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Laws of Media

Marshall and Eric McLuhan

For the end which this science of mine proposes is the invention not of arguments but of arts; not of things in accordance with principles, but of principles themselves; not of probable reasons, but of designations and directions for works. And as the intention is different, so, accordingly, is the effect; the effect of the one [Old Science] to overcome an opponent in argument, of the other to command nature in action.

Francis Bacon, *The Great Instauration*

LAWS OF MEDIA

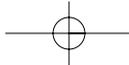
SIR Karl Popper's (right-brain) statement that a scientific law is one so stated as to be capable of falsification made it both possible and necessary to formulate the laws of the media.

All of man's artefacts – whether language, or laws, or ideas and hypotheses, or tools, or clothing, or computers – are extensions of the physical human body or the mind. Man the tool-making animal has long been engaged in extending one or another of his sense organs in such a manner as to disturb all of his other senses and faculties. But having made these experiments, men have consistently omitted to follow them with observations.

J.Z. Young, in *Doubt and Certainty in Science*, notes:

The effect of stimulations, external or internal, is to break up the unison of action of some part or the whole of the brain. A speculative suggestion is that the disturbance in some way breaks the unity of the actual pattern that has been previously

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built up in the brain. The brain then selects those features from the input that tend to repair the model and to return the cells to their regular synchronous beating. I cannot pretend to be able to develop this idea of models in our brain in detail, but it has great possibilities in showing how we tend to fit ourselves to the world and the world to ourselves. In some way the brain initiates sequences of actions that tend to return it to its rhythmic pattern, this return being the act of consummation, or completion. If the first action performed fails to do this, fails that is to stop the original disturbance, then other sequences may be tried. The brain runs through its rules one after another, matching the input with its various models until somehow unison is achieved. This may perhaps only be after strenuous, varied, and prolonged searching. During this random activity further connexions and action patterns are formed and they in turn will determine future sequences, (pages 67–8)

The inevitable drive for ‘closure,’ ‘completion,’ or equilibrium occurs with both the suppression and the extension of human sense or function. It was Edward T. Hall who in our time first drew attention to the fact that all human artefacts are extensions of man. In *The Silent Language*, he wrote:

Today man has developed extensions for practically everything he used to do with his body. The evolution of weapons begins with the teeth and the fist and ends with the atom bomb. Clothes and houses are extensions of man’s biological temperature-control mechanisms. Furniture takes the place of squatting and sitting on the ground. Power tools, glasses, TV, telephones, and books which carry the voice across both time and space are examples of material extensions. Money is a way of extending and storing labor. Our transportation networks now do what we used to do with our feet and backs. In fact, all man-made material things can be treated as extensions of what man once did with his body or some specialized part of his body.¹

Hans Hass, in *The Human Animal*, sees this power to create additional prosthetic organs as ‘an enormity from the evolutionary standpoint... an advance laden with unfathomable consequences’ (page 101).

Our *laws of media* are observations on the operation and effects of human artefacts on man and society, since a human artefact ‘is not merely an implement for working upon something, but an extension of our body, effected by the artificial addition of organs;... to which, to a greater or lesser degree, we owe our civilization.’² Hass considered the advantages of our bodily extensions to be five:

- (a) They have no need of constant nourishment, thus saving energy.
- (b) They can be discarded or stored rather than carried (a further saving of energy).
- (c) They are exchangeable, enabling man to specialize and to play multiple roles: when carrying a spear, he can be a hunter, or with a paddle he can move across the sea.
- (d) All of these instruments can be shared communally.
- (e) They can be made in the community by ‘specialists’ (giving rise to handicrafts). [*The Human Animal*, 103–4]

One thing Hass overlooks is the absence of biological or psychological means of coping with the *effects* of our own technical ingenuity. The problem is clearly indicated by A.T.W. Simeons in *Man's Presumptuous Brain*:

But when, about half a million years ago, man began very slowly to embark upon the road to cultural advance, an entirely new situation arose. The use of implements and the control of fire introduced artifacts of which the cortex could avail itself for purposes of living. These artifacts had no relationship whatever to the organization of the body and could, therefore, not be integrated into the functioning of the brain-stem.

The brain-stem's great body-regulating centre, the diencephalon, continued to function just as if the artifacts were non-existent. But as the diencephalon is also the organ in which instincts are generated, the earliest humans found themselves faced with a very old problem in a new garb. Their instinctive behaviour ceased to be appropriate in the new situations which the cortex created by using artifacts. Just as in the pre-mammalian reptiles the new environment in the trees rendered many ancient reflexes pointless, the new artificial environment which man began to build for himself at the dawn of culture made many of his animal reflexes useless, (page 43)

To put it briefly, man cannot trust himself when using his own artefacts. For example, Konrad Lorenz argues (*On Aggression*) that if man had more weaponry and armour as an organic part of himself, if he had tusks and horns, he would be less likely to kill his fellow men. Heavily armed animals have strong inhibitions against hurting their own species. Men, however, have few built-in restraints against turning their artificial weapons (extensions) upon one another. Firearms and bombs, which permit deadly action at great distances, seem to relieve the user of responsibility. Anthony Storr in *Human Aggression* observes:

It is obviously true that most bomber pilots are no better and no worse than other men. The majority of them, given a can of petrol and told to pour it over a child of three and ignite it, would probably disobey the order. Yet, put a decent man in an aeroplane a few hundred feet above a village, and he will, without compunction, drop high explosives and napalm and inflict appalling pain and injury on men, women and children. The distance between him and the people he is bombing makes them into an impersonal target, no longer human beings like himself with whom he can identify, (page 112)

Lorenz speaks in a similar fashion:

Humanity would have indeed destroyed itself by its first inventions, were it not for the very wonderful fact that inventions and responsibility are both the achievements of the same specifically human faculty of asking questions.

The deep, emotional layers of our personality simply do not register the fact that the crooking of the forefinger to release a shot tears the entrails of another man. No sane man would even go rabbit-hunting for pleasure if the necessity of killing his prey with his natural weapons brought home to him the full emotional realization of what he is actually doing.

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The same principle applies to an even greater degree to the use of modern remote-control weapons. (*On Aggression*, page 242)

Quite apart from the use of weaponry at a distance, there is the effect of the changes in man himself that result from using his own devices to create environments of service.³ Any new service environment, such as those created by the alphabet or railways or motor cars or telegraph or radio, deeply modifies the very nature and image of people who use it. As electric media proliferate, whole societies at a time become discarnate, detached from mere bodily or physical 'reality' and relieved of any allegiance to or sense of responsibility to or for it.

Radical changes of identity, happening suddenly and in very brief intervals of time, have proved more deadly and destructive of human values than wars fought with hardware weapons.

In the electric age, the alteration of human identity by new service environments of information has left whole populations without personal or community values to a degree that far exceeds the effects of food- and fuel- and energy-shortages.

Sir Peter Medawar has written a fine essay entitled 'What's Human about Man Is His Technology' in which he offers the straight hardware approach to considering microscopes and radio telescopes as sensory accessories, whereas cutlery, hammers, and automobiles 'are not sensory but motor accessories.' All such sensory and motor organs 'receive their instructions from ourselves.' Moreover, Medawar considers that although 'we are integrated psychologically with the instruments that serve us,' there is no question in his mind of our serving these instruments: to him they are neutral. He does not consider the total change of social surround created by environments of services brought into existence by these extensions of our bodily organs. Man and society remain essentially unchanged by these extensions which merely serve to enhance convenience or to lessen hardship. Such, at least, is Medawar's implication.

The main characteristic of man 'is not so much the devising of tools as the communication from one human being to another of the know-how to make them.' We cannot transmit our newly acquired 'organs' by any process of biological heredity: 'By no manner of means can the blacksmith transmit his brawny arms to his children, but there is nothing to stop him from teaching his children his trade, so that they grow up to be as strong and skillful as himself.' That is as far as Medawar is prepared to go. 'The evolution of this learning process . . . represents a fundamentally new biological stratagem – more important than any that preceded it – and totally unlike any other transaction of the organism with its environment.' The transformational effects of our artificial organs – they generate totally new conditions of environmental service and of life – these are the concerns of *Laws of Media*.

The artist is the person who invents the means to bridge between biological inheritance and the environments created by technological innovation.

Without the artist's intervention man merely *adapts* to his technologies and become their servo-mechanism. He worships the Idols of the Tribe, of the Cave, and of the Market. The canoeist or the motorist achieves his equilibrium by the cultivation of reflexes, becoming an extension of these situations. In *Men without Art*, Wyndham Lewis explained that the role of art is to liberate man from the robot status imposed by 'adjusting' to technologies. Rimbaud had put the matter simply: the job of the artist is 'le dereglement de tous les sens,' the upsetting of enslavements of equilibrium and homeostasis by awakening the faculties to full awareness. In 'The Caliph's Design II,' Lewis described art as perfecting the evolutionary process: 'The creation of a work of art is an act of the same description as the evolution of wings on the sides of a fish, the feathering of its fins; or the invention of a weapon within the body of a hymenopter to enable it to meet the terrible needs of its life' (*Wyndham Lewis the Artist: From 'Blast' to Burlington House*, 257). Lewis added: 'The artist is older than the fish, having access to primal sources of insight and design.'

