Endowment for Democracy and the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA); and large corporations began funding digital literacy initiatives, as did the MacArthur Foundation.

All these groups rallied around the creation of critical capacities in media users and the potentials of participatory media for democratic citizenship; significantly, each of them used the same rubric despite their sometimes polarized political views. In fact, only two years after the *Journal of Communication* issue, c despite

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delegated the duty of promoting media literacy in the United Kingdom to the newly formed Office of Communication, it adopted a definition devised in the United States in 1992 (the ñAspen declarationò):

ñcontrolled

To bring some context to the current use of the term *media literacy*, examination of the history of media in education might be illuminating. To that end, I offer a brief sketch of the use of technologies in the classroom and the pedagogical expectations that accompanied them. Silent film was the first industrial visual technology to make its way into the classroom, emerging in educational settings, both formal and informal, in the late 1890s, almost as soon as the technologies were commercially available. It was not long before these local and national initiatives, by churches, schools, libraries, and YMCAs, were scaled up to international agencies, such as the League of Nationsû International Educational Cinematograph Institute, one of the precursors of UNESCO (Druick, 2007).

The United States is well known as a producer of popular media entertainment, but its role in the promotion of media education is just as impressive. As far back as the silent film era, U.S. corporations and philanthropic organizations were keen to become part of classrooms. After 1923, the year that Kodak released its noninflammable 16mm format and began to steal market dominance away from the French company Pathé, American educators were able to assemble a powerful network of individuals, institutions, and philanthropic organizations, including journals such as *Moving Picture Age* and *Visual Education*, that focused on the use of film in the classroom (Greene, 2005; Orgeron, Orgeron, & Streible, 2012; Saettler, 1968; Wasson, 2005).

One of the characteristics of the current discourse of media literacy is its focus on intensification of media experiences for youth on digital platforms and the presumed dangers of illiteracy. Educationûs twin goals of subjectivization and modernization have long relied on the specter of the illiterate as its unschooled other (Hunter, 1988). Often, discourses of illiteracy have been tied to colonial relations. As late as the 1970s, one could still encounter a story in a communication textbook about the surprise of African viewers when seeing a chicken run across a movie screen or of Pacific Islanders unable to recognize themselves in a film (Carpenter, 1973). This colonial orientation is part and parcel of

the invention of various ñteaching machines.ò In his history of classroom uses of technology, Larry Cuban (1986) notes that the dream of efficiency in education manifested itself as the Taylorization of the classroom, in which the integration of the student into mechanized feedback loops was hoped to increase speed and standardization. The concept of teaching machines took on prominence in the decades following the Second World War; television was a reformerôs holy grail. In 1958, for instance, behavioral scientist B. F. Skinner published an article on teaching machines in *Science*, in which he characterized educational technology as the best way to meet the demands on educational systems:

> There are more people in the world than ever before, and a far greater part of them want an education. The demand cannot be met simply by building more schools and training more teachers. Education must become more efficient. To this end, curricula must be revised and simplified, and textbooks and classroom techniques improved. In any other field a demand for increased production would have led at once to the invention of labor-saving capital equipment. Education has reached this stage very late, possibly through a misconception of its task. Thanks to the advent of television, however, the so-called audio-visual aids are being re-examined. Film projectors, television sets, phonographs, and tape recorders are finding their way into American schools and colleges. (Skinner, 1958, p. 969)

The Ford Foundation entered the educational field in the early 1950s through the establishment of its Funds for the Advancement of Education. As an extension of this mandate, in the 1950s and 1960s, the foundation provided funding to the National Association of Educational Broadcasters for experimental projects using TV in schools, including a futuristic airborne regional educational broadcasting scheme in the American Midwest and a satellite instructional television experiment in India (Goldfarb, 2002; Perlman, 2010; see also Lin,ęrap

drew on traditions of education as inoculation against mediaûs deleterious effects (Hunter, 1988).[6] Yet despite, or perhaps because of, their critical perspectives, ideas about the media produced by social analysts were eagerly sought after by educational institutions and corporate interests involved in the development of global economies (Turner, 2006). To be sure, the movement of ideas about media studies and later media literacy into mainstream institutions of social reproduction such as the educational system did not occur without friction and modification. But it would be incorrect to assume that education and media typically have been at loggerheads. In the remainder of this essay, I sketch out these connections to bring greater clarity to the increasing prominence of the media literacy paradigm in educational discourse in general and higher education in particular.

