worship. The future of American literacy hinges on that, and it indeed perches us upon an

obvious question: how do *all* students, and not just those with pre-existing cultural capital in their home environment, gain access to these devices with some prior necessary exposure to cultural content---the “best that has been thought and said---” already in place? For otherwise our communities of dialoguing publics will simply represent those already predisposed to that practice, and not the country at large, which is necessary in order to completely erode the culture industry by depriving it of an audience entirely. In order to have a complete democracy, this cultural content must be disseminated democratically before, or at least in tandem with these new technological tools. But how to do that? Well, *that* opens up the next chapter of this research, and it is this question I will undertake answering in the successor to this thesis.

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