

TWO

THEORIES OF BROADCAST MEDIA

It is not possible to understand the central dynamics of network communication, or why the second media age thesis has become an orthodoxy, without understanding the nature of broadcast as a *medium*. In fact, as we shall see, the two communicative forms can be argued to be, in the contemporary period, mutually constitutive. That is, I argue, they are mutually related in their practical reality and are also related therefore in how we should understand them.

Understanding broadcast and network as distinct communicative architectures also entails making some fundamental distinctions about the kinds of communication effects which are *internal* to them. The distinction between 'transmission' versus 'ritual' communication is one which provides a useful way of classifying the different kinds of perspectives on broadcast media which emerged in the twentieth century. These perspectives correspond to qualitatively different kinds of communicative processes which are evident in the mass media, which broadly correspond to content versus form, respectively. The transmission view is by far the predominant one, and is only recently being criticized from the point of view of its overstatement. Instructively, the impetus of this rebuttal is not to be found in the large body of critical writings¹ but can be found in the rise of new kinds of communicational realities which expose transmission views of broadcast as inadequate. The critical literature on 'transmission' views of community has been led in recent decades by a number of French theorists, exemplified by the work of Jacques Derrida, discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

What this and the next chapter aim to do is to introduce the main perspectives on broadcast and network cultures of communication respectively before going on to look at the way in which the perspectives on broadcast need to be critically reassessed. This will mean that shortcomings of instrumental perspectives will become apparent in light of an understanding of network communication, but, in later chapters, we shall also see how broadcast can be seen to carry very important forms of reciprocity and community, *contra* the claims of many of the second media age thinkers.

The media as an extended form of the social – the rise of ‘mass media’

The massive changes wrought by the industrial revolutions that have unevenly transformed the developing world have represented important preconditions to the formations of populations living in conditions of density whilst at the same time connected by the framework of the nation-state. The sheer scale of population increases within modern nation-states combined with the migration of people from pastoral regions to cities has created metropolitan densities conducive to the maturing of so-called ‘mass society’. Infrastructures necessary to service such growth have led to the mass production of transport and goods, the mass delivery of education and of course the ‘mass media’ (see Giddens, 1990; Thompson, 1995).

In the period of the breakdown of traditional societies characterized by a high intensity of integration by religion, the fragmentation of nationally framed polities by way of urbanization, the separation of individuals from feudal means of production and the creation of labour-power as a commodity collectively gave rise to a range of perspectives on the ‘massification’ of society ranging from mass/elite frameworks to liberal-pluralist ones.²

The mass/elite framework had its most salient beginnings from the 1930s onwards, which was also the time when the media were first ‘mapped out as a field of study in a formal or academic sense’ (Bennett, 1982: 38). It was at this time that the co-emergence of cinema and radio combined with rising unemployment and mass armies of disposable workers which culminated in the Great Depression. What all of these frameworks have in common is the idea that the masses once formed by the aforementioned disintegrations are, in late modernity, in need of a mechanism of incorporation for social integration to occur. This may be politically, by way of the gradual enfranchisement of successive groups, or economically, by, for example, the law of value operating in the market to facilitate equivalence between labour-power and commodities. At the same time, however, the mass society framework of the 1930s gave rise to a concern for ‘effects analysis’ which focused on ‘stimulus’ and ‘response’ and the influence that ‘the media’, deemed to be somehow external to the formation of a person’s identity, comes to exert over that identity and culture in general.³ These studies oscillated between celebrating the media as agents of the education of the masses to condemning them for hypodermically injecting audiences with ‘propaganda’.⁴ Most of the empirical research was concerned with what people ‘think’ as a result of being influenced by the media. On some rare occasions, the ‘mass psychology’ of the media was also studied, such as when, in 1938, H.G. Wells’ famous novel *War of the Worlds* was broadcast in radio form on CBS, resulting in the now difficult to understand apocalyptic hysteria over a Martian invasion.

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The mass/elite model of society has been criticized by Marxist perspectives on communication and more recently within cultural studies. The Marxist critique labels mass/elite theory as an ideology of erasing a politics of class (neutralizing the realities of the ruling class versus the working class), whilst cultural studies is concerned with the way in which the framework treats audiences as 'passive'.⁵ Interestingly, the Marxist and cultural studies critiques dismiss 'mass society' perspectives insofar as they are deemed to be serious contenders for a sociological framework. Tony Bennett argues, for example, that as a theory of society, it is generally imprecise, that its historical commitments are at best romantic and at worst vague, and that there is no account of the transition between periods of social integration (Bennett, 1982: 37). Yet it is of course precisely because it developed in the period when broadcast media were in ascendance that this 'imprecise' theory came about. My own argument is that the mass society outlook, if thought about in relation to the media, is an entirely appropriate response to the embryonic dynamics of media-constituted integration. I agree with the above critiques that it cannot be taken seriously as a sociological framework, but as a theoretical expression of, as well as response to, the way broadcast media are able to reconstitute social relations it provides some early conceptual tools for this – even if these are inadequate by today's standards.

For example, mass society theory is sometimes accused of homogenizing media forms themselves. As John Hartley suggests, 'it is difficult to encompass the diversity of what constitutes print, cinema, radio and television within one definition' (in O'Sullivan et al., 1994: 172). But this is only true if we are interested in the *significatory* properties of these media.⁶ Where these media do converge, however, is in the capacity to act as bearers of a homomorphic *medium* of communication, which produces audiences whose field of recognition is vertically constituted.

It is significant that it was only during the period of the massive rise of broadcast through television in the fifties and sixties that literature again began to appear dealing with the age of the masses (see Bell, 1962; Kornhauser, 1960; Shils, 1957). This is the time when another, very different kind of mass society theory made its debut in the form of what Stuart Hall has called 'American Dream Sociology'. This kind of sociology, represented by the writings of Daniel Bell, Seymour Lipset and Edward Shils, argued that the general liberalization of society, supposedly measured by the participation of the working class in politics and the growth of welfare, had solved earlier conflicts arising within civil society to the point where a new consensus had been achieved by which resources were at last being distributed according to a harmonious pluralist pragmatism. This thesis, known as the 'end of ideology' thesis, argued that the fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved: the workers have achieved industrial and political citizenship; the conservatives have accepted the welfare state; and the democratic left has recognized that increase in overall state power carried with it more

dangers to freedom than solutions for economic problems (Lipset, 1963: 406). The 1950s renaissance of mass society theory was therefore one with 'the elite' subtracted from it where the masses had been redefined as the melting pot of democratic evolution. Shils was working earlier than the other theorists at revising the 1930s formulations in which the masses had achieved the long march from the outskirts of the social, cultural and political landscape to the democratized and pluralized community or universal speech. Such speech was, of course, guaranteed rather than truncated by the mass media. It is as if in fact such a democratization of the masses had not been possible without the rise of the media. In this way, American Dream Sociology saw the media as simply a transparent extension of the democratic public sphere, a continuation of the social by other means, where the media act in service to the community. As Stuart Hall (1982) describes it, 'in its purest form, pluralism [American Dream Sociology] assured that no structural barriers or limits of class would obstruct this process of cultural absorption: for, as we all 'knew', America was no longer a class society. Nothing prevented the long day's journey of the American masses to the centre' (60).

