目 录

序 言

深层阅读悟真谛，双重联想扩视野

复旦大学翻译专业建立之初，针对新世纪翻译人才培养、成长的趋势，提出"译才不器"的理念。为达到这样一个培养目标，又具体提出了所培养的翻译人才须达到的四项要求：一、扎实的双语语言基本功；二、相当的中华文化基础；三、丰富的知识面；四、良好的思辨能力。我们认为，翻译专业的课程设置及相关的教材编撰均应最大程度地体现这四项要求。

一般来说，翻译专业本科学生在低年级阶段以基础语言训练及修学相关知识性课程为主，进入高年级阶段后，他们的专业课程数目增多，正规口笔译的训练量也加大。随之而来的是，他们的英汉语阅读，无论是数量还是质量也都必须进一步提升。英语阅读作为英语语言文学专业的一门传统课程，在翻译专业的课程设置中仍不可或缺，但其配置形式和内容选择发生了变化。因为翻译专业的英语阅读课要针对翻译专业的特点而开设，其主要目的在于扩大学生的认知视野，增强学生的分析与思辨能力，丰富学生的英语知识储备。换言之，翻译专业高年级的英语阅读课程的设计，可能更要突出其面广层深的特点。舍此，恐怕就很难达到提出的使学生有"丰富的知识面"和"良好的思辨能力"的要求。

谈及英语阅读，我们不能不看到当前普遍存在的"快餐式"阅读倾向。虽然"快餐式"英语阅读可能有其存在的理由，但其弊端也是显而易见的。这种英语阅读（或英语学习）的结果如同斯坦纳所说："英语的外层被学说英语的人习得，但他们
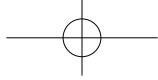
对隐含在这种语言里的历史、道德、文化背景存在是陌生的。"（George Steiner: *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* p.494）作为翻译专业(或英语语言文学专业)的一门高级课程，英语阅读应当明确拒绝"快餐式"阅读，提倡深层次阅读。这种阅读应当以原汁原味的英美文人、作家或知名专家学者的文章为主。如果我们的翻译专业（英语语言文学专业亦然）的英语阅读依赖"快餐式"英语材料，深入不下去，则时间一长，学生必然"营养不良"，后果是思想贫乏，语言苍白。这样，合格翻译人才的培养便无从谈起。

《多文体阅读》（*A Reading Course for Translation Majors*）专门为翻译专业高年级英语阅读课程而编写，并经过了几年的课堂实践。它的主要特点是：所选材料涵盖面宽、内容厚实、思想性强、语言道地而富韵味。每个单元的每篇文章都须细细咀嚼，方能消化吸收。从授课的角度讲，这本教材体现出两个特色：一是"读思结合"，即阅读与思考紧密相连，而且从某种程度上说，阅读与思考可以是循环往复的，即不仅是阅读之后有思考，而且还可以（甚至应当）思考之后再回头去重新阅读，以寻找或发掘出文章的相关含义或深层表意所在，如此才能让深层次的阅读奏效。每篇课文后面的十大讨论题便是为此目的而设置的。二是"用譬联想"，即在充分理解原文的基础上，对文章中的语言精华作精当的撷取，并在此基础上作语言与翻译方面的进一步联想，借此加强学生的语言与翻译应变能力。

《多文体阅读》的主笔者强晓虽是一位青年教师，却已从教多年。她酷爱英文，早在读硕士之时其文笔就出类拔萃；她勤勉好学（目前在读翻译学博士学位），深受复旦校园博雅环境的熏陶，读书杂涉多方；她钟爱教学，教学方式灵活，很受学生欢迎。更重要的是，她具有很强的敬业精神，做事踏实。正是这些优点成为她最终承担这本教材主笔的合适条件。当然，她为这本教材所付出的时间、精力、心智之多也是可想而知的。一个学者型翻译专业的教师，其铸成是要在实践中经历长期磨炼的。编写这本教材就是一种磨炼。我为这本教材的顺利完稿深感欣慰，同时希望《多文体阅读》对兄弟院系的师生有参考价值。当然，我作为这个系列教材的总主编，应当首先对书中可能存在的不足，乃至疏漏、错误之处负责。

何刚强

2010 年 5 月

编写说明

本书是一本为翻译专业本科高年级学生编写的阅读教材，历时近四年，是笔者反复教学实践的结果。笔者认为，本教材之所以谓之"多文体"，原因有二：

一、本书选材以非文学类为主，兼顾一些具有文学性的论述文。文章来源有原版教科书、学术专著、社科类畅销书、社科类经典著作、杂志期刊、个人随笔等等。选材广泛，风格多样，希望培养学生对于纯文学以外的不同风格文章的敏感度。

二、本书内容丰富、容量大，涉及文化、社会学、经济学、心理学、伦理学、艺术等各领域。每单元三篇文章，每篇都在 5,000 字左右，力求在满足学生阅读量的同时，构建学生的知识体系。

此外，本教材还有以下特色：

一、本书的八个单元有其内在的联系，且环环相扣，层层推进。每一单元的三篇文章内容呼应而风格迥异。笔者希望通过这样的编排，培养学生的整体观念。

二、本书旨在培养学生迅速吸收、理解和消化新信息，并在此基础上进行总结、分析、比较、评价，以及联系实际的能力，同时帮助学生养成主动吸收，应用新鲜语言素材的习惯。此外，笔者虽然不提倡对学生进行道德灌输，但因有感于现代社会正统价值观缺失、年轻人容易内心空虚等现状，所以在整本书的编写中，时刻不忘对人生观、价值观进行探讨，希望能潜移默化地引导学生。

三、讨论题 (Questions for Discussion) 是本书练习中的灵魂，集中体现了本书的主旨。翻译联想 (Translation Associations) 是另外一个较有特色的练习，它为讨论题的回答提供直接的语言素材，是连接信息、思想和语言的纽带。它通过培养学生对

"语义场"概念的认知及应用，引导学生将问题的讨论与语言的归纳学习有机地结合起来。

四、本书始终突出一个"趣"字。在选篇上，无论是庙堂之上的名家经典，还是江湖之中的草根之作，无不言之成趣，引人入胜；在练习的编写上，也尽量与学生的生活实际相结合，最大程度地激发其学习兴趣。

总而言之，笔者希望能借助本教材，更好地培养出学习速度快、思辨能力强、知识有广度、思想有厚度的学生，为他们将来成为优秀的译者打下基础。

当然，本书不仅是一本教材，也完全可以作为广大英语及翻译爱好者的一个读本。如果说这本书像一扇门，那么我们衷心地希望有更多的人能走进它，并由此步入一个更广阔的世界。

另外，对外经贸大学的项东老师担任了本书二至四单元的前期选篇及练习设计的工作，上海大学的李俐老师也参与了五至八单元的"翻译联想"这项练习的编写。特借此机会向她们表示衷心的感谢！

强　晓
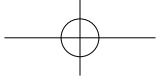
教学建议

一、使用前提

  首先，本书容量大，使用以一学年为宜，如果只上一学期，就必须有所取舍。其次，本书的使用是以学生已有较高的阅读和表达能力为前提的，如果学生英文水平不够的话，势必影响教学效果。所以，如果学生基础较薄弱，我们建议老师每周再增加两个课时，帮学生疏通语言。

二、使用原则

  要想最大程度地发挥本书的潜力，还需要老师和学生做到以下几点：

  1. 老师要确保学生在课前做好预习。笔者在实践中，要求学生在课前将课文至少读三遍。第一遍理解大意，第二遍查、背生词，第三遍则针对讨论题有的放矢。老师可以在每次上新课前给学生做一个单词小测验，这样不会占用多少时间，但可以督促学生自学生词。对于讨论题，如果是口头表达能力好的同学，可以让他们只写下要点，上课时再即兴发挥；如果是口头表达欠佳的同学，可以建议他们写得更加具体。

  2. 老师自己更加要做好充分的准备。从语言学习层面看，虽然要求学生自学语言，但老师要随时准备回答学生字词方面的问题。从思想内容层面看，老师要想更有效地引导学生的学习，就要做到既深入浅出，又高屋建瓴。笔者在备课时，由于深感自身知识储备的不足，常常是战战兢兢、如履薄冰。除了反复仔细研读每一篇

文章、思考文章之间的内在联系之外，还不忘加强相关内容的课外阅读，尽量做到"学生读一篇，我读十篇"。即便如此，在课堂上也很难始终做到得心应手。但笔者的总体感觉是，老师读得越多，思考得越多，对课堂讨论的控制力就越强，就能激发出学生更多的灵感。

3. 如果条件允许的话，不妨在学习本课程之前，先开设一门"批判性思维"（critical thinking）的课程。笔者在教学过程中体会到，课堂讨论往往会因为学生缺乏基本的逻辑思维能力而漏洞百出，流于肤浅，甚至陷入僵局。同理，这也要求教授这门课的老师具备较强的逻辑能力。

4. 如何评价学生表现是使用本书的一个难点。笔者曾尝试不设期末考试，完全以学生的课堂参与情况评定成绩。该做法的优点是极大地增强了学生课堂参与的积极性，缺点是很难将学生整个学期的课堂表现量化，容易流于主观，而且对性格内向、不爱发言的学生有失公允。经过摸索，我们现在采取的评价方法是综合考查学生的课堂表现、课后作业与期末论文，每部分各占三分之一。每篇文章结束后，让学生挑选一道自己最感兴趣的讨论题，作为课后作业，以书面形式交上来。期末论文也让学生联系所学课文，自由选题，写一篇思辨性的随笔。对于这三部分的评判标准，语言能力只占 30% 到 40%，更主要的则是考察学生吸收、理解和消化信息，并在此基础上进行总结、分析、比较、评价、联系实际的能力。

三、教学步骤 （以第二单元第二篇文章为例）

1. 学生课前预习

要求学生在课前自主通读全文，查、背生词，利用互联网搜索相关背景知识及作者信息；思考课后的讨论题，写下要点；读翻译联想，并练习将其中的词汇用在讨论题的回答中。

2. 课堂教学

1) 生词测验

a. My throat s_____（卡住）. Why do people keep saying these things? As if we truly were those little dolls sold in Chinatown tourist shops, heads b_____（上下快速摆动）up and down in complacent agreement to anything said!

b. Do they also conclude that Chinese people evolved into a mild-mannered lot because the language only allowed them to h_____（一瘸一拐地走）forth with minced words?

c. Was it respect—pounded in by the Chinese imperative to accept c_____（错综复杂的) explanations—that had me agreeing that I might find it worthwhile to drive seventy-five miles to view a time-share resort?

