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Culture or Commerce: On the Liberation of Expression

Virginia Held

It is a measure of the triumph of commercialism in the U.S. that few Americans can even imagine a culture not subservient to commercial interests. This results partly from a failure to recognize that the culture at present is subservient to commercial interests. But even when this reality is understood, no plausible alternative appears possible, so that criticisms of the present structure of cultural production and consumption are dismissed as utopian, or shunned as dangerous.

I shall try to show in this paper that our culture ought to be freed from commercial domination, and that achieving this liberation is a feasible goal.

Commercialism Triumphant

Let me first address the question of whether the culture is now dominated by commercial interests. Many Americans believe that it is not. They share the view that pervades the society: Americans have a very wide choice among cultural offerings; they choose as they wish to choose among these offerings, and the culture that results is the outcome of their preferences. "Consumer sovereignty" operates to bring about a "free culture"; whether we like the culture or not is a separate question. Those who don't like it can criticize it, but they should not "impose" their values on others.

The claim that the culture is subservient to commercial interests seems to these Americans far-fetched, since the culture is so widely thought to be the result of free choices to watch the programs and buy the magazines and read the newspapers that people want to watch and buy and read. Even if commercial interests gain from the sale of cultural products, this is thought of as a relatively incidental by-product of a performer's popularity or a TV program's wide appeal. What gives a producer of a cultural product the capacity to make money on that product is that consumers choose to buy it; what leads broadcasters to offer one program rather than another is that more viewers choose to watch it. So how, this argument holds, can one claim that the culture is *subservient* to commercial interests? Commercial interests, in the cultural sphere as in the market, depend on satisfying consumer tastes.

In dealing with this argument, it may help if we shift our point of

view from consumer to producer. What are the chances of producing cultural products in contemporary U.S. society for other than commercial gain? The popular image is that anyone can produce anything and can try for an audience. If they fail to gain an audience, they have nothing to complain about. But this image is highly unsatisfactory. In a society in which the mass media characterize the culture, we need to speak about the possibilities for the production of mass media products. And then of course it is apparent that the chances for producing culturally and aesthetically valuable but commercially unpromising productions are extremely limited. A talented producer might apply to a foundation for modest support for the filming of a documentary which might eventually be shown on a public TV station with a weak signal; already the producer has probably missed the mass media audience. Or if one is already a highly successful and very rich person, one might take a chance on a new publication designed to offer first-rate articles and stories regardless of the commercial gain the publication could be expected to achieve. But such possibilities are already limited to the already very rich.

The materials of the mass media are broadcasting studios, air time, camera crews, printing presses, etc. They are very expensive. Non-wealthy but talented persons can express themselves in the materials of the mass media only if these materials are available to them. At present in the U.S., these materials will only be available to them if these persons are willing to subordinate their judgments of what is culturally valuable to the commercial aims of those willing to make these materials available. These materials are almost completely unavailable to those not willing to harness their talents to commercial goals.

Consider advertising. Advertising produces more visual images, more cultural sounds and sayings, more employment opportunities for those who create cultural images and values, than any other area of society. Advertising permeates U.S. culture; it is ubiquitous and inescapable. Studies show that the typical consumer in the U.S. is bombarded by 5,000 advertising messages a day, and the number is increasing.¹ Advertising is of course cultural production subordinated to commercial purposes, rather than a source of images and values created for their intrinsic cultural and aesthetic worth.

Many people still think of advertising as providing "information," as in the conceptual model of the sign announcing the services of the village blacksmith. However, the informational content of most contemporary advertising is trivial, and what information there is would be far better presented by an impartial source. Advertisements are hardly even about the objects being sold; rather, they seek to make a potential purchaser desire the object so as to feel attractive or successful or envied. As the critic Raymond Williams says of contemporary advertising, "the short description of the pattern we have is *magic*: a

highly organized and professional system of inducements and satisfactions, functionally very similar to magical systems in simpler societies..."² People should know from many centuries of experience that magic should not be relied on, either as a way of explaining the world or as a way of providing cultural meanings and values. Yet its influence through advertising and the other cultural production it affects appears to be swelling.