Contrary to the way in which the presumed homogenizing function of the media was celebrated, several of the empirical studies of a behaviourist and positivist kind conducted at the height of this perspective confirmed the opposite effect, that audiences were in fact highly differentiated and heterogeneous (e.g. Lazarsfeld and Kendall, 1949).⁷ Such studies were effectively repositioned by Shils in yet another twist in the tale of mass society theory, as proof of the confirmation of the 'homogeneous' pluralistic tolerance of mediatized democracies.

What is characteristic of both the early and later versions of mass society theory is their adherence to empiricist and positivist epistemologies of the media. That is to say, in arguing that the media are able to extend the democratic process,⁸ by circulating views, a number of metaphysical commitments are made which have since been critiqued by linguistic perspectives on the media (semiotic, structuralist and post-structuralist). The media are largely assumed capable of providing a transparent reflection of reality (language is transparent), whether this be as a reflection of events (the news), of culture (popular culture), or of morality and art (film and literature). Secondly, the status of the individual is unproblematic for this model. For example the position (*qua* perspective) from where a media product might be consumed is disregarded. Thirdly, all individuals (subjects) are deemed to have the same opportunity for observation.

Mass media as a culture industry – from critical theory to cultural studies

A major counter-perspective to the liberal-pluralist idea that the mass media are a democratizing extension of social forms is represented in the

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Marxist tradition of the critique of ideology as well as the critique of the unequal ownership and control of the means of communication according to class divisions in capitalist societies. The critique of ideology, which will be explored in the following section, views the media as a powerful apparatus for 'ideologies' – which are not simply just ideas – for reproducing the values and structures that are active in the maintenance of class inequality. But the media are also significantly an industry in themselves, an industry in which commodities are bought and sold.

As the markets and innovations for developing subsistence commodities become exhausted, modern capitalism has tended to turn its attention to industries for which demand has fewer limitations, and has targeted altogether new needs that are created by historical circumstances. Service industries, military industries and leisure industries (tourism, music, entertainment, sport) each provide economic markets which are potentially unlimited and insatiable. The earliest thinkers on this phenomenon were Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who, in the mid-1940s, published their now canonized critique of the culture industry: 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' (1993).

The culture industry carries all of the hallmarks of capitalist production. Its products are standardized, emptied of aesthetic merit and capable of mass production, and they are consumed on scales as vast as those on which they are produced. The primary consequence of this massification of culture was, for Adorno and Horkheimer that it had profound implications for aesthetic reception. Art is appreciated not for its special ability to communicate truth or beauty but for its market ability. A Hollywood movie has to have a sex scene and a car chase, done in a certain way. The contemporary novel must have a minimum number of elements in order to be a 'best-seller'. The weekly 'life' magazine must have the requisite revelation on weight loss, improving sex life or overcoming relationship and family disorders. But it is not just the conventions *within* genres that become standardized; new genres appear which even mock the masses they are purporting to represent, such as the spectacle of humiliation characterizing 'candid camera', celebrity-hosted talk shows, 'world's funniest home videos' or 'funniest advertisements', or even 'world's dumbest criminals'. Conversely, celebrities have their own television genres, like 'Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous' or 'Entertainment Tonight'. Alternatively, serious social issues like AIDS, third world relief or the environment receive modest attention, unless they are promoted by a music or film celebrity. From the period when the control of information, communication and entertainment is concentrated in the hands of a few to be sold to the many, culture itself can become a commodity in all kinds of forms.

Insofar as culture becomes massified through broadcast principle, Adorno and Horkheimer see it as replacing religion and the smaller units of integration of the feudal world. This thesis at its broadest is therefore continuous with the mass society tradition in accounting for the social acceptance and role which broadcast achieves.

To take their opening claim:

The sociological theory that the loss of the support of objectively established religion, the dissolution of the last remnants of precapitalism, together with technological and social differentiation and specialization, have led to cultural chaos is disproved every day; for culture now impresses the same stamp on everything. Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1993: 30)

But the culture industry does not only produce standardized content, it also produces the audience itself by way of 'a circle of manipulation and retroactive need in which the unity of the system [of the production and consumption of meanings] grows ever stronger' (31). This formulation places emphasis on the fact that broadcast produces content for audiences at the same time as it produces audiences for the content – one of the first statements of how the media themselves are a system of social integration which, despite its function as servile to the needs of commodity capitalism, nevertheless facilitates a common culture. In other words the mass is constituted by broadcast; it is not some kind of pre-given amorphous body that has broadcast imposed on it.⁹

For Adorno and Horkheimer, perhaps the most significant feature of the culture industry is that it inculcates 'obedience to hierarchy' (38). In the very structure of the few producing on behalf of the many, it discourages the mass from taking initiative or from questioning the initiative being taken by the elite. It is little wonder that the culture industry produces a loss of individuality (see 41) – a phenomenon which mass society theory, as we saw, does not so much describe as promote in its selection of methodology.

Interestingly, the culture industry thesis shares with the liberal-pluralist perspective the idea of the media as an extension of social relations. However, where there is a fundamental disagreement is over what exactly is extended, which for the Frankfurt School is a replication of obedience to hierarchy continuous with pre-media social relations. Moreover, for them, the mass media collude in the reduction of social life to the flat, one-dimensional intellectual and emotional habits of commodity consumption, thereby completing the process of the spiritless circulation of commodities.

The media as an apparatus of ideology

For contemporary Marxist perspectives on the media, the culture industry is an 'industry' in itself, but is less important as a site of the production of 'new' social relations that might be exclusively derived from mass media as it is as a site of the reproduction of existing social relations – particularly class divisions, but also the divisions of gender, ethnicity and race. The Marxist approach is therefore interested in the meanings that are negotiated

within the media, and its influence in the reproduction of forms of consciousness that accord with the reproduction of capitalist social relations. In this section, we will therefore be surveying the idea of 'ideology' as the content of broadcast apparatuses rather as implicated in the very structure of broadcast, which will be examined in the next section.