…

2) 作者背景

以学生回答为主，老师总结、引申为辅。例如，谭恩美（Amy Tan）到底算不算语言学家？还是只能算业余语言学家？她开过公司，我们是否可以称她为商业女性？作为小说家，她擅长讲故事的写作风格是否在本文中有所体现？

3) 课后讨论题

以学生回答为主，老师总结、引申为辅。老师可以借助 PPT 对每个问题作出小结，如第 6 题：

- An anecdote of her relative pretending to be polite
- The claim that Chinese people are "discreet and modest" because there are no words for "yes" and "no"/they lack the linguistic means to make decisions or assertions（待驳斥的观点）
- Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to show that language does not determine reality（驳论证）
- Personal experience to show that Chinese people are not "discreet and modest"（驳论点）
- The danger of comparing two languages（指出观点错误的原因）
- Personal experience to show that Chinese language use is "strategic" rather than "discreet"（在驳论的基础上立论）
- The danger of the "discreet" stereotype（指出错误观点的危害）
- There ARE words for "yes" and "no"（驳论据）
- An anecdote of understanding her relatives' strategic language

有时也可以借用图表，例如第 1 题的前半部分：

Language determines how we see the world.
Language influences how we see the world.
The worlds of different linguistic communities are distinct worlds. (Language differences are paralleled by non-linguistic cognitive differences.)

不同颜色可以一目了然地表示出萨丕尔 – 沃尔夫假设（Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis）不同版本的强弱。

另外，老师应该特别指出，学生可以借助翻译联想中的词汇来回答问题，如第 5 题。
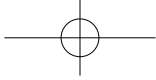
3. 课后作业

1) 让学生挑选一道各自最感兴趣的讨论题，以书面形式交上来。

2) 做习语搭配（Idiomatic Collocation），以书面形式交上来。

3) 翻译背诵（Translation and Recitation）和课堂活动（Activity）老师可以选择使用。在课时紧张的情况下，建议课堂活动每一单元做一次，以提高学生的学习兴趣。

Unit 1　Media

> **Objectives**
> - **Learn the characteristics of each medium**
> - **Explore how media have changed our reading and thinking**
> - **Reflect on the influence of media on our life**

Text 1

Is Google Making Us Stupid: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains?

By Nicholas Carr

"Dave, stop. Stop, will you? Stop, Dave. Will you stop, Dave?" So the supercomputer HAL pleads with the implacable astronaut Dave Bowman in a famous and weirdly poignant scene toward the end of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Bowman, having nearly been sent to a deep-space death by the malfunctioning machine, is calmly, coldly disconnecting the memory circuits that control its artificial brain. "Dave, my mind is going," HAL says, forlornly. "I can feel it. I can feel it."

I can feel it, too. Over the past few years I've had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn't going—so far as I can tell—but it's changing. I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I'm reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. I feel as if I'm always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle.

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I think I know what's going on. For more than a decade now, I've been spending a lot of time online, searching and surfing and sometimes adding to the great databases of the Internet. The Web has been a godsend to me as a writer. Research that once required days in the stacks or periodical rooms of libraries can now be done in minutes. A few Google searches, some quick clicks on hyperlinks, and I've got the telltale fact or pithy quote I was after. Even when I'm not working, I'm as likely as not to be foraging in the Web's info-thickets—reading and writing e-mails, scanning headlines and blog posts, watching videos and listening to podcasts, or just tripping from link to link. (Unlike footnotes, to which they're sometimes likened, hyperlinks don't merely point to related works; they propel you toward them.)

For me, as for others, the Net is becoming a universal medium, the conduit for most of the information that flows through my eyes and ears and into my mind. The advantages of having immediate access to such an incredibly rich store of information are many, and they've been widely described and duly applauded. "The perfect recall of silicon memory," *Wired*'s Clive Thompson has written, "can be an enormous boon to thinking." But that boon comes at a price. As the media theorist Marshall McLuhan pointed out in the 1960s, media are not just passive channels of information. They supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought. And what the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

I'm not the only one. When I mention my troubles with reading to friends and acquaintances—literary types, most of them—many say they're having similar experiences. The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing. Some of the bloggers I follow have also begun mentioning the phenomenon. Scott Karp, who writes a blog about online media, recently confessed that he has stopped reading books altogether. "I was a lit major in college, and used to be a voracious book reader." he wrote. "What happened?" He speculates on the answer: "What if I do all my reading on the web not so much because the way I read has changed, i.e. I'm just seeking convenience, but because the way I THINK has changed?"

Bruce Friedman, who blogs regularly about the use of computers in medicine, also has described how the Internet has altered his mental habits. "I now have almost totally lost the ability to read and absorb a longish article on the web or in print," he wrote earlier this year. A pathologist who has long been on the faculty of the University of Michigan Medical School, Friedman elaborated on his comment in a telephone conversation with me. His thinking, he said, has taken on a "staccato" quality, reflecting the way he quickly scans short passages of text from many sources online. "I can't read *War and Peace* anymore," he admitted. "I've lost the ability to do that. Even a blog post of more than three or four paragraphs is too much to absorb. I skim it."

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Anecdotes alone don't prove much. And we still await the long-term neurological and psychological experiments that will provide a definitive picture of how Internet use affects cognition. But a recently published study of online research habits, conducted by scholars from University College London, suggests that we may well be in the midst of a sea change in the way we read and think. As part of the five-year research program, the scholars examined computer logs documenting the behavior of visitors to two popular research sites, one operated by the British Library and one by a UK educational consortium, that provide access to journal articles, e-books, and other sources of written information. They found that people using the sites exhibited "a form of skimming activity," hopping from one source to another and rarely returning to any source they'd already visited. They typically read no more than one or two pages of an article or book before they would "bounce" out to another site. Sometimes they'd save a long article, but there's no evidence that they ever went back and actually read it. The authors of the study report:

> It is clear that users are not reading online in the traditional sense; indeed there are signs that new forms of "reading" are emerging as users "power browse" horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins. It almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense.

Thanks to the ubiquity of text on the Internet, not to mention the popularity of text-messaging on cell phones, we may well be reading more today than we did in the 1970s or 1980s, when television was our medium of choice. But it's a different kind of reading, and behind it lies a different kind of thinking—perhaps even a new sense of the self. "We are not only what we read," says Maryanne Wolf, a developmental psychologist at Tufts University and the author of *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. "We are how we read." Wolf worries that the style of reading promoted by the Net, a style that puts "efficiency" and "immediacy" above all else, may be weakening our capacity for the kind of deep reading that emerged when an earlier technology, the printing press, made long and complex works of prose commonplace. When we read online, she says, we tend to become "mere decoders of information." Our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged.

Reading, explains Wolf, is not an instinctive skill for human beings. It's not etched into our genes the way speech is. We have to teach our minds how to translate the symbolic characters we see into the language we understand. And the media or other technologies we use in learning and practicing the craft of reading play an important part in shaping the neural circuits inside our brains. Experiments demonstrate that readers of ideograms, such as the Chinese, develop a mental circuitry for reading that is very different from the circuitry found in those of us whose written language employs an alphabet. The variations extend across many regions of the brain, including those that govern such essential

cognitive functions as memory and the interpretation of visual and auditory stimuli. We can expect as well that the circuits woven by our use of the Net will be different from those woven by our reading of books and other printed works.

Sometime in 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche bought a typewriter—a Mailing-Hansen Writing Ball, to be precise. His vision was failing, and keeping his eyes focused on a page had become exhausting and painful, often bringing on crushing headaches. He had been forced to curtail his writing, and he feared that he would soon have to give it up. The typewriter rescued him, at least for a time. Once he had mastered touch-typing, he was able to write with his eyes closed, using only the tips of his fingers. Words could once again flow from his mind to the page.

But the machine had a subtler effect on his work. One of Nietzsche's friends, a composer, noticed a change in the style of his writing. His already terse prose had become even tighter, more telegraphic. "Perhaps you will through this instrument even take to a new idiom," the friend wrote in a letter, noting that, in his own work, his "'thoughts' in music and language often depend on the quality of pen and paper."

"You are right;" Nietzsche replied, "our writing equipment takes part in the forming of our thoughts." Under the sway of the machine, writes the German media scholar Friedrich A. Kittler, Nietzsche's prose "changed from arguments to aphorisms, from thoughts to puns, from rhetoric to telegram style."

The human brain is almost infinitely malleable. People used to think that our mental meshwork, the dense connections formed among the 100 billion or so neurons inside our skulls, was largely fixed by the time we reached adulthood. But brain researchers have discovered that that's not the case. James Olds, a professor of neuroscience who directs the Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study at George Mason University, says that even the adult mind "is very plastic." Nerve cells routinely break old connections and form new ones. "The brain," according to Olds, "has the ability to reprogram itself on the fly, altering the way it functions."

As we use what the sociologist Daniel Bell has called our "intellectual technologies"— the tools that extend our mental rather than our physical capacities—we inevitably begin to take on the qualities of those technologies. The mechanical clock, which came into common use in the 14th century, provides a compelling example. In *Technics and Civilization*, the historian and cultural critic Lewis Mumford described how the clock "disassociated time from human events and helped create the belief in an independent world of mathematically measurable sequences." The "abstract framework of divided time" became "the point of reference for both action and thought."

The clock's methodical ticking helped bring into being the scientific mind and the scientific man. But it also took something away. As the late MIT computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum observed in his 1976 book, *Computer Power and Human Reason: From Judgment to Calculation*, the conception of the world that emerged from the widespread

use of timekeeping instruments "remains an impoverished version of the older one, for it rests on a rejection of those direct experiences that formed the basis for, and indeed constituted, the old reality." In deciding when to eat, to work, to sleep, to rise, we stopped listening to our senses and started obeying the clock.

