

PF&R Awards Honor Media Watchdogs

Robert McChesney and Charles and Rose Klotzner received their 2011 Professional Freedom and Responsibility Awards at the August AEJMC convention. The Klotzners founded *St. Louis Journalism Review* (recently renamed *Gateway Journalism Review*), and media scholar McChesney (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) founded the Free Press organization.

Below are remarks that C&CS members Ralph Beliveau (University of Oklahoma) and Gigi Durham (University of Iowa) each shared during a panel discussion after the awards presentation.

Where Are We Now, Where Are We Going? C&CS Takes Stock

• By Gigi Durham

Twenty-one years ago, at the first major cultural studies conference organized in the U.S. at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Stuart Hall gave a stirring talk where he emphasized the fiercely political basis of critical cultural studies. "It does matter whether cultural studies



2011 PF&R Recipients: Above Left: Robert McChesney, and Charles and Rose Klotzner

is this or that," he said. "It can't be just any old thing which chooses to march under a particular banner. It is a serious enterprise, or project, and that is inscribed in what is sometimes called the 'political' aspect of cultural studies. There is something at stake in cultural studies that is not exactly true of many other very important intellectual and critical practices." What he meant was at stake was, of

course, the recognition of power and the confrontation of social injustice — injustice based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other vectors of identity; injustice leading to the corruption of the public sphere and to the tyrannies of unfettered capitalism; injustice leading to violence, oppression, colonization, and other harms. Critical cultural theory isn't just an abstraction: it's a lens through which these real-world problems can be understood and acted upon.

We tend to forget, sometimes, that the Frankfurt School scholars were writing against fascism and genocide; that the Birmingham School was confronting British class hierarchies,

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Remembering Hanno Hardt

Two colleagues reflect on Hardt's important influences

By Charles Hays
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Journalism, Communication,
and New Media
Thompson Rivers University
Kamloops, British Columbia

Note: Hardt was professor emeritus of communication studies and journalism and mass communication at the University of Iowa. He was also professor of communication studies at the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). Hardt passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 11 at age 76.

My favourite memories of Hanno are the wonderful conversations he hosted every week at George's, a convenient short block away from our graduate offices next to Seashore Hall. He always bought the first round (Pilsener Urquell) and then he would fire a conceptual

question into the discussion and sit back and watch us work it out. I had other wonderful conversations with my professors and mentors at Iowa, but on that level only with Hanno.

He once asked me pay a call to his office and tell him how I was progressing in the program. I had a different set of goals than some of my colleagues and Hanno reminded me gently that

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Hanno Hardt

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Headnote:

C&CS Working Group Examines Division's Self-Definition

JACQUELINE LAMBIASE, TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



Hello CCS members! I am looking forward to working with many of you this year, as we move toward another conference in August 2012 in Chicago, where

we will celebrate the 100th year of AEJMC. Erika Engstrom, our vice head and programming chair, has already collected about a dozen great panel proposals generated by you, and we'll get as many on the program in Chicago as we can.

At our business meeting in August, we created two working groups for issues, and I'll summarize one of those discussions for this issue. The first working group tackled the renewal of our division's definition of itself, especially as it related to the annual call for papers. You'll see a draft version of that new call language in this newsletter, captured by Kalen Church, one of our two research chairs.

Bob Trumbour, Rebecca Kern, Kalen Church, and Charles Self served on this working group, along with myself. Our discussion has proven to be interesting and challenging because we welcome many methodologies and because we enjoy pushing against dominant ways of thinking.

Our old language, taken from our by-laws, defined our division like this: "CCS ... encourages humanistic, interdisciplinary research into communication. Perspectives with a home here range from literary, and cultural and critical analysis to creative and philosophical essays. It sponsors research-paper sessions, theme presentations, and other scholarly activity at the yearly convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication."

The working group expanded the second sentence of the above definition to the following: "The division welcomes a variety of research topics and approaches

that include, but are not limited to, historical studies, feminist scholarship, news analysis, political economy, literary analysis with a media foundation, philosophy of communication, ethics, and media criticism."

This working group asked a lot of good questions during this process. Several questions, posed by Bob, related to the name of our division, and whether "critical" or "cultural" should be placed first.