Media, that is, the ground-configurations of effects, the service environments of technologies, are inaccessible to direct examination since their effects are mainly subliminal. Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* makes the same point in saying that 'the concrete entities of language are not directly accessible,' and like media 'everywhere and always there is the same complex equilibrium of terms that mutually condition each other' (page 110).

Our laws of media are intended to provide a ready means of identifying the properties of and actions exerted upon ourselves by our technologies and media and artefacts. They do not rest on any concept or theory, but are empirical, and form a practical means of perceiving the action and effects of ordinary human tools and services. They apply to all human artefacts, whether hardware or software, whether bulldozers or buttons, or poetic styles or philosophical systems. The four laws are framed as questions:

- What does the artefact enhance or intensify or make possible or accelerate? This can be asked concerning a wastebasket, a painting, a steamroller, or a zipper, as well as about a proposition in Euclid or a law of physics. It can be asked about any word or phrase in any language.
- If some aspect of a situation is enlarged or enhanced, simultaneously the old condition or unenhanced situation is displaced thereby What is pushed aside or obsolesced by the new 'organ'?
- What recurrence or retrieval of earlier actions and services is brought into play simultaneously by the new form? What older, previously obsolesced ground is brought back and inheres in the new form?
- When pushed to the limits of its potential (another complementary action), the new form will tend to reverse what had been its original characteristics. What is the reversal potential of the new form?

This tetrad of the effects of technologies and artefacts presents not a sequential process, but rather four simultaneous ones. All four aspects are inherent in each artefact from the start. The four aspects are complementary, and require careful

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observation of the artefact in relation to its ground, rather than consideration in the abstract. Usually, 'media study' (and equally, promotion) covers only the first two aspects, enhancement and obsolescence, and these lightly.

In tetrad form, the artefact is seen to be not neutral or passive, but an active logos or utterance of the human mind or body that transforms the user and his ground.

Enhancement and obsolescence are obviously complementary actions. Any new technique or idea or tool, while enabling a new range of activities by the user, pushes aside the older ways of doing things. Money speeds transactions and gives rise to uniform pricing systems, obsolescing haggle and barter and much of the human relation to commodities. The motor car enhances private mobility, and pushes aside the old organization of the city in favour of the suburb. 'No-fault divorce' enhances the corporate sharing of risk and responsibility and displaces private responsibility. 'The pill' tends to banish insecurity and uncertainty, while enhancing the 'programmable machine' approach to the body and numbing the user to its more human (fallible) dimensions, thus providing an amoral base for promiscuity. The photograph enhances pictorial realism and obsolesces portrait painting. The vacuum cleaner obsolesces the broom and the beater; the dryer pushes aside the clothes-line, and the washer the washboard and tub; the refrigerator replaces the icebox and the root cellar. Some forms are so evanescent they have their own built-in obsolescence. Nothing is as stale as yesterday's newspaper – until it can be retrieved as valuable documentary evidence or nostalgic treat. The computer speeds calculation and retrieval, obsolescing the 'Bob Cratchit' bookkeepers. Romanticism in poetry gave impetus to individual hyperaesthesia and pushed aside the eighteenth-century rationalist sensibility (left-hemisphere). 'In every fixed definition there is obsolescence or failed insight' (George Steiner, *After Babel*, 234). These are fairly easy aspects of the tetrad. The relation between obsolescence and retrieval is much more subtle. *From Cliché to Archetype* was written on this theme.

As outlined on the dust-jacket, the theme is 'new' archetype is 'ye olde cliché writ large.' Obsolescence is not the end of anything; it's the beginning of aesthetics, the cradle of taste, of art, of eloquence and of slang. That is, the cultural midden-heap of cast-off clichés and obsolescent forms is the matrix of all innovation. Petrarch's *Ruins of Rome* was the fount of a new humanist culture. Gutenberg technology retrieved the entire ancient world, while obsolescing the scriptoria and scholasticism of the Middle Ages. The needs of poet, musician, and artist for ever-new means of probing and exploring experience send them back again and again to the rag-and-bone shop of abandoned cliché.

The testimony of artists in this matter is impressive. The stages by which the literary archetype became substituted for the technical cliché as the means of creation is one of the subjects of this book [*From Cliché to Archetype*].

As a case in point, Yeats begins 'The Circus Animals' Desertion' by saying:

I sought a theme and sought for it in vain

I sought it daily for six weeks or so.
 Maybe at last, being but a broken man,
 I must be satisfied with my heart, although
 Winter and summer till old age began
 My circus animals were all on show,
 Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,
 Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.

This poem is a *ricorso* or rehearsal, a retrieval of Yeats's entire career. Seeing himself as an old man, he has thrown himself on the scrap heap. He has archetypalized himself, but first he rehearses all the clichés of his art, all the innovations that he had introduced into the drama and poetry of his time.

'What can I but enumerate old themes?'

Having surveyed these stages of his art, his innovations and experiments, he simply says.

Those masterful images because complete,
 Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?

His answer presents the main theme of *From Cliché to Archetype*: the new poetic techniques and images are retrieved from:

A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
 Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can.
 Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
 Who keeps the till. . .

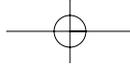
Yeats brings in here the whole theme of commerce as part of the poetic process. His poetic exhibitionism under the big top is done. The images retrieved from 'the rag-and-bone shop' out of which he built his ladder for the high-wire act are now complete and cast aside. His 'Jacob's ladder' is gone.

'I must lie down where all the ladders start.' The theme in *From Cliché to Archetype* is simply the scrapping of all poetic innovation and cliché when it has reached a certain stage of use. Masterful forms and images, when complete, are cast aside to become 'the rag-and-bone shop of the heart' – that is, the world of the archetype.

What about Jacob's ladder? Jacob lay down only to climb a ladder, or to dream, at least, of a ladder of angels ascending and descending in heavenly hierarchy. Yeats regards the moment of poetic breakdown as a new breakthrough, the beginning again of the ascent and descent of Jacob's ladder of heavenly vision.

As his poetic clichés collapse and are scrapped, he turns to the retrieval of old forms for new clichés. It is the worn-out cliché that reveals the creative or archetypal processes in language as in all other processes and artifacts. (From *Cliché to Archetype*. 126–7)

Brunelleschi and Alberti introduced the mathematical science of perspective-illusion drawing to Renaissance Europe, obsolescing the medieval symbolist style of multiple perspective, and carefully retrieving the linear perspective of Ptolemy in the second century. Samuel Edgerton Jr has detailed this retrieval and its development as an updating of medieval and scholastic sensibility in his *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective*. Retrieval is not simply a matter of hauling the old thing back onto stage, holus-bolus. Some translation or metamorphosis is necessary to place it into relation to the new ground – as anyone can testify who has experienced 'revivals' in our culture, whether in fashion or music or any other form. The old thing is brought up to date, as it were. For archaic or tribal



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man, in acoustic space, there is no past, no history – always present. Today we experience a return to that outlook when technological breakthroughs have become so massive as to bring one environment into collision with another, from telephone to radio to TV to satellite to computer.

Interface, of the resonant interval as 'where the action is' in all structures, whether chemical, psychic, or social, involves touch.

Touch, as the resonant interval or frontier of change and process, is indispensable to the study of structures. It involves also the idea of 'play,' as in the action of the interval between wheel and axle, as the basis of human communication. Since electronic man lives in a world of simultaneous information, he finds himself increasingly excluded from his traditional (visual) world, in which space and reason seem to be uniform, connected and stable. Instead, Western (visual and left-hemisphere) man now finds himself habitually relating to information structures that are simultaneous, discontinuous, and dynamic. Hearing, as such, is from all directions at once, a 360-degree sphere. Electrically, knowing is now from all directions at once in a 360-degree sphere, so that knowing itself has been recast or retrieved in acoustic form, as it were.

In 1917, T.S. Eliot in his 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' stressed the view that all art from Homer to the present formed a simultaneous order and that this order was perpetually motivated, renewed, and retrieved by new experience. His symbolist approach to language and art and communication is well indicated in his celebrated definition of the auditory imagination:

What I call the 'auditory imagination' is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word: sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin, and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated, and the trite, the current, and the new and the surprising, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality. (*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. 118–19)

The definition points to the endless process of change and transformation and retrieval implicit in this simultaneous and homeostatic structure, which is dedicated to eternal stability. Much of the confusion of our present age stems naturally from the divergent experience of Western literate man, on the one hand, and his new surround of simultaneous or acoustic knowledge, on the other. Western man is torn between the claims of visual and auditory cultures or structures.

Neo-acoustic space gives us simultaneous access to all pasts. As for tribal man, for us there is no history. All is present, and the mundane becomes mythic:

If we can consider form the reversing of archetype into cliché, as for example the use of an archetypal Ulysses in James Joyce's novel to explore contemporary consciousness in

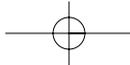
the city of Dublin, then we may ask what would be the status of this pattern in primordial times, in the medieval period, and today. The answer would seem to be that in primordial times and today this archetype-into-cliché process is perfectly normal and accepted but that in the medieval period it is exceptional and unusual. The Balinese say, 'We have no art. we do everything as well as possible.' The artist in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, or the era up to the nineteenth century was regarded as a unique, exceptional person because he used an exceptional, unusual process. In primordial times, as today, the artist uses a familiar, ordinary technique and so he is looked upon as an ordinary, familiar person. Every man today is in this sense an artist – the administrator, the scientist, the doctor, as well as the man who uses paint or sculpts stone. Just as the archaic man had to follow natural processes of rhythm in order to influence and to purge, cleanse them by *ricorso*, so modern electric technologies require such timing and precision that only the following of processes in nature can be tolerated. The immediately preceding centuries of mechanization had been able to bypass these processes by fragmentation and strip-mining kinds of procedures. (*From Cliché to Archetype*. 118–19)

The fall or scrapping of a culture world puts us all into the same archetypal cesspool, engendering nostalgia for earlier conditions.