The process of adapting to new intellectual technologies is reflected in the changing metaphors we use to explain ourselves to ourselves. When the mechanical clock arrived, people began thinking of their brains as operating "like clockwork." Today, in the age of software, we have come to think of them as operating "like computers." But the changes, neuroscience tells us, go much deeper than metaphor. Thanks to our brain's plasticity, the adaptation occurs also at a biological level.

The Internet promises to have particularly far-reaching effects on cognition. In a paper published in 1936, the British mathematician Alan Turing proved that a digital computer, which at the time existed only as a theoretical machine, could be programmed to perform the function of any other information-processing device. And that's what we're seeing today. The Internet, an immeasurably powerful computing system, is subsuming most of our other intellectual technologies. It's becoming our map and our clock, our printing press and our typewriter, our calculator and our telephone, and our radio and TV.

When the Net absorbs a medium, that medium is recreated in the Net's image. It injects the medium's content with hyperlinks, blinking ads, and other digital gewgaws, and it surrounds the content with the content of all the other media it has absorbed. A new e-mail message, for instance, may announce its arrival as we're glancing over the latest headlines at a newspaper's site. The result is to scatter our attention and diffuse our concentration.

The Net's influence doesn't end at the edges of a computer screen, either. As people's minds become attuned to the crazy quilt of Internet media, traditional media have to adapt to the audience's new expectations. Television programs add text crawls and pop-up ads, and magazines and newspapers shorten their articles, introduce capsule summaries, and crowd their pages with easy-to-browse info-snippets. When, in March of this year, *The New York Times* decided to devote the second and third pages of every edition to article abstracts, its design director, Tom Bodkin, explained that the "shortcuts" would give harried readers a quick "taste" of the day's news, sparing them the "less efficient" method of actually turning the pages and reading the articles. Old media have little choice but to play by the new-media rules.

Never has a communications system played so many roles in our lives—or exerted such broad influence over our thoughts—as the Internet does today. Yet, for all that's been written about the Net, there's been little consideration of how, exactly, it's reprogramming us. The Net's intellectual ethic remains obscure.

About the same time that Nietzsche started using his typewriter, an earnest young man named Frederick Winslow Taylor carried a stopwatch into the Midvale Steel Plant in

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Philadelphia and began a historic series of experiments aimed at improving the efficiency of the plant's machinists. With the approval of Midvale's owners, he recruited a group of factory hands, set them to work on various metalworking machines, and recorded and timed their every movement as well as the operations of the machines. By breaking down every job into a sequence of small, discrete steps and then testing different ways of performing each one, Taylor created a set of precise instructions—an "algorithm," we might say today—for how each worker should work. Midvale's employees grumbled about the strict new regime, claiming that it turned them into little more than automatons, but the factory's productivity soared.

More than a hundred years after the invention of the steam engine, the Industrial Revolution had at last found its philosophy and its philosopher. Taylor's tight industrial choreography—his "system," as he liked to call it—was embraced by manufacturers throughout the country and, in time, around the world. Seeking maximum speed, maximum efficiency, and maximum output, factory owners used time-and-motion studies to organize their work and configure the jobs of their workers. The goal, as Taylor defined it in his celebrated 1911 treatise, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, was to identify and adopt, for every job, the "one best method" of work and thereby to effect "the gradual substitution of science for rule of thumb throughout the mechanic arts." Once his system was applied to all acts of manual labor, Taylor assured his followers, it would bring about a restructuring not only of industry but of society, creating a utopia of perfect efficiency. "In the past the man has been first," he declared; "in the future the system must be first."

Taylor's system is still very much with us; it remains the ethic of industrial manufacturing. And now, thanks to the growing power that computer engineers and software coders wield over our intellectual lives, Taylor's ethic is beginning to govern the realm of the mind as well. The Internet is a machine designed for the efficient and automated collection, transmission, and manipulation of information, and its legions of programmers are intent on finding the "one best method"—the perfect algorithm—to carry out every mental movement of what we've come to describe as "knowledge work."

Google's headquarters, in Mountain View, California—the Googleplex—is the Internet's high church, and the religion practiced inside its walls is Taylorism. Google, says its chief executive, Eric Schmidt, is "a company that's founded around the science of measurement," and it is striving to "systematize everything" it does. Drawing on the terabytes of behavioral data it collects through its search engine and other sites, it carries out thousands of experiments a day, according to the *Harvard Business Review*, and it uses the results to refine the algorithms that increasingly control how people find information and extract meaning from it. What Taylor did for the work of the hand, Google is doing for the work of the mind.

The company has declared that its mission is "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." It seeks to develop "the perfect search engine,"

which it defines as something that "understands exactly what you mean and gives you back exactly what you want." In Google's view, information is a kind of commodity, a utilitarian resource that can be mined and processed with industrial efficiency. The more pieces of information we can "access" and the faster we can extract their gist, the more productive we become as thinkers.

Where does it end? Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the gifted young men who founded Google while pursuing doctoral degrees in computer science at Stanford, speak frequently of their desire to turn their search engine into an artificial intelligence, a HAL-like machine that might be connected directly to our brains. "The ultimate search engine is something as smart as people—or smarter," Page said in a speech a few years back. "For us, working on search is a way to work on artificial intelligence." In a 2004 interview with *Newsweek*, Brin said, "Certainly if you had all the world's information directly attached to your brain, or an artificial brain that was smarter than your brain, you'd be better off." Last year, Page told a convention of scientists that Google is "really trying to build artificial intelligence and to do it on a large scale."

Such an ambition is a natural one, even an admirable one, for a pair of math whizzes with vast quantities of cash at their disposal and a small army of computer scientists in their employ. A fundamentally scientific enterprise, Google is motivated by a desire to use technology, in Eric Schmidt's words, "to solve problems that have never been solved before," and artificial intelligence is the hardest problem out there. Why wouldn't Brin and Page want to be the ones to crack it?

Still, their easy assumption that we'd all "be better off" if our brains were supplemented, or even replaced, by an artificial intelligence is unsettling. It suggests a belief that intelligence is the output of a mechanical process, a series of discrete steps that can be isolated, measured, and optimized. In Google's world, the world we enter when we go online, there's little place for the fuzziness of contemplation. Ambiguity is not an opening for insight but a bug to be fixed. The human brain is just an outdated computer that needs a faster processor and a bigger hard drive.

The idea that our minds should operate as high-speed data-processing machines is not only built into the workings of the Internet, it is the network's reigning business model as well. The faster we surf across the Web—the more links we click and pages we view—the more opportunities Google and other companies gain to collect information about us and to feed us advertisements. Most of the proprietors of the commercial Internet have a financial stake in collecting the crumbs of data we leave behind as we flit from link to link—the more crumbs, the better. The last thing these companies want is to encourage leisurely reading or slow, concentrated thought. It's in their economic interest to drive us to distraction.

Maybe I'm just a worrywart. Just as there's a tendency to glorify technological progress, there's a countertendency to expect the worst of every new tool or machine. In

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Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates bemoaned the development of writing. He feared that, as people came to rely on the written word as a substitute for the knowledge they used to carry inside their heads, they would, in the words of one of the dialogue's characters, "cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful." And because they would be able to "receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, they would "be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant." They would be "filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of real wisdom." Socrates wasn't wrong—the new technology did often have the effects he feared—but he was shortsighted. He couldn't foresee the many ways that writing and reading would serve to spread information, spur fresh ideas, and expand human knowledge (if not wisdom).

The arrival of Gutenberg's printing press, in the 15th century, set off another round of teeth gnashing. The Italian humanist Hieronimo Squarciafico worried that the easy availability of books would lead to intellectual laziness, making men "less studious" and weakening their minds. Others argued that cheaply printed books and broadsheets would undermine religious authority, demean the work of scholars and scribes, and spread sedition and debauchery. As New York University professor Clay Shirky notes, "Most of the arguments made against the printing press were correct, even prescient." But, again, the doomsayers were unable to imagine the myriad blessings that the printed word would deliver.

So, yes, you should be skeptical of my skepticism. Perhaps those who dismiss critics of the Internet as Luddites or nostalgists will be proved correct, and from our hyperactive, data-stoked minds will spring a golden age of intellectual discovery and universal wisdom. Then again, the Net isn't the alphabet, and although it may replace the printing press, it produces something altogether different. The kind of deep reading that a sequence of printed pages promotes is valuable not just for the knowledge we acquire from the author's words but for the intellectual vibrations those words set off within our own minds. In the quiet spaces opened up by the sustained, undistracted reading of a book, or by any other act of contemplation, for that matter, we make our own associations, draw our own inferences and analogies, foster our own ideas. Deep reading, as Maryanne Wolf argues, is indistinguishable from deep thinking.

If we lose those quiet spaces, or fill them up with "content," we will sacrifice something important not only in our selves but in our culture. In a recent essay, the playwright Richard Foreman eloquently described what's at stake:

> I come from a tradition of Western culture, in which the ideal (my ideal) was the complex, dense and "cathedral-like" structure of the highly educated and articulate personality—a man or woman who carried inside themselves a personally constructed and unique version of the entire heritage of the West. [But now] I see within us all (myself included) the replacement of complex inner

density with a new kind of self—evolving under the pressure of information overload and the technology of the "instantly available."

As we are drained of our "inner repertory of dense cultural inheritance," Foreman concluded, we risk turning into "'pancake people'—spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button."

I'm haunted by that scene in *2001*. What makes it so poignant, and so weird, is the computer's emotional response to the disassembly of its mind: its despair as one circuit after another goes dark, its childlike pleading with the astronaut—"I can feel it. I can feel it. I'm afraid"—and its final reversion to what can only be called a state of innocence. HAL's outpouring of feeling contrasts with the emotionlessness that characterizes the human figures in the film, who go about their business with an almost robotic efficiency. Their thoughts and actions feel scripted, as if they're following the steps of an algorithm. In the world of *2001*, people have become so machinelike that the most human character turns out to be a machine. That's the essence of Kubrick's dark prophecy: as we come to rely on computers to mediate our understanding of the world, it is our own intelligence that flattens into artificial intelligence.

Who Is the Author?

This article is taken from the July/August 2008 edition of *The Atlantic*. After this article, Nicholas Carr developed it into a book entitled *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. Find out more about the book and the author online or from other sources, and choose a title (or titles) that suit(s) him best.