Whilst Marxist perspectives largely subscribe to the argument that the media offer an extension, by reflection, of social relations, this is only so in a distorted form. In a class society, it is quite normal that the 'true' character of social relations, of power and of inequality, is misrepresented. In class societies, wealth is distributed away from its producers, but, more importantly, this process is usually masked in some way. This, at least, is the 'false consciousness' argument of orthodox Marxism – the earliest Marxist formulation of the concept of ideology.¹⁰ The 'false consciousness' thesis posits ideology as a distorted inaccurate representation of the world, which is cultivated by the ruling class and its managerial servants against the interests of the working class. This early formulation persists today in the ongoing concern that some Marxists have with the 'ownership and control' of broadcasting and, in particular, its recent globalized form.

However, this theory has been widely criticized as being based on a correspondence theory of truth – the notion that ideas should transparently reflect the 'real' world. In fact this doctrine of false consciousness has many more continuities and affinities again with liberal-idealist conceptions of ideology than with later Marxian and cultural theory.

In Marx and Engels' writings a number of more sophisticated senses of ideology appear which were subsequently developed by twentieth-century Marxists for studying media.¹¹

Firstly, there is the idea of 'commodity fetishism', a definition found in Marx's later work which laid the ground for a theory of what Georg Lukács was later to call 'reification'. Unlike 'false consciousness', which some Marxists have attempted to apply to all kinds of class society, Marx's theory of fetishism is specific to the capitalist mode of production.

In turning to Marx's major late work *Capital*, we find a conception of ideology that is related to a fundamental distinction between essence and appearance. In *Capital*, economic relationships as experienced in everyday life do not 'reflect' or correspond to the underlying structural mechanisms of which they are an effect. Here, the appearance of capitalism as it actually presents itself obscures from individuals the systemic inner forces which govern their lives. The important point here is that the misrecognition of the 'true' character of social relations is not a 'defect' of the subject, rather it is a result of how social relations *present themselves*.

Thus in Marx's discussion of the fetishism of commodities in Volume I of *Capital* the fact that individuals exchange their labour-power (as a commodity) for other commodities is experienced as an equal exchange around which an entire realm of legitimation is erected – what Marx calls the 'noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface in full view of everyone' (Marx, 1976: 279; see also Hall, 1977: 324). Marx argues that

the 'essence' of commodity exchange is really an (abstract) exchange of labour, the source of social value, whilst to the individuals who exchange this labour this only ever appears to them as the concrete relations between things (in the form of price). Whilst this obscures the social character of labour, this essential reality is displaced to the sphere of exchange, which becomes all the more real: 'To the producers, therefore, the social relations between their private labours appear as *what they are*, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as direct social relations between things' (Marx, 1976: 166–7, my italics). From this it may be seen that the 'appearance' is in a sense 'real', especially because it is convincing. Real as it may be, Marx reminds us that it *conceals* the essence, an essence which explains the appearance and an essence which is not manifest to individuals: '... by equating their different products to each other in exchange as values, they equate their different kinds of labour as human labour. They do this without being aware of it' (166–7). In other words, it is not necessarily *ideas* which represent the world 'inaccurately'; rather it is the nature of capitalism itself to present itself in an inverted form.

In terms of the distinction between content and form that is to be examined in relation to the media, Marx's account of the commodity is instructive. Later we shall see how it has influenced the work of Jean Baudrillard and Guy Debord, in which the media themselves, in the form of signs, become intrinsically bound up with the exchange circuits of commodities. In fact, for Baudrillard and Debord, the world of image and spectacle becomes the ultimate form of commodity reification. This important concept, which had its first comprehensive development in the work of Lukács, denotes a phenomenon in which the relations between individuals are said to acquire a 'phantom objectivity, taking on autonomous, all-embracing and rational relations between things (Lukács, 1971: 83). The production of commodities comes to dominate the whole of society constituting appearances consisting of complexes of isolated facts. It permeates the division of labour within the state, bureaucracy, industry and especially science.

The final sense of ideology in Marx and Engels to be examined here is that of ideological incorporation, formulated in their book *The German Ideology*:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, that is, the class which is the ruling *material* force in 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 production, are subject to them. (Marx and Engels, 1970: 65)

The understanding of ideology that is purveyed here is one in which the ideas of one group, the ruling group, become generalized to the whole of

society. This is often interpreted as a mechanical relationship. But as this was later developed, the fact that one class may monopolize the means of mental and material production does not guarantee that it can simply *impose* its ideas; rather, these ideas are negotiated in a way in which their rule is accepted.

This stance on ideology was developed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci – by way of the concept of hegemony. This refers to an ideological struggle in which the ruling class compromises with the working class in return for its leadership in society as a whole. It is a consensual form of power in which Gramsci identified the mass media as central. This does not require direct editorial control of media by the capitalist class; rather, managers, who identify politically and ideologically with the ruling class, provide ‘the organic intellectuals’ who are at the front line of hegemonic struggle.

In the Gramscian framework of hegemony, ‘false consciousness’ is a myth in that people are seen as having “‘true” conceptions in their heads of society as it actually presents itself’ (see Alford, 1983: 8) – that is, they have ‘commonsense’ experience of exchange relations and the division of labour. Therefore ‘direct’ human experience is the point of origin, the source of their ‘real’ conceptions, which explains why they acquiesce to their conditions, as ‘there is no conceivable alternative to the commodity-form’ (Alford, 1983: 7). Thus, individuals’ ‘commonsense’ experience of the world tells them not only what exists but also what is *possible*. In this framework, ideology is merely a more systematic version of common sense, which legitimizes doctrines of particular social groups involved in the organization of the presentation of hegemony. Gramsci problematizes the doctrine that ideology is only ever an expression of class interests (and so an individual’s ideological position can be ‘more or less read off’ from their economic position) as being far more contradictory, and he sees class relationships as potentially more fragile.

For Gramsci, the dominant classes don’t merely prescribe ideology for working-class consumption; rather, they have to continually strive to limit the boundaries of the making of meaning to exclude definitions of social reality which conflict with *their* horizon of thought – the struggle for hegemony is won and lost not just in the media, but in the institutions of civil society (such as the family, the churches, the education system, but also in more coercive apparatuses: the law, the police, the army, etc.).¹²

Gramsci’s examination of the institutions of civil society was taken up in the 1960s and 1970s by the French Marxist Louis Althusser, who reworked the analysis in developing a very strong link between ideology and the power of the state. Althusser claimed that ideology, and what he called the ‘ideological state apparatus’, had become much more important in the twentieth century than the repressive and coercive state apparatuses of the nineteenth century. This change could be attributed to the important addition which Althusser makes to the state apparatus, which is the apparatus of broadcast.

Interestingly, it is not merely apparatuses of communication that are important here, but also those of the structure of ideological processes which occur in all institutional settings of power – religious, educational, political and workplace. For Althusser, the growth of electronic broadcasting institutions (particularly visual broadcasting) merely consolidates the consensual integration of individuals that occurs in the *structure* rather than the content of ideology.

