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Contents

EDITORIAL: IN WHOSE INTERESTS?	Inside Front Cover
ARCHITECTURE, VIDEO, TELEPATHY	1
Juan Downey, Video Artist, New York	
WORLD INFORMATION ORDER	4
Tapio Varis, Academy of Finland	
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRENDS	7
CTRC, University of Wisconsin-Madison	
CHILDMADE TV AT SECONDARY LEVEL	9
Roger Stephens and Bob Ferguson, London University	
THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY VIDEO IN SCOTLAND	11
Richard Reynish, Dumbarton	
VIDEO ARTS RESEARCH AT TATE GALLERY	12
Valerie Livingston, University of S. Florida	
IAMCR 10TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY	14
Selected Papers presented to Working Parties	
Letter from Professor Riegel	
REVIEWS	16
LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS	20-36
Abstracts and Listings Oct 76-Mar 77 including:	
Annual Reports and Descriptive Documents; Broadcasting and	
Cable; Catalogues (Software); Catalogues (Print); Commercial	
Products and Services (Video and TV); Communication (General);	
Courses; Cybernetics; Electronics and TV Technology; Laser	
Holography; Libraries; Mass Communication Research;	
Telecommunications; Teaching and Training; Video; Miscellaneous;	
Periodicals; Corrections and Late Additions.	

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Editorial: In Whose Interest?

One of the more bizarre episodes in the psychopathology of government concerns frequency allocation of the electromagnetic spectrum in the UK. In January 1977, the Home Secretary invited the public to submit comments for consideration by the government's delegation to the 1979 international World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC-79). At WARC-79 frequency allocations worldwide will be made for the following 15 years. On behalf of the newly-formed citizens media access pressure group, Community Communications (COM-COM, c/o Richard Dunn, 30 Golden Square, London W1), we wrote to the Home Office asking for information on present and proposed non-broadcast users of parts of the spectrum allocated for UK broadcasting.

"I am not able to provide the detailed information you ask for . . . without access to information not authorised for disclosure" replied the theatrical Home Office Radio Regulatory Department. Not content with stealing parts of the spectrum formally allocated for public broadcasting, the government invokes the Official Secrets Act to protect its crime, while brainwashed civil servants shovel classified rubbish from one file to another, on taxpayers' money. In whose interest? The public interest would be better served by removing broadcasting from the Home Office to a separate communications authority whose proceedings are carried out in public, protected by a Freedom of Information Act.

First task of COM-COM is to comment on the Annan Report on the Future of Broadcasting (whose 174 recommendations are reprinted in full in *Video Work No 2* - see listings). In the period 1977-79, COM-COM will press for many more access experiments, including local community broadcasting. It is vital that these experiments be allowed to happen and be given adequate support by a wide variety of funding agencies. There are no technical reasons why local community broadcasting could not begin immediately. The fourth TV channel - one quarter of allocated channel space - will be unused for the next two years as it has been for the last 25. It could be used in 1977-79 for experimentation, particularly at low transmitter powers. Only the pathological grip of the Home Office on the spectrum holds shut the door to access.

Fantasy Factory's research report to the Arts Council on the Future of Video Distribution is now completed. It proposes the setting up of a centralised video dubbing facility and of artist-in-residence schemes at TV stations, cable access stations and video resource centres. The next main project, a portapak-based video production training course for UNESCO, will be completed in October 1977.

Articles held over for next issue: Groniusstadt · Swindon Viewpoint

Architecture, Video, Telepathy

A COMMUNICATIONS UTOPIA

by Juan Downey, video artist, New York, USA.

The history of humanity is a series of frustrated utopias, the recurrent failure to meet pre-established desirable standards. If no utopia had been formulated, no frustration would have occurred — but also no growth.

I dream of a future environment that harmonises the act of perceiving with the self's projection onto the culture. On that field where both overlap we find nature radiating the presence of a consciousness, and conversely the culture/the artificial producing an environment of codified icons.

The crystal edifice on that frontier
... Architecture itself.

The artificial is a synthesis from a wide array of nature. A traditional form of mass media communications is Architecture: highly organised collective information. **Architecture provides both a shelter and an invasion** A shell of psycho-physical benefits and an invasion of poetry where the individual's conscience debates itself within public notions.

