

Globalization and Culture
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Lecture – 02
Global Flows and New Media and Technologies

One single factor which has been the most enabling in terms of a globalization is the new media and technologies. If you think of what are the causes of globalization and how the new global process differs from the earlier waves of globalization, the one factor that has caused this is the emergence of the improvement in communication and in a transport, transportation technologies and the emergence of the new media. What is different in this present wave of globalization and is the speed and the ease with which communication takes place across long distances. And the reason why we call it long distance connectedness is because of the amazing speed and ease with which we are able to not only travel, but also communicate across large distances.

So, once again like we did in the case of a nation and other aspects of globalization; before we understand the impact of new technologies and globalization lets one just try to understand how technologies begin and how technologies work and two let us look at some of the major theories of the media to see what they think about technologies and the electronic media.

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Technological determinism

- Technological determinism is predicated on the idea that any shift in technology brings about corresponding transformations in society, knowledge and the self.

We will begin with the idea of technological determinism or technological determinism which is a contested idea. Some people some theories do not quite agree of the mechanical theory of technological determinism which they think is very otherwise shown and which is very limited. But let us for the sake of a working definition borrow this theory which means the techno determinism means that it is predicated on the idea that any shift in technology brings about corresponding transformations in society knowledge and the self.

So, whenever we switch from an old technology to a new technology it brings about not just technological transformation. So, in other words just an improvement in the means of communication does not mean, does not mean that we will be able to communicate with greater speed and efficiency; but it also means complete transformation of the self, of the community and also the way we constitute knowledge. So, this begins with the idea of writing itself as a technology.

The first phase shift we see in the movement of technologies is the shift from speaking to writing, the invention of script and the shift from speaking to writing which was considered a very major phase shift in the history of the world in the sense to the extent that it completely transformed the consciousness of the world. It not only transformed the consciousness of human beings to the extent that the idea of individuality or the rational subject of, the autonomous rational subject of rationality is believed to have been emerged with the invention of writing which is very different from the psychodynamics of orality.

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Walter J Ong

- Although it has been critiqued for its simplified polarities, Walter J Ong's book *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the World* is a seminal study that drew heavily on the work of Eric A Havelock to throw light on the extent to which technologies determine human existence.


So, what happened when we moved over from speech to writing? what happened was a complete transformation not only in the idea of the self, but also in the idea of society and also the way we constitute knowledge. There is a myth about a about a god, about about a mythical king who when he came to know about the invention of writing, about the introduction of writing expressed his misgivings by saying that writing would; he banned writing from his kingdom because he felt that writing would take away the real power peoples memory and they would have only false memory. Plato mentions this story to express his own fears of writing and the changes that would be brought about by writing, by the introduction of writing. A similar fear of writing exists in oral cultures which have not which have not switched over to writing in certain spears of life because speaking is supposed to possess certain special powers which are destroyed by the invention of writing.

In the most and the best-known work on the shift from write to speech to writing is that of the priest of Walter J Ong. His book *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the World* is a seminal study that drew heavily on the work of Eric A Havelock to throw light on the extent to which technologies determine human existence. Now Ong says, Ongs is a phase shift from orality to literacy and he says that it completely transforms society, culture and human consciousness.

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Orality to Literacy

- Phase shift from orality to literacy transformed society, culture and human consciousness
- Primary oral culture with those characterized by literacy on the basis of their dominant mode of communication.
- Arguing that "sight isolates, sound incorporates", he viewed writing as a technology that transforms consciousness through increasing interiority and individuation(1967)
- Primary and Secondary Orality



Primary oral culture he defines as those which were characterized by literacy on the basis of their dominant mode of communication. Arguing that sight isolates, sound incorporates he viewed writing as a technology that transforms consciousness through increasing interiority and individuation. Ong makes made a distinction between primary and secondary all orality because his books stops with writing and he does not take into account electronic technologies, but he does gesture to it, allure to it briefly by making a distinction between primary and secondary orality. Secondary orality is orality which is produced by the electronic media and which he thinks is quite different from primary orality which is the orality of people who are not literate whereas secondary orality is already contaminated by literacy.