Let us look next at the commercialism of television, at its programs as well as its advertisements. Television programming has as its primary goal the building of audiences for commercials. Programs are designed for the sake of the advertisements that precede, interrupt, and conclude them. This is a fact not even in dispute: though many viewers are unaware of the subordination of programming interests to advertising interests, both defenders and critics of the U.S. television industry agree that, as a Carnegie Commission report put it, "commercial broadcasting's entire output is defined by an imperative need to reach mass audiences in order to sell products."³ Another account, by an author approvingly explaining the U.S. system, states that "TV programs are packages for commercials," and "since the primary aim of television is to sell products to a mass market, television must design...programs that hold an audience up to and through a commercial message."⁴ The difference for news programs on television is not substantial. They are intended also to be, first of all, sufficiently entertaining to hold their audiences for the rest of the station's programs and hence advertising.⁵

Let us note how this commercialization of television came about. Herbert Schiller writes:

Radio and television, almost from their inception in the United States were preempted to fulfill the sales objectives of the business community. Though cautioned in the 1920's by Herbert Hoover not to disfigure the exciting potential of the new natural resource that had been discovered, commerce unhesitatingly turned radio into its untiring pitchman. [Then,] against the advice and judgment of those who wanted to experiment carefully with the new medium and to discover its most fruitful capabilities, television prematurely was hurried into the economy by impatient equipment manufacturers and broadcasting networks, eager to sell sets and screen time. To no one's surprise, television followed closely in radio's commercial footsteps.⁶

In the pre-television era, Schiller observes, "the United States stood alone amongst advanced industrialized nations in having its radio broadcasting unabashedly commercial. In no other society did advertisers pay the bill and direct the destinies of the medium so completely."⁷ But by now it is the pattern of commercialism forged in the U.S. which threatens to win out elsewhere around the globe. The idea

that the enormous communications resource that is television should be used to strengthen democracy or promote cultural objectives rather than primarily to serve business interests has come to seem more and more quixotic to most Americans. Schiller concludes that "it is not only a matter of the ubiquitous, jarring commercial. The entire content that illuminates the home screen is fitted to the marketer's order."⁸ As a TV writer he cites lamented in the mid-1960's, "TV is not an art form or a culture channel; it is an advertising medium... [TV shows] are not *supposed* to be any good. They are supposed to make money... 'quality' may be not merely irrelevant but a distraction."⁹ What has happened since is that any large-scale alternative seems more and more unimaginable.

What about audiences? If large numbers of people watch these shows, does this not indicate that they like them? Isn't commercial television giving the public what it wants? Such a view ignores the contest in which popularity with an audience at a given time is taken to be a test of cultural appeal. Audiences in the U.S. have been exposed since early childhood to an average of four to seven hours a day of almost completely commercial television.¹⁰ They have been surrounded since infancy by an almost completely commercialized culture. A commercialized culture seems so natural and inevitable in the U.S. that any alternative seems immediately odd, marginal, and suspect. To find out what audiences "really" prefer, we would need to have for an extended period non-commercial production using the materials of the mass media at levels of technical competence and of expenditure comparable to that of commercial production. Instead of impoverished public stations constantly begging for funds and able to mount only the most modest programs, we would need to have non-commercial producers with resources like those of the commercial networks at their disposal. And viewers would have to have been brought up with a variety of such noncommercial alternatives as readily available as the commercial ones.

Many people suppose that newspapers and magazines are somewhat different from television, that journalistic aims are sometimes foremost and the desire to be commercially successful secondary. Increasingly, any differences there may have been are for most publications narrowing. Newspapers are very profitable businesses; they are increasingly owned and directed by small numbers of huge corporations. Ben Bagdikian writes:

It was in the 1965-1980 period that American mass media, especially newspapers, came under maximum control of national and multinational corporations... Corporate ownership changed the form and content, the strategies of operation, and the economics of newspapers.