Architecture provides an illusory membrane, a common place of many tensions and conforms itself according to each being's active role in social progress.

This information surface is an exchange of inner/outer fantasies, mysteries, reflections. Perception is here understood as reciprocated activity between human and culture, the same as the eye is an offspring of the mind rather than an independent detector sending signals to a main programme: the brain.

A human home is a breathing globe conformed by the lively superimposition of interior/exterior imagery. Erotic survival is relative to the control of that zone of aesthetic sparks!

Artificial and Natural Circumstances will Liberate Information from the Confining Boundaries of the TV Box

The physical essence of the video phenomenon is electromagnetic. The transformation of radiant energy into a flow of electrons and back again to visible electromagnetic waves is due to the Photoelectric Effect. Light as it strikes certain metals chips particles off into a river of electricity.

With the exception of Gravity, the whole of the Universe shares its electromagnetic nature with Video and with Thought. The process of thinking, regardless of its artificiality (computers) or naturalness (brains) is also electromagnetic signals. This commonly shared physical nature of the human intelligence, the electromagnetic spectrum, computers, and video, is a promise of beneficial symbiosis. Along with a thimbleful of fear is the open horizon of hope for computer/video exchanges with brain/nature energy circuits.

The rate at which electromagnetic technologies have developed only prefaces the rapid genetic changes in brain evolution. Humanity's survival is relative to a change with-

inflicts upon itself is a new being with a reshaped intelligence resulting from electromagnetic connectiveness, possible today by a magnetic-energy technology of decreasing physical appearance.

I foresee a direct and free exchange of information more similar to the exercise of telepathy than to the cumbersome TV box.

Exchange of Information

Even class struggle is present in concepts such as Feedback or the ability of an organism to remain in growth toward a predetermined goal. The life of any system is fed by its capacity for self-observation and by its continual reshaping according to a pre-established and desirable model.

Self-comparison to previous collective aspirations and reconfiguration to meet the expected standards should be work open to all members of society.

The control of the mirror and the power of rerouting should not be in the hands of the few but in those who self-examine and retrack: information workers.

Cybernetics is a call for social change: a revolution within the detection, processing and dispersal of information.

I am calling for an Information Revolution.

I aspire to a society with strong communications networks of multi-directional potentials as opposed to our present-day pyramidal oppressive hierarchy that misinforms the base in order to remain at the apex.

I call for a diversity of signal in multi-directional networks!

Media's Highest Form is Architecture: A Matter of Environmental Mass Communications: Public Art

Till the advent of radio and film, Architecture was the highest form of mass media communications, if we consider Publicness the ultimate value for any medium. Publicness understood as number of receivers reached by the signal and purity of the message as received.

Although the nature of the code, the emitter's ability to code and the receiver's to decode are to be evaluated when considering any medium, its efficiency lies in its reach both in space and in time.

Quality of signal conveyed and absence of noise woven into it account for the efficiency of the emitter, but reception is also dependent upon the circumstances it travelled through.

Unlike other media, Architecture attempts to reshape the environment at large. Other media are conformed by the circumstances they travel through. Architecture floods the environment with a signal that reconfigures that same environment and even preconditions our perception of the message. Unlike other media, in Architecture the message is omnipresent.

myths. Certain structures have remained through the centuries conveying and conveying, like a lighthouse gleaming in the loneliness of the ocean — its message unheard, perhaps misunderstood.

It is not this particular meaning or that specific symbol that we are invited to decipher; when experiencing Architecture we swim through the message.

The medium of Architecture, besides housing practical functions, conveys with visible signals the consciousness of a culture.

The TV box stands between us and the imagery bombardment, as a view from a bay-window is removed from the lively, foaming, regenerative exchanges of the constant ocean. The videotape object markets itself as a Zen paradox. The aspiration of Permanence for videotapes is in itself the Kiss of Death: frozen information, fragmented flow.

Video Recycles Itself into Culture: Impermanent Architecture into Nature

According to a Hopi tradition, it is the ultimate for a culture not to build! The Hopi despise the pyramid builders of Mexico and Central America, whose antecedents they claim to be.