A. Journalist

B. Expert on information technology

C. Academic

D. Blogger

E. Best-selling author

F. Other (please specify)

Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways has the Net affected people's reading and thinking according to Nicholas Carr?

2. Retell the story of Nietzsche briefly. What is the author trying to convey by this story?

3. "Our writing equipment takes part in the forming of our thoughts." Are you a blog writer? How does the writing equipment of blogs differ from that of diaries? How has it affected (your) blog writing?

4. Why does the Net tend to "scatter our attention and diffuse our concentration"?

5. What is Carr's purpose in calling our attention to the development of writing and thinking toward the end of the article?

6. How many parts can this article be decided into? Give a subtitle to each part.

7. "The advantages of having immediate access to such an incredibly rich store of information are many, and they've been widely described and duly applauded." Find places where Carr mentions these advantages. What is the author's tone in mentioning them?

8. Have you ever experienced the "deep reading" that the author advocates? Do you find it possible to "read deeply and without distraction" online? Do you believe that the Internet has exerted any positive effects on your reading and thinking?

9. In presenting his argument, what types of evidence does Carr offer? Can you detect any weaknesses in his reasoning? What counterarguments can you make?

10. This article is taken from *The Atlantic*. Find out more about this magazine online. Do you think the author has taken into account the target audience of the magazine in writing this article?

Translation Associations: Advantages and Disadvantages of the Internet

1. 资源共享 resource sharing
2. 交流便捷 convenience in communication; speedy information exchange
3. 迅速获得丰富信息 immediate access to a rich store of information
4. 言论自由 free speech
5. 表达民意 channels for public opinion; voicing of public opinion
6. 信息超载，信息泛滥 information overload/glut; info-trash; information pollution
7. 垃圾邮件 spam
8. 网络色情 online pornography
9. 网瘾 Internet addiction
10. 被动接受信息 take in information passively; be a passive recipient of information
11. 缺乏思考 lack of reflection/contemplation
12. 注意力分散 loss of concentration

Idiomatic Collocations

Make sentences with the following expressions from the text.

1. tinker with…
2. immerse oneself in…
3. lose the thread
4. zip along the surface
5. in the midst of a sea change
6. come into common use
7. operate like clockwork
8. play by the rules
9. rule of thumb
10. wield growing power over…

Translation and Recitation

1. What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

2. When, in March of this year, *The New York Times* decided to devote the second and third pages of every edition to article abstracts, its design director, Tom Bodkin, explained that the "shortcuts" would give harried readers a quick "taste" of the day's news, sparing them the "less efficient" method of actually turning the pages and reading the articles. Old media have little choice but to play by the new-media rules.

3. As we are drained of our "inner repertory of dense cultural inheritance," Foreman concluded, we risk turning into "'pancake people'—spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button."

Activity: Research and Role Play—Dealing with Internet Addiction

Many college students suffer from Internet addiction nowadays, which has severely affected their academic performance, their social life, their all-round development, and, in some cases, even their health. Divide yourselves into groups of three or four, research on the causes and cures of Internet addiction after class, and then prepare a five-minute role play to demonstrate both the appropriate and inappropriate ways of dealing with Internet addiction.

Text 2

The Age of Show Business

By Neil Postman

A dedicated graduate student I know returned to his small apartment the night before a major examination only to discover that his solitary lamp was broken beyond repair. After a whiff of panic, he was able to restore both his equanimity and his chances for a satisfactory grade by turning on the television set, turning off the sound, and with his back to the set, using its light to read important passages on which he was to be tested. This is one use of television—as a source of illuminating the printed page.

But the television screen is more than a light source. It is also a smooth, nearly flat surface on which the printed word may be displayed. We have all stayed at hotels in

which the TV set has had a special channel for describing the day's events in letters rolled endlessly across the screen. This is another use of television—as an electronic bulletin board.

Many television sets are also large and sturdy enough to bear the weight of a small library. The top of an old-fashioned RCA console can handle as many as thirty books, and I know one woman who has securely placed her entire collection of Dickens, Flaubert, and Turgenev on the top of a 21-inch Westinghouse. Here is still another use of television—as bookcase.

I bring forward these quixotic uses of television to ridicule the hope harbored by some that television can be used to support the literate tradition. Such a hope represents exactly what Marshall McLuhan used to call "rear-view mirror" thinking: the assumption that a new medium is merely an extension or amplification of an older one; that an automobile, for example, is only a fast horse, or an electric light a powerful candle. To make such a mistake in the matter at hand is to misconstrue entirely how television redefines the meaning of public discourse. Television does not extend or amplify literate culture. It attacks it. If television is a continuation of anything, it is of a tradition begun by the telegraph and photograph in the mid-nineteenth century, not by the printing press in the fifteenth.

What is television? What kinds of conversations does it permit? What are the intellectual tendencies it encourages? What sort of culture does it produce?

These are the questions to be addressed in the rest of this book, and to approach them with a minimum of confusion, I must begin by making a distinction between a technology and a medium. We might say that a technology is to a medium as the brain is to the mind. Like the brain, a technology is a physical apparatus. Like the mind, a medium is a use to which a physical apparatus is put. A technology becomes a medium as it employs a particular symbolic code, as it finds its place in a particular social setting, as it insinuates itself into economic and political contexts. A technology, in other words, is merely a machine. A medium is the social and intellectual environment a machine creates.

Of course, like the brain itself, every technology has an inherent bias. It has within its physical form a predisposition toward being used in certain ways and not others. Only those who know nothing of the history of technology believe that a technology is entirely neutral. There is an old joke that mocks that naive belief. Thomas Edison, it goes, would have revealed his discovery of the electric light much sooner than he did except for the fact that every time he turned it on, he held it to his mouth and said, "Hello? Hello?"

Not very likely. Each technology has an agenda of its own. It is, as I have suggested, a metaphor waiting to unfold. The printing press, for example, had a clear bias toward being used as a linguistic medium. It is conceivable to use it exclusively for the reproduction of pictures. And, one imagines, the Roman Catholic Church would not have objected to its being so used in the sixteenth century. Had that been the case, the Protestant Reformation
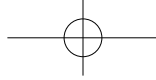
might not have occurred, for as Luther contended, with the word of God on every family's kitchen table, Christians do not require the Papacy to interpret it for them. But in fact there never was much chance that the press would be used solely, or even very much, for the duplication of icons. From its beginning in the fifteenth century, the press was perceived as an extraordinary opportunity for the display and mass distribution of written language. Everything about its technical possibilities led in that direction. One might even say it was invented for that purpose.

The technology of television has a bias, as well. It is conceivable to use television as a lamp, a surface for texts, a bookcase, even as radio. But it has not been so used and will not be so used, at least in America. Thus, in answering the question, What is television? We must understand as a first point that we are not talking about television as a technology but television as a medium. There are many places in the world where television, though the same technology as it is in America, is an entirely different medium from that which we know. I refer to places where the majority of people do not have television sets, and those who do have only one; where only one station is available; where television does not operate around the clock; where most programs have as their purpose the direct furtherance of government ideology and policy; where commercials are unknown, and "talking heads" are the principal image; where television is mostly used as if it were radio. For these reasons and more television will not have the same meaning or power as it does in America, which is to say, it is possible for a technology to be so used that its potentialities are prevented from developing and its social consequences kept to a minimum.

But in America, this has not been the case. Television has found in liberal democracy and a relatively free market economy a nurturing climate in which its full potentialities as a technology of images could be exploited. One result of this has been that American television programs are in demand all over the world. The total estimate of US television program exports is approximately 100,000 to 200,000 hours, equally divided among Latin America, Asia and Europe. Over the years, programs like "Gunsmoke," "Bonanza," "Mission: Impossible," "Star Trek," "Kojak," and more recently, "Dallas" and "Dynasty" have been as popular in England, Japan, Israel and Norway as in Omaha, Nebraska. I have heard (but not verified) that some years ago the Lapps postponed for several days their annual and, one supposes, essential migratory journey so that they could find out who shot J.R. All of this has occurred simultaneously with the decline of America's moral and political prestige worldwide. American television programs are in demand not because America is loved but because American television is loved.

We need not be detained too long in figuring out why. In watching American television, one is reminded of George Bernard Shaw's remark on his first seeing the glittering neon signs of Broadway and 42nd Street at night. "It must be beautiful," he said, "if you cannot read." American television is, indeed, a beautiful spectacle, a visual delight, pouring forth thousands of images on any given day. The average length of a shot on

network television is only 3.5 seconds, so that the eye never rests, always has something new to see. Moreover, television offers viewers a variety of subject matter, requires minimal skills to comprehend it, and is largely aimed at emotional gratification. Even commercials, which some regard as an annoyance, are exquisitely crafted, always pleasing to the eye and accompanied by exciting music. There is no question but that the best photography in the world is presently seen on television commercials. American television, in other words, is devoted entirely to supplying its audience with entertainment.

Of course, to say that television is entertaining is merely banal. Such a fact is hardly threatening to a culture, not even worth writing a book about. It may even be a reason for rejoicing. Life, as we like to say, is not a highway strewn with flowers. The sight of a few blossoms here and there may make our journey a trifle more endurable. The Lapps undoubtedly thought so. We may surmise that the ninety million Americans who watch television every night also think so. But what I am claiming here is not that television is entertaining but that it has made entertainment itself the natural format for the representation of all experience. Our television set keeps us in constant communion with the world, but it does so with a face whose smiling countenance is unalterable. The problem is not that television presents us with entertaining subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining, which is another issue altogether.

To say it still another way: Entertainment is the supra-ideology of all discourse on television. No matter what is depicted or from what point of view, the overarching assumption is that it is there for our amusement and pleasure. That is why even on news shows which provide us daily with fragments of tragedy and barbarism, we are urged by the newscasters to "join them tomorrow." What for? One would think that several minutes of murder and mayhem would suffice as material for a month of sleepless nights. We accept the newscasters' invitation because we know that the "news" is not to be taken seriously, that it is all in fun, so to say. Everything about a news show tells us this—the good looks and amiability of the cast, their pleasant banter, the exciting music that opens and closes the show, the vivid film footage, the attractive commercials—all these and more suggest that what we have just seen is no cause for weeping. A news show, to put it plainly, is a format for entertainment, not for education, reflection or catharsis. And we must not judge too harshly those who have framed it in this way. They are not assembling the news to be read, or broadcasting it to be heard. They are televising the news to be seen. They must follow where their medium leads. There is no conspiracy here, no lack of intelligence, only a straightforward recognition that "good television" has little to do with what is "good" about exposition or other forms of verbal communication but everything to do with what the pictorial images look like.