He writes that "at present, I sense, possibly rightly or wrongly, that the focus on 'critical' seems to be preferred by the membership to some degree, but will that dynamic shift over time? Also, is having 'cultural' first more or less inviting to someone who might be on the fence about joining our division?" These are great queries for us to continue discussing periodically, since our disciplines evolves and adapts to changing professional and academic issues. Our working group conversation can move into a broader conversation at our business meeting next year, if members want to take up the naming or renaming issue more directly.

Charles raises important new issues for C&CS to address, chief among them technology paradigms. He writes that "certainly technology has challenged our dominant ways of thinking. But more important, the core methods, assumptions, and concepts should be under scrutiny, it seems to me. Some really interesting work is emerging around ideas of media 'ecology,' network technologies, cybersemiotics, 'liquid modernity,' and information 'flow.'"

In addition to keeping our definition elastic and relevant, Kalen worked to make our call appealing to potential new members in several ways, and one is by mentioning that we have faculty and student paper awards.

I will write about the activities of

working group 2 in my next column, but I want to thank old and new officers for helping us frame these conversations back in August. Please add to the conversation through our listserv (which isn't functioning well, but Catherine Coleman is working to create a new list that merges the old listserv and our new list of members) at ccs_list@aejmc.net or on our Facebook page: Cultural and Critical Studies Division.

Upcoming deadlines include the call for abstracts for the AEJMC Midwinter Conference that will be hosted by the University of Oklahoma on March 2-3, 2012. See the call for paper abstracts and panel proposals on page 5 of this newsletter for more information.

Please be in touch about your ideas, with me or any of the other new officers listed here. Best to you all for the fall semester.

C&CS Members:
The Spring 2012 C&CS
Newsletter will be available
online in early April.

Please send member news,
photos/visuals, paper calls,
or other items of interest to
the C&CS newsletter editor
by Friday, March 9.

Include caption information
with any photos or other
visuals sent.

Please send newsletter
materials to Teresa Heinz
Housel (Hope College) at
housel@hope.edu.

PF&R Winners' Work Speaks to the Goals of Critical Cultural Studies

Continued from page 1

and later tackling sexism and racism; that Bob McChesney, one of the PF & R winners tonight, takes on media consolidation and monopolies that shut down the pluralism that is at the heart of democracy. The giants in our field were not playing around with glib celebrations of pop culture or pointless ponderings about the postmodern playground. Rather, they use theory and scholarship to address the ongoing and growing brutalities and despotism of the neoliberal, globalized world, a world in which unfettered capitalism is wreaking havoc on economies, institutions, and people. At its root, critical cultural studies is a pointer to collective action. In some aspects, we've succeeded in these activist goals.

The PF&R award winners tonight are emblematic of the real-world application of critical cultural theory to media institutions. Bob McChesney's Free Press organization is a leader in media reform, keeping people abreast of legislation and policy that endangers a truly free media system, organizing events, and spearheading petitions and campaigns.

The *Gateway Journalism Review* offers thoughtful analyses of current trends in media law, ethics, and policy in the Midwest as well as on a national level, with the goal of preserving media accountability and fairness.

These are just two examples of an application of critical cultural studies to real world politics.

In other ways, though, critical cultural studies has drifted from an intensely political project to an academic enterprise without traction. High theory, abstraction, a rejection of politics, an embrace of the pleasures of the popular, have all resulted in a kind of academic levity and lack of substance that are easy to ridicule and trivialize.

So a big question for me, and one that has come up in my classes on critical/cultural media studies, is how to revitalize the political projects that galvanized this entire field of inquiry in the first place; how to recapture the lived, grounded engagements — the notion of praxis — that lie at the heart of this area of inquiry. Are we really doing critical cultural studies if it all happens in the classroom, in academic journals, and in scholarly tomes that few people have the skills to read? Are our political energies and commitments being skillfully rechanneled into regulated and policed spaces that keep us from effecting the kinds of systemic changes our scholarship calls for?

The political columnist Katha

these untenurable activities anyway: at the University of Iowa, a small group of us organized a teach-in against the Iraq war at its outset; my colleague and partner Frank Durham has taught writing workshops to labor organizers; other colleagues work with prisoners; one of our doctoral students at the U of Iowa, Ted Gutsche, created a service learning course that allowed impoverished and marginalized people to tell their stories via journalistic modes of expression.