Perhaps previous phases of culture seem more secure because they are fixed and processed in memory. Initially, any cliché is a breakthrough into a new dimension of experience. Alfred North Whitehead mentions in *Science and the Modern World* that the great discovery of the nineteenth century was that of the technique of discovery. The art of discovery, the art of acoustic, probing awareness, is now a cliché, and creativity has become a stereotype of the twentieth century. Discovery, or uncovering, is a form of retrieval.

The archetype is retrieved awareness or consciousness. It is consequently a retrieved cliché – an old cliché retrieved by a new cliché. Since a cliché is a unit extension of man, an archetype is a quoted extension, medium, technology, or environment, an old ground seen as figure through a new ground. The cliché, in other words, is incompatible with other clichés, but the archetype is extremely cohesive; the residues of other archetypes adhere to it. When we consciously set out to retrieve one archetype, we unconsciously retrieve others; and this retrieval recurs in infinite regress. In fact, whenever we 'quote' one consciousness, we also 'quote' the archetypes we exclude; and this quotation of excluded archetypes has been called by Freud, Jung, and others 'the archetypal unconscious' (see *From Cliché to Archetype*, 21–2).

Jung and his disciples have been careful to insist that the archetype is to be distinguished from its expression. Strictly speaking, a Jungian archetype is a power or capacity of the psyche. Nevertheless, even in Jung's writings the term is used with interchangeable senses. In *Psyche and Symbol* Jung declares that 'the archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy. It represents or personifies certain instinctive data of the dark primitive psyche: the real, the invisible *roots of consciousness*.'



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Jung is careful to remind literary critics to consider the archetype as a primordial symbol:

The archetypes are by no means useless archaic survivals or relics. They are living entities, which cause the praeformation of numinous ideas or dominant representations. Insufficient understanding, however, accepts these prae-formations in their archaic form, because they have a numinous appeal to the underdeveloped mind. Thus Communism is an archaic, primitive and therefore highly insidious pattern which characterizes primitive social groups. It implies lawless chieftainship as a vitally necessary compensation, a fact which can only be overlooked by means of a rationalistic one-sidedness, the prerogative of the barbarous mind.

It is important to bear in mind that my concept of the 'archetypes' has been frequently misunderstood as denoting inherited patterns of thought or as a kind of philosophical speculation. In reality they belong to the realm of the activities of the instincts and in that sense they represent inherited forms of psychic behaviour. As such they are invested with certain dynamic qualities which, psychologically speaking, are designated as 'autonomy' and 'numinosity.' (*Psyche and Symbol*, xvi)

Jung accounts for his theory of archetypes by means of the hypothesis of a collective race memory, although he is well aware that there is no scientific acceptance for such an idea. His justification, however, for using the concept of a collective memory is based on the recurrence over a wide area of archetypal patterns in artefacts, literatures, arts, and so on, apart from the shaky scientific basis (see *From Cliché to Archetype*, 22–3). While a new form or technology pervades the host culture as a new cliché, it simultaneously consigns the former and now obsolete cliché or homeostasis to the cultural rag-and-bone shop.

Older clichés are retrieved both as inherent principles that inform the new ground and new awareness, and as archetypal nostalgia figures with transformed meaning in relation to the new ground.

The automobile ended the age of the horse and buggy, but these returned with new significance and experience as the movie 'Western.' The tetrad -the four laws considered simultaneously, as a cluster – is an instrument for revealing and predicting the dynamics of situations and innovations Nevertheless the usual 'archetypal' explanations are inadequate because they regard the archetype as a figure minus a ground. In this regard, Jean Piaget observed:

Before we go on, we should stress the importance of this notion of equilibration, which enables us to dispense with an archetypal explanation for the prevalence of good forms. Since equilibration laws are coercive, they suffice to account for the generality of such processes of form selection; heredity need not be called in at all. Moreover, it is equilibration which makes Gestalten reenter the domain of structure ... for whether physical or physiological, equilibration involves the idea of transformation within a system and the idea of self-regulation. Gestalt psychology is therefore a structuralist theory more on account of its use of equilibration principles than because of the laws of wholeness it proposes.⁴

Both the retrieval and reversal aspects of the tetrad involve metamorphosis. The tired cliché, movies, became available as an art form when TV replaced them as the entertainment surround. Likewise the entire planet has been retrieved as a programmable resource and art form (i.e., ecology) as a side-effect of the new satellite ground. Money obsolesces barter, but retrieves potlatch in the form of conspicuous consumption. The digital watch displaces the old circular dial, and retrieves the sundial form, which likewise used light itself to tell the time and which also had no moving parts. In the West, electronic technology displaces visual space and retrieves acoustic space in a new form, as the ground now includes the detritus of alphabetic civilization. However, the effect in the East is quite different, to the degree that its culture does not include a ground of phonetic literacy and industrial hardware. Harold Innis showed (*Empire and Communications*) how a shift in the media of writing, from clay tablets or stone to papyrus, was sufficient to displace temple bureaucracies by military ones with expansionist programs of conquest. The new speed of the lightweight medium was enough to release left-hemisphere outward drive and aggression. At present, Iran is enjoying the impact of electric media and driving inward at a furious rate, having shifted from a military- to a temple-controlled government, and spearheading a revival of ancient Islamic mores that is more than latent in many of Iran's neighbours.

The principle that during the stages of their development all things appear under forms opposite to those that they finally present is an ancient doctrine. Interest in the power of things to reverse themselves by evolution is evidenced by a great diversity of observations, sage and jocular. Alexander Pope wrote, in 'Essay on Man' (Epistle II):

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with its face.
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

The resonant juxtapositions of Pope's epigrammatic style automatically induce comprehensive awareness of whole situations: alert readers will have noted that Pope has covered all four of the tetrad processes.

In *Take Today: The Executive as Drop-out* the main themes were the three principal reversals of Western form wrought by electric information: from hardware to software, from job-structure to role-playing, and from centralism to decentralism. In the age of electric information and programmed production, commodities themselves assume more and more the character of information, although this trend appears mainly in the advertising budget. In his *A Study of History* Arnold Toynbee notes a great many reversals of form and dynamic, as when, in the middle of the fourth century AD, the Germans in the Roman service began abruptly to be proud of their tribal names and to retain them.

Such a moment marked new confidence born of saturation with Roman values, and it was a moment marked by the complementary Roman swing toward primitive values. (As Americans saturate with European values, especially since TV, they begin to insist upon American coach lamps, hitching posts, and colonial kitchenware as cultural

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objects.) Just as the barbarians got to the top of the Roman social ladder, the Romans themselves were disposed to assume the dress and manners of tribesmen out of the same frivolous and snobbish spirit that attached the French court of Louis xvi to the world of shepherds and shepherdesses. It would have seemed a natural moment for the intellectuals to have taken over while the governing class was touring Disneyland, as it were. So it must have appeared to Marx and his followers. But they reckoned without understanding the dynamics of the new media of communication. Marx based his analysis most untimely on the machine, just as the telegraph and other implosive forms began to reverse the mechanical dynamic.

. . . in any medium or structure there is what Kenneth Boulding calls a break boundary at which the system suddenly changes into another or passes some point of no return in its dynamic processes' . . .

One effect of the static photo had been to suppress the conspicuous consumption of the rich, but the effect of the speed-up of the photo had been to provide fantasy riches for the poor of the entire globe.

Today the road beyond its break boundary turns cities into highways, and the highway proper takes on a continuous urban character. Another characteristic reversal... is that the country ceases to be the center of all work, and the city ceases to be the center of leisure. In fact, improved roads and transport have reversed the ancient pattern and made cities the centers of work and the country the place of leisure and recreation

Earlier, the increase of traffic that came with money and roads had ended the static tribal state (as Toynbee calls the nomadic food-gathering culture). Typical of the reversing that occurs at break boundaries is the paradox that nomadic mobile man, the hunter and food-gatherer is socially static. On the other hand, sedentary, specialist man is dynamic, explosive, progressive. The new magnetic or world city will be static and iconic or inclusive. (*Understanding Media*, 37–8)

The reversal aspect of the tetrad is succinctly exemplified in a maxim from information theory: data overload equals pattern recognition. Any word or process or form, pushed to the limits of its potential, reverses its characteristics and becomes a complementary form, just as the airplane reverses its controls when it passes the 'sound barrier.' Money (hardware), pushed to its limit, reverses into the lack of money, that is, credit (software or information), and the credit card. At high speed or in great quantity, the motor car reverts to nautical form, and traffic (or a crowd) 'flows.' By repetition, an archetype can become a cliché again; or an individual man a crowd (with no private, but rather corporate, identity). Breakdown becomes breakthrough.