I should like to illustrate this point by offering the case of the eighty-minute discussion provided by the ABC network on November 20, 1983, following its controversial movie *The Day After*. Though the memory of this telecast has receded for most, I choose this

case because, clearly, here was television taking its most "serious" and "responsible" stance. Everything that made up this broadcast recommended it as a critical test of television's capacity to depart from an entertainment mode and rise to the level of public instruction. In the first place, the subject was the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. Second, the film itself had been attacked by several influential bodies politic, including the Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. Thus, it was important that the network display television's value and serious intentions as a medium of information and coherent discourse. Third, on the program itself no musical theme was used as background—a significant point since almost all television programs are embedded in music, which helps to tell the audience what emotions are to be called forth. This is a standard theatrical device, and its absence on television is always ominous. Fourth, there were no commercials during the discussion, thus elevating the tone of the event to the state of reverence usually reserved for the funerals of assassinated Presidents. And finally, the participants included Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, and Elie Wiesel, each of whom is a symbol of sorts of serious discourse. Although Kissinger, somewhat later, made an appearance on the hit show "Dynasty," he was then and still is a paradigm of intellectual sobriety; and Wiesel, practically a walking metaphor of social conscience. Indeed, the other members of the cast—Carl Sagan; William Buckley and General Brent Scowcroft—are, each in his way, men of intellectual bearing who are not expected to participate in trivial public matters.

The program began with Ted Koppel, master of ceremonies, so to speak, indicating that what followed was not intended to be a debate but a discussion. And so those who are interested in philosophies of discourse had an excellent opportunity to observe what serious television means by the word "discussion." Here is what it means: Each of six men was given approximately five minutes to say something about the subject. There was, however, no agreement on exactly what the subject was, and no one felt obliged to respond to anything anyone else said. In fact, it would have been difficult to do so, since the participants were called upon seriatim, as if they were finalists in a beauty contest, each being given his share of minutes in front of the camera. Thus, if Mr. Wiesel, who was called upon last, had a response to Mr. Buckley, who was called upon first, there would have been four commentaries in between, occupying about twenty minutes, so that the audience (if not Mr. Wiesel himself) would have had difficulty remembering the argument which prompted his response. In fact, the participants—most of whom were no strangers to television—largely avoided addressing each other's points. They used their initial minutes and then their subsequent ones to intimate their position or give an impression. Dr. Kissinger, for example, seemed intent on making viewers feel sorry that he was no longer their Secretary of State by reminding everyone of books he had once written, proposals he had once made, and negotiations he had once conducted. Mr. McNamara informed the audience that he had eaten lunch in Germany that very afternoon, and went on to say that he had at least fifteen proposals to reduce nuclear arms. One would have thought that the

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discussion would turn on this issue, but the others seemed about as interested in it as they were in what he had for lunch in Germany. (Later, he took the initiative to mention three of his proposals but they were not discussed.) Elie Wiesel, in a series of quasi-parables and paradoxes, stressed the tragic nature of the human condition, but because he did not have the time to provide a context for his remarks, he seemed quixotic and confused, conveying an impression of an itinerant rabbi who has wandered into a coven of Gentiles.

In other words, this was no discussion as we normally use the word. Even when the "discussion" period began, there were no arguments or counterarguments, no scrutiny of assumptions, no explanations, no elaborations, no definitions. Carl Sagan made, in my opinion, the most coherent statement—a four-minute rationale for a nuclear freeze—but it contained at least two questionable assumptions and was not carefully examined. Apparently, no one wanted to take time from his own few minutes to call attention to someone else's. Mr. Koppel, for his part, felt obliged to keep the "show" moving, and though he occasionally pursued what he discerned as a line of thought, he was more concerned to give each man his fair allotment of time.

But it is not time constraints alone that produce such fragmented and discontinuous language. When a television show is in process, it is very nearly impermissible to say, "Let me think about that" or "I don't know" or "What do you mean when you say…?" or "From what sources does your information come?" This type of discourse not only slows down the tempo of the show but creates the impression of uncertainty or lack of finish. It tends to reveal people in the act of thinking, which is as disconcerting and boring on television as it is on a Las Vegas stage. Thinking does not play well on television, a fact that television directors discovered long ago. There is not much to see in it. It is, in a phrase, not a performing art. But television demands a performing art, and so what the ABC network gave us was a picture of men of sophisticated verbal skills and political understanding being brought to heel by a medium that requires them to fashion performances rather than ideas. Which accounts for why the eighty minutes were very entertaining, in the way of a Samuel Beckett play: The intimations of gravity hung heavy, the meaning passeth all understanding. The performances, of course, were highly professional. Sagan abjured the turtle-neck sweater in which he starred when he did "Cosmos." He even had his hair cut for the event. His part was that of the logical scientist speaking in behalf of the planet. It is to be doubted that Paul Newman could have done better in the role, although Leonard Nimoy might have. Scowcroft was suitably military in his bearing—terse and distant, the unbreakable defender of national security. Kissinger, as always, was superb in the part of the knowing world statesman, weary of the sheer responsibility of keeping disaster at bay. Koppel played to perfection the part of a moderator, pretending, as it were, that he was sorting out ideas while, in fact, he was merely directing the performances. At the end, one could only applaud those performances, which is what a good television program always aims to achieve; that is to say, applause, not reflection.

I do not say categorically that it is impossible to use television as a carrier of coherent language or thought in process. William Buckley's own program, "Firing Line," occasionally shows people in the act of thinking but who also happen to have television cameras pointed at them. There are other programs, such as "Meet the Press" or "The Open Mind," which clearly strive to maintain a sense of intellectual decorum and typographic tradition, but they are scheduled so that they do not compete with programs of great visual interest, since otherwise, they will not be watched. After all, it is not unheard of that a format will occasionally go against the bias of its medium. For example, the most popular radio program of the early 1940's featured a ventriloquist, and in those days, I heard more than once the feet of a tap dancer on the "Major Bowes' Amateur Hour." (Indeed, if I am not mistaken, he even once featured a pantomimist.) But ventriloquism, dancing and mime do not play well on radio, just as sustained, complex talk does not play well on television. It can be made to play tolerably well if only one camera is used and the visual image is kept constant—as when the President gives a speech. But this is not television at its best, and it is not television that most people will choose to watch. The single most important fact about television is that people *watch it*, which is why it is called "tele*vision*." And what they watch, and like to watch, are moving pictures—millions of them, of short duration and dynamic variety. It is in the nature of the medium that it must suppress the content of ideas in order to accommodate the requirements of visual interest; that is to say, to accommodate the values of show business.

Film, records and radio (now that it is an adjunct of the music industry) are, of course, equally devoted to entertaining the culture, and their effects in altering the style of American discourse are not insignificant. But television is different because it encompasses all forms of discourse. No one goes to a movie to find out about government policy or the latest scientific advances. No one buys a record to find out the baseball scores or the weather or the latest murder. No one turns on radio anymore for soap operas or a presidential address (if a television set is at hand). But everyone goes to television for all these things and more, which is why television resonates so powerfully throughout the culture. Television is our culture's principal mode of knowing about itself. Therefore—and this is the critical point—how television stages the world becomes the model for how the world is properly to be staged. It is not merely that on the television screen entertainment is the metaphor for all discourse. It is that off the screen the same metaphor prevails. As typography once dictated the style of conducting politics, religion, business, education, law and other important social matters, television now takes command. In courtrooms, classrooms, operating rooms, board rooms, churches and even airplanes, Americans no longer talk to each other, they entertain each other. They do not exchange ideas; they exchange images. They do not argue with propositions; they argue with good looks, celebrities and commercials. For the message of television as metaphor is not only that all the world is a stage but that the stage is located in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In Chicago, for example, the Reverend Greg Sakowicz, a Roman Catholic priest, mixes his religious teaching with rock 'n' roll music. According to the Associated Press, the Reverend Sakowicz is both an associate pastor at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumberg (a suburb of Chicago) and a disc jockey at WKQX. On his show, "The Journey Inward," Father Sakowicz chats in soft tones about such topics as family relationships or commitment, and interposes his sermons with "the sound of Billboard's Top 10." He says that his preaching is not done "in a churchy way," and adds, "You don't have to be boring in order to be holy."

As reported with great enthusiasm by both WCBS-TV and WNBC-TV in 1984, the Philadelphia public schools have embarked on an experiment in which children will have their curriculum sung to them. Wearing Walkman equipment, students were shown listening to rock music whose lyrics were about the eight parts of speech. Mr. Jocko Henderson, who thought of this idea, is planning to delight students further by subjecting mathematics and history, as well as English, to the rigors of a rock music format. In fact, this is not Mr. Henderson's idea at all. It was pioneered by the Children's Television Workshop, whose television show "Sesame Street" is an expensive illustration of the idea that education is indistinguishable from entertainment. Nonetheless, Mr. Henderson has a point in his favor. Whereas "Sesame Street" merely attempts to make learning to read a form of light entertainment, the Philadelphia experiment aims to make the classroom itself into a rock concert.

On February 7, 1985, *The New York Times* reported that Professor Charles Pine of Rutgers University (Newark campus) was named Professor of the Year by the Council for the Support and Advancement of Education. In explaining why he has such a great impact on his students, Professor Pine said: "I have some gimmicks I use all the time. If you reach the end of the blackboard, I keep writing on the wall. It always gets a laugh. The way I show what a glass molecule does is to run over to one wall and bounce off it, and run over to the other wall." His students are, perhaps, too young to recall that James Cagney used this "molecule move" to great effect in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. If I am not mistaken, Donald O'Connor duplicated it in *Singin' in the Rain*. So far as I know, it has been used only once before in a classroom: Hegel tried it several times in demonstrating how the dialectical method works.