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Technology, Self and Community

- Print technology, newspaper, autonomous rational self, nation
- Information technology, new media, subject as non-unitary, imaginary community
- Deterritorialisation
- Diasporic Public Sphere
- New Imaginings of Self and Community




So, the beginning of the transformation that electronic media could possibly have in the lives of people was first suggested in Ong's book in the mention of secondary orality. And then we move on to Anderson's idea of the nation and how print technology, the invention of printing technology, the birth of newspapers and write led to the development of the autonomous rational self of modernity; you know so to the birth of the nation. Similarly, when we look at the new information technology we see a similar phase shift in the in the history of the, in the history of technologies and the history of the world; with new information technology, new media, the idea of the subject as non-unitary the idea of the community the imagining of the community as different form, the earlier communities that is already being debated over the last three or four decades.

The these technologies have led to deterritorialisation and they have led to the production or the emergence of a diasporic public sphere and led to, ultimately led to new imaginings of self and community.

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The Frankfurt School

- Adorno adopted an elitist stance in holding the mass media culpable of diluting and undermining the values enshrined in high culture
- Horkheimer decried them for depriving individuals of autonomous action and for spreading and legitimating dominant ideology
- Lazarsfeld - "narcotizing dysfunction" of the mass media such as film, the soap opera, and the variety show
- Pessimistic view of the media as a threat to the democratic process and elite cultural institutions still continue to govern objections to the mass media
- Has dominated modernist understandings of the mass media
- Critique of the effects of mass media derived from these theorists



Let me now quickly summarize for you the ideas of some of the major theories of media. And the reason why I am introducing you to these major theories is that when later we look at culture and we look at the emergence of certain cultures in the era of globalization we would see that many of the findings or many of the formulations or propositions made by these theories are undone or disproved either emergence of new media and technology in the new global world.

So, we begin with the Frankfurt school which consisted of a number of a theorists who are not who did not have; who were quite different from one another, but they all clubbed together under the name Frankfurt school. And one of the leading theorists in the school was Adorno who adopted an elitist stance in holding the mass media capable of diluting and undermining the values enshrined in high culture. So, the Frankfurt school was essentially opposed to the mass media and it was writing mainly during the first broadcast era with the emergence of, in relation to the mass media of newspapers mainly the radio and also film, but later television.

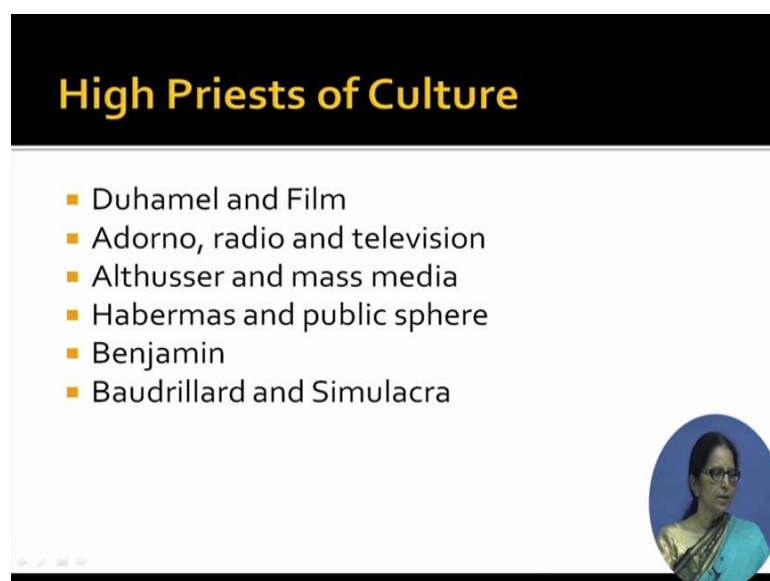
So, the fears of this Frankfurt theorists was that culture which would now be the possibility of circulation would make high culture easily available to the masses; the common masses who did not have the power to discriminate between good high and low culture, between good art and low art. And that would a lead to the dilution of high culture and two it would deprive undermine the values and shrine it high cultured. So, it

was a very a elitist kind of a opposition to the circulation of a culture to the mass media. And we would find later that even though the Frankfurt school theories have been questioned and discredited by the new theories of media, if some of them is giving about the mass media still hold even in the era of globalization.

So, Horkheimer decried them that is the mass media for depriving individuals of autonomous action and for spreading and legitimating dominant ideology. This is, this is an aspect of mass media or of the media which is very, very pertinent even at the state. Because media which was the fear of Frankfurt school theories, was feared to propagate was feared to become an instrument in the in the hands of dominant groups and become an instrument in the propagation of dominant ideologies.