In "Labour-Saving" Means More Work,' Ruth S. Cowan points to the reversal that every labour-saving device is a new and larger form of work in disguise, 'Homemakers,' she writes, 'log about the same number of hours at their work as their grandmothers did in 1910. 1920, and 1930. The average homemaker, now armed with dozens of motors and thousands of electronic chips, can still spend up to 50 hours a week doing housework' (page 77). All four aspects of the tetrad can be found in her discussion of the vacuum cleaner, which is a grotesque extension of lungs:

For decades prior to the turn of the century, inventors had been trying to create a carpet-cleaning system that would improve on the semiannual ritual of hauling rugs outside and beating them.

But the vacuum cleaner's introduction coincided almost precisely with the virtual disappearance of the domestic servant. For the most economically comfortable segment of the population, this meant one thing: The female head of the household was doing more housework than she had ever done before. What Maggie had once done with a broom. Mrs. Smith was now doing with a vacuum cleaner.

. . . As living quarters grew, standards for their upkeep increased; rugs had to be vacuumed daily or weekly, rather than semiannually. The net result was that when armed with a vacuum cleaner, homemakers could keep more space cleaner than their mothers and grandmothers would have believed possible, (page 78)

Another reversal occurs because of the proliferation of 'household technology': the homemaker leaves the home:

And then there is the automobile. We do not usually think of our cars as household appliances, but that is precisely what they are, since housework, as currently understood, could not be performed without them. The average homemaker is now more likely to be found behind a steering wheel than in front of a stove. She may have to drive her children to school and after-school activities, her husband to work or to public transport. She must shop for groceries. Meanwhile, as more homemakers acquired cars, more businessmen discovered the profitable joys of dispensing with delivery services.

The iceman, in other words, no longer cometh. Nor do the baker, the butcher, the grocer, the knife sharpener, the seamstress, nor the doctor. Thus a new category has been added to the homemaker's job description: chauffeur. (pages 78–9)

The next stage in reversal is to the 'working homemaker' who retrieves either the job or the home as the aesthetic base.

At electric speed, all forms are pushed to the limits of their potential.

On the telephone or on the air, it isn't messages that travel at electric speed: the sender is sent, minus a body, as information and image, and all the old relationships of speaker and audience tend to be reversed.

The laws of the media in tetrad form reveal some of the subliminal and previously inaccessible aspects of technology. To the extent that these observations reveal the hidden effects of artefacts on our lives, they are endeavours of art, bridging the worlds of biology and technology.

H.J. Eysenck, the British psychologist, observes:

In some form or other, the law of effect has been one of the most widely recognized generalizations in the whole of psychology. 'The belief that rewards and punishments are powerful tools for the selection and fixation of desirable acts and the elimination of undesirable ones' (Postman, 1947) is almost universal, and although the law itself is usually associated with the name of Thorndike (1911) who first used this phrase, he had precursors, e.g. Bain (1868) and Spencer (1870), who brought together the contributions of Associationism, Hedonism, and the Evolutionary Doctrine in a coherent form closely resembling Thorndike's own formulation. This formulation was as follows:

Of several responses made to the same situation, those which were accompanied or closely followed by satisfaction to the animal will, other things being

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equal, be more firmly connected with the situation, so that when it returns, they will be more likely to recur; those which are accompanied or closely followed by discomfort to the animal will, other things being equal, have their connection with the situation weakened so that, when it recurs, they will be less likely to occur. The greater the satisfaction or discomfort the greater the strengthening or weakening of the bond.

(‘Personality and the Law of Effect,’ 133)

The law of effect is strangely concentrated on the figure and its encounter with other figures, rather than on the figure in relation to the ground, or the total situation. ‘Connections’ are visual: there is no connection between figure and ground, but only interface. The left-hemisphere bias in Western thought, which directs attention to the figure or the idea or the concept, is typical not only of psychology but of philosophy and of science. Anthropology, in contrast, began by using the ground or the total culture itself as a figure for attention, thus seeming to break with the two-thousand-year tradition of considering figure-minus-ground. In Thomas Kuhn’s study, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the paradigms or extended metaphors which he sees as channelling scientific endeavours in various fields and times are considered as isolated figures without any social or cultural ground whatever. The only interplay that he allows them is with other paradigms, past or present. (In the Kuhn-Popper debate about legal innovation in science, Popper as it were embodies the obsolescence phase – ‘falsification’ – and Kuhn the reversal phase: who, one might ask, speaks for the rest of the tetrad?) Moreover, T.S. Eliot’s ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ was revolutionary precisely because he considered the totality of language and culture as a unified ground to which the individual talent had to be related. Indeed, a basic assumption of Old Science is the left-hemisphere need for abstract measurement and quantification of effects.

The left-hemisphere paradigm of quantitative measurement and of precision depends on a hidden ground, which has never been discussed by scientists in any field. That hidden ground is the acceptance of visual space as the norm of science and of rational endeavour. The implementors and users of visual space had, and have, the hidden phonemic ground of their discoveries or of their left-hemisphere preferences in the organization of thought and exploration. Today it is easy for us to perceive what programmed them as a hidden ground, because that ground has itself become a figure starkly portrayed against the new ground of the electric information environment. Instant information, as an environment, has the effect of pushing all other subliminal effects up into consciousness. That is, it has this effect with regard to all forms except itself, since the effect of an electric environment is to turn people inward and to substitute the inner trip for outer exploration, being for becoming.

That the hidden grounds of other cultures should now be available for inspection creates the worlds of structural linguistics and of anthropological and ecological studies on a world scale. For ‘the structural’ is constituted by the simultaneous and is antithetic to the visual, which it now makes perceptible as an exotic figure. When the environment of instant information becomes the hidden ground

of all perception, choice, and preference, the ground that underlays the world of precise and quantifiable scientific study is pushed aside or dissolved. All of our other senses create spaces peculiar to themselves, and all of these spaces are indivisible and immeasurable. Tactile space is the space of the resonant interval, as acoustic space is the sphere of simultaneous relations. They are as indivisible as osmic or kinetic space (smell or stress). The study of 'the law of effect' has been the area of scientific study since Galileo; but when data became available at electric speeds of retrieval, pattern recognition and transformation tended to supplant the exclusive concern with quantifiable results.

The field of 'information theory' began by using the old hardware paradigm of transportation of data from point to point.

Since electric information is simultaneously everywhere, the transportation theory yields its relevance to the awareness of transformation of 'software.'

The Western world is hung-up on the problem of visual versus acoustic space, seeming unable to let go of the 'common-sense' visual, even as it flounders in the acoustic ground. Gestalt psychology took a step away from visual space with its figure/ground paradigm. However, most psychologists still assume that both figure and ground are visual components in visual situations. In fact, they form an iconic or tactile relationship, defined by the resonant interval between them.

The degree of confusion that exists in many fields of study with regard to the visual and the acoustic is apparent in Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, with his division of language and speech. For Saussure, language is a total and inclusive world of simultaneous structures (that is, right-hemisphere and acoustic), whereas speech, which is sequential, is a relatively superficial and visual form. With these divisions of language and speech, Saussure associated the *diachronic* and *synchronic*:

But to indicate more clearly the opposition and crossing of two orders of phenomena that relate to the same object, I prefer to speak of *synchronic* and *diachronic* linguistics. Everything that relates to the static side of our science is *synchronic*: everything that has to do with evolution is *diachronic*. Similarly, *synchrony* and *diachrony* designate respectively as language-state and an evolutionary phase . . .

The first thing that strikes us when we study the facts of languages is that their succession in time does not exist insofar as the speaker is concerned. He is confronted with a state. That is why the linguist who wishes to understand a state must discard all knowledge of everything that produced it and ignore diachrony. He can enter the mind of speakers only by completely suppressing the past. The intervention of history can only falsify his judgment. (*Course in General Linguistics*, 8)

It probably would have done nothing to clarify these divisions if Saussure had said that the *synchronic* concerns the acoustic world of the inclusive, the simultaneous, and the unchanging. Even now, the futility of referring to visual as opposed to acoustic space resides in the fact that Western man still equates all space with the visual, just as in the eighteenth century all gases were considered

variants or pollutions of air. When anthropologist E.R. Leach turns to the thought of Lévi-Strauss, he says: 'Lévi-Strauss is distinguished among the intellectuals of his own country as the leading exponent of "Structuralism," a word which has come to be used as if it denoted a whole new philosophy of life on the analogy of "Marxism" or "Existentialism." What is this "Structuralism" all about?' (*Claude Lévi-Strauss*, 15). When Leach comes to examine the matter, he remarks: 'Two features in Lévi-Strauss' position seem crucial. First, he holds that the study of history diachronically and the study of anthropology cross-culturally but synchronically, are two alternative ways of doing the same kind of things' (pages 7–8). What emerges at once from Leach's approach to Lévi-Strauss is the fact that Leach does not know that the *diachronic* is visual (or left-hemisphere) in structure, and the *synchronic* is acoustic (or right-hemisphere) in structure. Having fallen off the rails completely at that early point in his tour of Lévi-Strauss, he not surprisingly fails to relate to Lévi-Strauss in any way whatever. A great deal of what emerges is ignorance of the character of the *diachronic* and the *synchronic*, including the fact that these categories, used in linguistics and anthropology alike, are not understood as presenting the structural clash between the visual and the acoustic. Elsewhere Leach takes a look behind the work of Lévi-Strauss and discovers:

This, in itself, is no new idea. A much older generation of anthropologists, notably Adolf Bastian (1826–1905) in Germany and Frazer in England held that because all men belong to one species there must be psychological universals (Elementargedanken) which should manifest themselves in the occurrence of similar customs among peoples 'who had reached the same stages of evolutionary development' all over the world. Frazer and his contemporaries assiduously compiled immense catalogues of 'similar' customs which were designed to exhibit this evolutionary principle. This is *not* what the structuralists are up to. (page 22)

The advantage of this passage is that it reveals another set of hang-ups: namely, that the archetypal and transcendental position, where it concerns 'psychological universals,' is itself based on the use of the paradigm of visual structure to the detriment of acoustic structure.