Newspapers and other media bought by large corporations as investments come under new pressures for maxi-

mizing profits... In addition, the new corporate ownership hastened the conversion of newspapers to primarily carriers of advertising. Advertisers want affluent readers... Newspapers control their readership by not reporting significantly on neighborhoods of low-income and elderly populations and by promoting their circulation in affluent neighborhoods...¹¹

A former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors who has headed four major newspapers says of the business today that "the profit response to the First Amendment is often much stronger than the journalistic response," in the print as well as in the electronic media. "The underlying purpose," he writes, "is to create an uncritical, permissive buying mood for the benefit of advertisers... The main goal of the news media conglomerates must be mass advertising."¹²

In sum, it seems clear that all the various forms of mass media in the U.S. are subordinated to commercial interests. Within these constraints, excellent TV programs are occasionally produced, some excellent magazine articles do get published, and some excellent reporting does appear in newspapers. But these achievements are reached despite nearly overwhelming commercial domination, not because of it. How could it be denied that with expanded opportunities for cultural expression free of the need to satisfy commercial interests, the talent that obviously exists in U.S. cultural life could flourish admirably, rather than merely shine through the barriers from time to time?

To see how questionable is the ordering of values that puts commerce over culture, consider what it would be like to have education analogously dependent on commercial interests and market outcomes. Some education resembling that available at present in private prep schools and a few private colleges might remain available for the children of the wealthy. A few religious schools might survive. And various types of training would be offered by corporations in whose interest it would be to have employees trained in that way. But the overwhelming bulk of education, elementary, secondary, and higher, would simply disappear. Commercial interests cannot create an educated public; only publicly funded public education can do so. Similarly, commercial interests cannot create a satisfactory culture, yet culture at present is almost entirely left to the mercies of commerce.

Alternatives to Commercialism

The degree of commercialism in the production of culture in the U.S. is sometimes so blatant that some Americans are led to wonder if

commercial interests should be regulated, modified, or otherwise muted. They may argue that children's programs that are no more than program-length dramatized advertisements for toy manufacturers' products are offensive. Or they may think the numbers of minutes of commercials per hour of programming should be reduced. Or they may ask for truth-in-advertising regulations to soften the most obvious and deceitful untruths. But these are minor limitations on an overwhelming domination of culture by business. Alternatives to the latter are almost never discussed or even imagined except among small and marginal groups.

One reason is that the only alternative to business domination that most Americans have heard of is state domination. Culture produced for purposes of political propaganda, through state control of the media and state censorship of free expression, is an alternative made familiar and entirely unacceptable by frequent commentary and reportage on the Soviet Union, the Communist bloc countries of Eastern Europe, China, and various other countries. As between state domination and commercial domination, almost everyone prefers the latter even when they recognize it as domination. Part of the triumph of commercialism in the media is that it has created the widespread belief that the only alternative to commercial control is state control, and almost no one favors that.

Over and over, the pattern of popular discussion of the media in the U.S. has been to focus on relatively minor aspects of commercialism, and to fail to question commercialism itself. Thus there have been periods of concern about a lack of competition among media giants, and occasional proposals for curbing monopoly and encouraging marketplace diversity among media producers.¹³ That the competition should not always be between commercial interests is not discussed. The Federal Communications Commission is charged by law to regulate broadcasting "in the public interest," but this has been interpreted as a permission to regulate the media to serve the economic interests of the industry as a whole. Oliver Wendell Holmes' metaphor of a "marketplace of ideas" as that for which we should strive has monopolized thinking about the media.¹⁴ Unfortunately, that one of ideas in that marketplace should be to take culture out of it almost never arises in public discussions of the media in the U.S.

How unsatisfactory it is to be limited in discussing the media to the alternatives of state control or commercial control can be seen if we draw, again, an analogy between culture and education. In the case of education, we know of systems where the heavy hand of the state controls the education of children and the appointments of professors, and of course we deplore this. And we can imagine a commercial alternative, where education would be available only to those able to pay for it in an educational free market, and professors would be appointed on the basis of their commercial appeal and service to cor-

porate interests. Although education in the U.S. is not as unlike this as it should be, we at least aspire to achieve independence and academic freedom. In the case of education we know that state control or commercial control are not the only alternatives, and that the goal of a satisfactory system of education, especially of higher education, must be to be free from domination by either the state or the marketplace or both. We could strive for similar possibilities for cultural expression and enjoyment.