Lazarsfeld who talked about the narcotizing dysfunction of the mass media such as the film, the soap opera and the variety show is a, is a is echoed in incomplete statements about the media particularly television reducing human beings to passive consumers to couch potatoes and losing the ability to think clearly, losing the ability to discriminate between the good and the bad. So, this pessimistic view of the media as a threat to the democratic process and lead cultural institutions still continued to govern objections to the mass media. And this view has dominated modernistic understandings of the mass media.

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High Priests of Culture

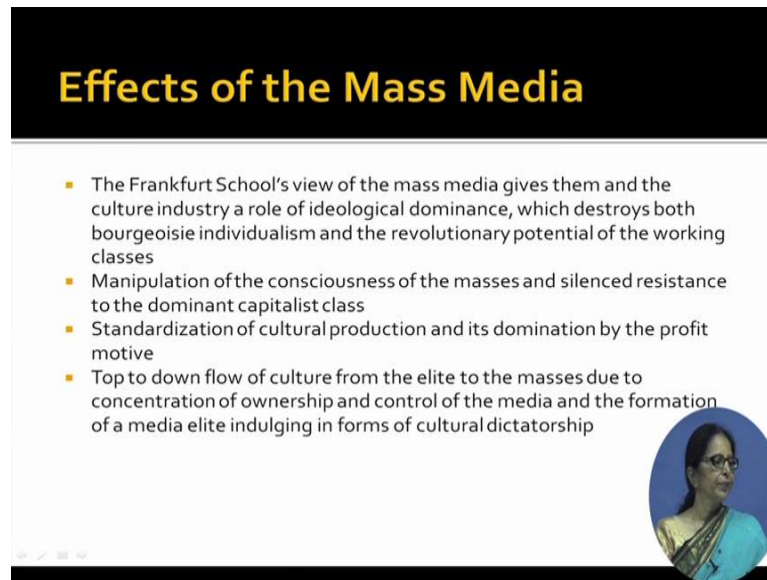
- Duhamel and Film
- Adorno, radio and television
- Althusser and mass media
- Habermas and public sphere
- Benjamin
- Baudrillard and Simulacra



The critic of the effects of mass media is derived from the Frankfurt school theories.

Now let us quickly name these high priests of culture, the theorists of the Frankfurt school; Duhamel and Film, Adorno who theorize mainly in relation to radio and television, Althusser and mass media, Habermas and his idea of the public sphere, Walter Benjamin and film and Baudrillard's idea of the Simulacra.

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Effects of the Mass Media


- The Frankfurt School's view of the mass media gives them and the culture industry a role of ideological dominance, which destroys both bourgeoisie individualism and the revolutionary potential of the working classes
- Manipulation of the consciousness of the masses and silenced resistance to the dominant capitalist class
- Standardization of cultural production and its domination by the profit motive
- Top to down flow of culture from the elite to the masses due to concentration of ownership and control of the media and the formation of a media elite indulging in forms of cultural dictatorship

What was the theory of the effects of media is dominated by the views of the Frankfurt school. The Frankfurt school's view of the mass media gives them and the culture industry a role of ideological dominance which destroys both bourgeoisie individualism and the revolutionary potential of the working classes. According to them the mass media leads to the manipulation of the consciousness of the masses and silenced resistance to the dominant capitalist class. It also leads to that standardization of cultural production and it is domination by the profit motive and it assumed that the top to down flow of culture from the elite to the masses due to concentration of ownership and control of the media and the formation of the media elite indulging in forms of cultural dictatorship.

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Critique of the Frankfurt School

- Mass Media as instruments of control
- Based on the broadcast model of the First Media Age: few producers and many consumers
- Binary of the autonomous/heteronomous subject of modernity
- Technological determinism




This view of the effects of media has been critiqued in the recent times by number of theories of media. So, this idea of mass media as instruments of control. According to new media theories it is based on the broadcast model of the first media age of few producers and many consumers. And this idea is based on the binary of the autonomous heteronomous subject of modernity and it seems to reek of technological determinism.

