

1.1 The twentieth century communications revolution, particularly the second half of the period, has produced such a profound change in cultural conditions that it is true to say that the human psyche has, in past centuries, never been under such stress to adapt to a profoundly different ethos than it is at this moment; nor been required to do so so rapidly. In the history of humankind, great changes have always begun to take place on a much more local basis and have spread, looked at from a twenty-first century time-scale, quite slowly. Now radically new ideas can spread, globally, in minutes. Technology now forces us to think of ourselves as a global community while, at the same time, we are culturally and emotionally unprepared effectively to undertake this task. A new, more profound understanding of the structure and functioning of the great mass-media is urgently required and, of these, it is abundantly clear that those that come under the classification of the motion-picture arts are now, and will be for long to come, the media with the most powerful cultural impact.

1.2 In the course of the twentieth century the demand for education in the technologies had become so powerful that it had come to exercise a dominating position in education generally. This has had the effect of producing a cultural hiatus that has weakened and obstructed our ability to make wise decisions regarding the social applications of the technologies of our present period. In our greatly increased knowledge of the *'how'* we have tended to lose sight of the profound importance of the *'why'*. So that the powerful media of communication may be applied wisely, some adjustment of this balance is needed in the educational preparation of those who are to assume a role of administrative importance in such technologies in the 21st. Century.

1.3 It is pitifully inadequate to attempt to give an account of the functioning of these complex media by methods involving only verbal primacy and for this reason we must accustom ourselves to the habit of thinking visually and aurally too.

1.4 In recent years a vast literature has grown on the subject of the mass media, but by far the larger portion of this body is composed of works of rather doubtful and frequently very transient value.

The complexity of these media and of their effects, from a psychological and from a sociological point of view, has allowed a very large number of writers to enter the arena of discussion who, it is clearly evident, are ill equipped to give even a verbal account of their ideas without promoting confusion.

Such statements, for instance, as 'The Medium is the Message' seem almost to have been uttered to give concrete exemplification to Wittgenstein's statement: 'It is not so much a matter that most propositions are untrue as that they are simply meaningless'.

Much writing and other communications on the subject of the media have been of this order, in which only an illusion of communication has been achieved, but one that has deceived many into imagining communication has actually taken place.

1.5 Since the vital last link in the chain of communication is to be with the human mind, we must apply ourselves to the study of human perception itself. Those

syntactical structures employed by the brain to assimilate and apply, in a manner useful to the organism, the information reaching it through its sensory apparatus and to construct, from this assimilated data, paradigms that will enable the organism to be more effectively in touch with its surroundings and, at a more advanced stage, to elaborate model systems that can provide descriptions of that environment, enabling functional predictions and historical insight to enrich the organism's interaction with its substrate must be promoted. Further, we need to explore the limiting boundaries of human perception, so that its 'shape', so to speak, becomes experientially familiar.

1.6 The vicissitudes experienced by our great companion art, the art of music, the only other art besides that of the motion-picture arts integrally to incorporate time in its structures; must be borne in mind. In the twentieth century and in the early years of the twenty-first music has experienced wide technical advances, but at the same time come under industrial influences. These industrial forces have led, at times, to an impoverishment of musical resources. One has only to reflect on the question of the wide variety of tempi, as given by the metronome, to realize the impoverishment that has taken place.

1.7 I would like to turn now to a darker side of some of the mass-media's operations; an area in which individuals are attempting to hide, beneath a cloak of euphemism, attitudes and practices of a clearly anti-social nature and of, frankly, the crudest of sado-masochistic content. This comes about through unrestricted profit-maximization, combined with a determination commercially to exploit widely prevailing social malaise. The amount of damage done by these entrepreneurs may take many years before the lesions they are producing in their misguided clients are healed.

1.8 A plea for responsible attitudes on behalf of the motion-picture media (by which designation I intend to include television and kine-holography) towards the various disorientating techniques now available must be made. Some of these are not without serious clinical consequences if abused. The old Latin expression: *"mens sana in corpore sano"* should still be our guide here.

1.9 Looking forwards, a vista of such potential richness reveals itself, it seems imperative that those of who are at the center of these developments of the human spirit maintain a clear head and a well directed purpose.

**1.10 Do na daoine óga atá ag saothrú ealaíon na scannán Gaeilge,
tugaim an chomhairle seo:
chomh luath in Éirinn agus is féidir leat,
éirigh as an aithris agus aimsigh do ghlór dílis féin.**

Go raibh maith agaibh as éisteacht liom go foighneach. Thank you.

George Morrison.
