Stimulating and Informing Debate

News and other forms of information media should act as stimulators of public debate
Need to provide the information citizens require to participate in an informed manner
Especially information about government and other powerful institutions

Poster: Three Stages

of the decline of the enlightment
First stage – The age of Print – individual is shaped by contextual depth
•Second Stage – Age of broadcast media – media images multiply and proliferate and are increasingly depthless
•Final stage – Age of the internet – content further proliferates, the line between producer and consumer blurs. Increasingly media simply refers to other media
Criticism of the Post-modern
•The fears that people had around social networking (kids meeting strangers) has mostly not played out •Most people use these networks to keep up with friends
•In general the representations people give are representations of their real identities
•Claims about the unreality of the world (nothing but simulacra) is clearly exaggerated
•If there is no representation of reality are all representations equal?
•Let media off the hook because if everything is false why bother analysing its implications

Local Media/ Niche Media

Local media
•Presents an opportunity for local cohesion
•Local media should support Gemeinschaft by focusing on issues of local importance
•Local issues should dominate

Local Media/ Niche Media (cont)

•Increasingly with national chains dominating the local is being pushed out of local media •Most content comes not from the local but national and international providers
Niche media
•Oriented towards a niche audience that is dispersed
•Made possible by the diversification of consumer culture •Tap into existing identities
•Can both construct and reflect the community they talk about
•Can be broad categories men's interest, women's interest, running magazine •Can be niche Star Trek, Star Wars, Dr. Who.
•Channels like Space and Syfy can offer niche
communities greater access to their favorite texts
DIT Media and Internet Communities
Fansites play an important role in internet communities
•Sites like the "Harry Potter Alliance", Daily Prophet, Equestria Daily, play the role of centralizing fans. •They become digital meeting places
•People get to know each other and form relationships
•Act as sites for discussion of both real life and show events
DIY Fan niches
•The low costs of entry online allow individuals to create their own media
•Fan podcasts, fansites and other forms represent a democratisation of nice publication
•Fans of even more fringe texts than Star Trek and Doctor Who are able to create these types of publications •Fan cultures become even more fragmented
Fan cultures: Making identities

Local Media/ Niche Media (cont)

•Starting with Stat Trek Fans have been making their own communities
•Early days the circulated fan fiction via mail
•Moved to electronic BBS systems in the 1990s and then to the internet in the late 1990s •Convention became a major source of community building

Pessismism about modern society

Modern society is a series of atomized people
•No common bonds of share history, religion, culture
•No central institutions that people rely upon (Church, town hall etc.)
•No unifying force whatsoever
•Leads to anomie a condition in which society provides little guidance to individuals
•Can community (gemeinschaft) exist in a mass society

Media and Masculinity

Most male roles in cinema and television entail the stereotype of the powerful, successful, virile man •Most often this person has some kind of mastery, business, cars, fighting
•James Bond, Jack Bauer etc...
•Video game heroes are almost universally this type
•Fiske sees this as men needing an outlet for their own frustrations. •Men not longer engaged in highly physical labour
•Fantasies of male empowerment
•Men's magazines play on many of these tropes •They cast women as 'destroyers of men's happiness'
Changes in masculinity in the media
•Some more sensitive male roles have appeared
•Men on Friends were not really powerful males
•Men like Raymond on Everybody Loves Raymond constantly being bossed around by women (subservient)

Media and Masculinity (cont)

Beyond heterosexuality
•Opposite sex attraction is at the core of western media industries.
•Homosexuals are also excluded through the process of symbolic annihilation.
•Lesbians in media often become the target of fetishized male desire
•The largely asexual "gay best friend" is a trope of mainstream media
•Largely acts a token representation on gayness.
•Largely structured through heterosexual cultural motif so we see gays and lesbians through straight eyes

Reading the Romance

Janice Radway studied why women read romance novels •Quintessential genre aimed at women
•Widely criticized as reproducing patriarchal stereotypes
Novels were used by women to create space (escape maternal and domestic responsibilities •Used to fulfil female sexual desires not being met in the marriage or family setting
•While women are not escaping patriarchy, they are using it for their own purposes

Gender Imbalance

Women's roles in film are often secondary to men's •Depictions of men outnumbered those of women 5 to 1 •83 percent of experts interviewed were men
•37 percent of journalist were women
•Women fill only 35.1% of management roles in the media •Only make up 18.8 percent of decision makers