When Coleridge said that all men are born either Platonists or Aristotelians, he was saying that all men tend to be either acoustic or visual in their sensory bias.

But now that this bias has divided the culture of the entire Western World in the electric age, it is no longer a matter of personal temperament or preference, but concerns the very fate of the intelligible, as such. When Leach says 'this is *not* what the structuralists are up to,' he is also declaring his own unawareness of the difference between visual and acoustic structures. He proceeds to relate the work of Roman Jakobson to that of Lévi-Strauss and of Noam Chomsky: 'The influence of Jakobson's style of phonemic analysis on the work of Lévi-Strauss has been very marked; it is therefore relevant that although certain aspects of Jakobson's work have lately been subjected to criticism, Noam Chomsky specif-

ically recognizes the fundamental importance of Jakobson's main theory of distinctive-feature analysis (which reappears in Lévi-Strauss' *Structuralism*) is now rejected by many leading linguists' (page 23).

The inability of Leach to grasp the different structures of the visual and the acoustic is matched by the similar inability of Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss, and Chomsky, all of whom are unwittingly committed to the structures of visual space with its continuities and homogeneities, rather than to the resonant intervals of acoustic space. In spite of the failure to recognize the antithetic nature of the visual and the acoustic, those who feel attracted to structuralism tend to strive to discover inclusive interrelationships in the situations they study.

Visually biased, or left-hemisphere people, accustomed to the abstract study of figures minus their ground, are commonly upset by any sudden intrusion of the forgotten or hidden or subliminal ground:

The human biocomputer is constantly being programmed, continually, simply and naturally, below its levels of awareness, by the surrounding environment.

We noticed that some subjects were quite upset with these effects, which were beyond their immediate control. They would not accept the fact that their brain was reading a word and registering the meaning of that word below their levels of awareness. No matter how hard they tried they could not read the word unless they put their visual axis directly on the word, thus spoiling the experiment. To avoid such effects, of course, we had an observer looking at their eyes and any cases in which they let their eyes move were discounted. This kind of upset was easily corrected by continuing the demonstrations. As the person got used to such results and accepted them, he no longer became upset by the unconscious operations of his biocomputer. (John C. Lilly, *The Center of the Cyclone*, 67)

It is the role of the artist to keep the community in conscious relation to the changing and hidden ground of its preferred objectives. Anai's Nin writes of D.H. Lawrence:

Lawrence's characters, whether in poetry, allegory or prophecy, are actors who speak with the very accents of our emotions; and, before we are aware, our feelings become identified and involved with theirs. Some have recoiled from such an awakening, often unpleasant; many have dreaded having to acknowledge this power of their physical sensations, as well as to face in plain words, the real meaning of their fantasies.

Lawrence was reviled for going so far. *There are always those who fear for that integral kernel in themselves, for that divine integrity which can be preserved by ignorance (before psychology) or by religion (before and after psychology) or by the cessation of thought (by the modern paroxysm of activity).* (D.H. Lawrence, 33)

The task confronting contemporary man is to live with the hidden ground of his activities as familiarly as our literate predecessors lived with the figure minus ground.



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In his *Propaganda*, Jacques Ellul explains that the basic conditioning or shaping of populations is done, not by programs for various media, but by the media themselves, and by the very language that we take for granted: 'Direct propaganda, aimed at modifying opinions and attitudes, must be preceded by propaganda that is sociological in character, slow, general, seeking to create a climate, an atmosphere of favorable preliminary attitudes' (page 15). After this preparation of the ground, the whole cultural ground itself must be mobilized: not messages but the new configuration of the whole ground constitutes propaganda: 'Propaganda must be total.

The propagandist must utilize all of the technical means at his disposal – the press, radio, TV, movies, posters, meetings, door-to-door canvassing' (page 9). That is, the media themselves, and the whole cultural ground are forms of language and of what Bacon termed Idols of the Marketplace. The transforming power of language is recognized by contemporary phenomenology and linguistics as well:

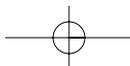
Further, the usurpation of language does not merely involve the social degradation of words, nor the abuse of our listener's confidence. More profoundly, language inserts itself into the self-consciousness of each man as a screen that distorts him in his own eyes. The intimate being of man is in fact confused, indistinct, and multiple. Language intervenes as a power destined to expropriate us from ourselves in order to bring us into line with those around, in order to model us to the common measure of all. It defines and perfects us, it terminates and determines us. The control of consciousness it exercises makes it the accomplice of having, in its monolithic poverty, as opposed to the plurality of being. To the degree that we are forced to resort to language we renounce our interior life because language imposes the discipline of exteriority. The use of speech is thus one of the essential causes of the unhappy conscience, all the more essential because we cannot be without it. It is this which Bruce Parain has strongly emphasized:

At every moment, each consciousness destroys a little bit of the vocabulary it has received and against which it cannot fail to revolt, because it is not its; but immediately it recreates another vocabulary in which it once again disappears.

(Georges Gusdorf, *Speaking*, 42–3)

The degree to which language as ground biases awareness was very vivid in the experience of Jacques Lusseyran. In his autobiography, *And There Was Light*, he provides an excellent structural or equilibrium approach of his own. The book is an account of the reordering of all of his sensory life as the result of a violent childhood accident in which he lost his sight. Loss of sight greatly enhanced the activity of his other senses and led to the development (or retrieval) of an inner sight as well. Altogether, he became aware that, in the sighted world in which he lived, there were a great many assumptions about perception that needed questioning:

How should I explain the way objects approached me when I was the one walking in their direction? Was I breathing them in or hearing them? . . . as I came closer, their mass was modified, often to the point of defining real contours. . .



As with the sense of touch, what came to me from objects was pressure ... When I became really attentive and did not oppose my own pressure to my surroundings, then trees and rocks came to me and printed their shape upon me like fingers leaving their impression in wax.

This tendency of objects to protect themselves beyond their physical limits produced sensations as definite as sight or hearing, (pages 31–3)

In presenting the laws of media in tetrad form, our object is to draw attention to situations that are still in process, situations that are structuring new perception and shaping new environments, even while they are restructuring old ones: the structures of media dynamics are inseparable from performance. Our effort has been to draw attention to the laws of composition as well as to the factors of regulation and interplay.

In *The Study of Human Communication*, Nan Lin stated, 'The ultimate goal of science is to explain by means of a set of theories, events that are observed' (page 192). The tetrads of our science are not based on a theory or set of concepts, but rather rely on observation, and on experience, and on percepts. While empirical, they provide a basis for prediction, for example, that retrievals or reversals of a certain form will occur.

As indicated earlier, all human artefacts are extensions of man, outerings or utterings of the human body or psyche, private or corporate. That is to say, they are speech, and they are translations of us, the users, from one form into another form: metaphors.

Etymology is so crucial that it deserves a host of separate studies. Etymology reveals a process of transformation of culture and sensibility and is also a matter of retrieval and of structure: the ground pattern of forces at the levels of molecular and atomic structure. At and beyond this level lies the structure of experience of the utterer; so grammatical flips into rhetorical investigation.

Aristotle first noted that the Greek invention of Nature was made possible when they had left behind a savage or barbaric state (first nature) by putting on an individualized and civilized one (second nature). And A. T. W. Simeons has discussed at length how disruptive the second nature has been to the first. Made discarnate by our electric information media, the West is furiously at work retrieving its obsolesced organic first nature in a spectrum of new aesthetic modes, from feminism to phenomenology. As our second nature consists entirely in our artefacts and extensions and the grounds and narcoses they impose, their etymologies are all to be found in first nature, the wild body. They have no hierarchy or orderly sequence; they subsume, obsolesce, retrieve, extend each other, burrow on each other, hybridize, and miscegenate endlessly. The following list is representative.

club, hammer	extends	forearm, first
clothing	"	skin
house	"	skeleton as carapace
saw, knife, bullet	"	teeth
writing	"	eye

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mirror, telescope.		
microscope, camera,		
spectacles	"	eye
cup, bowl	"	hands (cupped)
refrigerator	"	stomach
weapons	"	arms, legs, teeth, nails
rope	"	sinew
wheel	"	feet (in motion)
crowd	"	group, individual
tribe	"	family
automobile	"	whole body
chair	"	head, eyes (numbers rest)
bed	"	flesh
satellite	"	whole culture
spacecraft	"	planet
stairs	"	legs
number	"	hand, fingers

Whereas mechanical forms extend the limbs and organs, electric technologies beginning with the telegraph extend the nervous system and the conscious and unconscious in one or another manner and degree. (From the etymology of 'technology' it appears that the family extends the individual as the Greek for art, *techne*, and for child, *technon*, have common ancestry.) Technologies are the brain-children of the uttering left hemisphere, so the problem of what any one or group *means* has to be studied also in the way each adjusts the relation between left and right hemispheres and the diencephalon.