At my institution — The University of Iowa — public funding is being drastically cut every year, and I know that many of you are facing the same situation. As the budget shrinks, the administration's focus is on "doing more with less," as the catchphrase

The PF & R award winners tonight are emblematic of the real-world application of critical cultural theory to media institutions.

—Gigi Durham

Pollitt has observed correctly that all progressive causes, from feminism to racial equality to gay liberation to environmentalism and labor organizing, are appealing as ideas, but in practice come up against the real-world constraints imposed by declining wages, a fraying social fabric, and a pervasive sense of political stagnation.

Similarly, at the university, our best impulses are curtailed by the constraints of the system that requires us to teach more, to perform more service, to exert ourselves only in the directions that produce tangible rewards (like scholarly publication), and to stay away from activities that are not considered "tenurable."

Nonetheless, I know that many of my colleagues, and myself, pursue

goes (when really, one can only do less with less, though no one at administrative levels will admit it!).

So, class sizes increase, faculty are pressed into ever more teaching and service, faculty jobs are at risk as tenure is eroded, and more and more contingent and part-time faculty are hired instead of full-time tenure-line professors. Universities are beginning to look more like McDonald's, with managers in back offices and hourly wage line employees in paper hats (that would be the faculty). In the meantime, programs are being canceled as enrollment figures and legislators' perceptions of usefulness drive decision making. So business wins, while a cultural studies theory class is seen as frivolous on the one

"We" continued on page 8

Call for Reviewers for Annual Convention

Interested in helping the C&CS Division make Chicago 2012 its best conference yet? The C&CS Division is seeking volunteer reviewers for 2012 convention paper submissions.



Who can review for the division?

We are looking for faculty members from a variety of subject and theoretical backgrounds to help us with the process. The division recognizes that reviewing can be a time consuming process, and we are grateful for your help. The more reviewers we have, the fewer papers each volunteer will be assigned, so encourage your colleagues to participate, too. And yes, you can both review and submit a paper to the C&CS Division.

How can you sign up?

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact research co-chairs Kalen Churcher (kchurcher@niagara.edu) and Katie Foss (Katie.Foss@mtsu.edu) with your name, full contact information, and at least three areas of research interest. Also, let us know if you'd consider serving as a chair or discussant for the 2012 conference in Chicago.

Annual AEJMC Convention in Chicago (Aug. 9-12): Call For Papers

2012 marks AEJMC's 100th annual conference, to be held in Chicago from Aug. 9-12 (Thursday-Sunday).

The C&CS Division welcomes a variety of research topics and approaches that include, but are not limited to, historical studies, feminist scholarship, news analysis, political economy, literary analysis with a media foundation, philosophy of communication, ethics, and media criticism. C&CS also encourages work that challenges conventional approaches to media, examines paradigmatic assumptions, and explores innovative ways of theorizing.

Faculty and students are invited to upload papers to All-Academic via the AEJMC website by April 1. The division presents awards to authors of the top-ranking faculty and student submissions.

For questions about paper submissions, contact research co-chairs Kalen Churcher (kchurcher@niagara.edu) or Katie Foss (Katie.Foss@mtsu.edu).

Watch the AEJMC website for more details. Hope to see you in Chicago!



2012 AEJMC Midwinter Conference: Paper Abstracts and Panel Proposals Call

The AEJMC Midwinter Conference is an annual forum for presenting research and debate in areas relevant to the 12 AEJMC groups (divisions, interest groups and commissions) sponsoring the event. The conference provides a platform for presentations and extended discussions in a relaxed setting.

The conference will be March 2-3, 2012 at the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication (University of Oklahoma) in Norman, Okla. For the fourth year in a row, conference participants will be able to enjoy the College's state-of-the-art teaching and research facilities, as well as many winter diversions outside the conference activities, including world-class museums and art galleries.

Paper abstract submissions: Authors are invited to submit research paper abstracts of between 600 and 800 words (word count excludes author information and references). Abstracts should give a clear sense of relevant literature, research objectives, methodological approach, stage of research project (conceptual, data gathering, data interpreting), findings and conclusions.