The Diasporic Media

As networks of immigrants have spread across the globe they have created a web a diasporic media.
•Communities that are large enough, Indian and Chinese particularly can have their own media network that essentially connects their diasporas back to the mother country
•Bollywood (India) and Hong Kong (Greater China) have created profitable industries around serving the needs of populations that have left their countries/regions

New Ethnicities/ Hybrid Idenities

Stuart Hall has proposed that rather than looking at race in terms of specific unchanging categories it should be looked at as a set of complex negotiations Identity is more fluid than strict ethnic categories.
•Second and third generation immigrant children have identities that tend to be blend of their "mother country" and their "adopted country"

Blaxploitation/White Washing

Programs especially in the 1980s attempted to graft White middle class values onto blacks. •Shows like the Cosby show, portrayed blacks in middle-class white roles.
•Accused of not being in sync with the situation of average blacks

Cultural Hybridity

Ideas of cultural hybridity are predicated on the idea that no culture exists in a vacuum
•Ideas flow freely between cultures
•When a new idea or cultural form arrives, it is blended with local elements to make something that is authentically from that culture

Cultural Hybridity (cont)

•Historically you can think of the spread of things like the novel, started in Western Europe, but became a global form with unique articulations in different places (western form hybridized with local content and culture

Why Western culture remains dominant

America with it population of 320 million relatively wealthy (by global standards) gives it some advantages culturally •The large domestic market allows it to recover its cost domestically
•They then sell their products cheaply abroad.
•This has the added effect of making local cultural products less competitive.
•American culture is also generally of higher quality than that of 'margin' nations.
•Local audiences often prefer American media products

Exporting Raymond

Having watched this documentary do you think there such a thing as a universal cultural text, or universal themes?
•Why did Rosenthal and Sony have such a hard time communicating the value of Everybody Loves Raymond to the Russ

Globalization: The Nation Strikes Back

Despite the undermining of the nation by fragmentation, and globalization the nation remains a powerful concept
The Internet: Does it fix everything or make everything worst? •Optimistic view – When everyone can speak people are likely to buy in •Optimistic view – A move away from a top down centralized world
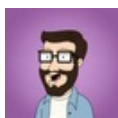
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Page 2 of 8.

Imagined Communities

Imagined because people in the nation for the most part have no real relationship to each other, so the connection through the nation is imagined
•Limited- Because all nations have boundaries beyond which lie other nations
•Sovereign – seen as being in control of their own territory and people
•Community- because regardless of inequalities the nation is imagined as a deep horizontal bond
Imagined communities
•Conditions of possibility for the nation arise from two media sources –Newspaper and the novel
•Both give a sense of the nation as a unified thing, shared experience of their history
•The desire of capitalists to sell newspapers and novels requires the standardisation of language in its written form •Unified language leads to a more unified populace and creates a bigger market for print media

Decline of the National Public

Based on the ideas of Jurgen Habermas a German scholar who emerged from the Frankfurt School.
Suggest that in the past there was an relatively open sphere that allowed for the discussion of ideas.
His public sphere is fairly aristocratic and male dominated but Habermas nevertheless suggests that having space for the discussion of ideas helped move society forward
Sees this as gradually decreasing as instrumentalism and utilitarian rationality have come to dominate.

Representing Public Opinion

Entails the media collecting information about people's opinions and reporting them so that the public and powerful institutions know what they are.

Representing Public Opinion (cont)

Important because people are limited in who they can talk to directly and it helps to know where other people stand
Things like opinion polling can be seen as serving this purpose

Egocasting

What ties all these technologies together is the stroking of the ego….With the advent of TiVo and iPod, however, we have moved beyond narrowcasting into "egocasting" — a world where we exercise an unparalleled degree of control over what we watch and what we hear. We can consciously avoid ideas, sounds, and images that we don't agree with or don't enjoy. As sociologists Walker and Bellamy have noted, "media audiences are seen as frequently selecting material that confirms their beliefs, values, and attitudes, while rejecting media content that conflicts with these cognitions." Technologies like TiVo and iPod enable unprecedented degrees of selective avoidance. The more control we can exercise over what we see and hear, the less prepared we are to be surprised. It is no coincidence that we impute God-like powers to our technologies of personalization (TiVo, iPod) that we would never impute to gate-keeping technologies. No one ever referred to Caller ID as "Jehovah's Secretary.".

