Cathodisms

Stéphane Spoiden
University of Michigan-Dearborn

At a time when European television is undergoing constant change, it is undoubtedly more opportune than ever to talk about it, less perhaps because it would be "mediocratized"[1] than because new multimedia techniques which are developing at the current time could render it obsolete or at least radically transform it. Doubtless it is equally opportune to talk about it today since several major figures in the French intellectual field have recently decided to offer reflections on the TV that have not gone unnoticed. I am thinking notably of the work *Echographie de la télévision* (*Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*), published in English recently, which Jacques Derrida published with the techno-philosopher Bernard Stiegler. Of particular interest for this article, however, is Pierre Bourdieu's opuscule entitled *Sur la télévision* (*On Television*) for, among other things, its surprising best-selling *tour de force*. This short book inaugurated the engaging collection *Liber-Raisons d'agir* which continues to reap success in bookstores with other works having to do with the media, notably *Les Nouveaux chiens de garde* (*The New Watch-Dogs*) by Serge Halimi and *Contre-feux* (*Acts of Resistance*), again by Bourdieu. The former is a powerful and devastating analysis of the media structure in France. The latter is a collection of articles that appeared earlier which attempts to reveal the collusion between media and neo-liberal ideology that the author sets to denounce. The complementary nature of these two publications in particular, and the coherence of the collection in general, has attracted great media attention and stirred public sentiment.

To complete a necessarily brief survey of the field, *télévision oblige*, I might add to the reflections of Derrida/Stiegler, Bourdieu, and Halimi the more diffuse thoughts of *mediologists* that can no longer be ignored when the notion of media is raised. I should point out that Mediology, unlike "media studies," is rarely concerned with the analysis of modern media such as television. Although it would be unfair to narrow the definition of "media studies" to contemporary media, it tends to concentrate on current political and social issues related to their media treatment. In contrast, Mediology is wider and more general in its scope. To quote Régis Debray, "this discipline devotes itself to the task of exploring the ways and means of symbolic efficacy" (*L'Etat séducteur* 11).[2] Continuing with Debray, "In the word 'mediology,' '*medio*' says not media nor medium but *mediations*, namely the dynamic combination of intermediary procedures and bodies that interpose themselves between a producing of signs and a producing of events" (*Media Manifestos* 17). Quite clearly this means that Mediology deals with various types of transmission and incarnation of an idea, and the transformation of that idea into an instituted force. The mediological method deals *simultaneously* with the role of the mediator, the symbolic and the material means of transmission in general, whereas "media studies" always gives preference to one of these aspects and often its political dimension. Mediology, on the other hand, always incorporates the technical element, the technical support in the analysis of culture. To generalize somewhat, one would say that the one contemplates transmission and material support—the process—whereas the other concentrates on meaning—the end result. In fact, Mediology's primary objective as a practice is to contribute to the undoing of walls erected between technical and symbolic spheres. If anything, Mediology should be considered as an attempt to create a new materialist philosophy rather than contribute to a field of critical media analysis.[3]

From this miscellany, I would like to focus my discussion on the short essay by Bourdieu that provoked lively reaction from certain television specialists and professionals, and on the intellectual stakes and power plays at the heart of the intellectual field that emerge from this controversy.

In Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Belles images*, one character beautifully captured the universal feeling, mixed with frustration and hope, about the early years of television: everybody bemoans the state of television while dreaming of what it could be. And therein lies a widely known paradox that is generally lost from sight: everyone thinks they have the right to broadcast their opinion about TV, often peremptory and accompanied by scorn, and yet a true criticism of television as a medium is theoretically impossible. My point may be explained in particular by taking up the argument of Serge Daney, who declared that "Television is a matter of *diffusion*, and returns to a *diffuse* mission" (70).[4] Diffusion, here, is to be understood as the opposite of projection, *the pro-jection of creative act*. Briefly, the critical impossibility of television stems from the impossibility of ascribing a creative act to it. Its criticism, therefore, would be *a criticism without object*. Daney's point of view is that the diffusive character of television would differentiate it from cinema and all other art forms. On the other hand, if one were to admit to the presence of a critical object, then, according to the established model in all artistic fields, only people deemed specialists would be able to criticize it according to the prescribed rules of a professional and/or academic field, as is done in literature or painting. But that does not seem to be the case at the moment in France, for television, with its uncertain status, has not yet fully developed this hypothetical critical field.