At the commencement exercises at Yale University in 1983, several honorary degrees were awarded, including one to Mother Teresa. As she and other humanitarians and scholars, each in turn, received their awards, the audience applauded appropriately but with a slight hint of reserve and impatience, for it wished to give its heart to the final recipient who waited shyly in the wings. As the details of her achievements were being recounted, many people left their seats and surged toward the stage to be closer to the great woman. And when the name Meryl Streep was announced, the audience unleashed a sonic boom of affection to wake the New Haven dead. One man who was present when Bob Hope received his honorary doctorate at another institution said that Dr. Streep's applause

surpassed Dr. Hope's. Knowing how to please a crowd as well as anyone, the intellectual leaders at Yale invited Dick Cavett, the talk-show host, to deliver the commencement address the following year. It is rumored that this year, Don Rickles will receive a Doctorate of Humane Letters and Lola Falana will give the commencement address.

Prior to the 1984 presidential elections, the two candidates confronted each other on television in what were called "debates." These events were not in the least like the Lincoln-Douglas debates or anything else that goes by the name. Each candidate was given five minutes to address such questions as, What is (or would be) your policy in Central America? His opposite number was then given one minute for a rebuttal. In such circumstances, complexity, documentation and logic can play no role, and, indeed, on several occasions syntax itself was abandoned entirely. It is no matter. The men were less concerned with giving arguments than with "giving off" impressions, which is what television does best. Post-debate commentary largely avoided any evaluation of the candidates' ideas, since there were none to evaluate. Instead, the debates were conceived as boxing matches, the relevant question being, Who KO'd whom? The answer was determined by the "style" of the men—how they looked, fixed their gaze, smiled, and delivered one-liners. In the second debate, President Reagan got off a swell one-liner when asked a question about his age. The following day, several newspapers indicated that Ron had KO'd Fritz with his joke. Thus, the leader of the free world is chosen by the people in the Age of Television.

What all of this means is that our culture has moved toward a new way of conducting its business, especially its important business. The nature of its discourse is changing as the demarcation line between what is show business and what is not becomes harder to see with each passing day. Our priests and presidents, our surgeons and lawyers, our educators and newscasters need worry less about satisfying the demands of their discipline than the demands of good showmanship. Had Irving Berlin changed one word in the title of his celebrated song, he would have been as prophetic, albeit more terse, as Aldous Huxley. He need only have written, There's No Business But Show Business.

Who Is the Author?

This article is taken from the book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* written by Neil Postman. Find out more about the book and the author online or from other sources, and choose a title (or titles) that suit(s) him best.

A. Journalist

B. Teacher/Professor

C. Humanist

D. Educator

E. Best-selling author

F. Other (please specify)

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the "quixotic uses of television" that Neil Postman mentions at the beginning of the article? If these uses are "quixotic", why does he bring them forward?

2. What is the difference between a technology and a medium? Why does Postman distinguish between the two concepts?

3. What does Postman mean in saying that "every technology has an inherent bias"? What bias does the technology of television have according to the author?

4. Why does Postman quote George Bernard Shaw's remark on his first seeing the glittering neon signs of Broadway and 42nd Street at night?

5. "The problem is not that television presents us with entertaining subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining…" Postman claims. Do you think television in China has such a problem? Illustrate your point with examples.

6. Postman gives a detailed account of the case of the eighty-minute discussion provided by the ABC network on November 20, 1983. What should a "discussion" consist of according to the author? What was this "discussion" like instead?

7. In Postman's view, is it possible to "use television as a carrier of coherent language or thought in process"? What do you think?

8. According to Postman, "television resonates so powerfully throughout the culture" that even off the screen Americans no longer "exchange ideas," they "exchange images." Do you think "images" are becoming increasingly important in our modern life? If so, how do you account for such a change?

9. What do you think of Professor Charles Pine's "gimmicks" in the classroom? Do you believe that there are times when some "entertainment" in the classroom can actually promote teaching and learning?

10. Do you watch American TV plays? What impact do you think they have had on your English learning?

Translation Associations: Types of TV Shows

1. 电视剧 TV drama
2. 情景喜剧 situation comedy; sitcom
3. 纪录片 documentary
4. 新闻节目 news
5. 真人秀，（以真实故事为题材的）电视节目 reality show
6. 脱口秀，访谈节目 talk show
7. 选秀节目 talent show
8. 综艺节目 variety show
9. （有奖）游戏节目 game show
10. （有奖）益智节目 quiz show
11. 外表大改造节目，改头换面节目 makeover show
12. 配对节目 dating show

Idiomatic Collocations

Make sentences with the following expressions from the text.

1. insinuate oneself into…
2. overarching assumption

3. suffice as…

4. depart from…

5. rise to the level of…

6. take the initiative to…

7. bring… to heel

8. keep… at bay

9. fix one's gaze

10. deliver one-liners

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Translation and Recitation

1. A technology becomes a medium as it employs a particular symbolic code, as it finds its place in a particular social setting, as it insinuates itself into economic and political contexts.

2. Thinking does not play well on television, a fact that television directors discovered long ago. There is not much to see in it. It is, in a phrase, not a performing art. But television demands a performing art, and so what the ABC network gave us was a picture of men of sophisticated verbal skills and political understanding being brought to heel by a medium that requires them to fashion performances rather than ideas.

3. In courtrooms, classrooms, operating rooms, board rooms, churches and even airplanes, Americans no longer talk to each other, they entertain each other. They do not exchange ideas; they exchange images. They do not argue with propositions; they argue with good looks, celebrities and commercials.

Activity: Role Play—Simulated TV Show

Is it possible to "use television as a carrier of coherent language or thought in process"? Divide yourselves into groups of three or four, pick a topic of common concern, and prepare a five-minute-long discussion in the form of a TV show after class. Make sure that your "discussion" is a discussion in its real sense, with definitions, scrutiny of assumptions, arguments and counterarguments, etc. At the same time, try to make it interesting, entertaining, and easily accessible to the average viewer.

Text 3

Make the News Comprehensive and Proportional

By Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel

What is news? Given the limits of space, time, and resources, what is important and what isn't, what is to be left in and what is to be left out? And in the age of Internet

infinity, who is to say?

These questions inform the eighth principle citizens require from their press:

Journalists should keep the news in proportion and make it comprehensive.

But how?

In the Age of Exploration cartography was as much art as science. The men who sat over parchment and drafted the pictures of the expanding world were able to do a fairly accurate job of drawing Europe and even the neighboring seas. As they moved west to the New World, however, to the regions that were so inflaming people's imaginations, they made mostly guesses. What was there? Gold? Fountains of youth? The end of the earth? Demons? The size of distant continents they sketched would swell and shrink according to which audience they thought might be purchasing their charts. In the faraway Pacific, they painted sea monsters, dragons, or giant whales to fill in what they did not actually know. The more fanciful and frightening their monsters, the more exotic the gold mines and Indians they depicted, the more their maps might sell, and the greater their reputations as cartographers might grow. Sensation made for popular maps, though they were poor guides for exploration or understanding.

Journalism is our modern cartography. It creates a map for citizens to navigate society. That is its utility and its economic reason for being.

This concept of cartography helps clarify the question of what journalism has a responsibility to cover. As with any map, journalism's value depends on its completeness and proportionality. Journalists who devote far more time and space to a sensational trial or celebrity scandal than they know it deserves—because they think it will sell—are like the cartographers who drew England or Spain the size of Greenland because it was popular. It may make short-term economic sense but it misleads the traveler and eventually destroys the credibility of the mapmaker. The journalist who writes what "she just knows to be true," without really checking first, is like the artist who draws sea monsters in the distant corners of the New World. A journalism that leaves out so much of the other news in the process is like the map that fails to tell the traveler of all the other roads along the way.

Thinking of journalism as mapmaking helps us see that proportion and comprehensiveness are key to accuracy. This goes beyond the single story. A front page or a newscast that is fun and interesting but by no reasonable definition contains anything significant is a distortion.

At the same time, an account of the day that contains only the earnest and momentous, without anything light or human, is equally out of balance.

Obviously the limits of space and resources mean news people cannot cover everything. Still, as citizens, we can ask these questions: Can we see the whole community in the newspaper or the newscast? Do I see myself in the coverage? Does the front page or the top of the newscast include a fair mix of what most people would consider either interesting or significant?

The Fallacy of Targeted Demographics

The mapmaker concept also helps us better understand the idea of diversity in news. If we think of journalism as social cartography, the map should include news of all our communities, not just those with attractive demographics or strong appeal to advertisers. To do otherwise is to create maps with whole areas missing.

Unfortunately, this has proven a difficult principle to uphold. As we outlined in the chapter on loyalty to citizens, newspapers throughout the 1980s began to focus more on affluent readers. This bears a little more discussion in the context of proportionality. There were several reasons for the strategy. After twenty-five years of losing audience and advertisers to television and other media, newspapers decided that there were structural limits to how much circulation they could have in the video age. Newspapers, in effect, decided they were a niche medium for the better-educated. A second major reason had to do with costs. Newspapers sell each paper at a loss. The twenty-five cents or even a dollar paid covers roughly only a fraction of what it costs to report, print, and deliver each copy. The rest is made up in advertising revenue. Every copy of the paper sold to readers who didn't attract advertisers, in effect, cost money. The advertising business also decided to use newspapers mainly to reach the upper classes. It would use other media, especially television and radio, to reach blue-collar audiences. In time, newspaper business strategists rationalized that targeting circulation on the affluent was not a necessity, but a virtue. Calculating cost per copy, and revenue per subscriber, could justify not appealing to the whole community in the name of economic efficiency. Writing off certain neighborhoods also meant not having to invest heavily to cover them.

It became difficult to argue with the economics, or even—given the loss of readership to television—the idea that these readers were not coming back. Bucking that trend would have meant believing in a long-term strategy that Wall Street and most conventional thinking disagreed with.

Television took a similar path, particularly after more stations began to do news, shrinking everyone's share of the pie. The pressure was intensified by the fact that stations, and Wall Street, were accustomed to enormous profitability—usually more than 40 percent—from news. To sustain the margins, stations kept surprisingly few reporters, and required most to produce at least a story a day. Covering the whole community was impossible. The news was aimed instead at the most desirable segment, younger women.