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Marshall McLuhan

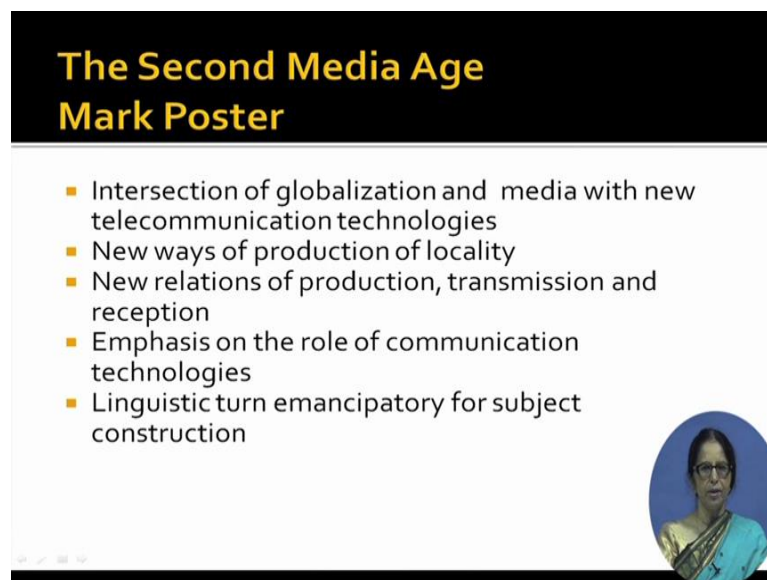
- Positive image of the electronic media began to emerge in the West
- Faith in the positive effects of the electronic media appears to have been corroborated by new media theorists in the digital era
- Comforting counterpoint to pessimistic denunciations of the mass media.
- Revival of the debate on media effects that began in the 1930s and 40s has been revived with the arrival of satellite technologies that appear to have ushered a phase shift similar to that from orality to literacy and from writing to print



One of the modern theorists of media who was very positive rather than pessimistic about the possibilities of new media other than Walter Benjamin who is classified among

the Frankfurt school theorists, but was less critical and more optimistic of the media is Marshall McLuhan who had a very positive image of with whom a positive image of the electronic media began to emerge in the west. McLuhan had a faith in the positive effects of the electronic media and this seems to have been corroborated by new media theorists in the digital era. McLuhan's theories form a comforting counterpoint to pessimistic denunciations of the mass media by Frankfurt school theorists. It is also lead the revival of the debate on media effects that began in the thirties and forties with the arrival of satellite technologies that appear to have ushered a phase shift similar to that from orality to literacy and from writing to print.

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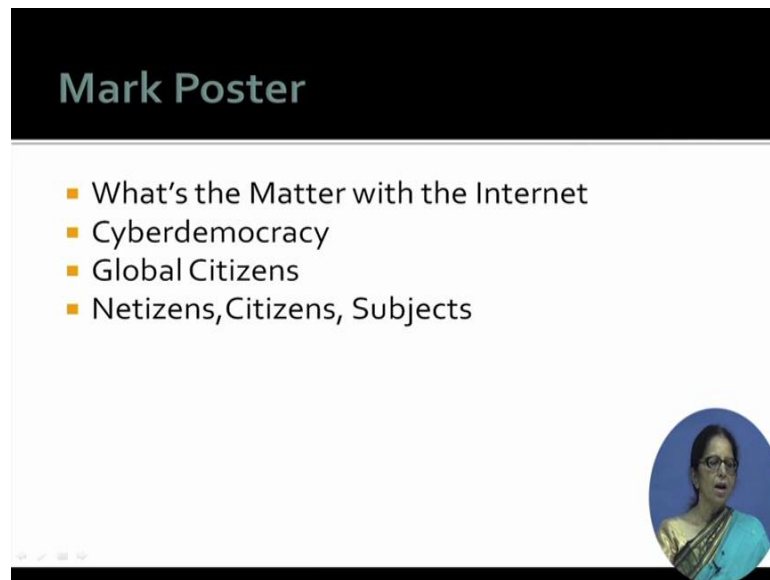
The Second Media Age

Mark Poster

- Intersection of globalization and media with new telecommunication technologies
- New ways of production of locality
- New relations of production, transmission and reception
- Emphasis on the role of communication technologies
- Linguistic turn emancipatory for subject construction


So, there seems to be a revival of this debate on media effects particularly with the onset of globalization. The Second Media Age a book by Mark Poster in it talks about intersection of globalization and media with new telecommunication technologies. Poster holds that one can see new ways of production of locality in the new in the global era, is also marked by new relations of production transmission and reception. He places an emphasis on the role of communication technologies and he feels that the linguistic turn is emancipatory for subject construction. Marks Mark Poster in his book in his essay What is the matter with the Internet talks about uses the term cyberdemocracy.