Fragmentation

In the twentieth century people within a nation for the most part had a limited range of culture to choose from
People could talk about culture because on the whole it was fairly unified realm.

Fragmentation (cont)

If everybody watches Dallas on Thursday night, everybody has something they can talk about with each other.
As cable and later the internet became more prominent the fear that people are no longer connected by

## The Failure of the Public Sphere

Habermas believes that already the public sphere has failed
•Points to the increasing domination of markets, the state and instrumental reason
•Media which in the 18th and 19th centuries were organized around small publishers with distinct ideological positions are now increasingly controlled by conglomerates
The failure of the public sphere
•Like the Frankfurt school scholars Habermas is critical of the commercial orientation of the media.
•He sees commerce as putting the emphasis on emotion, trivia, sensation and personalization rather than public interest
•People are distracted from issues of importance in the public sphere
•People are lulled into a sense that their buying decisions are acts of citizenship or of equal importance to being a citizen.

Pastiche

Where something is referred to ironically there is a connection to the original
•Jameson sees products simply being taken from the past and recombined with each other with no reference to the past in a process he calls "pastiche"
•New hybrids become empty shells, refereeing to nothing
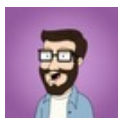
Pastiche (cont)

•Identities are simply an ever changing collage that people patch together without a sense of the origins of the pieces Pastichy-identity
•There is some debate with regards to the post-modern position.
•General agreement that identity is more tied to media and consumption than in the past •Though some disagree as to the level of its flexibility
•Individual are still able to make sense of identity
•With so many symbolic choices identity is fluid and highly complex
Simulated identity?
•Sherry Turkle argues that the online world allows for a decoupled identity •Identities that are not tied in any way to the real world
•People can play with gender, sexuality, race etc
•People live simulated lives in simulated world
•Turkle wonders at what point the virtual overpowers the real.

Post-Modernity

We cannot conceive of reality outside the representations of it
•Reality and media are one in the same
•Understanding of contemporary events and individual identities are inseparable from media
Consumerism: expansion and speed-up
•Culture industries are increasingly focused on creating more and more new things for us to consume. •Creating more product niches (subtypes of existing products)
•Constantly searching for new markets
For example: Playing and watching sports are increasingly the focus of intense marketing efforts.

Subcultures

Studies at Birmingham University's Center for Contemporary Culture challenged notions of anomie in modern society
•Focused on stylistically marked groups of young people (teddy boys, punks, skinheads etc...)
•Combined unrelated commercially available objects in unique ways called "bricolage"
•Used mass culture to create defiant, distinctive grass roots communities
Active audiences redux
•CCCS scholars challenged the idea that mass media destroys traditional communities
•If consumed in active ways these products could be the basis of form of collective identity.
•Media industries become the unwitting providers of raw materials
•World outside subcultures remains homogenous and shaped by media
•As Fiske argued, these cultures are then subject to appropriation by media industries in friendlier watered down forms
Grassroots or AstroTurf?
•Some critics doubt the possibility of real grass roots communities •Media industries are too quick to re-integrate identities and subcultures •Cool Hunters
•These light forms of identity are easily tried and then cast off.
Stigmatization and Moral Panics
•Moral Panic – Typically a reaction to a type of media or a group
•Ex. Comic Books, punks, goths, video games
•Negative coverage can help groups to cohere
•Will resent the misrepresentation and solidify their identity
•Group identities may partially be a function of representations of them

Acting as an Inclusion Discussion Forum

Media needs to provide a forum for people to engage with each other and decision makers directly
Call, in shows, comments on websites, letters to the editor provide this function

Media Communities: Homogenization and Atonization

Gemeinschaft
•Grass roots, intimate form of collective unity
•Predicated on shared understanding, collective unity and self-sufficiency
•Primarily a preindustrial mode of association
•Gesellschaft
•Indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values, and beliefs based on such interactions •Primarily an industrial and post-industrial mode of association

LGBTQ

Still primarily stereotypes
•Through the lens of straight understandings of sexuality •Also a victim of symbolic annihilation

Nurturing Public Belonging

This is really about giving people a sense that they have a stake in society
About building a sense of agency in societies where people are often disconnected from each other
Often focuses on the long standing relationship between national identity and media

Subversive

Texts like soap operas have a different narrative structure
•Not the classic beginning – middle – end
•An ongoing form of story telling
•Doesn't always end with a heterosexual relationship
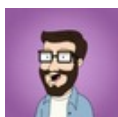
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Page 4 of 8.

