



from

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

14 Gregory Hall, Urbana, Illinois

3/14/60

To George Gerbner

*Marshall McLuhan enclosed the attached
in a letter to me today and asked that
I pass it on to you.*

HAROLD E. HILL
Associate Director

POLY-ANTICS OF THE HIGHWAY

A road is at first in Low Definition, coming into existence to fetch rural produce to town areas; (before road, of course, the pedestrian and the mounted man).

As it goes into High Definition, it fetches the town to the country.

It next becomes a substitute for the country, and then destroys the country.

As it continues to improve, or be more of a road, it destroys the city, and is at that stage metamorphosed into a new kind of city. (The current town planners talk of cities 3000 miles long, and of hundreds of millions of people).

I have omitted the vehicle component in this dynamic, but obviously a road consists of two media simultaneously with constant interaction between them.

So that, as highway becomes city, it also becomes airway. And the airway is for travel and the highway for living.

A similar sort of reversal occurs in the vehicle itself which gives the experience of travel up to a certain speed, and then there is the reversal into stasis. So that in jet travel there is hardly any experience of movement at all, and whether you are over Rome or Tokyo the experience is the same.

Marshall McLuhan
March 8/60.

u n i v e r s i t y o f t o r o n t o

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

toronto 5, ontario, canada. h.m. mcluhan, director

December 29th, 1965

Mr. Merrill Panitt,
Editor,
TV GUIDE,
Radnor, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Panitt:

Thank you for reminding me about my friend, George Gerbner. Indeed, he is a possible aid for this matter of pre-TV study in Athens. You see, we have a considerable study going here in Toronto to achieve a sensory profile of the entire population. Our instrumentation and personnel could be transferred to Athens much more readily now, than earlier. Also, I have good friends in Athens at the Technological Institute who are eager to see this study done. They can help us a good deal. We think that \$10,000 or \$15,000 would do the job. We would be happy to team up with another group, or agency, being quite sure that the establishing of sensory profiles will soon become not only feasible, but indispensable for every type of programming and planning whatever. You see, until now, nobody has even supposed that such data could become available.

My friend, Edward T. Hall (author of The Silent Language) is an anthropologist and psychologist who feels that we are going to need ten years to gain acceptance for this project. Such time lag, however, is as wasteful as unnecessary.

If any further thoughts occur to you about those related to the TV industry who could help us, please send them along.

The best for the New Year,

Marshall McLuhan

HMM:ms

u n i v e r s i t y o f t o r o n t o

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

toronto 5, ontario, canada. h.m. mcluhan, director

December 29, 1965

Professor George Gerbner,
The Annenberg School of Communications,
University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia, 4, Pa.

Dear George:

When I had asked Merrill Panitt about suggestions for sources of aid in our TV research, he mentioned you. Why not? You see, our attempt to establish a sensory profile of the Toronto population is coming along very well at present. Our instrumentation and experience can be transferred to Athens before TV begins there. It would be ideal to have their sensory profile before television, so that the post-television study could be done as well.

We estimate that the Greek test could be done for \$10,000 or \$15,000, because we have a good many friends there in the Athens Technological Institute. They have no funds to offer us, but would provide space and some personnel.

Would there be any chance of our teaming up with the Annenberg School on this one? Or with anyone else that you can think of? You see, once the sensory profile is obtainable, it will become indispensable for all populations before any programming or planning of any sort is done.

I am currently trying to finish off a book and am finding the interruptions very oppressive.

Very best wishes in the New Year,

Marshall

HMM:ms



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA

575 LEXINGTON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Office of the Editor • PLaza 1-3600

April 3, 1968

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

Dear Dean Gerbner:

I hope Dr. Diringer's talk at the Annenberg School was a success. I did not get an opportunity to see him after his return to New York, so I have no way of judging how he was received. I would be interested in having your comments.

Once again we are planning a new edition of the Encyclopedia Americana. We are in need of a biography of MARSHALL McLUHAN, and I am hopeful that you will write it for us.

I believe the article should begin by briefly identifying McLuhan and giving some idea of his influence and popularity. This should be followed by a short biographical sketch of not more than 15 or 20 lines. The major part of the article should be devoted to a discussion of "McLuhanism," hopefully in terms that a person coming upon his concepts for the first time will understand. The coverage should conclude with a critique of his theories as suggested in the final sentence in your article on Communications (of which a copy is enclosed). (McLuhan's books should be mentioned somewhere in the body of the text.) Also, please supply a bibliography of three or four books that the general reader would find helpful for further study.

As examples of biographies, I am enclosing copies of the articles on Henri Bergson and George Berkeley that were written for a recent edition of the encyclopedia.

McLUHAN is assigned 77 lines of Americana text, equal to about 580 words. Payment for the article will be \$70.00. In order to meet our production schedule, we will need the manuscript by July 1, 1968. I earnestly hope that you will be able to undertake this assignment. May I have your decision by April 25?

With my very best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Nathan H. Pletcher
Senior Editor

nhp/ld
Encl.

April 29, 1968

Mr. Nathan H. Fletcher, Senior Editor
The Encyclopedia Americana
575 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Dear Mr. Fletcher:

I will be glad to write a biography of Marshall McLuhan
as requested in your letter of April 3.

Dr. Diringer's lecture here was very successful. Thanks
for calling his visit to my attention.

Sincerely yours,

GG:kaf

George Gerbner,
Dean

COMMISSIONING AGREEMENT

Date: May 1, 1968

TITLE	NO. OF WORDS	DATE DUE	SUGGESTIONS
McLUHAN, MARSHALL	580	7/1/68	(77 lines)

TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS ASSIGNED...580

Commissioning Editor

C-18-68

The ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA

Office of the Editor

575 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, NEW YORK

May 1, 1968

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

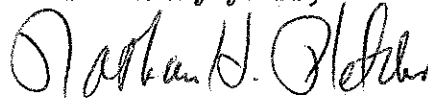
Dear Dr. Gerbner:

Thank you for your letter of April 29, in which you consent to write the article on MARSHALL McLUHAN for the Encyclopedia Americana.

I am enclosing two copies of our Commissioning Agreement and Americana copy paper. As agreed, the deadline is July 1, 1968, and payment amounts to \$70.00. Please complete the agreement and return one copy to me. The second copy is for your own files.