In what follows, we shall investigate Althusser's radical departure in thinking on the nature of ideology from both the early Marxist and liberal notions. His innovation involves questioning the very notion of what it means to be an individual in a communication process, an innovation which has been echoed ever since in the analyses of what today is called 'post-structuralism'.

Ideology as a structure of broadcast – Althusser

Althusser's most striking point of departure from the humanist Marxists is to question the categories in which ideology is thought. Ideology is not found in the content of messages, nor is it adopted in the consciousness of individuals; rather, it is nothing less than the mechanism by which the individual experiences selfhood – as an autonomous knowing subject in a world of knowing subjects.

Althusser's account of ideology is almost a reversal of the conventional humanist accounts. For Althusser, there is no such thing as 'given' individuals with an experience of the real; rather, the very idea of individuality is created in the communication process itself. By his account, this process by which the individual is constituted only intensifies in the age of 'mass media'. Indeed it makes possible the 'cult of the individual' which Émile Durkheim first discussed at the turn of the twentieth century.

For Althusser, individuals (subjects) are never essential but are constituted (an 'effect' of ideology). The centrepiece of his theory is his distinction between the individual and the subject. His major proposition in this regard is that '*the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects*' (Althusser, 1971: 160). In other words, Althusser is not denying the existence of individual 'personality', it is just that such 'personality' is only possible in and through a communication process. The mechanism by which this occurs he describes as 'interpellation', where he says that 'all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects' (162).

For Althusser, ideology only exists by the subject and for the subject, and its function is to constitute people as subjects. While it may seem 'obvious' that individuals are unified, autonomous beings whose consciousness and unique personality is the source of their ideas and beliefs,

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Althusser maintains that this obviousness only comes from people '(mis)recognizing' themselves in the way that ideology 'interpellates' them, calls them by their names and in turn 'recognizes their autonomy' (162). It is in this imaginary misrecognition that the subject is *constituted*; the subject is therefore formed in an imaginary relation – 'it cannot be the pure subject of the empiricist notion of experience because it is *formed* through a definite structure of recognition' (Hirst, 1976: 387). Ideology does not constitute individuals in a singular divine act; rather, 'ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects'. For Althusser, *individuals are always-already subjects* in the same way that ideology itself is 'always-already' known (Althusser, 1971: 175–6).

As 'autonomous' subjects with a unique 'subject-position' in the social formation, individuals willingly 'work by themselves' (181) as a 'centre of initiatives' (182). However, whilst the subject is a 'centre of initiatives' responsible for its actions, it is also a subjected being who submits freely to the authority of the Subject – God, Father, institution, the boss, etc. – that is, *a subject through the Subject and subjected to the Subject*.

The structure of all ideology, interpellating individuals as subjects in the name of a Unique and Absolute Subject, is *specular*, i.e. a mirror-structure, and *doubly specular*: this mirror duplication is constitutive of all ideology and ensures its functioning. Which means that all ideology is *centred*, that the Absolute Subject occupies the unique place of the Centre, and interpellates around it the infinity of individuals into subjects in a double-mirror connection such that it *subjects* to the Subject. (Althusser, 1971: 168)

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Althusser's theory represents something of a paradigm earthquake for the study of broadcast media and its social significance. In suggesting that, firstly, ideology is not simply a moment of signification but is the very condition by which it is possible to act as a self-conscious subject, and, secondly, that structures of interpellation which exhibit specular and centred structures are the most significant sites of ideology, broadcast media become an extremely important kind of state apparatus. Althusser's, theory points to a sense in which ideology – what he calls ideology-in-general – can be considered a structure of broadcast rather than just content. Ideology as content he refers to as ideology-in-particular. For Althusser, particular ideologies may change but ideology-in-general is an enduring structure. This is why, as Sprinker (1987: 279–80) has argued, the behaviour of media audiences should be seen not as psychological but as social.

Because, for Althusser, ideology is the very condition of a subject being a subject at all, he argues that no-one in any society can do without ideology – without a representation of themselves as subjects, of their world and of their relation to the world. This is why ideology is not merely a representation of people's conditions of existence (distorted or

otherwise) but rather is 'a "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (162)'. For Althusser, as a Marxist, the political point of this statement is that in a social formation where production relations (and inequality) are obscured, where conditions which govern people's existence aren't manifest to them, 'they necessarily live these absent conditions in an imaginary presence "as if" they were given' (Hirst, 1976: 386). Therefore ideology is active in maintaining the status quo of the existing relations of production – active in the reproduction of social relations. However, as we shall see in Chapter 5, Althusser's theory is also important for an understanding of forms of social integration which can be seen to be quite independent of the needs of the reproduction of capitalism.

The society of the spectacle – Debord, Boorstin and Foucault

The power attributed to ideology-in-general in social integration and social reproduction provides a useful theoretical backdrop to understanding the 'spectacle' thesis in French media theory – in particular the theories of Guy Debord and later Jean Baudrillard. This thesis also argues for the basic externalization and objectification of social reality in the media, but it less a function of narrative than it is of the role of spectacle in the generation of a world of simulation. Their theory is a post-representational one in which the fact of the image rather than what the image says becomes the most important aspect of present-day broadcast societies. The system of images transforms the mundane into a hyperreal carnival of totemic monuments through which the 'masses' achieve congregation.

Debord, Boorstin and Foucault

In understanding the significance that is attributed to the image in the various theories of spectacle, it is important to specify the fact that 'the image' derives its power almost exclusively from the medium of broadcast. We will see in the next chapter that, with the Internet, there is no such thing as 'the image', as the Internet does not provide a field of visibility in the same way as broadcast does. The image is a function of media in which there is a concentration of the attention of the many on a particular monumental event or representation. When such representations are repeated over time – when images become icons – the image is able to take on a life of its own – where the things it refers to become secondary. Indeed the referent may disappear altogether.

An early and original theorization of the phenomenon of the reification (cf. Lukács, above) of the image in modern society is given in Guy Debord's well-known monograph *Society of the Spectacle* (1977). First

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published in France in 1967, this text takes a 'situationist' perspective on broadcast media. Debord's argument is that capitalist culture presents itself as an immense assemblage of spectacle. But spectacle for him is not just 'a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images' (epigram no. 4). The spectacle even promotes itself as an agent of the unification of society as a whole. It is the domain of society which 'concentrates all gazing and all consciousness' (epigram no. 3).