Submissions should be made by e-mail to the midwinter chair (from the list below) of the group authors wish to submit to. Note that authors can submit any specific paper abstract to only one participating group – submitting the same paper abstract to several groups will result in disqualification and withdrawal from the review process. Do not submit full papers.

Authors of accepted papers will be notified by mid-January 2012. Papers presented at the midwinter conference are also eligible for presentation at the AEJMC national convention in August. Authors are encouraged to use the Midwinter Conference as an opportunity to get feedback on their research to improve and finalize it for submission to the national conference.

Authors of accepted abstracts must submit complete papers (not exceeding 30 pages) to the discussant

of their conference session at least two weeks before the midwinter conference.

At least one author of each accepted paper must register and attend the conference to present the paper. Failure to register by the deadline will result in authors' names and papers being removed from the program. NO onsite registration will be available.

Panel submissions: In addition, the organizers are also inviting panel proposals. These proposals should be sent to the midwinter chair of the particular division or group they wish to present the panel to. Panel submissions should include the panel

March 2-3, 2012
Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Oklahoma
(Details about registration, accomodation, and travel:
http://www.ou.edu/gaylord/home/main/out-reach/aejmc_mid_winter.html

title, a description of the session's focus, the issues to be discussed, and a list of panelists (potential and confirmed), including affiliation. Panel proposals should not exceed two double-spaced pages.

Submission format: All submissions (for paper abstracts and panels) should include the name(s) of the author(s) or panel organizer(s) on the title page only. The title page should also include the author or lead author's (or organizer's) mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address. The title should be on the first page of the text and on running heads on each page of text. Authors should e-mail their abstracts or proposals as attachments (saved with the author's last name as file name) in a standard word-processing format (preferably Word or RTF) to the relevant midwinter chair. Authors must ensure that they remove any identifying information from their document (with the exception of the title page).

Deadline: All submissions should reach the appropriate group's midwinter chair by noon, Dec. 2, 2011.

The University of Oklahoma is located in Norman, 20 miles south of Oklahoma City, with easy access to the Will Rogers World Airport. Details on conference registration, hotel accommodation and airport transportation will be available at <http://www.ou.edu/gaylord>.

For more information, please contact Elanie Steyn, Conference Site Host (elanie@ou.edu).

AEJMC 2012 Midwinter Chairs by Division/Interest Group/Commission:

- Civic & Citizen Journalism Interest Group: Burton St. John, Old Dominion University (BSaintJo@odu.edu)
- Communication Technology Division: Amanda Sturgill, Elon University (asturgill@elon.edu)
- Commission on the Status of Women: Camille Kraeplin, Southern Methodist University (kraeplin@mail.smu.edu)
- Cultural & Critical Studies Division: Rebecca Kern, Manhattan College (rebecca.kern@manhattan.edu)
- Entertainment Studies Interest Group: Mark Callister, Brigham Young University (mark_callister@byu.edu)
- International Communication Division: Celeste Conzalez de Bustamante, University of Arizona (celesteg@email.arizona.edu)
- Magazine Division: Ellen Gerl, Ohio University (gerl@ohio.edu)
- Mass Communication & Society Division: Lisa Paulin, North Carolina Central University (lpaulin@nccu.edu)
- Media Management and Economics Division: Sue Alessandri, Suffolk University (salessandri@suffolk.edu)
- Minorities and Communication Division: George Daniels, University of Alabama (gdaniels@ua.edu)
- Religion and Media Interest Group: Michael Smith, Campbell University (smithm@campbell.edu)
- Visual Communication Division: Byung Lee, Elon University

C&CS Sessions at St. Louis Convention

The annual AEJMC convention held this past August in historic downtown St. Louis featured lively and diverse C&CS sessions dedicated to research and teaching. The beautiful summer weather was an extra bonus for convention-goers.

Pictured are photos from some C&CS sessions:

Top left: Jane Marcellus (outgoing C&CS head) thanks graduate students Liz Lance (Missouri) and Nick Gilewicz (Temple) for their service as C&CS graduate student liaisons.

Bottom left: Charles Klotzer, left and a PF&R award winner, listens to Gigi Durham and Ralph Beliveau.