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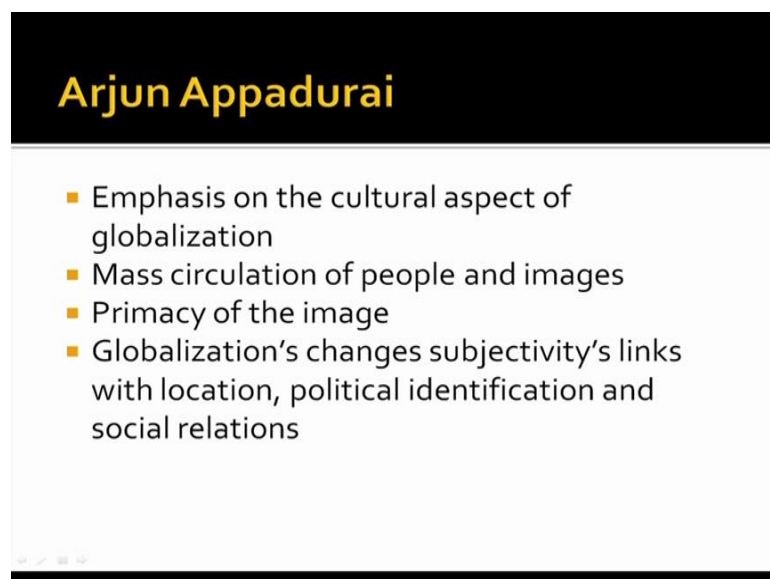
Mark Poster

- What's the Matter with the Internet
- Cyberdemocracy
- Global Citizens
- Netizens, Citizens, Subjects



And he feels that the new media, the new electronic media instead of holding instead of instead of reducing the consumers to passive consumers and instead of slaving them to the pleasures of entertainment have particularly the internet have let to what he calls cyberdemocracy. And there have been liberty, they have been very emancipatory because the technologies in the present world which are interactive enable anyone in the world to transmit their information or ideas across the world without mediation by, without mediation by any other any other powerful group.

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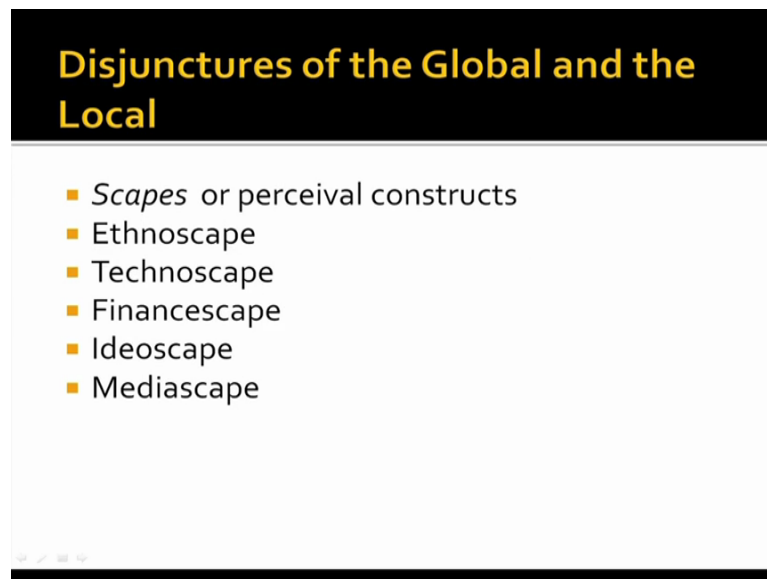


Arjun Appadurai

- Emphasis on the cultural aspect of globalization
- Mass circulation of people and images
- Primacy of the image
- Globalization's changes subjectivity's links with location, political identification and social relations

So, technologically at least it is possible for anyone to circulate the ideas particularly through the medium of internet if not through television and radio with new improved technologies. So, we talking about global citizens, we talking about netizens citizens and subjects and Arjun Appadurai who I have already spoken about, he emphasis on the cultural aspects of globalization it speaks about the mass circulation of people and images and he lays an importance on primacy of the image. Appadurai talks about globalization.