Even if most of the educational television projects were declared failures by the 1970s, technology and the classroom were by then well bonded. Cultural critics who had formerly adopted the inoculation approach now began to be interested in the potentials of media for art and education, the ñcreative media approachò (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012, p. 146). Following Freireûs ideas about pedagogy for liberation as well as McLuhanûs ideas about media as human ñextendersò made popular by *Understanding Media* (McLuhan, 1964), production began to take the place of critical reception as the appropriate mode of using media in the classroom (Cowie, 2000; Shor & Friere, 1987). Not only did it have exemplary ability to engage students, but in one fell swoop it would help to demystify mainstream media and possibly liberate young minds from corporate culture. As Renee Hobbs and Amy Jensen (2009) put it, ñDuring the 1970s, media literacy education began to be recognized as a critical practice of citizenship, part of the exercise of democratic rights and civil responsibilitiesò (p. 3).

Media education of the 1970s and 1980s was organized primarily around the study of television. For Len Masterman, one of the most influential media educators of the period, the simple act of bringing media into the classroom was a way of decentering knowledge and opening up the ñpotential for genuine dialogue.ò Moreover, Masterman (1997) asserted that the imaginative and investigative approach of media studies was ñlight years ahead of the content-bound syllabuses of most traditional subjectsò (p. 49). Masterman was highly pragmatic: If media studies could be accepted as a subject in high schools, with dedicated instructors, it would develop enough institutional legitimacy, he thought, to enable it to create its own associations and journals. Arguably, it was precisely this move from a media studies on the margins to the educational legitimacy and institutionalization that would pave the way for new policies concerning media literacy later in the decade.

Yet, as media education became a part of Kï12 school curriculaðalbeit unevenly and with a certain amount of resistance from ñback to basicsò conservativesðthe critical, political agenda was often

[6] Although outside the scope of this essay, it bears noting that Marshall McLuhanûs preliminary work for his book *Understanding Media* was undertaken for a Ford Foundationïfunded study on behalf of the National Association of Educational Br000912 03d0.01c62( )]TJETQ0.00000912 0 612 792 reW*TuW*0000912 1i-438(t)6(e6(ese)8( )-319

softened and simplified to achieve the kind of instrumentality evident in the Aspen declaration of 1992. As media education guru David Buckingham (2003) put it,

> Media education is proposed as a way of dealing with some very wide and complex social problemsðand if the media are routinely identified as the overriding cause of these problems, media education frequently seems to be seen as the solution. (p. 11)

Just as the study of propaganda during the Second World War was transformed into the euphemism of ñcommunicationò as it developed into an academic discipline in the postwar world (Simpson, 1994), so, too, critiques of the media undertaken by 1960s social movement actors and radical adult educators were taken up and changed by educational institutions in the 1990s under the banner of ñmedia literacy.ò As an example of the gross simplification this shift entailed, by 2003, the American Center for Media Literacy had released a ñMediaLit Kitò that boiled the study of media down to five core concepts and five key questions (Thoman & Jolls, 2003).

Given its connection to a countercultural ethos steeped in the New Leftôs foundational belief in participatory democracy, it seems surprising, perhaps, that the new paradigm of media literacy fit so well with the emerging doctrine of neoliberalism. Yet, as several studies have convincingly demonstrated, neoliberalism built its legitimacy precisely on the critique of authority and repressive paternalism made by social movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005; Fraser, 2009; Hallin, 2008; Turner, 2006). Critiques of the mainstream media, like certain aspects of feminism, were readily adopted into mainstream culture (including advertising), while substantive social critiques, especially about economic redistribution and environmental and social justice, were largely brushed aside.