With many thanks,

Sincerely yours,



Nathan H. Pletcher
Senior Editor

NHP:dh

Encl.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA AMERICANA

575 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022



June 25, 1968

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

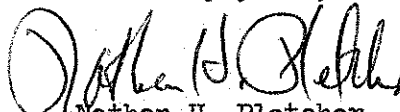
Dear Dr. Gerbner:

We are looking forward to receiving your manuscript of
the article MARSHALL McLuhan.

If for any reason you must delay the deadline of July 1,
1968, would you kindly let me know so that I may make the
necessary adjustment in our production schedule?

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,


Nathan H. Pletcher
Senior Editor

NHP:rmo

no
June 28, 1968

Mr. Nathan H. Pletcher
Senior Editor
Encyclopedia Americana
575 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Dear Mr. Pletcher:

Enclosed is my article on Marshall McLuhan. You may want to cut it
some more - I have butchered it all I could. The bibliography can be
reduced to any number of references you wish, starting from the end.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

GG:kaf
enclosure

George Gerbner,
Dean

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

February 19, 1971

Dear George:

After some absence and a lot of illness, I got to read your Violence in Television Drama. Naturally, I found it fascinating, and the page 76 observations about violence as helping people "to know how to behave in different roles in order to avoid, as well as use, violence" -- I found this a very helpful approach to the identity problem. My own concern with violence as the attempt to achieve identity, private or corporate, gets new relevance from this. After all, violence is a way of discovering where the lines of force are in any situation, tells you what the contours, patterns are. It keeps you in touch. (One of the most valuable discoveries for me in the past two or three years has been the insight into tactility as the resonant interval of quantum mechanics. Earlier I had come across the Japanese concept of the MA, or the space between things, as tactility. In our visual world we think of space as connected and continuous. For all other senses, spaces are discontinuous.)

I would like to ask your thought about what might have been the pattern of violence in movies of the same period in which you studied TV? Many new insights in the entire media world have prompted me to re-write Understanding Media around the fact that the content of all media whatever is the user, whether it be a hammer, a language, or a book. The content is naturally modified in use. I would welcome any specific suggestions you might have for improving and up-dating Understanding Media.

Herbert Krugman of General Electric ran some head-camera and encephalographic tests on subjects to check whether it was the medium or the "content" to which they responded. He was as flabbergasted as I to find that the brain waves responded only to the media and not to the program changes within them. I didn't think the situation was that extreme! He then formulated the view that "though we still have a transportation theory of communication, we must now say it is the sender and not the message that is sent." This amounts to saying that under electric conditions man has become angelic, disembodied information, instantly translated and transported. Naturally, I am working steadily on the electric angelism of man in the Magnetic City. This makes us all into science fiction, does it not? I would enjoy your comments on this. (Perhaps you may wish to have a copy of the Krugman report? Perhaps you know him? I don't.)

Regards
Marshall

see file

AIR MAIL

March 9, 1971

Dr. Marshall McLuhan
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto, 5, CANADA

Dear Marshall:

I didn't know about your absence or illness -- but glad to know that you are back at work. Yes, symbolic violence is a demonstration of roles, identity, and power, and a dramatic short cut to instant social structure. But remember that the other side of the violence coin is victimization, and I think that victimization, and the ratio between the two, are even more sensitive indicators of roles and the risks of life than violence itself.

I don't know about violence in movies for the same period, but there are a few rather trivial comments concerning violence in movies of several countries produced around 1960 in the enclosed monograph.

I heard Krugman give that paper at the Association for Public Opinion Research conference last spring, but was not so impressed with the brain waves. Also, his use of the word "sent" is a pun, and it is unfair to compare it to "transport" except as in "he was transported with delight." However, there is a sense in which it is correct to say that the sender is sent: the sender as an institution, a corporation, or a person (rather than only medium) imprints certain characteristics upon the use of media which become part of the message. In that sense, of course man has become angelic, disembodied, etc. But that makes him all the more real. His humanity, his thought, become objectified in symbols which convey his most human and social (or in mass communication structural and corporate) characteristics. In some, I would say that in mass communications the corporation is the message.

It is high time for another visit to Philadelphia. Are you willing, and if you are what format or circumstances would be most suitable to you?

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

GG:kas
enclosure

George Gerbner,
Professor of Communications
and Dean

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

June 14, 1973

Dear George:

I enclose the paper I have done for the Biennial Conference on Information in Paris. Tell me if you wanted some changes in it.

In revising Understanding Media currently I have been working on a good many new chapters, some of which might be more suitable than this paper. Please tell me your thoughts, and good luck on the new publication.

Cordially,

Marshall

letter -
Visit -
Article -
Book - series - P-H
bid for it

Completed
Visit

George's treatment
unfortunate

not poss. to read

June 25, 1973

Marshall McLuhan, Director
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

Dear Marshall:

Thank you for sending me your Paris paper. I like it very much and would like to use it in our first issue. It will also lend itself to good graphic treatment, something in which we hope to innovate. (Suggestions welcome.) If there are any suggestions for changes they should be minor and will come from my Associate Editor in September; I don't have any.

As to your other article possibilities, please keep us in mind. By now you have received the letter of invitation to join us as CCE. I want to make this the kind of Journal I think you'll agree we need, and I hope that you will find it a suitable outlet for say one major piece a year.

I also have another deal cooking that may be of interest to you. This is a communications series of college-trade paperbacks by a publisher that can give us the best marketing and promotion service available. Plus personal service by the editor, yours truly, provided I can enlist the best authors to contribute. Otherwise I will not accept the job. If you are open to negotiations toward what I think could be a very attractive package, I'd like to visit to discuss it with you in person. Please let me know.

I will be back from Europe on Aug. 20, but reachable in the meantime through my office. Hope to hear from you.

With best regards,

George Gerbner,
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG/jp

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

July 27, 1973

Dear George:

Apropos your letter of June 25th mentioning
your return on August 20th, by all means I hope you will
drop in here to discuss the project you mentioned.

Cordially,

Marshall McLuhan

September 24, 1973
AIR MAIL

Dr. Marshall McLuhan
Director
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto 5, CANADA

Dear Marshall:

Thank you for the opportunity to get together even so briefly and late at night. I was delighted to see you and to listen to fresh insights, and enjoyed meeting Mrs. McLuhan very much.

I am looking forward to receiving the manuscript or whatever is available from Eric.

I would also like to have a chance to consider your new media notes for publication in the Journal. If you could send me a copy soon, I would like to see if we could run it in conjunction with your Paris paper which is slated for the January issue.