Subversive (cont)

•These are "misuses" of a genre that still is coded primarily with patriarchal meanings Reading as a subversive activity?
•Hermes looked at reading "trashy" magazines as a form of escape •Offered women a temporary reprieve from work, worries, relationships •Their 'light' content makes them ideal for short bursts of engagement •Women often didn't care about the content
●David Gauntlet found that women's engagement in these texts varied a great deal ●Some used them to set goals
●Some liked to criticize the identities depicted
●Women could be critical of these magazines while still enjoying them

Nations: Imagine Communities

Benedict Anderson proposed the idea of nations as imagined communities
Three paradoxes:
The objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists
The formal universality of nationality as a sociocultural concept
The political power of nationalism vs their philosophical poverty and even incoherence

The Male Gaze

Laura Mulvey – proposed the idea of the male gaze
•A concept that she created using ideas from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis
•Cinema is centered on scopophilia – the pleasure of gazing on them
•Women are set as the object of the voyeuristic gaze
The Male Gaze: The perfect mirror

The Male Gaze (cont)

•Second part of the idea comes from Jacques Lacan
•The "mirror stage" is when young children start to enjoy looking at their own reflection
•It is not themselves that they enjoy but an external, whole, or perfect them
•It's against this idealized self that "self-image forms"
•Visual media (cinema, TV, photographs) produce idealized images
•Female characters are made into sexual object for the male gaze
•Male stars are the one's the audience is meant to identify with.

Imagined Communities

Nations are imagined because despite the fact that you as the member of a nation will never meet most other Canadians, you are still confident that they exist, and that they like you are part of the nation
Nations are limited – they have relatively fixed political boundaries
Nations are sovereign – It is understood that a nation may exercise its power evenly within its entire territory
They are a community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship"
Anderson locates the beginnings of the nation with two forms of media that emerged from the printing press: The Newspaper and the Novel
The newspaper gives people a sense of belonging to the nation.
Everyone is able to get the same news of the nation through the newspaper and people imagine that the newspaper is being read everywhere in the nation

Do we need the public sphere

Habermas' concept is not without its critics. The question remains do we need his vision of the public sphere or the commons where everyone can meet discuss and have a voice?
Since it is unlikely that it will take the form that Habermas suggests what is the path forward without it.

Media/Race/Ethnicity: Under-Representation

The number of minorities depicted on television still trails the number of Caucasians.
Stereotypical representation
•Only depicts racial groups according to broad stereotypes
•African American gangsters, Asia super students, Muslim terrorists etc
•Often seen as making the situation for these groups more difficult because it reinforces stereotypes in the majority population
Stereotypes
•Because they have so little agency in creating representations of themselves minorities may start to internalize stereotyped representations.
•There is also the fear that they may simply feel alienated from the society, since it treats them in a way that is consistent with a stereotype that doesn't represent their real identity
Promoting positive images
•Various attempts made in the 1970s and 1980s to create positive representations of minorities, in this case mostly African American
•One attempt was the 'Blaxploitation' film movement
•These films tried to portray strong African Americans reversing stereotypes, or often simply taking a white character type and "blackening" it
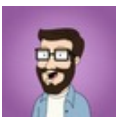
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Page 5 of 8.

Media/Race/Ethnicity: Under-Representation (cont)

•Strong, aggressive males like Dirty Harry and James Bond's characteristic are transposed onto an African American

Scapes

Finanscapes
•Refers primarily to the global flow of capital
•This flow is chaotic and uneven
•Constant shifting of capital from one place to another
•As global finance becomes more interdependent, states have less power to control the flow of capital
Ethnoscape
•Refers to the increasing flow of people across the globe
•As money flows through the Finanscape people follow
•Increasingly nations are losing the ability to regulate the flow of people.
Technoscapes
•Refers to the way that technologies move around the globe in an increasingly fluid way.
•Refers to the way that technology increasingly transforms the world in concert with technoscape and ethnoscape
Ideoscape
•The movement of political and social ideas from one place to the next
•Ideas like democracy, radical Islam, equality etc... move around the world at increasing speeds
Mediascapes
•The movement of media around the world and how it allows distant cultures to see glimpses of each other •Often results in a skewed image of other cultures
•A constant movement of images goes around the world at great speeds