In other words, the crucial study that remains is that of working out in precise detail the relations between second and first natures: which organs or faculties are extended or stressed or numbed and in which pattern or degree by each one of our artefacts. This is to make explicit, via etymology, the analogical ratios that constitute our being and our cultures. Language is one resource and, as Joyce found, infallible when handled properly. In the case of the chair, for example, each part is named for the part of the body that it extends and replaces (first nature): feet, legs, seat, back, arms, and so on. Each of these is systemically numbed in the user as the chair diverts energy from it in the direction of the head and eyes. Are nails an extension of fingernails? of teeth? Our artists have spent endless hours exploring these same matters as they relate to changes in sensibility, so their work may be mined for further clues. Shakespeare saw the Court as the heart of the state, the body politic. The belly addresses the members:

True is it my Incorporate Friends (quoth he)
 That I receiue the generall Food at first,
 Which you do Hue vpon; and fit it is.
 Because I am the Store-house, and the Shop
 Of the whole Body. But, if you do remember.

I send it through the Riuers of your blood,
Even to the Court, the Heart, to th'seat o' th'Brain ...

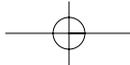
(*Coriolanus*, I, i, 137–43)

Perhaps now, in a democracy the pollster is the pacemaker? When James Joyce wrote *Ulysses*, he played on the analogical ratios between texts (his and Homer's) and also between situations, arts, symbols, and organs of the body in organizing his own text.⁵ So he saw, for example, the house as extended skeleton, the bed as deriving from the principle of flesh (padding), the streets as circulation (of blood), and the newspaper as lungs (obsolescing the town crier and retrieving the figures of eloquence). In *Finnegans Wake* he saw the internal-combustion engine as a metaphor for the stomach, which likewise converts fuel into energy.

To date, linguistics, philosophy, and semiotics have all stopped short of etymology (relation between figure and ground), at the limits of denotation or connotation – content and concept. Without ground or the aid of rhetoric or grammar or both they are prevented from making the leap into percepts and true science: media study remains restricted to content and moralism. Similarly with exegesis of words or things dialectic is stopped at the level of description or of matching signifier and signified: only the technique of resonant interplay of figures and grounds will make sense of metaphor, the basis of all words and all speech. Technology – second nature – recapitulates first nature in new forms; that is, it translates from one nature to another; the user is the content and the utterer; technology, as extension/outering, is speech. George Steiner sums up some of the foregoing themes in the light of hemispheric asymmetry:

Some anthropologists argue that the emergence of 'true language' was more sudden, that it coincided with the abrupt forward leap in the elaboration and diversity of tool-making towards the end of the last Ice Age. Neither hypothesis can be verified. But it might be that neither sees the full import of asymmetry. Pavlov's often-reiterated belief is worth recalling: the processes of learning and of language in men are different from those in animals . . . The sources of superfluity, with their anatomical analogue in the asymmetries of the cortex, generate new surpluses. Asymmetry, in the central sense of which the configurations of the brain are the enacting form, was the trigger. It set in motion the dissonance, the dialectic of human consciousness. Unlike animal species we are out of balance with and in the world. Speech is the consequence and the maintainer of this disequilibrium. (*After Babel*, 281)

Steiner holds that it is speech that keeps us human and saves us from, as Lewis has it, becoming robots. (Certainly it and our technologies as other speech – we speak our selves – have enacted our two natures, effectively hoicking us out of servitude to Nature, but leaving us slaves to the vagaries of second nature.) The asymmetry he refers to is physical: in 65 per cent of cases studied, the *planum temporale* on the left side of the brain was one-third longer than that on the right.⁶ 'This asymmetry, which seems to be genetically determined, is dramatized by the fact that the great majority of human beings are right-handed. Evidence for this goes back to the earliest known stone tools. No such cerebral unbalance has been



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found in primates or any other animal species' (*After Babel*, 280–1). This finding strongly suggests a direct relation between an imbalance in first nature and the origin of speech and artefacts – second nature. Steiner is also acutely aware of the enhancement (cognition) and retrieval (re-cognition, remaking) aspects of language and suggests that it was the discovery of the retrieval function that enabled speakers to flip language out of content and into technology:

Then, it may be towards the end of the last Ice Age, occurred the explosive discovery that language is making and re-making, that statements can be free of fact and utility... There is, to be sure, no evidence that this discovery, with which language as we know it truly begins, was explosive. But interrelated advances in cranial capacity, in the making of tools, and, so far as we can judge, in the lineaments of social organization do suggest a Quantum jump. The symbolic affinities between words and fire, between the live twist of flame and the darting tongue, are immemorably archaic and firmly entrenched in the subconscious, (page 230)

All words, in every language, are metaphors.

Structurally speaking, a metaphor is a technique of presenting or of observing one situation in terms of another situation. It is a technique of awareness, of perception (right hemisphere) not of concepts (left hemisphere). As two situations are involved, there are two figure/ground relations in apposition. Normally, only two of the four elements are made explicit, the others remain implicit.

All metaphors have four components in analogical ratio. 'Cats are the crabgrass of life' presents 'cats are to (my) life as crabgrass is to an otherwise beautiful lawn.' Or, 'she sailed into the room' presents her motion entering the room' in terms of a ship's swift (perhaps forceful or graceful) motion under sail. To say that metaphor has four terms that are discontinuous, yet in ratio to one another, is to say that the basic mode of metaphor is resonance and interval – the audile-tactile.

Apropos the four-part structure that relates to all human artefacts (verbal and non-verbal), its existence is certainly not deliberate or intentional. Rather, it is a testimony to the fact that the mind of man is structurally active in all human artefacts and hypotheses. That these appositional ratios are not also present in the structure of the 'natural' world raises an entirely separate question. It is perhaps relevant to point out that the Greeks made no entelechies or observations of the effects of man-made technology, but only of what they considered the objects of the natural world.

The usual approach to metaphor is purely verbal rather than operational or structural, that is, in left-hemisphere terms of the figures only, minus their grounds. Thus, metaphor is discussed as a form of 'sort-crossing' or of 'category mistake' or of 'mis-naming.' For example, as C.M. Turbayne points out:⁷

However appropriate in one sense a good metaphor may be, in another sense there is something inappropriate about it. This inappropriateness results from the use of

a sign in a sense different from the usual, which use I shall call 'sort-crossing'. Such sort-crossing is the first definite feature of metaphor and, according to Aristotle, its genus:

Metaphor (meta-phora) consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference (epi-phora) being either from genus to species, or on the grounds of analogy. (*Poetics* 1457b)

Elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle betrays his left-hemisphere visual bias in his confusion of metaphor and simile. He regards both of these rhetorical figures as concepts and as propositional, whereas metaphor is discontinuous, abrupt and appositional. His approach is descriptive rather than structural or perceptual.

Paul Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* is devoted to an examination and discussion of recent approaches to metaphor from various disciplines, including linguistics, semantics, the philosophy of language, literary criticism, and aesthetics. In discovering the Aristotelian notion of metaphor as 'alien usage' – the 'substitution theory' – he makes a revealing slip regarding his own assumptions about words:

Now the fact that the metaphorical term is borrowed from an alien domain does not imply that it substitutes for an ordinary word which one could have found in the same place. Nevertheless, it seems that Aristotle himself was confused on this point and thus provided grounds for the modern critiques of the rhetorical theory of metaphor. The metaphorical word takes the place of a non-metaphorical word that one could have used (on condition that it exists), so it is doubly alien, as a present but borrowed word and as substitute for an absent word, (page 19)

However, all words are metaphor (except, in a special sense, the word 'word' itself): the non-metaphorical word is a feature only of primitive tribal thought and experience about words. The native hunter or Inuit says, 'Of course "stone" is stone, else how could I know stone?'

Language always preserves a play or figure/ground relation between experience, and perception and its replay in expression.

Poets regard language as the storehouse of experience. It is this same left-hemisphere approach to the right-hemisphere (appositional) properties of language that prompts Ricoeur to relegate all technology to the domain of logos rather than to that of mythos.

At the heart of Ricoeur's approach to metaphor is the 'transportation theory' of communication. It is, he remarks, 'the relationship between Aristotle's embryonic classification and the concept of transportation, which constitutes the unity of meaning of the genus "metaphor"' (page 21) Ricoeur continues:

Two facts should be noted. First, transposition operates between logical poles. Metaphor occurs in an order already constituted in terms of genus and species, and in a game whose relation-rules – subordination, co-ordination, proportionality or

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equality of relationships – are already given. Second, metaphor consists in a violation of this order and this game. In giving to a genus the name of a species, to the fourth term of the proportional relationship the name of the second term, and vice versa, one simultaneously recognizes and transgresses the logical structure of language (1457b 12–20). The *anti*, discussed earlier, applies not just to the substitution of one word for another, but also to the jumbling of classification in cases that do not have to do only with making up for lexical poverty. Aristotle himself did not exploit this idea of a categorical transgression, which some modern authors compare to Gilbert Ryle's concept of 'category mistake'. Doubtless this was because he was more interested, within the perspective of his *Poetics*, in the semantic gain attached to the transference of names than in the logical cost of the operation. The reverse side of the process, however, is at least as interesting to describe as the obverse. (page 21)

Ricoeur is trying to hold the discussion of metaphor in terms of the matching rather than the making process, in terms of logic and dialectic instead of poesis, in terms of (descriptive) concepts instead of percepts. To do so, it is necessary to ignore ground and to create a dialectic of polar figures, to reduce proportion to mere equalities (which robs them of resonance), and to interpolate a 'logical structure' of language. In consequence, he speaks of (Aristotelian) analogy, 'which, as we have seen, is analysed as an identity or similarity of two relations' (page 21) and of 'the logical moment of proportionality' (page 34).