Thinking about these encapsulated media insights, it occurred to me that it would be wasteful to just add them to Understanding Media. It might be preferable to think of them as composing a companion volume in which each capsule would receive a full page with appropriate illustrations, something like The Mechanical Bride, but of course a somewhat different type of treatment. In that way, exclusive attention would be focused on the new insights, and they would be presented in a more compelling setting than just a new prologue to an already existing book. If you see merit in this idea, please let me know and I will work up some more specific suggestions after I've had a chance to examine the material more carefully.

I hope we can get together again soon and more extensively, although the calm and warmth of your home was much appreciated on that otherwise dismal Friday night.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner,
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:kas

McLuhan

October 9, 1973
AIR MAIL

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Director
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Ontario, CANADA

Dear Marshall:

Enclosed is a retyped copy of your article for the January 1974 issue of the Journal of Communication. We have cut its length a bit and moved a couple of paragraphs around, but otherwise it is essentially unchanged.

The sentences which are underlined and boxed in on the typescript will be set in a large bold typeface and set off from the rest of the text -- our version of subheadings. In addition, we hope to arrange some graphic treatment for the article as a whole. Also, please note that instead of a title we are planning to use the sentence "At the moment of Sputnik the planet became a global theater in which there are no spectators but only actors."

I hope you will be able to read it and send it back to me, with any comments or changes, by November 1, our printing deadline. Unless further changes are desirable, or you instruct us otherwise for compelling reasons of your own, proofs will be read and corrected here and will not be sent to you.

Thank you for your cooperation and haste. I am, by the way, still looking forward to receiving the materials we discussed.

With best personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner,
Editor
Journal of Communication

GG:kag
encl.

CC: Ms. Susan Schmidt

S-FY
XG

McLuhan

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

October 19, 1973

Dear George:

I enclose the essay, having looked it over at least. Feel free to slice it, edit it, in any way you wish.

I now have completed brief axiomatic formulation of the media laws covering the 33 chapters of Understanding Media. Another 20 or 30 are almost ready, but there would seem to be some advantage in having a single set to cover the whole of Understanding Media. Shall dispatch them to you in a day or two.

Eric likewise, is working on a succinct statement of James Joyce's presentation of the media.

Susan Schmidt asked how I wanted to be identified in the Journal. I suggest:

Marshall McLuhan,
Director,
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Author of several books on communications
media, the latest being TAKE TODAY: THE
EXECUTIVE AS DROPOUT (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
Inc. N.Y. 1972)

Mrs Marshall

P.S. After the book notation add: (The effects of electric information speeds ~~and~~ decision-making and social institutions.)

McLuhan

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

October 24, 1973

Dear George:

I am sending a merely tentative formulation of the Laws of the Media. Nos. 1-33 correspond to the chapters of Understanding Media while nos. 1-30 correspond to some additional chapters for Understanding Media 2. Not having had any formulation of Laws while writing Understanding Media, there is no sequence nor any selection of media that supports the formulation of Laws as such. They are randomized at present.

I would appreciate having your comments on many aspects of the present state of my formulation, since I intend to go ahead with modifications and revisions of the entire group of media.

Yrs Marshall

October 25, 1973

Susie:

I kept xerox of McLuhan letter.

GG

November 5, 1973
AIR MAIL

Professor Marshall McLuhan
Center for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto 5, CANADA

Dear Marshall:

I have now had a chance to look through the Laws of the Media formulation. Many thanks for sending it to me.

This is fascinating material. I wonder how you plan to use it. I mean the Laws of Media are media in that they have a pattern and rhythm of their own. I still believe they merit a separate book. You have the introductory chapter. Then the Laws, one to a page, with occasional amplification or example, and suitable graphic treatment. (I may know the artist who could do it.)

The question is whether this material is fully committed to the revision. If not, please let me know and I'll check with Prentice Hall in terms of a Spectrum paperback. And if it is, I would still like to consider the essay and selected Laws for a Journal article say in the fall of 1974.

Our first (Winter 1974) issue with your piece is soon going to press. I think you'll like the mix.

Let me know what you think.

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

April 2, 1974

Dear George:

I enclose a sample of my "Laws of the Media" which you would be free to publish in any form you chose. I have written various introductions at various times and have thrown them all away. One was called "The Laws of the Media: A Structural Approach", citing Collingwood's Metaphysics: "Where there is no strain, there is no history." Structuralism in linguistics and in aesthetics I am fairly familiar with, especially through the new criticism, and also the history of symbolism. The structuralists, beginning with Ferdinand de Saussure and now Levi-Strauss, divide the two approaches to the problems of form into diachrony and synchrony. Diachrony is simply the developmental, chronological study of any cultural matter, but synchrony works on the assumption that all aspects of any form are simultaneously present in any part of it. This simultaneous approach is the one I use in the Laws of the Media herewith enclosed. However, in the case of any one of them, I can flip to the diachronic approach for filling in historical background and details.

Since electric speeds of information constitute a sort of simultaneous structuring of experience, synchrony, representing all directions at once, is, as it were, acoustic, whereas the diachronic, representing one stage at a time, is visual in its analytic pattern. Few people seem to be aware that visual space and order are continuous, connected, homogeneous and static. In these regards, visual space is quite different from any other kind of space, be it tactile, kinetic, audile or osmic (smell). Visual space alone can be divided.

In formulating the Laws of the Media I have proceeded by induction, even though in the process of induction one discovers many things that could not be merely inducted. The Laws of the Media have been shaped by studying the effects of media so there is always a hidden ground upon which these effects stand, and against which they bounce. That is to say, the Law of a medium is a figure interplaying with a ground. As with a wheel and an axle, there must be an interval between the two in order for the play to exist.

To Sam Pearson
mailed 4/16/74 (K)

Sam - Please
see mine.
9.

When you have had a look at these, please write me any comments or suggestionss you can, in order to make the package more useful or usable. A few months ago I remember writing the statement that "a scientific hypothesis is one that can be disproved." I set about putting the Laws of the Media in this "disprovable" form, hoping that in the course of "disproving" each of them, many new discoveries would occur.

Courage for
your new magazine
and I enclose a few
one-liners as possible
cheer!
yours Marshall

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

April 3, 1974

Dear George:

Omitted from the Media Laws which I sent yesterday are these three on the sciences. Since any scientific Law is a human artifact, it is characterized by the same dynamics as any other human artifact in the hardware order. The tetrad or "algebra" of the media, I failed to spell out. (Dantzig in his book on Number explains the basic form of algebra as rhetorical or the words themselves, then came the syncopated or shortened forms of the words, and then the symbolic or present form of letters.) The first step (A) points to the immediate effect of any innovation or hypothesis in enhancing something, and at the same time obsolescing something, that is (B). At the same time there is retrieval of something archaic that had been previously obsolesced (C), and finally when the potential of the form is used up or fully developed, it flips into an antithetic mode (D).