A Free Culture

What is culture? Anthropologists used to apply the word "culture" to almost everything that occurred in the societies they studied, but more recently some agreement is emerging among those writing about culture that culture is to be distinguished from social structure. Culture is what gives meaning to what occurs. It consists of the symbols and meanings created by humans in societies. It is not the same as the systems of authority and institutions which allocate power and organize economic activity and constitute the social structure. Culture can include the "high culture" of art in museums and of literature read only by the highly educated, as well as the "popular culture" of television, radio and mass magazines. Some argue that the lines between high culture and popular culture are increasingly blurred, but this is a separate issue from that of commercialism vs. non-commercialism, though the two may be causally connected.

I shall discuss cultural freedom in a context such as that of the United States at present, where the mass media are a salient aspect of the culture. The appropriate role of culture, and therefore of the mass media, is as legitimate a question for social philosophy as is the appropriate role of government. It is unfortunate that philosophers have paid relatively little attention to this question. With the development of the mass media and the obviously great influence of the media in shaping society, it seems important for philosophers to deal seriously and in a sustained way with questions about what the aims and practices of culture ought to be.

Perhaps the following general principles could be agreed to by most philosophers: Culture ought to attempt to make sense of human experience, to provide an understanding of the choices possible for humans in given societies, and to promote the flourishing of human expression. Some would hold that culture ought itself to contribute to sustaining or improving moral life, others that this is not specifically the task of culture. In any case, culture needs to provide evaluations and critiques of and proposals for improving a society's existing social structure; it should not merely reflect or reinforce the configurations of power already in place.

If we accept such a view of the goals of culture, we can argue that a

culture dominated by commercial interests fails to contribute as it should to achieving these goals. A culture free to do so would have to be a culture that is not beholden to economic interests as well as not subject to political control. Obviously, the United States at present does not have a free culture in this sense, since the overwhelming preponderance of its cultural production is designed to serve the interests of economic gain. In the U.S. today, culture is commerce.

A culture which is not yet free could strive, and have others strive on its behalf, for independence from outside control, either political or commercial. It could have as its goal to be a culture which would offer genuine possibilities for free expression for everyone. There is no reason to dismiss such a goal as utopian or dangerous. Culture could strive for protection from outside interference by adopting an analogue of the principle of academic freedom, a principle which enables universities in the U.S. to strive to foster independent thought and inquiry. Universities can aim to be open to all on the basis of ability and achievement, rather than wealth. Universities do not have commercial gain as a priority, and not only because, as commerce, they would not be very successful; some might be economically successful if they openly sold their independence to corporate interests. Corporations spend large sums on research, training, the collection and transmission of information. But universities strive for a different kind of research and for education that does not subordinate itself to commercial objectives. At the same time, most universities depend largely or a great deal on public funding, but they resist, with considerable success, political control.

Some critics of U.S. society believe that educational institutions in the U.S., including those of higher education, are highly subservient to capitalistic economic structures, but my argument rests only on comparative judgments. It is clear that universities are more independent of outside control than are the mass media, and that they provide greater opportunity for free thought and non-commercial production. Independence from both state and commercial control is at least an aspiration if not a reality in higher education; it is not even an aspiration in the media, but it could be.

One can imagine efforts in the production of culture, on a much wider scale than any able to subsist at present, aiming at and eventually having comparable independence. For instance, there could be newspapers whose goals really would be to inform and enlighten the public rather than to boost profitability, and there could be television networks that would seek to provide the best entertainment of the highest quality for mass audiences, as well as expanded programs for specialized audiences, all for distinctively cultural rather than commercial values.

Individual Responsibility

Everyone requires social support. The myth of an independent Robinson Crusoe-like individual ignores the reality of what others—including those who care for children — provide. Whatever society does not take from us in the way of life, liberty, and estate, it accords us. And whatever we “earn” in the “marketplace” we only earn because society makes this possible.

Society can enable some persons to gain part or all of their income by producing culture. It could make the possibilities for cultural independence and free expression much more widely available than they are at present. But responsibilities would accompany and often precede opportunities.