A contemporary, Jacques Derrida, sees metaphor as a connected triad of signs progressing from savage to civilized, from first nature to second nature. Working from Rousseau's *Essay*, he proposes that 'it is not fear itself that the word *giant* expresses literally,' but rather 'the idea that the passion presents to us':

The idea 'giant' is at once the literal sign of the representer of the passion, the metaphoric sign of the object [the terrifying man that one calls a giant] and the metaphoric sign of the affect (fear). That sign is metaphoric because it is *false* with regard to the object: it is metaphoric because it is *indirect* with regard to the affect: it is the sign of a sign, it expresses emotion only through another sign, through the representer of fear, namely through the false sign. It represents the affect literally only through representing a false representer, (Of Grammatology, 277)

Derrida insists on visual matching and connection of figures that contain or point to or represent each other in the triadic chain A:B:C. In this variety of the transportation theory, meaning is carried via matching and connection.

George Steiner confirms that present-day dialecticians are still mired in the transportation approach:

It is worth noting that the development of modern phenomenology has accentuated the areas of overlap between translation theory and the general investigation of sense and meaning. The conceptual claims, the idiom of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel Levinas force on anyone concerned with the nature of translation a fuller awareness of, a more responsible discomfort at, notions of identity and otherness, of intentionality and signification. When Levinas writes that 'le langage est le dépassement incessant de la Sinngebung par la signification' (significance con-

stantly transcends designation), he comes near to equating all speech-acts with translation in the way indicated at the outset of this study. (*Totalité et infinie*, 273.) Phenomenological ontologies look very much like meditations on the ‘transportability’ of meanings. (*After Babel*, 278)

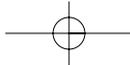
Steiner’s own approach, and his entire study, *After Babel*, is based on the “ammatical awareness both of metaphor as translation and of translation transformation of sensibility.

Ricoeur’s main problem, and that of most contemporary ‘rhetorical’ .’tcism, is related to the confusion that arises from not dealing with something on its own terms. Throughout his discussion, Ricoeur leans on Aristotle’s distinction of metaphor as part of rhetoric on the one hand, and as part of dramatic mimesis on the other. His essential point is contained in stotle’s statement, ‘to metaphorize well implies an intuitive perception the similarity in dissimilars.’ Full explication of the unresolved and unquestioned assumptions in Ricoeur’s, and for that matter, all modern examination of metaphor would require an extensive history of the trivium – rammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. As yet, no such history exists, though portions of it are available; for example, in the work of Werner Jaeger, W.S. Howell, Walter Ong, Henri de Lubac, and H.I. Marrou, to mention a few. However, these suffer from not accounting for the interdependence and interaction of the ‘three roads’ (the trivium).

Intense rivalry characterized the trivium from the outset. Plato’s and Aristotle’s dialectical accounts of rhetoric are severely biased.

The trivium, the arts or sciences of the logos, was born of the phonetic alphabet. As shown in chapter one, the effect of phonetic literacy on the Greek psyche and culture was catastrophic. Mimesis gave way to individualized detachment, and the integral resonating oral logos was broken into multiple fragments, each bearing some one or another of its original properties. For more than a century a great number of these systems were invented by poets, exegetes, philosophers, rhetors, and so on, but it was the fifth-century Stoics who formulated the essential tripartite relationship. The Stoics developed a ‘threefold logos’ that served as the pattern for the trivium, although the trivium itself was not formally recognized as the basis of education and science for some time. The pre-alphabetic logos was retrieved in two ways: it informed the Patristic ‘doctrine of the logos,’ and it was recapitulated in the overlapping structures of the threefold Stoic logos.

Briefly, the relation between the Stoic system and the trivium is as follows: the Stoic *logos hendiathetos* is the inner, abstract word in the mind prior to (or minus) speech. Its pattern appears in dialectic (logic and philosophy) via emphasis on abstraction (figure minus ground) and absolutes, and on correct thought form (sequence), irrespective of audience. The Stoic *logos prophorikos* is the ‘uttered word’ and corresponds to rhetoric as the science of transforming audiences with speech. Their *logos spermatikos* is the (uttered) logos as ‘seeds’ embedded in things animate or inanimate that structure and inform them and provide the formal principles of



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their being and growth (becoming). This third logos is the root of grammar (which meant 'literature') with its twin concerns of etymology and multiple-level exegesis, the ground-search for structure and roots. All of the sciences of the later quadrivium (of music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy) were subdivisions of grammar, as forms of exegesis of the Book of Nature. Ancient rhetoric and grammar, then, are principally right-hemisphere activities: a dialectical rendering of either one (such as Plato's or Aristotle's), quite aside from partisanship, would be at best a metaphor for, or a biased translation of, the original.

The wars of the Ancients and the Moderns were grounded in a rivalry between the hemispheres.

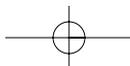
Throughout its history, the trivium was beset by rivalries, later known as the 'wars of the Ancients and the Moderns.' Grammar (the encyclopedic tradition of learned exegesis and commentary) and rhetoric together usually held control of the trivium against the conflicting claims of the dialecticians.

Following the Greek rhetorician isocrates, Cicero, and after him Quintilian, established the basic pattern for Western civilized education, reaffirmed by St Augustine four centuries later as the alignment of encyclopedic wisdom and eloquence. That is, with the trivium as a retrieval of the oral logos on the new ground of writing, the conjunction of grammar and rhetoric on the one hand, and dialectic on the other, provided a balance of the hemispheres. For these men, 'tradition' had the same right-hemisphere figure-ground resonance and simultaneity that was proposed by T.S. Eliot (a modern grammarian of ancient ilk). For more than fifteen centuries, most of our Western history, the Ciceronian program, itself a retrieval of the old Greek liberal educational system, the 'egkuklios paideia' (vide Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*) was the basis of liberal education and Christian humanism. With print, via Gutenberg, the visual stress of the alphabet gained new ascendancy.⁸ Spearheaded by the French dialectician Peter Ramus, a new battle of the Ancients (rhetoricians and grammarians) and Moderns (dialecticians) was waged, and dialectic 'Method' obsolesced tradition. Since that time grammar and rhetoric have been cast in a dialectic or left-hemisphere mould, along with all of our arts and sciences. It is only with the return to acoustic space in this century, to right-hemisphere multisensory forms of awareness, that the tables begin to turn once more.

Laws of Media offers a bridge between the hemispheres, a dialogue-structure in accordance with the role of the *corpus callosum*, which neurosurgeons identify as the organ that facilitates interplay between the two types of cognition. Until now, the conventional form in analysis or exposition has been triadic and logical, as in the syllogism. It is ultimately a propositional left-hemisphere form, rigid and connected, in the pattern of efficient cause.

The logical syllogism has the connected triadic or triangular form

All As are Bs.
C is an A.
Therefore C is a B.



as in

All men are mortal.
All dialecticians are men.
Therefore all dialecticians are mortal.

Hegel's great triad is equally a connected form by virtue of the identity of opposition, of sameness-in-reverse. He set out his writings in dialectical triads comprising a thesis, an antithesis, and a synthesis. Thus, he viewed and reviewed history; thus, he organized his *Encyclopedia*, where he set forth his triadic system, in three sections - 'Logic,' 'Philosophy of Nature,' and 'Philosophy of Mind.' Hegel regarded thought and nature (software and hardware, as we say now) as opposites united in mind and society. The nineteenth century, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out, regarded Hegel as 'the possessor of a marvelous secret which enabled him to speak of all things without a thought by mechanically applying dialectical order and connection to them.'⁹

Hence, the grammarian George Steiner inveighs against the sterile triad while he proposes his own tetrad for translation – metaphor writ large:

This view of translation as a hermeneutic of trust (*élanement*), of penetration, of embodiment, and of restitution, will allow us to overcome the sterile triadic model which has dominated the history and theory of the subject. The perennial distinction between literalism, paraphrase and free imitation, turns out to be wholly contingent. It has no precision or philosophic basis. It overlooks the key fact that a fourfold *hermeneia*, Aristotle's term for discourse which signifies because it interprets, is conceptually and practically inherent in even the rudiments of translation. (*After Babel*. 303)

So he proposes a fourfold 'hermeneutic motion,' and emphasizes 'that the hermeneutic motion is dangerously incomplete, that it is dangerous because it is incomplete, if it lacks its fourth stage, the piston-stroke, as it were, which completes the cycle. . . . The enactment of reciprocity in order to restore balance is the crux of the metier and morals of translation. But it is very difficult to put abstractly.'¹⁰ Whether syllogistic or Hegelian-dialectical, for some mysterious inherent reason the triad form itself eliminates ground. But when a fourth term is added to a triad, making a tetrad, the form flips into a new one – resonant and appositional and metamorphic.