The passage of time makes it possible to see serious problems with the economic logic of targeting demographics. One is that the new audiences being ignored starting in the late 1970s were the rising immigrant communities that were changing America's cities. This was precisely the population that became the backbone of journalism's success one hundred years earlier. Pulitzer, Scripps, and the rest of the penny-press barons made immigrants their core audience. Their prose was simple so immigrants could puzzle it out.

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The editorial pages taught them how to be citizens. New Americans would gather nights after work to talk about what was in the papers, or to read to each other and discuss the highlights of the day.

As the immigrants of the 1880s and 1890s became more Americanized, the papers changed with them, becoming more middle class and more literary. The *New York World* of 1910 was a far more sober paper than the *World* of twenty years before.

Eighty years later the journalism industry, now so tied to economic efficiency, did not make that same investment and establish a relationship with the newest Americans, as it had done a century before.

Nor, as journalism targeted itself to just the most profitable demographics, did it make much investment in the youngest Americans. Stories were long, sophisticated, and often required college degrees to follow. Critics such as Stephen Hess of the Brookings Institution began to talk about journalists writing for their sources. On television, the emphasis on crime, and also titillation, transformed television news from something that families would gather to watch to something that parents would shield children from. In the name of efficiency and profit margins, we did nothing to make a new generation that wanted news. Today, young people have demonstrably less interest in or need for the news than earlier generations. While the news business cannot take all the blame, in fact it had a business strategy that helped create nonnews consumers.

The task of reaching out to all communities was doubtless harder to accomplish in 1990 than in 1890. Competition for people's time was much more intense, and the diversity of cultures more varied than a century earlier, when immigration was largely European. But there were now many more information sources to choose from, and news organizations mistakenly assumed that audiences would gravitate to the newspaper as they "Americanized." In Miami, the *Herald* was late in recognizing that its audience would not come to the *Herald*, that the *Herald* had to come to them. As a result, the paper had dramatically declined in circulation until the shifting demographics and the newspaper's need to respond became clear. The paper's circulation of more than 435,000 in 1984 had slumped to 357,000 by 1999. Innovations such as multiple newspapers, including *El Nuevo Herald*, *Jewish Herald*, and *Yo!* (a weekly aimed at young people), were begun. Interestingly, by the end of the century, the combined daily circulation of the *Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald* was 437,809, larger than that of the old *Herald* at its peak.

Could it have been otherwise? Could journalism have avoided this disconnection with the broader audience and reached out successfully to a more diverse audience and a younger one? This is difficult to answer definitively. But as journalism companies aimed at elite demographics and cost efficiency, the industry as a general rule did not try. Or by the time they did, as in the case in Miami, it was very late. The concept of the mapmaker makes the error clear. We created a map for certain neighborhoods and not others. Those who were unable to navigate where they lived gave it up.

The newscasts and newspapers that ignored whole communities also created problems for those it did serve. First it left its audiences poorly informed because so much was left out. This made citizens vulnerable to making poor decisions about contemporary trends and about their needs. Ultimately, the strategy threatened the livelihood of the news organization, the institution with the greatest need for an interested citizenry. In the memorable phrase of Wall Street analyst John Morton, we had "eaten our seed corn."

With whole communities left out, there was also the reverse problem of offering too much detail to the demographic group journalism was serving. Stories became longer and more copious, though aimed at a narrower segment of the population. The papers were sometimes more than a hundred pages a day and could take a full day to read. In television, targeting had a similar effect. The daily health segments on local TV today, for instance, which cover every new medical study however preliminary, tend more to confuse citizens about health than inform them.

The mistake may be repairable. But journalism must act quickly to find ways to serve diverse communities—but as part of a whole community.

There is also evidence that citizens agree. For several years, starting in 1998, the Project for Excellence in Journalism has studied what kind of local TV news builds ratings. A design team of local news professionals rated covering the whole community as the most important responsibility of a TV news station. The data found viewers concurred. Stations that covered a wider range of topics were more likely to be building or holding on to their audience than those that did not.

The Limits of Metaphor

As with all metaphors, the mapmaking comparison has its limits. Cartography is scientific, but journalism is not. You can plot the exact location of a road and measure the site of a country, or even an ocean. The proportions of a news story are another matter. A big story for some is unimportant to others.

Proportion and comprehensiveness in news are subjective. Their elusiveness, however, does not mean they are any less important than the more objective roads and river features of maps. To the contrary, striving for them is essential to journalism's popularity—and financial health. It is also possible—not just an abstract notion—to pursue proportion and comprehensiveness, despite their being subjective. A citizen and a journalist may differ over the choices made about what is important. But citizens can accept those differences if they are confident that the journalist is trying to make news judgments to serve what readers need and want. The key is citizens must believe the journalists' choices are not exploitative—they are not simply offering what will sell—and that journalists aren't pandering. Again, people care less whether journalists make mistakes, or correct them well, or always pick the right stories. The key element of credibility is the perceived motive

of the journalist. People do not expect perfection. They do expect good intentions, as we suggested in our discussion of allegiance to citizens. Concern for proportionality is a key way of demonstrating public interest motives.

Honest people can disagree about a story's importance, but citizens and journalists alike know when a story is being hyped. They may disagree on precisely when the line was crossed, but at a certain point they know it has happened. In recent times that point has been hit with depressing regularity.

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The Pressure to Hype

At moments when the news media culture is undergoing rapid change and disorientation, there seems to be pressure to hype and sensationalize. You might call it the principle of the "naked body and the guitar."

If you want to attract an audience, you could go down to a street corner, do a striptease, and get naked. You would probably attract a crowd in a hurry. The problem is, How do you keep people? How do you avoid audience churn? There is another approach. Suppose you went to the same street corner and played the guitar. A few people listen the first day. Perhaps more the second. Depending on how good a guitar player you are, how diverse and intriguing your repertoire, the audience might grow and grow each day. You would not, if you were good, have to keep churning the crowd, getting new people to replace those who grew tired of repetition.

This is the choice, in effect, that the news media face at a time when new technology expands the number of outlets and each organization watches its audience shrink. When the future is uncertain, and it is unclear how long you can stay in business unless you generate audience fast, which approach should you pursue? A news organization has to operate, to some extent, according to a faith or philosophy, since empirical models of the past may not work in the future.

Some news organizations, even those with fairly serious histories, have resorted to the path of the naked. In part, this is driven by the idea that news has become a commodity that is in oversupply. As one Wall Street analyst, James M. Marsh Jr. of Prudential Securities, told the Committee of Concerned Journalists, "There is currently an overabundance of news programming, with supply easily outstripping demand." In part, too, this is driven by the fact that producing a lot of original reporting is expensive and requires a web of correspondents, camera crews, and bureaus worldwide.

The consequence is that the networks have moved significantly away from the hard news business. A study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism in the fall of 1997 confirms what other studies have found: prime-time newsmagazines—the growth area of network news, its economic engine—largely ignore the news. These programs are not driven by news values in the traditional sense.

The nightly newscasts, too, have shifted to less reported news of the work of civic institutions to more entertainment and celebrity attraction. In 1999, as an example, ABC reduced the number of its news correspondents by 10 percent. Most of those let go were reporters with clear expertise in covering specific, substantive beats, including medical reporter George Strait, foreign correspondent Jim Laurie, education correspondent Beth Nissen, and Supreme Court reporter Tim O'Brien. At the same time, the network negotiated a new contract with former presidential aide turned pundit George Stephanopoulos, who, according to ABC News president David Westin, was now "recasting" himself as a reporter. In other words, reporters who actually went out to discover what was going on in government offices were being replaced by a former government official who could speculate about what might be taking place.

Some in network television note that while the broadcast news divisions have moved away from covering beats and breaking news around the world, the entertainment divisions have moved in the direction of "reality-based" programming. Shows such as *Homicide*, *Law and Order*, and others strive for nuanced and complex stories that are "ripped from the headlines."

"We've reached the point where the entertainment divisions are doing the news and the news divisions are doing the entertainment," mused ABC News correspondent Robert Krulwich in the spring of 2000.

Within a few months, we had reached the point where network programmers were staging "reality-based" entertainment shows, such as the blockbuster hit *Survivor* in the summer of 2000, and then inserting the stars as "guests" on their news programs to boost the ratings of both the entertainment and the news shows. CBS, for instance, turned over large segments of its morning show, which is produced by the news department, to promote *Survivor*, including interviews with the person kicked off the island the night before. Thus the entertainment division of the corporation stages news, which the news division then covers.

There is growing evidence that, despite the skill and seriousness of journalists like those on ABC's *Nightline*, the news anchors, and some superb correspondents at all three broadcast television networks, there is more than a grain of truth to what Krulwich says.

When ABC News in the spring of 2000 hired movie star Leonardo DiCaprio to interview President Bill Clinton about the environment and then denied it had done so amid staff protests, the ultimate reaction was not outrage at the fallen standards of a supposedly serious network, but laughter and derision at the manifest chaos that had come to dominate the thinking inside the news divisions. One ABC news staffer sent this anonymous letter to the *Washington Post*. "You don't have to be a journalist to be called one on television. The trusted, recognizable TV faces that feed us our daily ration of news are nothing more than multimillion-dollar-a-year celebrity presenters," the letter said, "The kind of journalism practiced here seems to be less about the loftier goals of civic duty and

public responsibility, but about providing the right vehicle to show off the Talent."

"Maybe it's time for broadcasters to give up on news and leave it to the real pros—in cable and print—who remain committed to doing it right," wrote Randall Rothenberg in *Advertising Age*. "The public figured out a long time ago," William Powers suggested in the *National Journal*, "that network news isn't a serious business and stopped worrying about it."

Marketing Versus Marketing

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What is the answer to resisting sensationalism and keeping the news in proportion? As we have said, we do not think that it lies with isolating the journalist behind some wall that ignores the realities of the marketplace. A better understanding of changing tastes, needs, and trends in the community is an important part of the answer.