I suppose this is somewhat Hegelian, although Hegel does not have the retrieval bit, as far as I know.

Yrs Marshall

April 11, 1974
AIR MAIL

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Center for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto 5, CANADA

Dear Marshall:

I have your letters of April 2 and 3, and all Media Laws. I also have your previous notes on this. Now let me immerse myself in this material and work with it until it clicks into the right pattern and format for publishing. I will also discuss format with our imaginative graphic artist.

Hope to develop a proposal for you in a month or two. Meanwhile, unless you stop me, I would like to work some one-liners and your message of cheer into INTERCOM.

If you have any further Laws or thoughts on this please let me know. I assume it is not being actively considered for publication elsewhere. (If it is, please let me know so we don't get into a mess.) You know how much I like these. Will try to do them justice. Thank you for sending them to me.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

GG:kas

University of Toronto

Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

April 11, 1974

Professor George Gerbner
The Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut Street,
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

A friend, Dean Motter, has done a few sample
graphics for Media Laws, three of which I enclose. Do
you think they are helpful?

YVS Marshall

4/16/74

Dear Marshall -

These graphics are imaginative
and funny but not right for
the Media Laws. (How about

MEDIALECTICS, instead?)

I am working on something that
will take time but hope will
be worth it.

Yours -

George

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director
May 3, 1974

Professor Geo. Gerbner
The Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut St.,
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

"Medialectics" is worth working on. Have just had word from my agent, Mrs. Molinaro, that, temporarily, I should hang on to Media Laws until New York decides whether they would serve as a fulfilment for a commitment which I made two years ago. The book in question is coming along quite rapidly, and consists of a Baedeker of breakthroughs in all the sciences and arts since 1900. What we have found is that the arts tend to be a generation ahead of the sciences on all fronts. That is, the "paradigms" used in science appear much earlier in the arts. Now, I have a good many of these in fairly accessible form, and you might wish to try a few of them serially.

Either the Media Laws, or these paradigms, are ^{to be} in the clear for your use. Shall know which, for sure, quite soon.

*Really working hard on
some new breakthroughs.*

Yrs Marshall

Call Sam
Call Mel

Mel book
our mailing
piece

Meet Thump

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

~~This is what I~~

Marshall McLuhan, Director

~~Write an article by~~ ^{May 21, 1974} ~~freelance~~

Professor George Gerbner
Professor of Communications, and Dean
The Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut Street,
University of Pennsylvania, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

The latest development apropos the Laws of the Media is that my publisher says I must, under no conditions, release any of the material before it comes out in book form. I think this is unnecessary, but there it is. I don't think he has any idea of how to get illustrations. My son, Eric, has a friend who has done some already, but I'm not sure that the publisher will accept him either. Do you have any suggestions of a good man for the job?

Have some lectures to give in Sweden in early June, so life has been very full and confused.

Shall be in touch as soon as I get back. Meantime, heartiest congratulations on your magazine.

Yrs Marshall

University of Toronto
Toronto 5, Canada

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

June 18, 1974

Prof. George Gerbner
Dean
The Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut St.,
University of Pennsylvania, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

Had a most interesting trip. In Stockholm I was on a panel with Jean-Louis Servan-Schreiber who gave me a copy of his The Power to Inform - Media: The Information Business (McGraw-Hill). I would like to review it, if nobody has grabbed it.

One thing I keep working on, George, is to discover the reasons why people panic when the effects of anything are pointed out. All media are supposed to be neutral carriers of data. I wonder whether there is any tie-in with the disease carrier who is unaware of his deadly role. Apart from Innis, and myself, are you aware of any media students who study the media as carriers of "disease" and social dislocation? It will be interesting to see how the Chinese face up to the media as transformers rather than as transporters. A friend in Paris who is just back from Japan reports that the Japanese have deep guilt feelings apropos their own culture as stolen from the Chinese. One result: they are prepared to scrap this stolen thing. Would this explain their willingness to introduce the phonetic alphabet at the expense of destroying the ideogram?

Yrs Marshall

Charles
Belief Love
new book coming

June 28, 1974

AIR MAIL

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Director, Centre for Culture & Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto, 5, CANADA

Dear Marshall:

Enclosed is the design proposal for Media Laws by Sam Maitin that I discussed with you on the phone today. Included also are two notes from Sam that pertain to the design. His address and phone number are also given.

Thank you for undertaking the Servan-Schreiber review for us. Our next deadlines are October 1 and January 1.

Best -

CC: Sam Maitin

November 27, 1974

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Director
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

Dear Marshall:

Thank you for your review of The Power to Inform.
It is just fine as it is.

A couple of weeks ago I wrote you a note asking
if you could let me see a copy of your talk in
Acapulco. Please send it along if you can.

Also, what is happening to the publication of
The Laws of the Media?

Best regards and good wishes for the holidays.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

GG: kas

March 24, 1975

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Director
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

Dear Marshall:

The information theory critique idea is a good one and certainly long overdue. It would be most suitable for the Journal, but I may have other suggestions once I've had an opportunity to read it. If it comes soon, we may even want to carry it before your Organized Ignorance piece (about which, incidentally, I sent you the suggested insertions on March 11. I assume you agree; if not, please let me know).

I look forward to reading your new article.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

GG:kas

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

March 17, 1975

Dear George:

* | In the current issue of The Scientific American there is a piece by Björk on "An Experiment in Work Satisfaction". It recounts the shift in Sweden from lineal assembly-line methods to wholistic teamwork and stress on learning new jobs in order to "deal directly with matters that had previously been handled by specialized management departments." This article, of course, is a confirmation of the analysis that I did in Take Today: The Executive as Dropout (with Barrington Nevitt, published by Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Inc. N.Y. 1972). I would like to use it as an opening for a fairly brief critique of information theory. This latter still uses tunnel vision and lineal transportation as a basis for all communication teaching and practise. The whole of systems analysis is locked into this pattern. What is called "tunnel vision" is now shifting to "funnel vision" which takes account of all the side-effects of any system. What is called "information" in the conventional Shannon and Weaver model, will simply not bear inspection.