The various dead ends of television in the classroom were overcome by the structural emergence of digital in the mid-

innovative new forms of profit extraction from viewers and readers (transformed into ñprosumer content-makersò) in what Jodi Dean (2009) calls the system of ñ

that the study engages. Ito and the other authors demonstrate their sensitivity to definitions of literacy that emphasize its situatedness and embedding in relations of power.

> In our work, we suggest that not only are new media practices defining forms of literacy that rely on interactive and multimedia forms but they also are defining literacies that are specific to a particular media moment, and possibly generational identities. (Ito et al., 2009, p. 26)

While identifying youth practices online as literacy throughout the study, the authors advocate for adults to recognize youthûs activities as meaningful, demonstrating that there is a generational rift in definitions of literacy and its value.

The study by Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, and Robison (2009) takes a more explicitly normative approach to digital technologies in the classroom and identifies 11 core skills ñthat all youth need to learn if they are going to be equal participants in the world of tomorrowò (p. 21), including play, simulation, performance, appropriation, multitasking, judgment, networking, and transmedia navigation. Using existing innovations in the Kï12 classroom as models, the report suggests that there could be a more ñsystematic considerationò of the development of these skills in the curriculum. ñWe do not want to see media literacy treated as an add-on subject,ò write the authors. ñRather, its introduction should be a paradigm shift that, like multiculturalism or globalization, reshapes how we teach every existing subjectò (p. 109).

viral advertising, terrorism recruiting, and all the typical fears that surround modern youth (Shade, 2011). Media literacy promises resources for practices of freedom in this new fearful media environment, but questions about how media literacy itself legitimates education under technocapitalism also need to be posed.

From a cultural studies perspective, the rise of media literacy discourse is clearly linked to a constellation of social, political, and economic conditions—primary among them neoliberalism. The logics that it mobilizes—of inoculation against degraded culture, of reason over mindless pleasures, and of the active use of media for democracy—engage a set of deep-seated governmental problematics productive of the subject of modernity, *homo economicus* (Foucault, 2008). Proponents of all political stripes support the essentially governmental imaginary that an educated subject will be protected against a destructive system thanks to guidance that will make him or her aware of the connections between knowledge and power. This approach aims to mobilize the media themselves as a democratic counterforce, presuming the vulnerability of corporate media to critique. However, corporate media culture, more pervasive than ever, has come to demand this critique, which at the very least serves to legitimize its self-proclaimed provision of diverse choices on neutral platforms. For the most part, ideas about media literacy appear to operate seamlessly to help young people become better media consumers and media producers within the structural compulsion to participate that drives communicative capitalism.

In placing current media literacy discourse in relation to long-standing practices of using media as an efficient means to introduce modern practices—including market relations—into education, what I have offered here is an incentive for future research. More consideration is required, I contend, of the work that media literacy discourse performs in various institutional and policy contexts—in the United States and beyond. Institutional education, as an intrinsic part of the project of modernity, has been consistently criticized for not integrating fully enough a range of techniques and technologies that would engage students more effectively. Historical examples show that, in the United States, the marketplace is perpetually being presented as a more efficient educator than are public educational institutions, consistently marked as conservative and beleaguered. This is not new. Nor, for that matter, is the appropriation of the seemingly oppositional discipline of media studies into the mainstream of K–12 and postsecondary education, which has taken place over four decades or more. However, with the advent of communicative capitalism and compulsory digital participation, normative discourses of media literacy as tied to citizenship, participatory democracy, and even diversity cannot be assumed to work in univocal ways. What demands the attention of critical communication scholars now are the ways such ideas are articulated—however unwittingly—to forms of governmental justification immanent to the current neoliberal formation.

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