What seems more certain in the eyes of communication specialists is that television is conceived, or at least perceived, as a democratic medium. It is a democratic object because it arouses an ongoing debate about its power of representation, but also because of the different ends to which its message can be appropriated. It is at this point that the debate becomes complicated at the rate of television images, and that the question of its social use falls within the scope of Bourdieu's criticism, since one of the premises of his work is that "television poses a serious danger for all the various areas of cultural production . . . [and] no less of a threat to political life and to democracy itself" (*On Television* 10). The traditional position of intellectual discourse on television, of which Bourdieu's work is a part, generally accuses it of partici-

pating in cultural homogenization, of serving as a means of domination by big corporations and, *grosso modo*, of intensifying the individualization of citizens in a mass society where everyone consumes in a solitary and passive manner. To this, communication specialists reply that the presence of a television set in practically every home, the democratic will of its programming schedule, its diversity, and above all the reappropriation that channel surfers make of it, all confer on television the quality of democratic object and, such as it is, the object of democratic criticism.

Historically, television has practically always been uncriticizable in France because, when there was only one channel of this recent invention, it was evidently futile and premature to criticize it *as medium*—and here I exclude criticism of its social use—whereas now it remains just as uncriticizable as a single object since it has become plural, multiple, and heterogeneous. It is hardly surprising, after all, that only since the end of state television in France has serious questioning about the state of television begun. It is an understatement to say that rather than putting an end to all debate about the choice of programming, freedom of expression, and audience levels, the opening of television to the laws of the market and commercialization have intensified the discussions, including that caused by Bourdieu's work. But more than anything else, it is the unavoidable fallout from his discussion of television, albeit a sociological and economic one, within the mediological arena that has provoked critical reaction. It was also at this moment that observers noticed the obvious tardiness of France in comparison with Anglo-Saxon countries in communication and media studies. It is a delay that still manifests itself today in pure and simple ignorance, on the part of most intellectuals, of a constituted field of criticism, henceforth established in numerous universities, not only in the United States or Britain but also in France.

The virulent criticism that Bourdieu's short essay provoked rests in part on a misunderstanding that Bourdieu himself alluded to in a preface published in the English version. He deplores the fact that "the journalistic 'big guns' who went after [his] book simply bracketed [his] method (in particular the analysis of

journalism as a field)" (*On Television* 2). It is true that if one were to consider strictly the sociological analysis of the journalistic field in relation to the neo-liberal discourse—which, I am sure, remained Bourdieu's primary aim—the book would be of quite a different tenor. Even if the invisible structure of the press that *On Television* claims to reveal is more evident than Bourdieu alleges, it remains no less true that his analysis runs along valid lines. But how can reducing this work "to a series of utterly hackneyed positions punctuated by a smattering of polemical outbursts" (*On Television* 2) be avoided when the analysis is presented under the deceptive title of "*On Television*" and drowns *in an uninformed discourse on the functioning of television*? First of all, the misunderstanding with media specialists might have been easily defrayed by avoiding the confusion between criticism of TV's use and criticism of the medium itself, as Halimi did in *Les Nouveaux chiens de garde*. What is worse, in my mind, is the error in presentation of publishing two different texts under the title of *On Television*, when quite clearly Bourdieu ought to have announced an examination of journalism in general. Even admitting that television plays a primordial role in the field of journalism, his choice can only be interpreted as a publicity stunt, since the mention of television in the title guaranteed its attractiveness to the public, and also served as an open door to controversy. With this title, Bourdieu adopts just such a sensationalist practice generally attributed to the *gendetélévision* (telepeople). The same can be said for the work of Derrida and Stiegler, which deals mainly with legacy, memory, and recording in general, and touches only incidentally on the question of television, but whose subtitle nonetheless remains "*de la télévision*."