We all have social responsibilities, but those engaged in the production of culture have special responsibilities to achieve the aims of culture previously outlined. They ought to put independence of judgment and intellect, independence from control by established power, both economic and political, ahead of other considerations. They ought to put moral and aesthetic considerations ahead of the interests of corporations or states. The primary responsibilities of those who are enabled by the society to produce its culture should be to articulate and to represent the images, norms, goals, values, and standards by which the society ought to be guided. Anyone engaged in the production of culture should be an activist for intellectual independence and for enlarged possibilities for free expression.¹⁵

Of course free expression requires an absence of censorship, as traditionally acknowledged. But an absence of censorship is by no means sufficient for free expression. Free expression requires also the economic and cultural means to express oneself freely. And in a culture where expression is dominated by the mass media, access to expression in and through the media should not depend on already possessing the economic resources to buy such means of expression. To participate in pursuing the appropriate goals of culture, persons should be enabled to participate in cultural expression as they should be enabled to obtain education. The capacity to participate should in neither case be limited to those who have wealth or can successfully please those who control corporate wealth in or out of the media. The standards for participation in the production of mass culture should be independent of economic resources and uses, as the standards for the acquisition of education and participation in the progress of knowledge should be. Of course not everyone can go to Harvard or appear on CBS, but access to both should depend on talent and achievement impartially assessed. And if private institutions are unable or unwilling to be impartial, there should be public institutions that can and will be.

The United States at present by no means assures adequate enabling

rights to education. The children of rich parents are twelve times as likely to get college degrees as the children of poor parents even when the two groups are of equal intelligence,¹⁶ and this is a shocking indication of the lack of equality of opportunity that exists in education. Professional education is even less open to those with economic disadvantages. Nevertheless, the concept of a right to education as an enabling right is clear enough. Almost everyone agrees that education ought to be open on the basis of merit not money, and that a right to education must be a right to have access to education, not merely a right to buy an expensive education if one already has the economic resources. We understand, conceptually, what a right to education ought to include and what ought to be done to assure respect for such rights.

We have no comparable conceptions of enabling rights to cultural expression, but to deal with questions about what culture ought to provide and how persons should act to achieve this, we ought to develop them.¹⁷

Feasible Change

A concrete step that could be taken to increase cultural freedom would be vastly increased public funding of public broadcasting and of cultural production of many kinds. The forms of cultural production that would thus be encouraged should be different for different audiences. They should range from the most popular and least intellectually demanding entertainment to the most developed forms of high art and specialized creativity. But all such forms should be enabled to be guided by cultural and aesthetic standards and goals, not the standards and goals of economic gain and commercial success.

There has recently been some discussion over whether public television should offer programming for small, specialized audiences, or whether it should strive to reach mass audiences.¹⁸ This debate is as tragic as other debates that see slightly different forms of commercialism as the only alternatives for the bulk of media production. Why should there not be both kinds of public television? Why shouldn't public television be supported at a level that would enable it to offer many kinds of programming? Why should there not be in every community several public channels for different types of audiences, all of them non-commercial?

In the 19th century we developed a massive scheme of public education so that education would no longer be completely dependent on the possession of private wealth. Gradually, access to even higher education has been opened to more persons and has become less a privilege of the rich. Private schools and colleges were not replaced, but a wide range of alternatives were developed. A comparable development of large-scale publicly supported possibilities for cultural

expression would enable us to progress toward having a free culture.

As academic freedom protects relatively well the independence of those supported by universities, so a comparable standard of freedom from outside control could be demanded of those who work in other areas of cultural expression.¹⁹ And there could be institutional arrangements supporting cultural independence so that the preconditions for such independence are not limited to those who happen to have them from such accidental and unrelated occurrences as that their parents left them a fortune or they have amassed a large amount of wealth from trading in securities or conducting a real-estate business.

In an advanced society, all persons should be enabled to express themselves in their spare time. But those whom society enables to earn a living in cultural production have special responsibilities to promote the independence of culture and to try to bring it about that a given work contributes to what a culture ought to do.