Below: Lane Rakow (North Dakota) described the Community Connect Project at a C&CS session



AEJMC CONVENTION IN ST. LOUIS



AEJMC Launches Mentorship Program for First-Time Convention Attendees

The 2012 AEJMC conference holds great promise as we celebrate the organization's centennial anniversary. The Chicago conference is expected to draw a large number of participants, including many first time conference attendees.

For many first-time conference participants, the experience may seem overwhelming at times. Some people may be unclear what a poster session is and how it may be different than a scholar to scholar session (it is not). Many are not sure about which social they may attend and what the best strategies are for meeting new people.

During the 2011 conference in Saint Louis, the membership committee of AEJMC decided to establish an exciting new mentorship program that aims to welcome and acclimate first time conference attendees.

The idea behind the mentorship

program is to match veteran conference goers with first-time attendees. We hope that as a mentor, you will help introduce the newcomers to the conference, explain some of the key concepts and help them find their way around by introducing them to other members.



If you would like to serve as a mentor, please email the membership chair of the division or interest group that you are most active in. We will ask the membership chairs to help us with the matching process.

If you have any questions about the

mentorship program or would like more information, please feel free to email me at gjgolan@syr.edu or any of the other membership committee members.

We are all very excited about the mentorship program and we hope that you will participate in it.

Sincerely,
Guy J. Golan
AEJMC, Membership Committee
Chair
Syracuse University

C&CS Contact For This Initiative:

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Journal of Communication Inquiry



Retrospective on Hardt and Negri Update by Hye-Jin Lee, Managing Editor, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*

In 2010, the seminal work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's trilogy celebrated its tenth anniversary. Called the "Communist Manifesto for the twenty-first century" by Slavoj Žižek (2001), *Empire* (2000), became a surprise international bestseller despite being a densely written scholarly book. Since the publication of *Empire*, Hardt and Negri collaborated on two more projects, *Multitude* (2003) and *Commonwealth* (2009).

Reviving Marxist theory, concepts in Hardt and Negri's trilogy have contributed to introducing new ideas to contemporary scholarship, especially to many English-speaking readers. So with the tenth anniversary of *Empire*, the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* (jci) is

focusing its annual special theme issue on a retrospective of Hardt and Negri's works. However, as Jack Z. Bratich (Rutgers University), the guest editor of this theme issue, notes in his introduction, this special theme issue is less of a commemoration of the trilogy than an investigation of how their ideas are connected with critical media and communication studies, as Hardt and Negri frequently refer to media and communication processes in their works.

In this special theme issue we have 19 short essays contributed by international media scholars, theorists, and activists from many different countries including Canada, UK, Australia, and Italy. The release of this special theme issue seems to be timely as Hardt and Negri's books (especially *Empire*) are considered to have predicted and helped shape the current wave of progressive movements—Occupy Wall Street (OWS)—that is now spreading both nationally and internationally.

The issue includes essays from Franco (Bifo) Berardi (founder of A/traerso, rekombinant.org, and the tele-street phenomenon), who along with Paolo Virno and Antonio Negri has been a core member of the Italian autonomist movement in the 1970s. The issue also includes work by M. R. Greene-May, who directly links the concept of "corruption" from Hardt and Negri's works to street action and thus would be useful in understanding the current affairs. Other contributions come from Leopoldina Fortunati, who foregrounds gender in her historical trace of information and communication technologies and immaterial labor, and many more. We hope this special theme issue will engage many viewers to join us in assessing Hardt and Negri's trilogy, as well as generate new ideas and concepts to evaluate the media subjectivities who have emerged in an environment where media is immersed into all of our everyday practices, institutions, and relations.

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We Must Not Forget Political Goals of Cultural Studies

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hand, dangerously subversive on the other.

These trends may explain the retrenchment I'm seeing in many journalism and mass communication programs: a retrenchment to the social scientific, apolitical, supposedly objective frameworks of research, and a marginalization of critical, cultural, politically urgent scholarship and coursework. Many journalism programs have no classes whatsoever in critical theory, cultural studies, or political economy, all crucial to understanding the collapse of the media today — from the Murdoch scandal to issues of Net neutrality.