For Debord, the modern media, for which he contends the term 'mass media' is a 'superficial manifestation' (aphorism 24), are agents both of political power and of urbanization. They secure the complacency of the population to inequality and hierarchy:

The oldest specialization, the specialization of power, is at the root of the spectacle. The spectacle is thus a specialized activity which speaks for all the others. It is the diplomatic representation of hierarchic society to itself, where all other expression is banned. (aphorism 23)

At the same time the spectacle is a practical agent for the dual unification and separation of individuals around the principle of private consumption:

The spectacle originates in the loss of the unity of the world, and the gigantic expansion of the modern spectacle expresses the totality of this loss: the abstraction of all specific labor and the general abstraction of the entirety of production are perfectly rendered in the spectacle, whose *mode of being concrete* is precisely abstraction. (aphorism 29)

Debord describes the situation of the spectacle – as simply one representation of the real – splitting off and separating from the real as though it has transcended it:

The spectacle is nothing more than the common language of this separation. What binds the spectators together is no more than an irreversible relation at the very centre which maintains their isolation. The spectacle re-unites the separate, but re-unites it *as separate* (aphorism 29).

In Debord's account, a view which is restated by Fredric Jameson (1991) nearly two decades later, the image is – following a somewhat Lukácsian trajectory – presented as 'the final form of commodity reification'.

Six years prior to Debord's publication, across the Atlantic, the phenomenon was receiving theoretical attention in the form of Daniel Boorstin's publication of *The Image* (1962).¹³ Boorstin saw television and cinema as an extension of the de-naturing and de-realization of modern society wrought by the electronic management of the environment. In modern society,

distinctions of social classes, of times and seasons, have been blurred as never before. With steam heat we are too hot in winter; with air conditioning

we are too cool in summer. Fluorescent lights make indoors brighter than out, night lighter than day. The distinctions between here and there dissolve. With movies and television, today can become yesterday; and we can be everywhere, while we are still here. In fact it is easier to be there (say on the floor of the national political convention) when we are here (at home or in our hotel room before our television screen) than when we are there. (231–2)

For Boorstin, broadcast technologies are servile to what he described as the 'homogenization of experience', in which differences between individuals are flattened rather than expressed – leaving individualism itself as the remainder. Nowhere is this more salient than in public opinion polls:

... the rising interest in public opinions and public opinion polls illustrates ... the rise of images and their domination over our thinking about ourselves. ... Public opinion, once the public's expression, becomes more and more an image into which the public fits its expression. Public opinion becomes filled with what is already there. (239, 240)

A consequence of Boorstin's claims is that, in the age of the image, public opinion is no longer able to be surveyed or polled. Polling itself, a positivist gesture of research, cannot quite cope with the fact that it is attending to a thoroughly anti-positivist reality.

Debord and Boorstin's depiction of the social function of spectacle bespeaks striking continuities with that of Michel Foucault's account of public displays and torture in eighteenth-century Europe.¹⁴ J.B. Thompson (1995) gives a good account of this in sketching the formation of modern forms of power:

The societies of the ancient world and of the ancient regime were societies of spectacle: the exercise of power was linked to the public manifestation of the strength and superiority of the sovereign. It was a regime of power in which a few were made visible to the many, and in which the visibility of the few was used as a means of exercising power over the many – in the way, for instance, that a public execution in the market square became a spectacle in which a sovereign power took its revenge, reaffirming the glory of the king through the destruction of the rebellious subject. (132)

Thompson argues that Foucault's work is instructive for a theory of the media, less in his promotion of discourse analysis than in showing how the older spectacular forms of power became manifested in institutional life in routine fashion, imbuing surveillance and disciplinary regimes in an involuntary way. That is, the 'disciplinary society' which Foucault details in *Discipline and Punish* is one in which 'the visibility of the few by the many has been replaced by the visibility of the many by the few' (Thompson, 1995: 133).¹⁵

Of course Adorno and Horkheimer would argue that these two forms of recognition relation are intertwined. That is to say, the visibility of the

few by the many which is organized by the few is also the means by which the few are able to control the many through economic and cultural subordination. In an article on television, Adorno (1954) comments: 'the more inarticulate and diffuse the audience of mass media seems to be, the more mass media tend to achieve their "integration" (220). The gaze of the audience is sold to advertisers, at the same time as *selection* of the content of media programmes is itself highly coded within dominant ideological interests.¹⁶

In the context of modern mass media, the institutionalization of this commodification of the gaze is one which imposes an entire order of symbolic inequality, in which the masses associate via the image and the celebrity (for further discussion, see Chapter 6).

This inequity in the production of 'cultural capital' that is central to broadcast as a system of reproduction of late capitalist societies occasionally surfaces at the level of discourse. The central operation of the performative nature of broadcast is not itself visible. We know from Althusser that, in fact, the very operation of 'interpellation' and of the calling function of ideology is one that is upside-down. Althusser puts it in psychoanalytic language – that it is conscious on the condition that it is unconscious – but the effect is the same. For Althusser, the structures of the system of interpellation are, by definition, impossible to examine.

However, it is possible to argue that at the level of discourse, the structure of interpellation sometimes surfaces in narratives which, when the analysis of what constitutes broadcast is taken into account, can be seen to be self-referential: an abstract reflection of the medium itself but explainable in terms of the medium. Here are three such discourses.

The discourse of 'ordinary people'

It is only in the age of 'spectacle' and the first media age that it is possible to speak of ordinary people. The now familiar way in which individuals who do not work for the culture industry, or are not subject to any significant media attention, behave when interviewed by a television network or press or radio is instructive here. A very common narrative of a person being called on to describe their role in an event, a process or in society at large is one which runs, 'I am just an ordinary person doing my job.' But even news narratives replicate this 'interpellation' of the individual in describing how 'ordinary men and women are to be affected by this or that government decision'. Ordinarity cannot simply be explained as some deeply constituted residue of feudal class dynamics in which one's position is more or less determined by birth. The discourses of 'ordinariness' can be seen to closely coincide with the rise of 'mediated publicness'.

It is only under the conditions of the polarization between celebrity and ordinary culture that a film such as *Forrest Gump* could be made. An interesting film from the point of view of defying any easy genre classification,

it centres on the character of Gump, who, with humble means and simplistic technique, is able to achieve an extraordinary range of things, from marathon running, to heroic war service, to Gridiron stardom. Whilst the film is predominantly concerned with celebrating the culture of opportunity said to underwrite the moral superiority of the United States, it is also about how even the most ordinary person can, in a society of celebrities and spectacle, be noticed and satisfied.

The discourse of 'the system'

In this discourse anonymity is rejected in favour of a reflexive critique of abstract domination. Just as ordinariness has replaced the specification of 'underclass' or working class, something distinctively co-emergent with the mass media, so too the specification of politicians and the ruling classes has been replaced in populist discourse by a rebelliousness to something called 'the system'. A phrase which was taken up by the counter-cultures since the 1960s, it has entered into popular discourses in ways which denote everything from the suffocation of expression and creativity, to the inevitability of domination, to a generalized cynicism of power.