Cultural Proximity / Cultural Discount

Cultural proximity: Cultures with similar languages and shared histories are likely to be receptive to each others' cultural products
•For Example: Because of their shared cultural history Russian cultural products have a generally widely accepted in Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan.
•British cultural products do well in Canada, Australia, USA
•Cultural discount: Cultural products that come from countries with very different cultures tend to have difficulty bridging cultural differences. They will be less appealing in other countries.
•For example Hong Kong action films despite being high quality generally have a hard time breaking into the Anglo-American market. They seem to foreign.

The Public Sphere

Based on the model of civic debate in the 18th and 19th centuries
•Suggests that democracy flourished in an atmosphere of open debate of ideas
•Declined with the advent of instrumental reason and the domination of society by the state and commerce
The public sphere
•Media and public engagement •Stimulating and informing debate •Representing Public opinion
•Acting as an inclusive discussion forum
•Nurturing public belonging

The burden of representation

With so few minority actors and roles in the media, those actors that do have a roles are expected to stand in for their entire group.

The burden of representation (cont)

•Whiteness is made invisible by it's dominance, but a few minority actors are forced to represent their entire group.
•Audiences are then encouraged to think of race in terms of racial essence, qualities that set the whole group apart from whites.
•Tokenism: minority actors are often put into a program specifically to give the illusion of inclusion.
•The burden of representation can also be seen in references made in news program to "the black community" "the Muslim community"

Celebrities are the hyperreal

With celebrities the real person is invisible.
•Celebrity personalities are constructed by media firms
•One appearance refers to another, which builds on another etc. •Media personality funerals are an example of the hyperreal Identity
•Increasingly people differentiate themselves not by the place they live or by occupation, but by the symbolic value attached to objects, like clothes, phones, etc.
•Fredric Jameson, sees use-value (what something does) being replaced increasingly by symbolic value (What it means)
•The need to constantly create novel seeming items has led to the recycling of fashions from the past.
•Where something is referred to ironically there is a connection to the original

Simulacra - 4 phrases

#1 Traditional symbolic –Images perform the role of the sign, acting as a means of faithfully reproducing the world
•#2 Ideology – The predominant role for signs and images is to obscure or distort reality
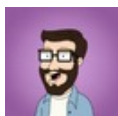
Simulacra - 4 phrases (cont)

•#3 Transition – reality is no longer discernable under the images –images play at being reality E.G Disneyland
•#4 Simulacra – Images no longer even attempt to refer to anything other than each other. This is the world of the hyperreal

Media=Reality

•Baudrillard fears that people are so bombarded with media that there is no distinction between representation and reality •The real in the minds of the post-modern person is simply a collection of media representations
•Our understanding of politics and world history are not directly experienced, they are mediated. So we only really know the representations
•Our understanding of current media events is shaped by our experience with past media.

Symbolic Value

Increasingly consumption becomes an identity statement.
•Items are purchased as much for their symbolic value as their use value
•Example Mac vs PC (Macs are far more expensive, but denote a more affluent sensibility, PCs are cheaper and more utilitarian)
•Clothing, cars, home décor etc. are all meant as statements of identity.
•Increases the intensity of consumerism Information overload
•Information surrounds us constantly
•People consume media from the moment they get up to the moment they fall asleep
•Media is more portable, we take our favorites with us
•Jean Baudrillard feared that all this 'noise' was drowning out meaning and substance
•As Postman suggested we are all becoming collectors of digital garbage

Beyond Anderson: The News

David Morley talks about broadcasting having the ongoing effect of connecting the nation by creating a shared sense of ownership.
•Creates shared cultural memories through the broadcasting events across the whole nation

The Internet: Fix everything or everything worst

Optimistic view – When everyone can speak people are likely to buy in
Optimistic view – A move away from a top down centralized world
Pessimistic view – More Fragmentation
Pessimistic view – More surveillance
Pessimistic view – More Egocasting

Case Study: #PrenticeBlamesAlbertans

"In terms of who is responsible, we all need only look in the mirror, right. Basically all of us have had the best of everything and have not had to pay for what it costs," he added. "Collectively we got into this as Albertans and collectively we're going to get out of it and everybody is going to have to shoulder some share of the responsibility."