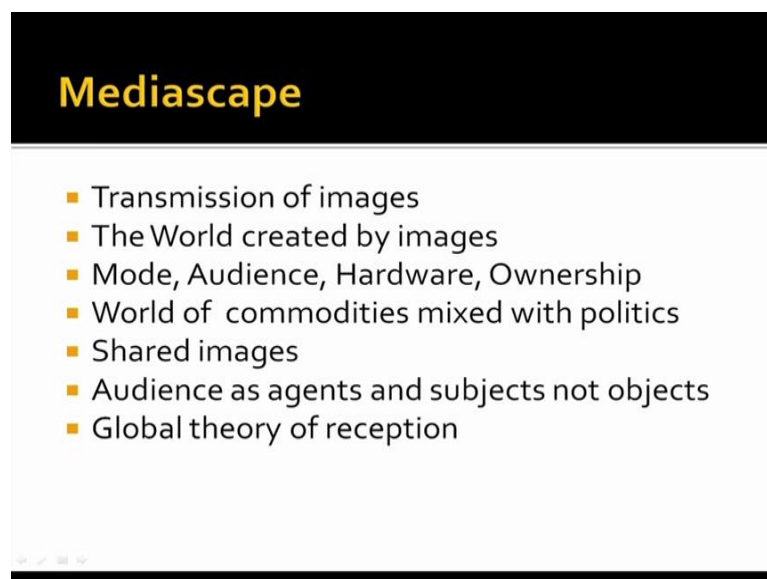
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Disjunctures of the Global and the Local

- *Scapes* or perceiverial constructs
- Ethnoscape
- Technoscape
- Financescape
- Ideoscape
- Mediascape

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Mediascape

- Transmission of images
- The World created by images
- Mode, Audience, Hardware, Ownership
- World of commodities mixed with politics
- Shared images
- Audience as agents and subjects not objects
- Global theory of reception

I have already introduced you to the idea of scapes. What I would like to say in relation to the new theories of media is that the old critic of media if the old theory of the media effect was based according to mark poster on the idea of single consumer and multiple, of a single producer and multiple consumers. And this single producer which was often the state would have about to dominate the minds of millions of consumers through the possibilities of circulation of the ideas and media has always has traditionally played this important role as serving the instrument of dominant groups within any within any nation.

But the critic of the Frankfurt school and older theorists of media was well plays within the within the contingencies of the earlier broadcast model where this was a reality. But today the mediatize world is very different from the older media world to older media scape and the second broadcast age as (Refer Time: 21.24) calls it is substantively different in the in not only in in the change, in the nature of ownership because media ownership is comparatively if not fully more distributed in. So, that the model of a single producer and multiple consumers seems to have been demystified; disrupted by the emergency of multiple producers maybe some dominant producers and some non-dominant producers and similarly multiple consumers.

So, in the present media scape it is possible for consumers to be more selective to choose, to choose the greater choice of media that they have today with the multiplicity of ownership allows them to compare one ideological view against the other and not take media therefore, face value as they tended to do in the past. Secondly, the media themselves as (Refer Time: 22.38) puts it have become more interactive because they no longer want way channels as they were in the first broadcast era. Because today even in the traditional media like radio and television the possibilities for interactivity and infinite, infinite in terms of participation by the audience, by listeners through requests, through sending questions, through voting, through live conversations. So, the media seem to have become more interactive and the audience can express their views directly or indirectly merely by switching of certain media the in media scape which offers such a wide variety of choices. The audience can express their displeasure or they can explain exercise their option.

Apart from that they can actively intervene directly intervene in media through modifying, through questioning, through interrogating what or by comparing different

media that they have access till today. So, the media have become more interactive in the present. And finally, the most important media in the present context is internet which infinitely increases the possibility the democratic or libratory possibilities of media as compared to the first broadcast age because it technically enables any consumer, anyone to become producer and it also offers possibilities to any person to disseminate their ideas across the world. I am saying technologically there might still be limitations; vertical, legal, restrictions on the not only on the dissemination of ideas, but also the production because one requires in order to produce media content one does require resources, one requires finance.

So, unless one is equipped with resources it is not impossible, but it is difficult for anyone to create content or to disseminate one's ideas other than that there are political and legal restrictions through the surveillance maintained on the media that prevents people from, that prevents the media scape from being completely emancipatory completely libratory. The examples of people circulating their own productions on internet YouTube and the number of hits they receive the number of viewers they receive shows that it is technically possible for people to participate in the new media scape and to become producers in addition to be more selective more discriminate discriminating consumers.

With this we conclude this discussion on the media on the new telecommunication technologies and media. Ultimately we will say that not only have they enabled, the not only do they possesses the possibilities of connecting the world, different parts of the world which does not need much elaboration, but they also have created a libratory media scape which through which cultural circulation takes place today.

Thank you.