The discourse of 'they'

'They' are building a new freeway. 'They' have discovered a cure for cancer. 'They' are opening a new shopping centre. 'They' aren't telling the public the full story. Perhaps the most pervasive term to accompany the rise of the mass media is that of 'they'. Who, exactly, are 'they'? The fact that the mass which is constituted by broadcast media are indeterminate as far as particular messages go implies that the individuals who are part of this mass are also indeterminate to each other. In other words, broadcast makes possible scales of association which are difficult to achieve by any other means. On the one hand, we can talk about a high level of integration via the image and the celebrity, but, on the other, relatively weak kinds of connection at the horizontal level of the division of labour. In media societies, 'otherness' is completely concentrated in the fetish of the spectacle or the celebrity, whilst at the level of the everyday, it is radically diluted. But what kind of other are 'they'?

There are many theses. 'They' is simply a shorthand for the institutional nature of the entity being described – the roadbuilders, scientists and doctors, developers, the government, etc. 'They' could also be a default way of saying 'I can't elaborate on the detail' or 'It is more complex than my description warrants.' 'They' could also simply be an absent-mindedness, a carelessness about 'who' it is that makes the daily news. 'They' might be a polite way of saying also that we can't know

'who' 'everyone' is, nor would we want to. But when considered in relation to the structure of broadcast media, it is clear that, for example, celebrities are not they, their own identity is well defined, so much so that the media produces genres of programming and magazines which are exclusively *about* celebrities. Obversely, they aren't written about and yet seem to be everywhere. 'They' substitutes for the modern loss of specificity. We are not quite sure how it works, we are not invited to participate, but *they* know. 'They', in this reading, is the emblem of individual disconnection and disembodiment – of the fact of the loss of various practical knowledges which are based in cultures of mutual presence and oral culture.

With all of these discourses, the question arises as to whether 'they' are peculiar to broadcast integration or to technologically extended culture in general – of which the Internet is a part. This will be reassessed in Chapter 4.

Mass media as the dominant form of access to social reality – Baudrillard

In the last section we saw how, whilst spectacle has become a highly visible social reality, its influence over social behaviour is not so visible. This influence is nevertheless manifest in specific discourses, which provide rare cases in which the field of recognition created by the broadcast medium condenses into the content of that medium.

The way in which the attention of the audiences is concentrated though spectacle is not unlike a contemporary form of 'reification' of social relationships where the fetish of representations overtakes the conditions of that representation. The spectrality of the image, and the successive forms by which it becomes detached from social relations in general, is also a central concern of media sociologist Jean Baudrillard. But unlike the spectacle thinkers, Baudrillard argues that the ascent of a culture of images produces a crisis in representation itself. In media societies, processes of signification are no longer underwritten by a metaphysics of presence or the promise of recovering some kind of original, authentic or privileged meaning.

The eclipse of ontology by the image rests with what Baudrillard sees as the power of 'simulacra'. This term refers to the way in which what we consume from media becomes more real than what it supposedly refers to. In elaborating the evolution of simulacra in his essay 'The precession of Simulacra' in *Simulations* (1982), Baudrillard takes us through four phases of the representation the image. The image in its different guises:

- is the reflection of a basic reality;
- masks and perverts a basic reality;
- masks the absence of a basic reality;
- bears no relation to reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum.

Baudrillard examines the cultural status of representation in European society to suggest that it evolves through the above forms of phenomenality.

The first phase is easily recognizable in the code of journalists today, who, with their narrow conventions and frameworks of objectivity, bias and neutrality, embrace the prospect of a correspondence between reality and the representations they produce. The second phase is also recognized in various understandings of ideology discussed above, that representation is largely a distortion of real conditions. The third phase is probably the most difficult to understand. Here, Baudrillard argues that an objective representation of the real is impossible, because the referent is already a simulational reality. Therefore, representation hides not 'the truth' but the fact that there is no 'truth'. His most famous example is probably his claim that the function of theme parks like Disneyland is to encourage us to think that the rest of society is somehow 'real' – whereas for Baudrillard the entire world has today become, in a sense, a giant theme park (see, in particular, Baudrillard, 1988).

The fourth phase marks the end of social reality itself as an available referent. This is easy to understand. The connection to the referent can become lost altogether – something which is indicated by the emergence of a number of interesting genres like 'reality TV'. What is represented on TV is supposed to be more significant than other forms of experience. At the same time, the television itself can be found colonizing our public lives everywhere we turn, in taverns, shopping malls, delis, laundromats, airports, train stations, hardwares and local stores. As McCarthy (2001) argues, 'TV integrates into our everyday environments so well that we barely notice its presence' (2). Indeed, according to Baudrillard, these two senses of the screen becoming the real (the screen colonizes the real, and the real is only 'real' if it is on a screen) mean that images begin to refer to *each other* rather than to the 'real' world.

This relationship is not unlike the kind of relationships involved in commodity fetishism, which Marx investigates. As discussed earlier, for Marx, it is only via the commodity that individuals experience their connection to each other. We can recall that whilst commodity fetishism conceals the 'essence' of the commodity (which for Marx is labour), the 'appearance' of the commodity in the advertisement and on the shelf is also 'real' and therefore convincing.

For Baudrillard, it is the image itself that becomes the measure of all things, including our access to social reality. 'Everywhere socialization is measured according to exposure through media messages. Those who are under-exposed to the media are virtually asocial or desocialized' (Baudrillard, 1983: 96). The image is highly convincing and we do not seem to be able to live without it. But the greater our exposure to the mass of images, the more 'information' we receive, the more we come to live in a world of less and less meaning: 'Information devours its own contents; it devours communication and the social', it 'impodes', and for two

reasons: firstly: '[i]nstead of causing communication, *it exhausts itself in the act* of staging the communication; instead of producing meaning, it exhausts itself in the staging of meaning'. Here Baudrillard argues that meaning is devoured more rapidly than it can be reinjected insofar as information and the image becomes self-referential – 'a closed circuit' (99). Secondly, the media do not bring about socialization, but the implosion of social relationships in the only remaining relationship created by the mass media – the masses. Insofar as all relationships must 'pass through' the media relationship, they suffer the entropic force that is the condition of simulacra.¹⁷ The implosion of meaning right down to the microscopic level of an individual sign, what a word can mean, is mirrored by this macroscopic implosion of the social, in a way that echoes McLuhan's formula – the medium is the message.

The 'mass'-age, in Baudrillard's terminology, is an exclusive effect rather than a precondition of the media. The mass and the media are the shadow of each other, and when dynamics of simulacra prevail, that institution known as the 'social' becomes outmoded, absorbed into the image. In this world the individual becomes 'a pure screen, a switching centre for all the networks of influence' (1983: 133), in a world wherein '*we form a mass*, living most of the time in panic or haphazardly, above and beyond meaning' (1983: 11).