Since my approach to communication is the only current one that uses the peripheral side-effect approach, it is about time that I encountered the conventional systems engineering group. More and more I realize that the phenomenology group, through their interest in publics and audiences, have begun to prepare acceptance for my peripheral or "funnel vision" of the media and their side-effects. This explains why I am so much more popular and better understood in Latin countries, and in France, than in Anglo-Saxony. Edward de Bono's Horizontal Thinking, he told me, was picked up from my media approach.

If you think this kind of piece unsuited to your magazine, tell me where you think it would do better -- perhaps some place like the Saturday Review?

Yrs Marshall

March 24, 1975

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Director
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

Dear Marshall:

The information theory critique idea is a good one and certainly long overdue. It would be most suitable for the Journal, but I may have other suggestions once I've had an opportunity to read it. If it comes soon, we may even want to carry it before your Organized Ignorance piece (about which, incidentally, I sent you the suggested insertions on March 11. I assume you agree; if not, please let me know).

I look forward to reading your new article.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

GG:kas

*Sorry Out Meade: He
Space Orientation 97*

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

November 11, 1975

Professor George Gerbner
Editorial Office
Journal of Communications
The Annenberg School of Communication
3620 Walnut St.
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, 19104

Dear George:

I was talking to an architect today who is designing a new Union Station here in Toronto. I had occasion to explain to him some of the implications of our unique North American space orientation. I think I have referred to the matter before, but I am more and more inclined to tackle an essay on the subject. Please give me a green light if what follows sounds promising.

North Americans are the only people in the world who go outside to be alone and inside to be social. The origin of this matter relates to our having come here to "tame the wilderness." However, it's the implications of this pattern for our private and social and political lives which are fantastic. On the one hand, when we go out to movies or theatres with our dates, we not only expect to be private, but forbid the invasion of our privacy by advertising. Europeans, on the other hand, expect advertising in theatres and in movies, but bitterly resent it in their homes, whether on TV or radio. We accept advertising in our homes, and the American home has no privacy.

The most flamboyant feature of our S.O. (Space Orientation) is the motor car in which we find the ultimate form of privacy when away from home. The American car is quiet inside, unlike the European car, and it is big and enclosed and well suited to the business of meditation and decision-making. (Car driving, by the way, has become one of the major enemies of literacy, since the peripheral vision necessary for driving a car is alien to the "tunnel vision" needed for reading. I have a friend, Joe Foyle, who has discovered that most forty-year-old executives have lost the ability to read, thanks to commuting by car. He earns a living helping them to recover their lost reading skills!)

Since Americans go out to be alone, they do not have institutions suited to socializing away from home. The night-club is for privacy, and there is no intellectual cafe or pub life. One of the many unexpected features of going outside to be alone is that Americans use their private voices when they go out and do not put on a group voice or standard English, German, French, etc. The only group voices in America we associate with ethnic groups, and Southerners, and these are considered to be comic. Group voices are normal in all the rest of the world, and are the base of all class society. It would seem obvious that the reason for the "classless" character of American society is the use of the private instead of group speech. Wherever group speech can be detected, as from Harvard or Yale (e.g., William Buckley) we also find a basis for mirth and ridicule.

The American also goes outside to be alone, both at work and at play. The coffee-break of fifteen years back (?) was a kind of social revolution, i.e., socializing on company time. All American literature and journalism postulates this pattern of going out to be alone, so that it implies that both the Western and the who-done-it are major forms of American creativity as much as Thoreau or Melville.

The entire world of the American film is shaped by this pattern, above all in Charles Chaplin's saga. The little man who goes out and finds nobody to associate with is the Englishman in America. A French visitor was telling us the other day that some Europeans regard the Chaplin saga as a documentary of American life. One of the paradoxes about this S.O. pattern is that the American is an extrovert when he goes out of doors, hostile and aggressive, but not when he is at home. Taking strangers home is normal for the American. Besides the film world in which the contrast between European and American directing in the use of space stands out so starkly, there is also the problem of American divorce. The role of the mistress in European life relates to their use of outside space as social. Since this is forbidden to the American, it is impossible for him to have a mistress as part of his social life. He certainly cannot take her home, so he gets a divorce, whereas the European uses the mistress to protect the privacy and sanctity of the home. This matter, George, like all the other matters mentioned here, has been almost totally ignored by sociologists and media people alike. Personally, I would rather see these matters in essay form rather than have them enlarged into a book. There is the matter of TV as tending to reverse the S.O. since it brings the outside inside as it were and takes the inside outside. The

effect on young Americans would be to somewhat Europeanize them. The S.O. extends to many other matters, including education and religion and public worship.

*most cordial
regards
Marshall*

Temporary mailing address during strike:

Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto
c/o Box 2800
Ogdensburg, New York 13669

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

August 26, 1975

Professor Geo. Gerbner
Editorial Office
Journal of Communications
The Annenberg School of Communication
3620 Walnut St.
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, 19104

Dear George:

I enclose a copy of a letter I just sent to Edward
T. Hall since it contains themes that I would like to discuss
with you. The work of Roger Barker I have just begun to look
at, but he's quite conscious of the gap in psychological
studies, i.e., the refusal to tackle the environment as
structure.

Mrs Marshall

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

August 26, 1975

Professor E.T. Hall
Department of Anthropology
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois, 60201

Dear Ted and Mildy:

I was quite overjoyed to have your Fourth Dimension in Architecture: The Impact of Building on Man's Behavior. It is a field I have worked in a great deal with Siegfried Giedion and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt. I also went on some of the Delos cruises with Doxiadis and his group. I was very happy to get clued in on Roger Barker's Ecological Psychology. By the way, on your opening page you state:

The most pervasive and important assumption, a cornerstone in the edifice of Western thought, is one that lies hidden from our consciousness and has to do with man's relationship to his environment. Quite simply the Western view is that human processes, particularly behaviour, are independent of environmental controls and influence.

On that point I have been trying for the past thirty years to establish some awareness of how the phonetic alphabet created a unique visual bias in Western man. Among our several senses and the numerous kinds of space evoked by these senses, visual space alone (i.e., Euclidean space) is continuous, connected, homogeneous and static. This space is still called "physical space" by Western scientists and also "rational space" by intellectuals.

It's a space unknown to any non-literate society, just as Euclid can exist only in a culture of phonetic literacy. The reasons for this I have often explained in detail, but more important is the fact that today visual space is almost vestigial and our visual faculty is merging once more with the total sensorium in the new environment of electric information.

I have written a book with an electrical engineer to explain the effects of this new electric environment on the structures of business and politics. Naturally, I learned all these things in the first place from the poets since Baudelaire. These people are the antenna of the race, picking up the new forms much sooner than anybody else.