Administrators tell graduate students they need to pursue quantitative research methods and traditional approaches to mass communication theory if they want to be hired, effectively crushing and rerouting budding interests in the critical cultural framework. I see this retrenchment, and the suppression of critical cultural theory, coursework and scholarship, as part of a larger move to rechannel dissent, to redirect political energy into banal pop culture, to encourage apoliticism and disinterest.

Please don't mistake me: I think popular culture can be a source of political energy and activism, and I don't believe that all social science is apolitical. But the driving epistemology of critical cultural studies is rooted in a vision of progressive social change, a claim that is not and cannot be made by other academic disciplines, especially in the areas of journalism and mass communication. This has become imperative at a moment when universities are under siege, the gap between rich and poor is widening, anti-immigrant logics are the most public expression of racism, the Supreme Court has just set feminism back fifty years with its Wal-Mart ruling, right-wing extremism is recognized as a motive for terrorism, and senseless wars are draining the coffers and lives of this country as well as others. How can we not be critical at such a moment? How can we not examine the role of culture — including the media — in this environment? And most importantly, what can we do about it?

For those of us who believe that academic work is necessarily engaged with real-world problems, for those of us who understand that intellectual projects are most valuable when they advance critiques that expose systems of corruption and oppression, for those of us who see our role as scholars and teachers as an activist enterprise (and I know this room is full of such people), it's imperative that we defend the importance of the critical cultural studies curriculum at the university, and that we strive to make our classrooms the starting points for social change.

In the same speech I quoted earlier, Stuart Hall said that the best metaphor for critical cultural studies was the metaphor of struggle, of "wrestling with angels." These days, I feel like there's a lot of wrestling going on; I also feel like cultural studies is in a hammerlock. I would like to open up the question of how cultural studies can stay true to its origins and take to the streets. Is that even possible in the contemporary university? This, to me, is the most pressing issue facing critical cultural scholars today.

Our field is at a crisis point where it must engage in real reflection, self-interrogation, and potential solutions to this dilemma. Can we — and should we — reset our agenda? I'd like to invite you to join an ongoing discussion of how to keep this struggle alive in the contemporary university setting.

Thank you.

From the Public to a Pedagogy of Hope • By Ralph Beliveau

FOR CHARLES AND ROSE KLOTZER

In the present we are faced with a fairly major project; the rehabilitation of the notion of "the public." Set against the idea of the private, there are ways we can and should talk about the value and the need for a complex notion of the public that we can invest in.

It is clear that the winners of the Cultural and Critical Studies award for Professional Freedom and Responsibility, Charles and Rose Klotzer, have a special place on earth for the idea of the public.

The *St. Louis Journalism Review* sought to keep the public involved in the process of maintaining, repairing, and potentially transforming the information media. Like much critical work the beneficiaries are intended to be some notion of the public.

The public needs the media system as the central nervous system on which to take action. As Robert McChesney discusses in *Communication Revolution* (New Press, 2007), we are currently experiencing what he calls a "critical juncture." Put bluntly to his critics, McChesney argues that there is a path that is neither Rupert Murdoch nor Josef Stalin. Instead he argues for a third way, a desire for a combination of media available that draws on both independent public sector ownership as well as a small business sector. The problems arise with the dominance of corporate media, working in conjunction with the government or the State (capital 's').

So what is a critical juncture? It's a period of a decade or two where the range of options for society is much greater than it is otherwise. It presents an opportunity for fundamental change. They tend to occur, according to McChesney, when two or all three of the following conditions hold:

1. There is a revolutionary new communication technology that undermines the existing system.
 2. The content of the media system, especially the journalism, is increasingly discredited or seen as illegitimate.
 3. There is a major political crisis—severe social disequilibrium—in which the existing order is no longer working and there are major movements for reform.
- McChesney identifies three times this has happened in the recent past:

- the progressive era, where the crisis in journalism resulted in its professionalization
- the post-depression era of the 1930s, where radio and an organized opposition to commercial broadcasting resulted in a loosely regulated commercial model
- and the late 1960s/early 1970s, where popular social movements provoked radical critique...but no real lasting resolution was achieved.