Here the media no longer function as a massive lie in pretending to represent fiction as the real or the real as fiction. What Baudrillard means by hyperreality or simulation is different. There can no longer be a contrast with the real; rather, the real is produced out of itself as the performativity of the mass media is amplified above all other events.

For Baudrillard, the masses aren't the kind of duped underclass that are to be manipulated by the media and politicians (a notable departure from the mass/elite and Marxist frameworks); rather, they are a kind of ground of absorption and massive gravitation which neutralizes all meaning and creates the conditions for a society of nihilism and cynicism.

The masses are a stronger medium than all the media: 'it is the former who envelop and absorb the latter – or at least there is no priority of one over the other. The mass and the media are one single process. Mass(age) is the message' (Baudrillard, 1983: 44).

The medium is the message – McLuhan, Innis and Meyrowitz

The final important perspective on broadcast media that I want to explore is that of Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis, which Joshua Meyrowitz has called 'medium' theory. Whilst not having as much currency as the 'spectacle' and ideology frameworks, it has recently received a large amount of attention (see Adilkno, 1998; Bolter and Grusin, 1999; Goodheart, 2000; Jordan, 1999; Meyrowitz, 1995, 1999; Skinner, 2000; Wark, 2000). Most of

this attention is directed toward seeing McLuhan as a rediscovered prophet of a second media age, but much of it also interested in an affirmation that it is, after all, important to look at communication media.

McLuhan's work is based on an historical understanding of successive waves of communication from print to electronic. His various aphorisms on the media, including 'the global village' and 'the medium is the message', have become absorbed into popular culture, whilst not necessarily understood within McLuhan's own system of thought. Influential in the academy in the 1960s, McLuhan underwent a 'loss of vogue' (McQuail, 1983: 90) in the seventies, which continued until the recent reclamation of his work by theorists of the second media age and cyberculture.¹⁸

The major contribution of McLuhan to communication theory is his multi-dimensional account of communication 'mediums' – a way of looking at technologically constituted social relationships, which each have their distinct reality or ontology. This approach is very different from, say, the culture industry thesis, the theory of ideology, or Baudrillard's procession of simulacra: each of which implies a basic homogenization of those immersed in media.¹⁹

Rather, McLuhan's contention is that media technologies carry distinct temporal and spatial specificities to which correspond definite frameworks of perception. As James Carey (1972) suggests,

The exploitation of a particular communications technology fixes particular sensory relations in members of society. By fixing such a relation, it determines a society's world view; that is, it stipulates a characteristic way of organizing experience. It thus determines the forms of knowledge, the structure of perception, and the sensory equipment attuned to absorb reality. (284–5)

Historically, however, he does argue, one or more of these frameworks may come to dominate cultural perception as a whole. Thus, he distinguishes between print-based culture and electronically extended culture. In print culture, claims McLuhan in *Understanding Media* (originally published in 1964), our perception of the world tends to be englobed by literature and the book, which becomes an analogue conditioning other experiences. This is often experienced as the new mediating the old and interiorizing it:²⁰ ... 'the "content" of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph'. (McLuhan, 1994: 16)²¹

THE TELEGRAPH

PRINT WRITING SPEECH

Today, McLuhan's schema as applied to the Internet might look like the following:

THE INTERNET

PRINT
WRITTEN WORD
SPEECH

IMAGE
ICON
VISUAL COMMUNICATION

These layers of technological worlds, past and present, intensify the work of processing meaning which confronts consumers immersed in the different mediums. This process work becomes heightened to the point where we have to be educated and inducted into it as increasingly information has to be produced by the audience or the receiver.

McLuhan's primary distinction that is relevant here is that between 'hot' and 'cool' mediums.²² Hot mediums like radio and cinema circulate a large amount of information, bombarding the viewer or listener. Relatively little is required in order to interpret them. Cool mediums, on the other hand, presuppose interaction. McLuhan's assumption is that in hot mediums there is an overdose of information, and there is little need for interactivity, for 'active' participants, or for participation at all.

Later in *Understanding Media* McLuhan begins to describe the demise of mechanical media like print in making way for technologies of 'automation' like radio and television as part of what he calls the 'cybernation' transformation of modern society. It is the electronic instantaneity of radio and TV which consolidates the hegemony of mass media over older mechanical technologies of reproduction.

Automation brings in real 'mass production,' not in terms of size, but of an instant inclusive embrace. Such is also the character of 'mass media'. They are an indication, not of the size of their audiences, but of the fact that everybody becomes involved in them at the same time. (McLuhan, 1994: 372)

In other words, the significant property of broadcast which McLuhan zeros in on is its 'live' character. Here it is the fact that a broadcast communication is *live for the audience*, rather than live at the point of production. The content of the transmission could have been prepared earlier or at the same time as the audience is consuming it. However, McLuhan is, of course not interested in the content, but in the way the audience is merely a constituted reflex of the medium itself. Insofar as the media achieves cybernation, 'the consumer' of a message also 'becomes producer in the automation circuit, quite as much a the reader of the mosaic telegraph press makes his own news, or just *is* his own news' (McLuhan, 1994: 372). The value of McLuhan's analysis here is that he suggests that an electronic assembly or 'virtual' assembly does not have to be dialogical or equal, or even have 'high participation', in order to guarantee mutual presence. Even if the vast majority of 'participants' in a medium are

passive (as in a hot medium), they are nevertheless able to experience mutual presence as the really real.

Most controversial among McLuhan's theories is his later emphasis on the human-technical extension argument where the definition of what qualifies as media is dramatically extended. In a shift from 'the medium is the message' to 'the medium is the massage', (see McLuhan and Fiore, 1967). McLuhan views anything that can extend the body's senses and biological capabilities (psychic or physical) as earning the status of media. 'The wheel is an extension of the foot, the book is an extension of the eye, clothing an extension of skin, electric circuitry an extension of the central nervous system' (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967: 31-41). Whilst, as we shall see in later chapters, there are enormous problems in referring CITs (communication and information technologies) exclusively back to the body in a kind of corporeal essentialism, McLuhan paradoxically allows us to understand recent developments in the *convergence* of CITs with transportation and architectural technologies in a way that is most useful.²³

The cryptic eccentricity of McLuhan's work overshadowed some of his contemporaries, who, in a number of ways, were more comprehensive and rigorous in their analysis of technical mediums of communication and forms of political power.

One such writer, Harold Innis, presented a medium theory which is perhaps more user-friendly for a theory of broadcast. In *The Bias of Communications* (1964, originally published 1951)²⁴ Innis makes a major distinction between two kinds of 'empires' of communication. The first, corresponding to the printing press and electronic communication, results in spatial domination (of nations and of populations) – what he calls a 'space bias'; whilst the second, 'time bias', based on oral culture and the cloistered world of the manuscript, accommodates memory and continuity. For Innis, the oral tradition needs to be reclaimed. Broadcast belongs to the empire of space, and in the time he was writing, the early fifties, it had come to structure prevailing power relations.