Notable among the cultures of the Altiplano (a fertile high plateau on the Andes where the Aymara and Quechua languages copulate) are the Uros, builders of papyrus islands, papyrus housing and papyrus transportation: a non-pollutant environment, 99% made of these wild floating green blades, native to Lake Titicaca.

These reeds, having long stems, round-triangle in section, shield behind an almost waterproof glossy skin a number of air chambers which are responsible for the flotation of the material. The papyrus decomposes and gradually the whole of the man-made is re-absorbed into the lake. The Uros move approximately every five years to a new island. Thus, they build for Nature to unbuild. Their culture is woven cyclically to natural phenomena.

The Inca Empire stemmed from the Uros culture and was shredded by the gold-lust Conquistadores. The Incas were Super-Architects and Great Regional Planners. Their deep ecological knowledge included the mastery of wall over earthquake. Aware of the undercurrents of the Andes, sophisticated stonecarvers built and redistributed the soil in intelligent agriculture.

The Hopis are to the Mayans and the Aztecs what the Uros are to the Incas. Cultures of Impermanent Architecture gave birth to cultures of Permanent Architecture.

Thus we find among the cultures of the Americas two opposite attitudes toward the environment. The one aspires to dependence on Nature (God) and manifests this ongoing mysticism in an Impermanent Architecture. Both the Hopis from the Southwest and the Uros from Lake Titicaca represent, in unique manners, this trend reminiscent of eastern philosophies. The second attitude (Permanent Architecture) wants to inscribe in long-lasting materials (stone) what the culture knows: religion, mathematics, astronomy; it is typified by the Mayans and the Incas, both producers of grain and impeccable buildings. Stone stands upon stone, for what purpose?

It is a popular myth that the Mayan society was overwhelmed by the number of grain crops the Yucatan Peninsula produced yearly. The lack of hardship in satisfying the basic needs allowed a lot of free time to

them to build pyramids for mixed economic/aesthetic/mystic/political reasons. This form of non-functional work is not unfamiliar to economic historians: a social therapy against any possibility of mass reform.

Another explanation says: the Mayans built to stop the jungle's constant growth from devouring the recently conquered agricultural fields. Thus Architecture fragmented vegetation. For this reason, perhaps, the Hopis and the Uros rejected Permanence and produced an Architecture deeply woven into natural cycles!

A Generalised Cathode Ray Tube

It is time now to link the two seemingly distant entities of a building and of information dispersal. I propose an organism of the two in a generalised cathode ray tube within which we travel like electrons.

Due to its fully electromagnetic fibre the future is artificially natural. An aspiration to a man-made and natural harmony expressed in a media environment. An enjoyable landscape where each plant talks about a higher order of proportions, numbers, energy, through each one of its petals.

The Universe is a magnetic field with a variety of emitters projecting icons about space-time that randomly gain or lose placement among the imagery of today's live culture. Certainly most important among this imagery is the fact that the human condition is still the one of misery, repression, torture, famine, treason.

Strengthened Communication Networks Pre-empt the Need for Transportation. Minds like Electron Guns Modulating Flows of Brain Signals.

Electromagnetic energy is a modulated stream of wave-material. This radiant nature is commonly shared by thoughts, artificial intelligence, video, and it accounts for the life itself of the Universe we inhabit.

If we achieve the right entrance into the wave (to paraphrase Kubler), we can conceive of telepathy, teleportation, and even of teleroticism: libidos acting at a distance, a collective tantric sex, a fusion of lights.

Teleportation seemingly resolves the dilemma between communication and transportation grids, both traditionally controlled by imperial greed. These paths of goods should be woven into an independentist decentralising order giving birth to a global nervous system to accommodate the diverse.

The Bluish Glow of the Radiant Screen

During the thirties General Motors manoeuvred to dismantle the Los Angeles electrified mass-transit system. The need for motorised vehicles was manufactured by large corporate business: cars + buses + oil + tyres. These corporations realised that for business to grow, branches and roots into the culture are required. Hollywood thus projected a motorised paradise where the most intense passions occurred within the intimacy of a wheeled roaring capsule. For anyone of my generation, even falling in love was preconditioned by the existence, quality, and quantity of vehicles involved. With similar impact, the bluish glow of the radiant TV screen has re-arranged the contemporary home. The immaterial nucleus of today's living room is a source of images and sounds. It is light itself that preconditions human behaviour and its effect upon the environment.