McChesney argues that we are now living through just such a juncture:

"McChesney's" continued on page 9

Cultural and Critical Studies Division 2011-2012 Officers

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McChesney's Ideas Can Inform Media Literacy Pedagogy

Continued from page 8

- revolutionary new communication technology that undermines the existing system -- the digital revolution
- the content of the media system is increasingly discredited or seen as illegitimate -- "Journalism is at its lowest ebb since the progressive era" (p. 10).

The third condition--the social disequilibrium--is still unsettled. When the book was written in 2007 the question of a political crisis was not at hand. We have perhaps seen the arrival of the political crisis over the past few months, where the ability to govern has been put into question by irreconcilable political differences, a stagnating two-party system, and the ability to produce unnecessary crises that turns Naomi Klein's "Shock Doctrine" into a convention that is simultaneously business-as-usual and politics-by-extortion.

McChesney's proposed solution is organizing people to be involved in the media policy-making process.

In part the goal is to reduce the domination of policy decisions influenced by corporate media lobbying, done in the name of the people, but really without their knowledge or consent.

The challenge here is probably familiar

to many of us. To some extent public disaffection is an obstacle; to another extent, the obscurity of the political process is a daunting circumstance. (Does the argument over televising the meetings of the Super Committee/'Gang of 12' make it easier for people to connect with politics? Or does it just pretend to open the curtain, only to produce another performance piece?)

For me the solution goes back to education and pedagogy. Here I would like to combine McChesney's ideas of the critical juncture with some consideration of media literacy teaching, and conclude with an exploration of the pedagogies of hope. The critical juncture we are at now strikes different parts of the public differently. The Internet-savvy demographics have less interest in the legacies of media production, and are more interested in media coming to them on their own terms, whether that means watching Daily Show clips or grazing across the Internet for pieces of information gathered amid the tumult of the Web. For them the critical juncture may seem less problematic because of the wide-open spaces provided through the Web. And there are certainly other diverse perspectives in this group.

Other cultural groups have different relationships with the critical juncture. Some

understand the relationship between media and politics contextualized in their own educational experiences, which may have taught them history, but may just as well ended with the historically impoverished notion of "Civics" instead. The idea of public control over the possibilities remain tied to how any individual may perceive the relationship between private media and public media policy.

So how do people learn to understand the media during a critical juncture? Most of it is rather informal, private, and seen as a prerogative, first, of parental oversight, and second of personal consumer choice. In both of these cases, the interests of the larger public are superseded by a notion of individual determination that is completely fine with the current structure of media ownership, since the public can remain unaware of its individuals' common interests. Parents can decide what media they and their children should watch, other individuals can use the fabrication of marketplace choice to feel like they are in control. In either case, the idea of questioning ownership over voices and communication channels is not likely to come up, and control over the media industries remains in the small club of corporate entities.

On the other hand, discussions of "Critical" *continued on page 10*

Critical Understanding of Media Promotes Value of the Public

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alternative models ought to be kept in mind when considering the possibilities from a media literate perspective. Consider the private corporate model versus the BBC model of sufficiently sized license fee funding, or the Al Jazeera English model of state funding. Alternative funding models have never really entered serious discussion in the U.S. (not since 1934, anyway), and would only do so if the perception of the limitations of the free market were more widely considered. But as long as the market forces are unquestioningly perceived to be the conduit for media that is desired and free (in the political sense), we should expect nothing more in the legacy media than the limited models offered by PBS in television, NPR in radio, and the admirable efforts of amateur or experimental journalism, or people of conscience like Mr. Klotzer.

Fortunately, for some period of this critical juncture, alternative models of media communication have and will continue to experiment on the Web (and to a lesser degree in low power FM, even in TV services like YouTube). The questions become whether the use of Internet alternatives to mainstream media are significant enough in number to create a sense of ownership for the Web viewer/producer public, and whether educational contexts approach new media environments from a media literacy perspective.

The greatest hope for the critical juncture comes, however, after we have taken steps not just to make

the public citizen understand—become literate to— their role in the media, but to take ownership over the potential of the policy making process. To conclude then we can consider how a pedagogy of hope informs this situation.

As defined by Gabriel Marcel, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks, a pedagogy of hope is a necessary condition for imaging the possibilities of positive change. Hope finds its reason to be in the incompleteness we experience in the world,

cal structures of the world. This elevation was to a degree working against the collaborative idea at the core of critical pedagogy in general and pedagogies of hope in particular.