Not directly related to these matters is one of considerable scope. It was a matter that I explored at a time when I had to give a talk to some British advertisers. Wishing to distinguish the relation of their advertising to their milieu as compared with the role of advertising in our world, I used the illustration that North Americans will not tolerate advertising in movie houses any more than we would tolerate commercial interruptions in a telephone conversation. Probing a bit, I discovered that the reason for our unwillingness to have ads in theatres was that we go out with our dates to be alone. This, of course, is not true in England or Europe where they go out to socialize and go home to be alone. The North Americans, on the other hand, go home to socialize,

allowing for very little privacy in the home. If a European wants to write a book, he stays at home. If an American wants to write a book, he gets a grant and leaves home. This contrast between North American attitudes to space extends to the rest of the world. Even Eskimos tend to go home to be alone. You may have seen the one-liner: "An igloo is an icicle built for two."

This extraordinary attitude to space of North Americans, structures all of our literature and architecture and, incidentally, provides Charlie Chaplin with a continuous theme for all of his movies. As a sociable Cockney, he thought that North Americans were quite mad in their non-social ways when in the street, or the restaurant, or at work, for Americans also go out to work to be alone. Behind this figure of extraverted solitude is the hidden ground of the epic struggle to "tame the wilderness". Just why South Americans were able to retain their European space is a quite complicated question, related to religion and aristocratic institutions.

Coming back to the Western man's assumption that he is immune to environmental controls and influence, it is basic to know that visually oriented man recognizes figure but not ground, whether he is studying philosophy or art. Thus, the formal cause of any philosophy or any art is the public which is taken for granted by the makers of philosophy and entertainment alike. There's not a line of Plato or Aristotle that does not presuppose very specific publics, yet historians of philosophy tend naturally to

"contain" their thought. It is like studying "The Death of a Salesman" as a theory of society and business, minus the public for which Arthur Miller wrote the play. A few months ago, in New York magazine, Arthur Miller wrote "1949 -- The Year it Came Apart", describing the disappearance of the public for which he had written the play. TV simply re-structured that public and made that play, and many other plays, meaningless.

What I call a "theory of communication" is a study of the effects of a work on a particular public. The Shannon-Weaver model of information theory (encoder, channel and de-coder) simply ignores the laws of the situation, i.e., the Shannon Weaver model is identical with the bias of Western man which excludes the possibility of environmental influence. In fact, the environment presupposed by the activity of communication is categorized as "noise" in the Shannon Weaver paradigm. Visual space is the only kind of space which is figure minus ground, and this fact remains unknown to psychologists and physicists alike. However, since we are rapidly moving out of visual space, we are discovering that the old visual assumptions do not apply. The non-visual spaces of electronic man are discontinuous, non-homogeneous and dynamic. Naturally, structural observations of this sort do not apply any value judgements whatever, and all of my media studies are minus value judgements for this reason.

This does not imply that the structure does not have effect. The

structure of a virus may have dire effect but the knowledge of the structure must precede the study of the effects. In the Western world, however, we have strong moral indignation expressed without reference to any structural factors whatever, e.g., program "content" as a supposed cause of social change or violence.

again, Congrats on
The Fourth Dimension
and hoping to have your
further aid and comment
Yrs Marshall

November 24, 1975

Prof. Marshall McLuhan
Centre for Culture & Technology
University of Toronto
c/o Box 2800
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

Dear Marshall:

"Going Out Inside; the Spaced-Out American" sounds good. This latest formulation is crisp and seems ready for an essay, subject to our usual tender loving editorial care.

I am looking forward to reading it.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

GG:kas

McLuhan -- note strike address

San Juan
Ha

Dear Marshall:

"Going Out Inside; the Spaced-Out American" sounds good. This latest formulation ~~xx~~ is crisp and seems ready for an essay, subject to ^{our} usual tender loving editorial care.

I am looking forward to reading it.

With best regards --

Jim sign

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

September 3, 1976

Dear George:

The enclosures may help you to follow my work more easily. For thirty years, at least, I have been using the two hemisphere approach under the names of the written and the oral, the visual and the acoustic, the hot and the cool, the medium and the message, figure and ground, and so on. Now it turns out that medicine has been building a great beach-head for this approach with its new understanding of the two hemispheres of the brain. If you look at the traits of the left hemisphere, you will discover the lineaments of the First world -- the literate and industrial world -- and, on the other hand, in the right hemisphere you will perceive the characteristics of the Third world -- the world without the phonetic alphabet.

During the past century, while the knowledge of the two hemispheres has been growing, there has also been a new electronic milieu or environment which automatically pushes the right hemisphere into a more dominant position than it has held in the Western world since the invention of the phonetic alphabet. The two hemispheres naturally respond to the milieu or total surround in which people live and work. My work has been a dialogue between the two hemispheres in which the characteristics of the right hemisphere are given so much recognition that I have been unintelligible to the left hemisphere people. It happens that the left hemisphere people are completely out of touch with the results and the formal characteristics of their own new electric technologies.

yrs Marshall

THE GREAT BRAIN ROBBERY

Marshall McLuhan, much admired and much maligned, is alive and well today and the resurrection of his ideas has emanated from, of all places, the medical profession. A Very Big Surprise, and I suspect that it may have hit Big MacL the same way in all his utterances on the link between Mankind's Tools and human streams of culture, I cannot recall coming across a strictly PHYSICAL connection. His reflections on the new ELECTRONIC AGE and its influence on human perceptions, his electrifying views on our changing sense-ratio's as caused by electricity and its modern uses in the form of computers, television, tape, satellites, radio, etc., have all been extrapolated on a mostly transcendental plane. Those who "got the message", and understood the GRAMMAR of receiving it from the new "seamless electronic web", had to absorb their comprehension by way of McL's work on a level that consisted entirely of "feel", instinct, intuition, without benefit of their facility for employing linear, sequential, logical, rational approaches as bestowed on them by twenty five hundred years of growing stress on the visual sense, created by phonetics.

Those of us who were smitten by McLuhan's genius, and to a greater extent those who had made it a point of meeting him in person, and hearing him out, have often wondered why he "went thataway", hardly to be heard from again in public

in the last few years. I have this hunch that perhaps he had come to the end of his rope, that there was no more he could say to us in his accustomed Delphic manner, that his ways of playing upon our powers of pattern recognition had assumed too much about the presence of such powers in most of us mortals, thus making it too hard on The Public to break through to a more general understanding of his assumptions. Because "assumptions" they had to remain for a while, for lack of rational, visual means to get his ideas across to the intellectual elite who were, by heredity, peer-indoctrination and force of habit, "hung-up" on the notion that "civilization" can only exist where linear, "logical" thinking has the upper hand, to wit, WESTERN civilisation. And the word "assume" has a bad connotation in Literate Society, witness that cute uttering that "to assume can make an ass of u and me."