It is from a box plugged to the wall that our environment

of light is today's opiate mystification. Buildings with thousand-window facades, where each window frames the light rectangle of a TV set. A high-rise of glowing tubes!

Furniture, gadgets, buildings are low in a hierarchy where growth is the ultimate. TV has committed a treason to its own energy nature by advocating a myth of objects and their transportation while paying lip service to the widening of human perception.

Teilhard de Chardin coined the term **Socialism of the Mind as a concretisation of the Mystical Body of Christ**, a dogma of the Church: an integration of the individual with the collective great. A self-motivated realisation of what group brain activity can become as symbiotic force.

Socialism of the Mind: A Technology of Brain Waves

The life of President Salvador Allende is spotted by imperfections along the luminous path of his beliefs and their implementation. Somehow his death makes him rare among politicians. Somehow his death gives life.

The Need of Polarities

Having asserted firmly the ideas developed in the above paragraphs and pages, now I have doubts:

How do you suppose such a technological grand-leap will happen, along with the necessary evolution? How will a humanity submerged in misery be able to shape up to the physical and psychological requirements to achieve teleportation?

What prevents this esoteric building from becoming an absurdity?

Is there an underlying incongruous rebellion that prevents my proposition from becoming a stale frame of mind?

I envision glowing arteries branching out and intersecting each other in radiant nodes, parallel to the existence of an underlying abyss. The aesthetic enjoyment sparks exclusively where its field of exchange is rezoned. It is upon the moving border between the neurally detected and the yet to be perceived that life bursts.

Order does not sustain its grid unless there is disorder continually attempting to burst out of sheer vitality. There is a need for the sudden passion that redesigns the system. In Hindu philosophy the *neti-neti* pattern stands for the simultaneous existence of converse realities.

It is within our European culture that any of two opposites can survive only by the extermination or partial repression of the other. The vitality of a force is strengthened by the weakening of its complementary. Since my childhood I have had a silent admiration for aspects of the German culture. Jung's fear of the occult is only comparable to Mann's in *Doctor Faustus*. The white existence of good hopefully surmounts the black pit of evil.

In electricity the difference of potential in two locations accounts for the motion of electrons. For the above proposed information/energy exchange to occur there is a need for polarities. Meaning exclusively enlightens areas where its message is unknown. Knowledge explores the obscure. To inform then is to generate doubt. The aesthetic experience places us face to face with mystery in process of resolution. It is the nature of art to bring us to grips with the yet undefined.

Messages flow through differences of potential knowledge:

Human/Home

The presence of interior and exterior myths is the Ideal Home:

the harmonious screen upon which both culture and the self project simultaneously by deviating adversities.

Thus a shelter

is a field

of neural exchange

where a radiating self pushes against exterior cultural presences.

This exchange of symbols is endlessly reshaping

the field, the screen, the shelter,

that curvilinear pulsing surface

where the imagery of the self,

faces and superimposes

the cultural icons of the circumstance.

World Information Order

BLOW-BY-BLOW ACCOUNT OF THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL DEBATE

by TAPIO VARIS, National Research Council for Social Sciences, Academy of Finland.

Every second year world communication researchers meet in their International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) World Conference. One of the many interesting views presented in Leipzig 1974 was that world information structure does not properly reflect the world economic structure. Some evidence was given to the economic relations between the Socialist countries and Western countries and to the imbalance of information flows between them. In the last IAMCR meeting in Leicester, September 1976, some of the discussions centered around the new information order. This concept has emerged in accordance with the actions towards a new economic order. In this global approach the main emphasis is in the role of the underdeveloped countries in the world information system. This is already recognized as a problem at the political level.

Colombo and New Delhi Conferences

The Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Colombo August 1976, welcomed and endorsed the Declarations and the decisions of the New Delhi Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned countries as "an important step towards further cooperation among Non-Aligned countries in establishing a balanced and equitable distribution of news and infor-

other things that "the present global information flows are marked by a serious inadequacy and imbalance. The means of communicating information are concentrated in a few countries. The great majority of countries are reduced to being passive recipients of information which is disseminated from a few centres . . ."

The problem is quite obvious. Not only is the world