We ought to consider how this parallels the relationships between teachers and students, as well as the relationship between media producers and their audiences. My sense is that much of the resentment people feel toward content providers is tied to an arrogance

Pedagogies of hope are rooted fundamentally in our notions of the public, of our sense in the collaborative rather than the competitive.

- Ralph Beliveau

and our efforts to seek out that which may bring us to a more complete state. Hope requires that this search be something undertaken communally, in dialogue, oriented toward our experience in the world. In other words, pedagogies of hope are rooted fundamentally to our notions of the public, of our sense of the collaborative rather than the competitive.

In writing about a pedagogy of hope in 2005, Dale Jacobs observed how the senior generation of critical pedagogy thinkers—including Giroux, McLaren, and Ira Shor—would place teachers in a position of transformative agents because of their perceived ability to see more clearly the ideologi-

among media sources when they see themselves as the providers of a righted picture of the world.

Worse yet, efforts at connecting citizen viewers to media—broadcasters including vox pops from Twitter, for example—feels more like a desperate gesture than a conversation or a collaboration.

But the possibilities for hope at this critical juncture are still there. We are all in it together, so we need to imagine and hope and work toward a stronger emphasis on understanding media from a perspective that is invested in and promotes the value of the public.

2012 AEJMC Convention

The AEJMC 2012 Convention will be held in Chicago at the Chicago Marriott Downtown on August 9-12. Please note that the convention will occur on Thursday-Sunday rather than Wednesday-Saturday as usual. For more information and to view the 2012 paper call, visit: <http://www.aejmc.org/home/events/annual-convention/>

Hardt's Research and Advice Have Far-Reaching Influences

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I should not gauge my goals by those of my colleagues or even my mentors, and that going to the places I wanted to go and doing the things I wanted to do were important. "Research, even," he said. "You can do that anywhere. Just go and write."

After a couple of decades delivering the daily news, graduate school was an education in many ways. Hanno brought me up to the heights he knew and pointed out the landscape. Other mentors did the same and offered up their own wisdom, but Hanno's advice still resonates. It's the same advice I give my own students.

Just go, and write.

By Susan Brockus Wiesinger
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I never knew Hanno Hardt. Never met the man.

His critical scholarship, however, had a profound influence upon my own work. I first encountered Hardt in a mass communication class in my graduate program at Purdue. Professor Matt Cecil had worked with Hardt at Iowa and introduced him to the class via the book *Interactions*.

I had just entered the master's

program after 12 years as a newspaper reporter, editor, and publisher. Hardt's book helped shape the perspectives that later would emerge in my master's thesis, my doctoral dissertation, and my ongoing critical and cultural analyses of media ownership.

Hardt was concerned with the corporatization of the American press and the tendency of owners to conform to the demands of the market and other powerful interests.

"As a result, investigative reporting, analytical writing on social, economic, and political issues, and confrontational stances have been largely replaced by notoriously placid, if not socially and politically irrelevant, coverage of events." (Hardt, 1998, p. 209)

He was an advocate for "deprofessionalization" of journalism, which would refocus the efforts of journalists on communities and crafting stories that achieve democratic ideals, rather than on an end goal that cast news as a product.

Hardt noted time and again that journalism in the United States always has represented a significant power struggle between owners and journalists;

that newsrooms "have been a laboratory for technological innovations and a battleground of economic and social interests" for more than a hundred years (p. 173). He argued that new technology, such as the then-emerging World Wide Web, would only further dilute the voices of journalists and increase the power of owners.

"[T]he emergence of newsroom technologies created conditions for newswriters that defined their role as producers of specific images and appeals rather than as independent sources of cultural and political enlightenment." (p. 178).

This was the stuff that resonated with me at the start of my academic career and these are words I paraphrase today as I teach a media literacy course that is in the core of our journalism curriculum.

My dog-eared, bought-used, heavily handled copy of *Interactions* is now 13 years old and sits within reach among my favorite works. Nearby titles include Tuchman, Bagdikian, Gitlin, Herman and Chomsky, and McChesney.

I'm deeply appreciative of Hardt's commitment to journalism. His influence lives on.