And now, almost out of the blue, the McLuhanites have a new stand to hang their hats on! A new way to explain to the doubting Thomases what McL. was trying to emphasize! And it's PHYSICAL, thank God, and we can now build our arguments on LOGICAL, EMPIRICAL, "INTELLECTUAL" grounds, because at the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of California in San Francisco, and at the Ross-Loos Medical Group at U.S.C. men like David Galin, Robert Ornstein and Joseph E. Bogen have been unearthing an increasing body of

medical proof that the human brain has two independently functioning halves: the left half, and I quote: "operating in a linear, sequential mode which underlies language and analytic thought . . . the right hemisphere specialized for a more intuitive mode which grasps the relations between the parts directly, rather than by a sequence of deductions", end of quote.

So there you have it, friends of Big McL: you can now go back to "The Medium Is The Message", to the "Gutenberg Galaxy", and pick out those concepts you found so difficult to explain to your engineer-type friends. Take that word "SENSE RATIO'S", for instance that part where he reasoned that a branch of the human race, the branch that extended into Western Europe, became so infatuated with putting ALL things in a logical sequence that all other ways of perceiving the live-a-day world, the Universe, and Inner Life, became unacceptable to science, with Euclid and Newton leading the way. The inordinate stress on the VISUAL, as brought about by the one-at-a-time-ness of the alphabet, can now be argued to have trained, educated, and even EVOLUTIONIZED the L E F T half of the brain to where the balance between visuality and our other senses have suffered too much from neglect. READING and WRITING and ARITHMETIC, those Demi-Gods of Western Civilisation, have thrown our senses of smell, hearing, and tactility out of balance, and have saddled us

with the perception and consciousness that everything we do and think MUST per se have a beginning and a middle and an end, and preferably a LOGICAL end. Uni-directional causality, fostered by phonetics, got the upper hand. Many phenomena that required PATTERN-recognition and MUTUALLY CAUSAL THINKING PROCESSES became inexplicable and uncomprehensible. "Organic" thinking, "generalized" proceedings, came to be regarded as uncivilized. "Ear Culture", which we now know to be housed in the right half of the brain, came to be looked upon as the stamping grounds of savages and, at best, of Eastern Mystics. Ear culture is too diffused and kaleidoscopic for the bookbrainwashed whose right half of the brain has become too emasculated to discern the cosmos anymore. The ear cannot focus, but the eye can, and a too well developed left half of the brain sets up a consciousness that accepts only that which can be focused upon, e-x-t-e-n-d-e-d. Hence the Viet Nam war with its "light at the end of the tunnel". Hence Mr. Schlesinger's continued belief in the goal-orientation of the Communists. And look, fellahs, what you can do now with the dichotomy of East and West, who were "s'pozed" never to meet! The East, which to this day has largely retained the full function of the right half of the brain, and thus its tactility which, by McL-definition, is the INTERPLAY between the senses, not merely the contact of skin and object. The West, for many long years now embarked upon its path of linearity, overloading the left half of the brain! America,

leaving behind in its own development of left-half-evolution a large segment of its population, and then suddenly Bussin'm in Boston to close the gap!

And what infinite possibilities to tie his "probes" into electronics to the new, physically proven facts of the return of our sense-ratios to more ORGANIC ways of perception! Just read again his chapters on radio, TV, computers, and dig out such gems again as: "The TV image requires each instant that we close the spaces in the mesh by a convulsive SENSUOUS participation that is profoundly TACTILE." So you see tactility is back, "wholeness" is back. To aid the process, we have thirty four million Americans smoking pot in their desperate effort to block out the evolutionary over-development of the left half of their brains, and stimulate the right half. We have Jesus Freaks and Moonies, Guru's and Transcendental Meditation, sex-encounter groups to take us back to tactility and "fusion of the minds", the campuses talking endlessly about "wholeness", "ecology" (which IS wholeness), "finding yourself, "doing your thing" and the entire range of "in" projects, and we even already have a persiflage on hand on all these trends in the "NOW - SOCIETY" of cartoon-fame. And, buddy, when it gets cartooned, it has already moved from cliché to archetype.

Can you remember the McLuhanism about CLASSIFIED WISDOM, taking over from OPERATIONAL wisdom in a literate society? How,

in such a society, everybody who wants to be counted gets overwhelmed by this tremendous urge to CATEGORIZE, ANALYSE, CLASSIFY AND INDEX everything they perceive? And do you recall how Big McL. probed into the workings of our new electronic media to show how all that is changing? Well, all you McL.-Fiends, your proof is now in the pudding. You can relax and show up all those clowns who just shrugged, and turned away from you at cocktail-time, when you started to discuss Topic One the right half of Homo Sapiens' Broken Brain is now getting back into operation. Now, we have important Believers on OUR side, such as Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California, who will do the introductory remarks at a weekend seminar at U.C. Berkeley on the consequences of The Great Brain Robbery, and I'm willing to think (but I have no proof, mind'ya) that he has been using his copy of UNDERSTANDING MEDIA all along, and is coming out in the open, now that all that knowledge and perception has been made respectable by The Boys Who Pay Those Skyhigh Malpractice Premiums.

J.J. Dronkers

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January, 1967.

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director
August 5, 1977

Dr. George Gerbner
Editorial Office
Journal of Communications
University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

I enclose copy of a letter that you may find interesting. Art Hurst and I have been working for fifteen years on this problem, and only recently have we realized that Dyslexia and the loss of motor skills is directly related to TV. TV is a disembodied experience. Being "on the air" is like being "on the phone" -- one has no physical body.

Cordially,

Marshall McLuhan

MM:ms
Encls.

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor's Office
State of California
Sacramento, 95814
California

August 4, 1977

Re: Dyslexia or Learning Disability
within our present-day society

Dear Governor Brown:

The following is a statement prepared jointly by Dr. Marshall McLuhan and W.A. Hurst, O.D.:

Literacy, and abilities associated with it, have deteriorated alarmingly during the past ten to fifteen years. It is no mere coincidence that this has occurred at the same time as increased use of television and other electronic devices. Children today are spending an average of seven or more hours per day in front of TV sets.