The critical reaction said quite enough. To recap briefly, Bourdieu's short book is fascinating in its triviality, not unlike television itself, because it presents everything in the vernacular of anti-television criticism. It thus reiterates the banal discourse that some great French intellectuals, who persistently ignore specialized media studies, regularly inflict upon the public as original criticism. And, paradoxically, it is for this reason that the work merits tarrying a while. Bourdieu recalls the age-old oppo-

sition between television as a vector of a mass-media culture, and a high-level intellectual field which feels excluded, or at least insufficiently *tele-viewed*, whereas a few high-media-profile intellectual personalities would themselves be *tele-skewed* on the set. Bourdieu's manual also follows the anti-technical tradition which extends back not just to Martin Heidegger or the Frankfort school (Adorno, Marcuse), but to the very origins of European philosophy which grew out of the *tekhnè-épistèmé* opposition of the Greeks. Or to take it back even further, as mediologists do willingly, to the separation of "gesture and word" that the great prehistory specialist André Leroi-Gourhan spoke about so authoritatively. Intellectual thought on television, and Bourdieu's analysis in particular, is founded on the abjection of the "technique." In sum, this work serves as a cruel reminder of the superficial knowledge of audiovisual culture among traditional intellectuals, as well as of the constant power struggle in the intellectual field over media exposure.

On Television, as I have already hinted, speaks little of television. First, this work ignores what television constitutes for most people by reducing it to news, information magazine shows, and slightly intellectual debate. Second, television news, television-, radio- and print-journalism, and the "journalistic field" in general, which we know for its vast heterogeneity, are dealt with interchangeably under the cover of a misleading title. To insinuate, like Bourdieu, that television is inferior in quality to newspapers such as *Le Monde* and intellectual monthlies such as *Le Monde diplomatique*, and why not, to a magisterial two-hour conference at the Collège de France, is at once obvious and unjust.[5] Supreme in Bourdieu's analysis is a confusion that springs directly from the rigidity of his method which consists of putting all media and all practices connected to transmission on the same level, or, if you will, of forgetting the importance of the medium in the construction of a discourse. Gathering together in the same field television journalists (what type of channel and program?) and print journalists (what type of publication?) denigrates not only technical support in mediation but equally the nature of the medium and its semiotic modes (writing, voice, illustration), without even

considering the economic impositions that the one and the other exert in terms of the time or space given over to express itself.

It might also be pointed out that being content to note that television journalists let themselves go along with conformism, that they form an estate beholden to large corporate entities, and exhibit other deplorable and dubious practices, is sadly not limited to television but concerns all media, as Halimi demonstrates admirably. But at least this particular part of Bourdieu's critique seems based on a fair representation of reality. Less so is accusing television under the pretext that it constitutes the dominant medium, the final link in a journalistic field which in Bourdieu's theoretical construction leaves much to be desired.

Specialists in communication first, and most recently mediologists, who do not have a fond regard for television, have long recognized its shortcomings, blind spots, and limitations, which reduces Bourdieu's intervention to very little. First of all, television, which is a "heavy industry" (Debray, *Transmettre* 133 note) in terms of the costs of diffusion, is not a propitious medium for the propagation of an elevated intellectual discourse, which requires a time of expression and reflection whose absence Bourdieu deplores (*On Television* 28-30). Mentioning this evidence off-handedly in place of favoring or developing other means of transmission for this type of discourse is tantamount to a confession of powerlessness, or even worse. One might be driven to suspect that the readiness to criticize television that one sees among many intellectuals, print intellectuals in particular, would spring from the fantasy of power, or *hubris*, to dispose of a medium which has so intimately invaded the private space of a substantial number of end users. Besides, television's spectacular and distracting character makes the diffusion of a specialized culture difficult. Nonetheless, Derrida seems to believe in an intellectual future for television. However, he too implicitly admits the impossibility of rigorous treatment of intellectual questions in front of the cameras when, during his filmed conversation with Stiegler, he refuses to reply to certain questions adjudged to be difficult, even though, ironically, he had all the time he wanted available to him. Indeed, the silences and tergiversations that a difficult ques-

tion would exact would be as unthinkable and untenable for both author and viewer. Such are the limits connected to the medium, I want to say the intrinsic limits or competence imposed by *the technological* that *the sociological* must recognize. At any rate, Derrida places great hope in thematic television and intellectual channels which could develop.