Problems Confronted

Alasdair MacIntyre has said that my position requires me to suppose that the producers of culture can be "purely external critics," that they can devise and justify conclusions concerning genuine moral worth independently of any appeal to *de facto* beliefs, conventions, and institutions.²⁰ I do not think my suggestions require this. We can look at historical examples of the kind of relative independence I am advocating, as science has liberated itself from religious control, and as art struggles often for freedom from political control.

I am not imagining that those who shape culture can be fully independent, especially of the beliefs of their times. But they can be more independent, or less independent, of the power that is dominant at any given time in a given society. And greater independence from existing configurations of power is conducive to improved beliefs and more satisfactory cultural expression. I am advocating more independence for cultural expression than most of those engaged in such expression in our society now have or even aspire to. And I am arguing for such independence for more persons.

I am sometimes accused of being ahistorical. However, my discussion here is focused on a given time and place: the United States at the present time. And I offer the kind of comparative judgments my non-ahistorical colleagues often recommend concerning other beliefs and attitudes. I make comparisons between the production of culture and of knowledge in our society, and I suggest improvements in the former so that in terms of independence from outside control it more nearly resembles the latter. Clearly, we can compare the intellectual independence that people protected by academic freedom can exercise with the much more limited intellectual independence of most others who shape the culture in our society. And surely we can recommend

concrete steps to help liberate the culture from the grip of commercial control.

It is important not to exaggerate the degree of independence of universities in American society, and not to minimize the damaging aspects of elitism and professionalism. I am only asserting that universities offer relatively larger pockets of independence from what some critics think of as the cultural hegemony of capitalism than do the mass media as now constituted. To enable those working in the media and producing media culture to catch up to the degree of independence possible for those in academic life would be progress.

In my recent book *Rights and Goods* I argue for different moral approaches for different social contexts, that is, for a division of moral labor. I think we can show that different social roles ought to be guided by different moral considerations, and the book attempts to specify some norms and values appropriate for various social roles.

Sometimes the producers of culture ought to support and strengthen existing standards against tendencies toward disregard of them and toward the weakening of their requirements. But given the dangerous irrationality, the injustice and cruelty, of existing societies, the producers of culture ought especially to demand improvements soon in their structures. The clearest distinction that needs to be maintained is that between power, including economic power, and aesthetic and moral value, and we ought to decide what has aesthetic and moral value from positions as independent as possible from such power.

Ultimately, if we could get outside history, there might be no need for role moralities. We could perhaps then have one total scheme of recommendations showing how everything should fit together. But we cannot transcend history, and from where we are here and now, we do better, in my view, to develop different norms for different roles. A unified moral field theory for anything anyone should do anywhere is a postponable goal. In the meantime, those who produce culture have an obligation, I think, to do what MacIntyre suggests is possible: to show the incoherences and failures of previous theory, to hasten the development and acceptance of the "best theory to emerge so far." But theories do not simply "emerge" all by themselves, and these arguments are valid for other concerns than those of "theory." Persons create cultural images and influences concerning what has value and what does not, and other persons accept or resist them. I am suggesting that persons will do better to do so from positions that are independent from existing structures of power, including economic power, rather than from positions beholden to them.

The society now expends vast amounts of its resources on the images and programs and cultural productions that are advantageous to commercial interests. It is a very rich though subservient culture. The society could redirect some of the sums it spends on commercial

culture toward the production of cultural expression free of commercial domination. This would allow for the development of a much more satisfactory array of choices for the consumers of culture than is now available, where the choices are virtually all between commercial products.

The airwaves of the U.S. have been given away for commercial development. The society could regain them, or some of them, for use in the interest of public benefit and enjoyment rather than of corporate profit. It could at least tax the enormous profits of broadcasters to raise money for public programming. And it could end its tax subsidies for advertising and for corporate cultural expenditures, directing such sums instead toward independent cultural production and consumption.