The tetrads of *Laws of Media* present not sequential but simultaneous facets of media effects. That is to say, they are right-hemisphere in character, and each tetrad comprises two figures and two grounds in proportion to each other. This proportion of ratios is not made of imposed theoretical classifications (as are, say, Hegel's three terms) but are structurally inherent in each of our artefacts and procedures. All four are processes. The tetrads render obsolete all groundless dialectical and systematic Marxist approaches to interpretation of social processes and technological transformations of culture by flipping the discussion into a kind of linguistic of real words.

The laws of the media, in tetrad form, bring logos and formal cause up to date to reveal analytically the structure of all human artefacts.

All words (and languages) are artefacts, each of which manifests this same four-part structure. There are no exceptions. This is the right-hemisphere aspect of language. All non-verbal artefacts – whether safety pins or ICBMS, including also laws of science and institutions – share this same four-part logos-structure in their manifestations and effects. (The tetrad is only applicable to human artefacts, and not, for example, to birds' nests or spiders' webs.) 'Media determinism,' the imposition willy-nilly of new cultural grounds by the action of new technologies (e.g., the imposition of visual space and left-hemisphere dominance following our adoption of the alphabet, or the imposition of the feudal system as a 'side-effect' of the stirrup), is only possible while the users are 'well-adjusted' – sound asleep. The vortex of side-effects was pinned by Joyce: 'willed without witting, whorled without aimed.' There is no inevitability where there is a willingness to pay attention.

Insofar as the tetrads are a means of focusing awareness of hidden or unobserved qualities in our culture and technology, they act phenomeno-logically. From Hegel to Heidegger, phenomenologists have engaged in an attempt to get at the hidden properties or hidden effects of language and technology alike. In other words, they have tackled a right-hemisphere problem using left-hemisphere techniques and modes of cognition. With the tetrads this dilemma is resolved.

All human artefacts are human utterances, or outerings, and as such they are linguistic and rhetorical entities. At the same time, the etymology of all human technologies is to be found in the human body itself: they are, as it were, prosthetic devices, mutations, metaphors of the body or its parts. The tetrad is exegesis on four levels, showing not the mythic, but the logos-structure of each artefact, and giving its four 'parts' as metaphor, or word.

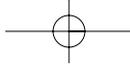
The laws of media in tetrad form belong properly to rhetoric and grammar, not philosophy. Our concern is etymology and exegesis.

This is to place the modern study of technology and artefacts on a humanistic and linguistic basis for the first time.

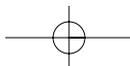
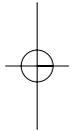
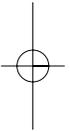
NOTES

1. E.T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, 56–7. However, the notion is of a respectable age: Two generations ago, Emerson made the observation, 'The human body is the magazine of inventions, the patent office where are the models from which every hint was taken. All the tools and engines on earth are only extensions of its limbs and senses. One definition of man is "an intelligence served by organs"' ('Works and Days,' 151).
2. Hass, *The Human Animal*, 101. In the same vein, Karl Popper wrote, 'the kind of extra-personal or exosomatic evolution that interests me here is this: instead of growing better memories and brains, we grow paper, pens, typewriters, dictaphones, the printing press and libraries. These add to our language . . . what may be described as new dimensions. The latest development . . . is the growth of computers' (*Objective Knowledge*, 238–9).

3. Emerson put it similarly: 'These tools have some questionable properties They are reagents. Machinery is aggressive. The weaver becomes a web, the machinist a machine All tools are in one sense edge-tools, and dangerous. A man builds a fine house; and now he has a master, and a task for life: he is to furnish, watch, show it, and keep it in repair, the rest of his days. A man has a reputation, and is no longer free, but must respect that. A man makes a picture or a book. and. if it succeeds, 't is often the worse for him. I saw a brave man the other day. hitherto as free as the hawk or the fox of the wilderness, constructing his cabinet of drawers for shells, eggs, minerals, and mounted birds. It was easy to see that he was amusing himself with making pretty links for his own limbs ... The machine unmakes the man Now that the machine is so perfect, the engineer is nobody' (Works and Days,' 157-8).
4. *Structuralism*, 57. Harold Innis. in *The Bias of Communication* and in *Empire and Communications*, made many historical observations on the differing Gestalt patterns and structures in human organization as they related to different means available for shaping situations. One of his most frequent illustrations of this principle concerned the types of bureaucracy that grew from the use of stone, on the one hand, and paper, on 'he other hand, as materials for writing. When stone or brick or clay are used as writing materials, the bureaucracy or human organization of interests and energies tends to take a priestly form dedicated to stability in time When paper is available, the bureaucracy tends to become military, with a strong interest in the control of space. Innis was not only concerned with the study of changes in the outer patterns of human organization resulting from different means of communication in time and space, but he was much interested in the changes that took place in the perceptual lives of the people involved in these changes He played the inner and outer aspects of innovation and change back and forth across each other as a figure/ground interface.
5. *Vide* his chart of 'Correspondences' reproduced entire in *James Joyce: The Poetry of Conscience* by Mary Parr.
6. Steiner, *After Babel*, 280, gives these references: cf. Norman Geschwind and Walter Levitsky, 'Human Brain: Left-Right Asymmetries in Temporal Speech Regions,' *Science*, CLXI, 1968, and Norman Geschwind, 'Language and the Brain,' *Scientific American*, CCXXVI, 1972.
7. C.M. Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor*, 11, A complete bibliography of the literature on metaphor is presented in *Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History*, by Warren A Shibles.
8. Cf *The Gutenberg Galaxy* for a detailed discussion; also cf. *The Coming of the Book*, by Lucien Paul Victor Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin; and Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*. Bogen notes ('Some Educational Implications of Hemispheric Specialization,' 145): 'Although humans of any culture, so far as we know, have the potential for reading and writing, many remain non-literate and thus fall short of acquiring the most special of left-hemisphere functions. Conversely, we can readily comprehend the concept of a society in which right-hemisphere illiteracy is the rule. Indeed, our own society (admittedly complex) seems to be, in some respects, a good example; a scholastized, post-Gutenberg-industrialized, computer-happy exaggeration of the Graeco-Roman penchant for propositionizing.'
9. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 156. Quite a different Hegel is the subject of the current 'Hegelian Revival.' Merleau-Ponty notes that 'Hegel is the only one who thinks that his system can contain the truth of all the others, and the man who knew the others only through Hegel's synthesis would not know them at all' (page 81). He elaborates: 'Hegel is the Museum. He is if you wish all philosophies, but deprived of their finiteness and power of impact, embalmed, transformed, he believes, into themselves, but really transformed into Hegel. We only have to see how a truth wastes away when it is integrated into different ones (how the Cogito, for example, in going from Descartes to the Cartesians, becomes almost a listlessly repeated ritual) to agree that the synthesis does not effectively contain all past systems of thought, that it is not all that they have been, and finally that it is never a synthesis which is both "in and for itself" – that is, a synthesis which in the same movement is and knows, is what it knows, knows what it is, preserves and suppresses, realizes and destroys. If Hegel means that as the past becomes distant it changes into its meaning, and that we can trace an intelligible history of thought in retrospect, he is right, but on condition that in this synthesis each term remain the whole of the world at the date considered, and that in linking philosophies together we keep them all in their place like so many open significations and let an exchange of anticipations and metamorphoses subsist between them' (page 82).

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10. Steiner, *After Babel*, 300. He explains: "The a-prioristic movement of trust puts us off balance. We "lean towards" the confronting text (every transiator has experienced this palpable bending towards and launching at his target). We encircle and invade cognitively. We come home laden, thus again off-balance, having caused disequilibrium throughout the system by taking away from "ther other" and by adding, though possibly with ambiguous consequence, to our own. The system is now off-tilt. The hermeneutic act must compensate' (page 300).



However, one downside of media law is that the world it belongs to doesn't really sleep. Associates and partners are often "on call" outside of office hours (usually evenings and weekends) to respond to queries from clients. On the bright side, it's unlikely these will involve staying late at the office unless you're a barrister working on urgent applications for injunctions. Which Area of Law Is Right for Me? Take our quiz to see which legal area you're more suited to! Take the Quiz. Where Can I Practise as a Media Lawyer? Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man by Marshall McLuhan Paperback \$27.99. In Stock. Ships from and sold by Amazon.com. FREE Shipping. Details. The Lost Tetrads of Marshall McLuhan by Marshall McLuhan Paperback \$17.71. Only 20 left in stock - order soon. Ships from and sold by Amazon.com. Media laws. The definition of legislation. (OSCE/Pauline Schreuder). Media Law standard textbook (3rd edition) for students of Russian colleges, by Senior Adviser Andrey Rikhter, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Video & Photography. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media > Media laws. Key Resources. Legal reviews commissioned by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Collection. Entertainment law, also referred to as media law, is legal services provided to the entertainment industry. These services in entertainment law overlap with intellectual property law. Intellectual property has many moving parts that include trademarks, copyright, and the "Right of Publicity". However, the practice of entertainment law often involves questions of employment law, contract law, torts, labor law, bankruptcy law, immigration, securities law, security interests, agency, right of privacy Media Laws: Mass Media laws in India have a long history and are deeply rooted in the country's colonial experience under British rule. The earliest regulatory measures can be traced back to 1799 when Lord Wellesley promulgated the Press Regulations. Media Laws - An Overview. Written by: Aparimita Basu, A Final year student of Symbiosis Institute of Mass Communication, Pune. Copyright Registration in India.