In the past, before the electronic revolution, sensory input was followed immediately by motor output, creating a complete unit within the individual, but TV, an all-involving, isolated "sensory only" instrument, dissociates the sensory from motor action, creating "half a man", thus creating the "disembodied electronic man", and leaving the old necessary motor skills withered and useless. Dyslexia, or Learning Disability, is therefore the natural product of confused or non-motor skills.

Examination of a child with Dyslexia shows the typical "Strauss Syndrome":

- (1) Specific learning deficits -- reading, spelling, etc.
- (2) Perceptual motor deficits -- printing, writing, etc.
- (3) Lack of motor coordination
- (4) Hyperkinesis (restless)
- (5) Impulsivity
- (6) Emotional instability
- (7) Short attention span

The overwhelming motor components of the above are quite apparent.

Many studies have shown that Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia) are almost entirely a male characteristic. The same studies have failed to show that the male problem may be caused by the failure to develop, at home, the motor skills which girls automatically develop in female activities (skipping, cooking, grooming, sewing, etc.).

The boys, on the other hand, are directed to large specialist activities in rough sports -- hockey, baseball, football, etc. These lack the fine hand-eye-body coordination necessary for all-round academic efficiency.

In addition to the above, recent studies on the hemispheres of the brain show that the new electronic environment fosters the dominance of the right hemisphere to the detriment of the left, and since the left hemisphere governs motor sequences and the ability to read, a conflict is created, causing Dyslexia. It is interesting to note that where TV is not available, as in Labrador, studies show that Dyslexia is relatively unknown.

To combat the problem requires immediate and drastic measures. We therefore recommend (from "Day One") the following:

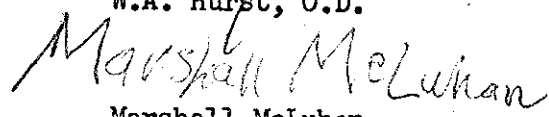
- (1) Curtailment of TV viewing for children.
- (2) In its place, a planned "motor" program, involving multi-sensory motor experiences for the child, graduated according to his age and maturity.
- (3) The motor activities of reading in the future to be anticipated in the home by the use of blackboards. Gross and fine motor training to be done on specific low-cost pieces of equipment.

The auditory motor side can be trained by the use of tape recorders, reading aloud while encouraging the child to participate actively in the program.

We have a great many data concerning all aspects of this Dyslexia problem, which can be supplied. It would be very desirable that further follow-up and explanation be given in regard to these materials. Perhaps you may find it more convenient to have Dr. Hurst visit you in person in order to discuss the matter thoroughly.

Sincerely yours,


W.A. Hurst, O.D.


Marshall McLuhan

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

August 30, 1977

Mr. George Gerbner,
Editorial Office,
Journal of Communication,
The Annenberg School of Communications,
3620 Walnut St.,
University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

I hope you have been having a good summer. The well-nourished aspect of your magazine speaks of a very busy summer.

Over the years, Art Hurst and I have done quite a lot of study of learning disabilities and Dyslexia as they relate to TV viewing. He is an Optometrist who has made many measurements of the "near point" habits of the TV generation. In the Grades, for example, the average distance from the page is 4.6 inches, which automatically ensures monocular vision. Convergence is not possible at that distance, so the student suppresses the action of one eye. Hurst has long been aware that the in-flow of TV imagery does not produce any motor response in the eyes. The TV viewer's eyes are immobilized, hence the soporific effect. Some of these studies have led Hurst to design a stereoscopic head-camera. Existing head-cameras are monocular only, so far as we can find out.

A few years ago Hurst approached an optical manufacturer in Chicago who estimated it would cost \$50,000 to make the head-camera. This head-camera would enable testers to determine almost instantly the degree of dyslexic states from the age of six months upward. Since the child with learning disabilities (they are mainly visual in origin) is the delinquent and "criminal" element in our society, this head-camera would save countless millions of lives and misery. You may have some suggestions about people who would be interested in backing such a project.

Reading some Erle Stanley Gardner recently, I decided to start a kind of Media-log by simply marking the media items as they appear sequentially in the story. In the first line is the phrase "confidential secretary", and shortly opens out into a romantic scene with "the singing of the birds, the blue of the sky, moonlight on water, the sound of the night wind in the trees."

The next item is "a witness", then "a memo", and "their first trip to California". Since Gardner's fiction makes extensive use of urban technology, using the city as a kind of menippean epic or satire of everyday life, he is a very rich mine of material. Much of the charm of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes relates to the manipulation of the urban environment as a collective epic resource. It would be practical to set a graduate student to work up an essay of Media-logs that would compare the performance of different detective story writers. Of course, I have been thinking of similar Media-logs in the work of more conventional novelists and other writers. I have been thinking of English writers only, but European writers would probably offer fascinating subjects also.

Jrs Marshall

P.S. I may not have sent you a copy of my new book City as Classroom. It is primarily for secondary schools but can be accommodated in various ways and at various levels. It uses the city as a "Little Red School House" where everything is taught to everybody. It reverses the Ivan Illich Deschooling idea by putting the questions in the classroom rather than the answers. Shall have a copy sent to you.

University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada M5S 1A1

CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Marshall McLuhan, Director

September 19, 1977

Professor George Gerbner,
Editorial Office
Journal of Communication
The Annenberg School of Communications
3620 Walnut St.
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

Dear George:

For the past fifteen years I have worked with Arthur Hurst, an Optometrist, who has done many studies of what is called "near point", i.e., the average distance of the student's eyes from the printed page. The TV child in the Grades averages 4.6 inches from the page, and this has resulted in monocular vision. Another basic factor is the absence of motor response in the eyes of the TV viewer. The nature of the TV image, which Tony Schwartz points out "uses the eye as an ear" (page 14 of The Responsive Chord, (New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973), is at millisecond speed which leaves no opportunity for eye muscles to focus and converge.

We can send you Hurst's research material, if you wish. He has also worked out a complete set of motor exercises to off-set the TV effect. These discoveries amount to saying that TV is a kind of disease, physiologically considered.

Mrs Marshall

MM:ms

October 4, 1977

Marshall McLuhan, Director
Centre for Culture & Technology
University of Toronto
Toronto, CANADA M5S 1A1

Dear Marshall:

Your new piece on "The Rise and Fall of Nature"
is in print and looks good.

As to the Arthur Hurst material, it seems a
little far out and physiological for our readers,
but I would be glad to read a finished manuscript
of the report of a study, if one is available.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Editor

GG:ab