Market research has been especially effective in revealing how best to structure stories in prime-time magazines. NBC discovered that the single most significant way to deliver viewers to its affiliates at 11 p.m. was to show the picture of the day or picture of the week at the end of the broadcast. *Dateline* learned to time the material in such a way that it appeared when other networks were broadcasting their commercials. "It often was worth a 2 rating-point improvement, or more than 1.8 million households. We would do a 12 rating most of the show and deliver a 14 rating to our affiliates," McGill explained.

But when it comes to the content of news, how do you measure the response to a story you had not imagined and tested? Such is the experience of television news. The medium has gone well down the road in knowing what people watch through its minute-to-minute overnight ratings. It can even tell at what point in certain stories people began to click away. So the medium has begun to tailor newscasts to ensure that every story has wide viewership.

But this has been a strategy that has done little to forestall the declining audience. Viewership of nightly network news has declined from 75 percent of households watching TV news in 1980 to 47 percent in 1998. Local news viewership also began to decline in the late 1990s, though concrete numbers are impossible to gather.

This might be called the paradox of giving people only the news they want.

"News organizations have been hoist on their own petard," says John Carey, a market researcher who has worked with NBC and other media clients. "Over time they have followed those ratings numbers, doing more and more of those stories that get high numbers, and they get stuck in those patterns… As a consequence, the newsmagazines are stuck with an older audience, a more sentimental one and a more sensational one." But most viewers have fled. "In a sense, the people at the network know it, but they don't know how to get out of it."

But what if we return to the idea of the "interlocking public," to a news report that A. M. Rosenthal called "the smorgasbord of news and information" when he was executive

editor of the *New York Times*? Or, as newspaper editor Dave Burgin used to say about how a page in a newspaper should be laid out: If no story may attract more than 15 percent of the audience, make sure there are enough stories so that everyone will want to read one of them. By choosing content this way, a news organization can be more assured of putting the news in proportion.

Or go back to the mapmaker analogy. If journalism provides people only with information they say in advance they want to know about, we are telling them only about the part of the community they already know about.

So what kind of market research would be of value? Journalists, citizens, and researchers together offer this answer: research that helps journalists make judgments, not research that replaces their judgment. Put another way, we need to stop using market research that treats our audience as customers, asking them which products they prefer. We need to create a journalism market research that approaches people as citizens and tells us more about their lives. How do you spend your time? Take us through your day. How long is your commute? What are you worried about? What do you hope and fear for your kids? Open-ended research on broad trends of interest. The kinds of questions that will allow editors to understand how to design a news package that is comprehensive and proportional to their community and their needs.
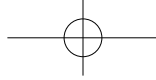
This kind of research is being developed by Valerie Crane at Research Communications Limited in Massachusetts. Crane's research involves two broad approaches, neither of them strictly traditional.

The first identifies through in-depth interviews and then larger survey samples what basic needs in people's lives are met by the news they get—a quantitative way of going back to the function of news. "For some people it is about connecting to community. For some it is about making their life better [healthier, safer, more comfortable]. For others it's about making up their own mind. For others it is a way of winning social acceptance," Crane says. She has identified twelve different needs, but the range and priority of those needs tend to differ by community and also the kind of journalism the respondents have been exposed to locally.

Crane finds quantifying for news companies why people use news—rather than asking what kinds of topics people are interested in—is an important way to focus on the right issue. "Too rarely do people [in news companies] think about what citizens needs are," she says of her clients.

Second, Crane studies how people in a given community are living their lives, using a version of what some people call lifestyle and trends research. This type of research tends to group populations into clusters based not just on demographics but on attitudes and behavior. She studies fifteen different areas, from health, religion, work, consumerism, family relations, education, and more, and identifies the top concerns and trends in a given place.

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Taken together, her research into why people use the news and her study of the deeper concerns and trends in their lives give journalists insight into how to then apply their own professional judgment. But the research, she says, should augment, not supplant, that judgment.

Al Tompkins, a former news director who now teaches broadcasting at the Poynter Institute, believes Crane's research tells journalists "how communities live, where their loyalties are, and not just what are they watching but why are they watching." Crane's work, Tompkins says, "guides the presentation of news but doesn't determine what stories you do."

For instance, though a lot of research suggests people don't like politics, Tompkins says, "Crane's research shows us they do care about their community, but they don't trust the political institutions… It wasn't the topic they were sick of, it was the approach to the topic."

John Carey at Greystone Communication does ethnographic market research. Ethnography, which is an outgrowth of anthropology, works through direct onsite observation. Carey literally sits in people's houses and watches how they interact with media and technology. He has sat in people's houses through mealtimes, at breakfast, dinner, early in the morning, and even late at night.

Carey's findings turn many of the conventional ideas about television on their head. For instance, though a good deal of social science research suggests what some academics have called the "supremacy of the visual," or the notion that pictures are more powerful than words in television, Carey's work finds that "very often people are not watching but listening to television news. Many people are actually reading a newspaper while they have on TV news. They tend to turn to watch the television when they hear something that they think will have important pictures." Putting information out visually without reinforcing words can be a great mistake.

Carey's research also suggests that the concept of teasers, or tempting people to stay tuned a little longer for an important upcoming report, may be thoroughly misguided. "A big mistake is thinking that people are watching over a length of time. Teasers are a huge mistake. People don't wait." Those items that say, "Will it rain tomorrow? Well, tonight will be cold, and Jim will be back in seven minutes with the complete forecast"—those tend to drive people away. Indeed, Carey's observations show that anytime there is a commercial, most viewers immediately switch channels. A better alternative, Carey believes, is to provide key information like weather constantly, to pack information all over your newscast, even to scroll it during commercials. "You would grab people by the constancy of your information."

The late Carole Kneeland, a news director in Austin, Texas, who was also known for defying conventional wisdom, followed this approach. She repeated the weather forecast throughout the newscast on the assumption that people wouldn't stay for the whole half

hour, but if you could inform more people quickly, over time you would command the most loyal and largest audience.

"I think in the future we will have to break away from thirty-minute and sixty-minute content," Carey suggests. "You could have programming that is five minutes long in cycles," with longer pieces at certain times, much like radio programs with news and weather repeating every eight or twelve minutes, or the National Public Radio broadcasts with repeating headlines intermixed with longer stories.

Many journalists resist market research. "It's what I call the myth of the golden gut," says Crane. Ironically, journalists have more of the skills needed to do the kind of observational research about people's lives than might be best suited for journalism. Journalists, however, have not developed any tradition of doing it. Nor do they appear close to trying.

If journalism has lost its way, the reason in large part is that it has lost meaning in people's lives, not only its traditional audience but the next generation as well. We have shown, we hope, that a major reason for this is that journalists have lost the confidence to try to make the news comprehensive and proportional. Like the ancient maps that left much of the world terra incognita, contemporary audiences confront a journalism with similar blank spaces in place of uninteresting demographic groups or topics too difficult to pursue.

The answer is not to return to a day when journalists operate purely by instinct. We hope we have spotlighted a group of new cartographers who are developing tools to chart the way people live their lives today and the needs for news these lives create. They are providing one of the most important tools a news organization needs to design a more comprehensive and proportional news report that attracts rather than repels the audience. Now it is up to journalists to try.

Who Is the Author?

This article is taken from the book *Elements of Journalism* written by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. Find out more about the book and the authors online or from other sources, and choose a title (or titles) that suit(s) them best.

A. Media critic   D. Academic
B. Political correspondent   E. Best-selling author
C. Journalist   F. Other (please specify)

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Questions for Discussion

1. How do you understand the word "art" in the sentence "In the Age of Exploration cartography was as much art as science"?
2. Kovach and Rosenstiel maintain that "journalism's value depends on its completeness and proportionality". Explain the two concepts.
3. Why did newspapers in the US begin to focus more on affluent readers in the 1980s?
4. What are the limits of comparing journalism to cartography? According to Kovach and Rosenstiel, is it possible to pursue proportion and comprehensiveness despite their being subjective?
5. If the section "The Limits of Metaphor" was omitted, would it affect the persuasiveness of the article?
6. What is the principle of the "naked body and the guitar"?
7. Why and how have some news organizations resorted to the path of the naked?
8. What is "the paradox of giving people only the news they want"?
9. What kind of market research would be of value to journalism? What new findings has this kind of research led to?
10. Where do you usually get the news? Is there a newspaper that you often read? A website you often browse? Or a TV news program you often watch? Assess it/them in terms of completeness and proportionality. Is there a tendency to hype?

Translation Associations: Principles of Journalism

1. 真实 true; truthful
2. 准确 accurate
3. 客观 objective
4. 公正 fair; impartial
5. 独立 independent; disinterested
6. 及时 timely
7. 相关 relevant
8. 均衡 proportional
9. 全面 comprehensive
10. 简练 succinct; pithy

Idiomatic Collocations

Make sentences with the following expressions from the text.

1. in the name of…
2. write off…
3. buck a trend
4. puzzle… out
5. hold on to…
6. A and B alike
7. cross the line
8. hoist on one's own petard
9. take sb. through one's day
10. defy conventional wisdom

Translation and Recitation

1. On television, the emphasis on crime, and also titillation, transformed television news from something that families would gather to watch to something that parents would shield children from. In the name of efficiency and profit margins, we did nothing to make a new generation that wanted news.

2. You don't have to be a journalist to be called one on television. The trusted, recognizable TV faces that feed us our daily ration of news are nothing more than multimillion-dollar-a-year celebrity presenters. The kind of journalism practiced here seems to be less about the loftier goals of civic duty and public responsibility, but about providing the right vehicle to show off the Talent.

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Activity: Presentation on *Elements of Journalism*

In their book *Elements of Journalism*, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel elaborated on the following principles:

1. What Is Journalism For?
2. Truth: The First and Most Confusing Principle
3. Who Journalists Work for
4. Journalism of Verification
5. Independence from Faction
6. Monitor Power and Offer Voice to the Voiceless
7. Journalism as a Public Forum
8. Engagement and Relevance
9. Make the News Comprehensive and Proportional
10. Journalists Have a Responsibility to Conscience

Divide yourselves into ten groups. Each group read one chapter after class and then present it to your classmates with PowerPoint. In addition to a summary, you should also give two pieces of news as examples—one that accords with the principle that you are presenting and one that violates it. Each presentation should be between four to six minutes. Please be prepared to ask or take questions after the presentation.