As David Crowley and David Mitchell (1995) depict him:

Innis ... saw a recurrent dialectic in History where one medium asserted primacy in a society, followed by efforts to bypass the social power that gathered around the control of that medium ... each new mode of communication was associated with tearing individuals and their entire forms of life out of their traditional moorings in locality and place and relocating them within larger and more dispersed forms of influence. With modernity, this process of co-location of the self within multiple spaces, identities, and influences intensifies; human agency itself is progressively pulled away from the local and reconstituted within the expanding possibilities of the modern. (8)

Despite a lapse in the momentum of medium theory in the seventies, it certainly had some sophisticated exponents in the eighties and nineties, among whom Joshua Meyrowitz, whose work is explored further in the following chapters, is exemplary.

Meyrowitz's major work *No Sense of Place* (1985) was a carefully theorized volume which attempted to continue the traditions begun by McLuhan and Innis. For Meyrowitz, electronic media reterritorialize 'sense of place' and the spatial, political and social conditions of this sense of place. They do this by their cross-contextuality and reach, the way in which they can asymmetrically bring together extremely diverse groups who are otherwise separated in cultural focus, in space, and perhaps also in time. Media, especially electronic media, make possible arbitrary relations between a concrete space and a sense of place. By undermining 'the traditional association between physical setting and social situation' the constraints of embodiment such as being in one place at the one time disappear (7). The value of this analysis is in anticipating what has recently only been attributed to 'cyberspace', the mobility that is afforded to an Internet consumer, highlighting the 'virtual' aspects of broadcast.

The value of the 'mediationists', as David Crowley and David Mitchell describe them, is that they were the first to draw attention to the interrelation between different media and systems of power. Their work is neither based on a philosophy of consciousness nor is it behaviourist. In the next two chapters I discuss it further, firstly, in Chapter 3, in terms of how network media have heightened the importance of medium theory; and secondly, in terms of how medium theory allows us to theorize the relationship between network and broadcast media.

Notes

- 1 The major corpus of critical accounts of the transmission view has come from post-Saussurian philosophies of language.
- 2 Bennett (1982) gives a useful survey of the different perspectives.
- 3 Effects analysis quickly established itself as a serious pursuit of sociological research. In American sociology, dominated as it was by positivist methodologies, the opportunity for empirical testing of the various theories about media effects presented itself (see McQuire, 1995).
- 4 For the former function, see, for example, Leavis (1930); for the latter function, see Chakhotin (1939).
- 5 Oddly, this latter critique is confused about the different kinds of 'mass media'. For example, in a dictionary definition on the subject, John Hartley distinguishes between print, screen, audio and 'broadcast' media. Broadcast is therefore equated with whatever might be in some sense 'live' throughout a signal radiation apparatus (in O'Sullivan et al., 1994: 172-3). Here Hartley is caught up in a cosmology of media 'effects', the study of how the media affects audiences. For example, even in critiquing the idea that the media influence the mass, and arguing that audiences are much more active and intelligent than mass society theory would have us believe, the very prospect of resistance presupposes an effects model.
- 6 The Marxist and cultural studies frameworks are primarily interested in the way media are industrially and state regulated.
- 7 More recently audience studies has become a branch of media studies in its own right, which stresses the idea of the active and diversified audience. See Ang (1991) and Gitlin (1998) – the argument that there is no such thing as a single Habermasian public sphere.

- 8 The question of democracy in the first and second media age is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.
- 9 For a 1990s text which empirically investigates the way in which modern audiences are the product of the management and marketing efforts of media organizations, see Ettema and Charles (1994).
- 10 Ideology is thus identified with passages from Marx's earlier work in *The German Ideology* as a false, imaginary, upside-down, illusory representation of reality: 'in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*' (Marx and Engels, 1970: 47).
- 11 The literature on Marx and Engels' concepts of ideology is vast and I will offer here a summary of them to the extent that they are a useful background for examining the media as a state apparatus. For a useful overview of Marxist theories of ideology, see Larrain (1983) and Eagleton (1991).
- 12 The struggle for hegemony usually entails the manufacture of consensus by way of the revival or construction of deviance. These may be internal to a particular nation-state, such as criminality, counter-cultures and sub-cultures. External deviance might be projected as a threat posed by other cultures and other nations as either economically, militarily or culturally dangerous – culminating in the modern discourse of 'terrorism'.
- 13 Given that this text is almost entirely grounded in an empiricist epistemology (see my discussion above), Boorstin manages to capture the import of spectacle in a persuasive way.
- 14 It is perhaps remarkable that Foucault did not write anything about the modern media, even though he was writing throughout the heights of the society of spectacle. Certainly his work is taken up by media studies and cultural studies in substantial ways, however, particularly in the discourse analysis perspective, as we have seen earlier in this chapter.
- 15 The visibility of the few by the many was not always a matter of violent display, but indeed a common form was also the 'royal progression' which continues today in nations with a monarchical head of state. The regency would conduct routine and regularized regional tours to be visible to his or her subjects on a repetitive basis, as, for example, the British monarch does today, in relation to the Commonwealth.
- 16 The view that the function of broadcast institutions is primarily to sell audiences to advertisers was first put most strongly by the Canadian Marxist Dallas Smythe (1981).
- 17 'It is useless to wonder if it is the loss of communication which causes this escalation in the simulacra, or it is the simulacra which is there first'. There is no first term, Baudrillard argues: '... it is a circular process – that of simulation, that of the hyperreal: a hyperreality of communication and of meaning, more real than the real. Hence the real is abolished'. (1983: 99).
- 18 Especially by the editors of *Wired* magazine.
- 19 For an excellent comparison of Baudrillard and McLuhan, see Smart (1992: 115–40) and Huyssen (1995).
- 20 Recently this process which McLuhan describes has been taken up in the concept of 'remediation'. See particularly Bolter and Grusin (1999).
- 21 However, McLuhan often gets these relationships between forms and content confused. For example in one passage in trying to explain how we positivize the content and ignore the medium, he says: 'The "content" of writing or print is speech, but the reader is almost entirely unaware either of print or of speech' (26). To be consistent, McLuhan must surely mean 'the reader is almost entirely unaware either of print or of *writing*'.
- 22 See the next chapter for a critique of this distinction.
- 23 For example, McLuhan's outlook is, even if in a limited sense, able to make some of the basic connections which are being made today between 'spaces of flow' (Castells), be these of bodies or messages. See for example Meyrowitz (1985), Morse (1998), Graham and Marvin (1996), Calhoun (1992).
- 24 McLuhan declares his indebtedness to Innis on a number of occasions. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1967) he pronounces: 'Innis was the first person to hit upon the *process* of change as implicit in the *forms* of media technology' (50).