For his part, Bourdieu is content to characterize television as a medium that "haunts every sphere of cultural production" (*On Television* 37), which is true only when one attempts to treat particularly difficult discussion topics in an unfavorable arena such as television. The hard reality is that the diffusion of avant-garde poetry and cutting-edge mathematics for which Bourdieu reserves a place in television (*On Television* 37) might succeed better through another medium.

It is not too clear whether Bourdieu declares himself implicitly in favor of thematic channels, or of forced transfusion of high culture on general channels, which would certainly lead to their appearance in the obituaries. However, another aspect of setting up thematic television channels is that it divides, isolates and secludes the community of viewers into still smaller groups and thereby further endangers "political life and democracy" (*On Television* 10), which Bourdieu would view disapprovingly. Obviously, I have nothing against channels such as *Arte*, but cultural television offers an easy alibi to other more general channels that yearn to rid themselves completely of the cultural question. This would give no hope to Derrida's enthusiasm for a new communication space between intellectual discourse and the public at large.

I return to Bourdieu, who bemoans the fact that if one does not have a televisual wit with clear, striking, and memorable intervention—"fast thinking" (*On Television* 28) is the expression he uses—to go on the air is to be duped. This is true, but then again, if one wants to speak of television's limits as a medium, it would be wise to extend the question to other means of transmission and expression to establish a more equitable stance. It has been established for a long time that television, like all media, functions in a mode of compromise, a concept which, moreover, has never been fully appreciated by French intellectuals. It would

behoove us to see if what we lose on the one hand on television we don't gain on the other. One of the best accounts of the "television compromise" is Daniel Bougnoux's, which I will take up in a few brief arguments.[6]

According to Bourdieu, television does not produce a critical and analytical discourse but a mediocre collection of received ideas (*On Television* 29): an "omnibus" he says in the French text (*Sur la télévision* 16), and thus a middling concoction, "something for everyone" (*On Television* 18). And, of course, it is preferably staged in a dramatic form (*On Television* 19), and thus censured whether through the special "glasses" of the producer (*On Television* 19), or through the Audimat, the audience ratings equivalent to Nielsen ratings in the U.S. (*On Television* 26-29). First of all, it hasn't been necessary to wait for the appearance of television to hear similar protests, already levied at the mass circulation press and radio. But, *compared to writing*, with its logical argumentation and attachment to reason, which Bourdieu implicitly sustains and on which Derrida bases his resistance to filmed interviews, the counter-argument holds that televised expression has the obvious advantage when it comes to images. "Television does not develop a demonstration, it prefers to simply expose"[7] says Bougnoux when he speaks of the details that the camera reveals, including the mimicry, the body language, and all "the semiotic layers which precede and support language, at the level of image and index."[8] Following Bougnoux and many other observers, such as the TV show "Les Guignols de l'info" in particular, I could give countless examples of the movements, grimaces, and silences of political candidates or intellectuals in debates which *say* more than is actually said and which decipher the superficial integrity of the spoken word.[9] As Bougnoux points out, would we now be willing to vote for political candidates who would not deign to divulge their opinions except in written form while hiding their image? But without coming to that, and I am paraphrasing Bougnoux, no one on television is master of an involuntary polyphony which exceeds verbal language, even with the greatest self-control, which in itself could have perverse effects were it attempted. As Bougnoux summarizes, "the spoken

word, its point or its logical thread, has less importance in television because meaning abounds in other channels, which is not necessarily a bad thing."[10] The semiotic superiority of the image resides in the fact that "it gives the advantage to the concrete, the individual, the emotion, that it is immediately understandable (for it is less coded than language or text)."[11]