Media Imperialism

One of the key aspects of imperialism is that it imposes the values and institutions of a dominant culture on a less powerful one.
•In the age of imperialism Europeans went around the world not only conquering but also spreading their values and institutions
•They justified this with the idea that European society was the most advanced, thus they could and should impose their system of doing things on other nations
•In some cases this was view a civilizing other cultures
Today the 'West' no longer rules over the rest directly

Media Imperialism (cont)

•Western culture remains dominant
•Culture is seen by some, particularly is post-colonial studies as a continuation of the project of imperialism
•There remains a fear that this is a 'soft' approach to imperialism
•By flooding the global market with attractive cultural product the fear is that Anglo-America is continuing to promote its way as the best way
•Other countries often feel American film promote ideas like individualism, autonomy and the right to be different, which are value not every culture shares.
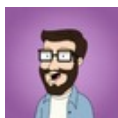
Globalization: Appadurai's Scapes

Financescape
Ethnoscape
Technoscapes
Ideoscapes
Mediascapes

Adaptation / Localization

The shallowest form of global cultural transfer
•When a cultural product is transferred from one culture to another with the transformation of only culturally specific markers
•The core of the narratives and appeal remain essentially the same.
•Are these stories universal?

Cultural Odorlessness

Cultural products that are deliberately created with as few distinguishing cultural markers as possible. •These products can circulate easily globally because they don't suffer from cultural discount
•EG. Pokémon, which has very few specific cultural markers in the text itself.

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Page 7 of 8.

Post-Feminist Independance

Some people point to programs like HBO's SEX and the City as a turning point in the representation of women •Some depictions of women as assertive and sexually assured also contribute to this. (ie Cosmopolitan and Glamour magazine)
•Some of these emphasize stronger roles for women.
The post-feminist masquerade
•Some feminists argue that shows like Sex and the City and other assertive women in media are false representations of indepe-ndance
•The role of women in media remains dominantly linked to beauty, and attracting male attention
•The way relationships unfold is different, the submissive house wife is mostly gone
•Goals like marriage and children continue to dominate
•Women and men's magazines still covered with attractive, mostly white women.

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Post-Feminist Independance (cont)

•Women and men's magazines still covered with attractive, mostly white women.

Patriarchal Romance and Domesticity

Women often depicted as, smaller weaker than men
•Men are decisive, women are dependant and emotional
•The role of a woman is to find a man (in media... I'm not saying that)
•Complaints of "symbolic annihilation"
•Symbolic Annihilation – a group's diversity is hidden when they are depicted only stereotypically

Frankfurt School Rises

Like the Frankfurt school scholars Habermas is critical of the commercial orientation of the media.
He sees commerce as putting the emphasis on emotion, trivia, sensation and personali-zation rather than public interest
People are distracted from issues of importance in the public sphere
People are lulled into a sense that their buying decisions are acts of citizenship or of equal importance to being a citizen

Gender as a social construction

Judith Butler (building on Foucault) argues that gender is socially constructed •Gender is defined by arbitrary categories
•Gender is performed
•Heterosexuality is portrayed as the norm
•Gender traits are essentialized
•Part of a system that legitimizes male power and female subordination

Ghettoization

Diasporic media allow minority communities to have positive roles that are written and performed for and by people like them.
•The major fear is that people will never transcend their communities and integrate
•This could lead to ghettoization, and potentially tension with other minorities and the majority population since insular groups tend to be seen as 'other'

Beyond Anderson: The News

David Morley Suggests that news is still an important aspect of nationalisms
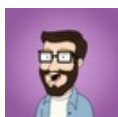Through the creation of shared national events and therefore national shared memories
Mass experiences like funerals, sports championships and others become the foundation of shared national identity.
Banal Nationalism
Nationalism is being constantly being reinforced in the most banal utterances .
Media uses the name of the nation as well as refereeing to "we' and 'us' when discussing the nation to reinforce the common sense of belonging

Decline of the Public Sphere:

From Facilitators to shapers
Habermas believes that already the public sphere has failed
Points to the increasing domination of markets, the state and instrumental reason
Media which in the 18th and 19th centuries were organized around small publishers with distinct ideological positions are now increasingly controlled by conglomerates
Like Chomsky sees this as promoting whatever ideals and values corporations are in favor of