MacIntyre relies heavily on "our traditions," and our "shared beliefs."²¹ I find in our traditions, including the "rational" traditions invoked by MacIntyre, highly conflicting tendencies and many aspects which ought to be rejected. If we put aside the visual metaphors deemed to be distorting,²² we can still recognize in our traditions: war, exploitation, racism, patriarchy. These are not traditions to which we should be loyal, and there is no escape from the responsibility of deciding which of the beliefs and practices of the society in which we find ourselves we ought to share, and which we ought to try to change. Cultural consideration of alternative images and values is an essential part of the process.²³ And a culture liberated from commercial control as well as from religious and political control could contribute greatly. A society permeated by the media, which some are beginning to call a "media society,"²⁴ could then, perhaps, in turn be transformed by a liberated culture.

Notes

- ¹ "Ad Clutter: Even in Restrooms Now," *New York Times*, Feb. 18, 1988, p. D1. For further discussion, see Virginia Held, "Advertising and Program Content," *Business and Professional Ethics Journal* Vol. 3, Nos. 3 & 4 (Spring/Summer 1984) 61-76.
- ² Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980) p. 184.
- ³ *A Public Trust. The Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting* (New York: Bantam, 1979) p. 10.
- ⁴ Robert O. Snow, *Creating Media Culture* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1983) pp. 127 and 147. See also Les Brown, *Television. The Business Behind the Box* (New York: Harcourt, 1971) esp. pp. 15-16.

- ⁵ See William A. Henry III, "News as Entertainment: The Search for Dramatic Unity," and Edward Jay Epstein, "The Selection of Reality," in *What's News: The Media in American Society*, ed. Elie Abel (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1981)
- ⁶ Herbert I. Schiller, *Mass Communications and American Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969) pp. 93-94. See also "Television Network Procurement," Report of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 88th Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 281, March 3, 1963. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963) p. 49 and footnote 9.
- ⁷ Schiller, *Op. cit.*, p. 94.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- ⁹ Daniel Karp, "TV Shows Are Not Supposed to Be Good," *The New York Times Magazine*, January 23, 1966.
- ¹⁰ "In the fifties, American households averaged four hours of television viewing a day; by the eighties it was seven hours." Donald Lazere, Introduction, in *American Media and Mass Culture. Left Perspectives*, ed. Donald Lazere (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987) p. 9.
- ¹¹ Ben Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983) p. 201.
- ¹² J. Edward Murray, "Quality News Versus Junk News," *Nieman Reports*, XXX-VIII, 2, Summer 1984, pp. 14-19.
- ¹³ See e.g. Thomas Streeter, "Policy discourse and broadcast practice: The FCC, the U.S. broadcast networks and the discourse of the marketplace," *Media, Culture, and Society*, 1983, 5, p. 255.
- ¹⁴ See *Abrams v. United States*, 250 U.S. 616, 630 (1919).
- ¹⁵ For further discussion, see Virginia Held, "The Independence of Intellectuals," *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXX, 10 (Oct., 1983) 572-582; and Virginia Held, *Rights and Goods. Justifying Social Action* (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1984) especially Chapter 12.
- ¹⁶ Richard DeLone, *Small Futures* (New York: Harcourt, 1979) p. 3.
- ¹⁷ For further discussion see Virginia Held, "Access, Enablement, and The First Amendment," in *Philosophical Foundations of the Constitution*, ed. by Diana Meyers and Kenneth Kipnis (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988).
- ¹⁸ See John J. O'Connor, "Talking Heads and the Public-TV Pickle," *New York Times*, Section 2, p. 25, Feb. 14, 1988.
- ¹⁹ Educational institutions are sometimes thought of as part of the culture of a society and sometimes as part of its social structure. One could say the same about the advertising and broadcasting and newspaper industries in the U.S. at present. What culture there is that is not a function of the social structure is often marginal. But my argument does not depend on such classificatory issues.

- 20 Alasdair MacIntyre. "Moral Arguments and Social Contexts." *Journal of Philosophy*. LXXX. No. 10 (Oct. 1983) p. 590.
- 21 Ibid. See also Alasdair MacIntyre. *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).
- 22 See especially Richard Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979).
- 23 One of the best collections for beginning to think about these issues is Donald Lazere, ed. *American Media and Mass Culture*.
- 24 See Everette E. Dennis. *The Media Society. Evidence About Mass Communication in America* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1978).