The beauty of the televisual message is that the broadcaster does not totally direct it. And the allegedly idiotic viewers, who master semiotics better than intellectuals would want to admit, not only interpret and criticize in their way but show themselves unfathomable and unpredictable in their reception. For instance, they turn their attention toward elements which are badly controlled like the surroundings or the details of a politician's clothing. Television enhances indices of authenticity of enunciation situated on the edge of a constrained verbal or written discourse, and offers a direct insight into the *habitus* of the person being televised. To the heterogeneity and polyphony of its diffusion is added a heterogeneity of reception (Wolton 44). "One of the good things about television," says Bougnoux, "is that it favors by its nature the floating attention, from which comes our liberty as television viewers."[12] All the indices, which escape no one, show that television, which one often accuses of distorting reality, cannot, at another level, but "go along with reality" (Bougnoux). The mediologist concludes that television, often identified with the spectacle, "actually deconstructs it by revealing its tricks and indices under the surface!"[13] When the average viewer in France sees former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing singing along with classic accordion tunes on a Saturday night show, surreal spectacle that it is, he/she will be drawn to ask questions of authenticity. Or when the same politician decides to go working class by putting on a sweater, the next day's sarcastic remarks will affirm that it is made of expensive mohair.

Confusingly enough, Bourdieu implicitly acquiesces to the semiotic superiority of television. When reacting to the vehement criticism that his essay triggered, he imputes part of the responsibility to what he calls "the *transcription effect*—the elimination by transcription of the nonverbal accompaniment to words such as

tone, gestures, and mimicry. An impartial viewer perceives these elements, which make all the difference between a discussion meant to produce understanding and the polemic that most journalists saw in the book" (*On Television* 1). Put another way, Bourdieu tells us that we ought to have watched him . . . on television, rather than read him. But do not be confused. Even if one speaks often about the tyranny of spectacular images on television, images do not actually reign; it is the commentary "which gives the images . . . their syntax and their meaning," as Bougnoux reminds us.[14] And so it goes for Bourdieu and his intervention at the Collège de France.

Once again, it has to be admitted that Bourdieu, as well as Halimi, is right to underscore *that there is no efficient counter-power to television*, which itself as media would have to serve as a counter-power to politics. Bourdieu's uncompromising analysis, however, minimizes the power of viewers and channel-surfing. One must admit that the appropriation of the television message on the receiving end is evident. This is precisely what Derrida calls "ex-appropriation" (46-48), that is to say that the televised program must first of all admit its possibility of being expropriated, before being re-appropriated by the television viewer. Derrida more readily admits the "scriptibility" of television messages, to borrow Roland Barthes's concept. And here lies the difference between Bourdieu and Derrida on reception that may have to do with Bourdieu's ambiguous public position. Simultaneously elitist as Collège de France Professor and populist as an engaged intellectual, Bourdieu's perceived obligation may be to inform and educate the average viewer of the so-called hidden manipulations from the media.

There exists in Bourdieu's work a profound genealogy to this short essay about television. Through his interventions, Bourdieu is always shown to be very hostile to the confusion between the journalistic field and the intellectual field or other specialized fields as he names them. In "L'Emprise du journalisme" ("The Power of Journalism"), he joins Debray and his mediological analysis of intellectual power in France when denouncing the practice of those he calls "journalist-intellectuals." At stake is the

practice of introducing "new forms of cultural production, located in a poorly defined intermediary position between academic esotericism and journalistic 'exotericism' " (*On Television* 74). Nothing particularly surprising here! The intellectuals, of whom Debray and Bourdieu are currently two of the great representatives in France, are mostly hostile to television and to mass communication, where they consider themselves often under-represented.

On the other hand, one might be a little surprised to see the sociologist attack the mediologist in a fiery parenthetical comment in the French text of *On Television*: "This doesn't prevent the practitioners of 'mediology,' self-designated specialists in a science that doesn't exist, from drawing all sorts of peremptory conclusions about the state of media in the world today before any study has been concluded" (58).[15] The double irony is that Debray and many others, including Bougnoux, have for years published analyses that are much more incisive than Bourdieu's on information and diffusion, of which he makes no mention unless it is to deny their legitimacy. Moreover, this "small world" seems to have forgotten, or seems to remember only too well, that Debray's *Le Pouvoir intellectuel en France* (*Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France*) which would found the field of Mediology in 1979, carried with it the strong imprint of sociology. Not to mention that Debray admitted his indebtedness to Bourdieu, by thanking him in the acknowledgement section and by citing him on several occasions. These influences and contiguities were remembered fifteen years later by Debray in his *Media Manifestos* under the revealing heading of *Disciplinary Neighbors and Creditors*: ". . . our study borders more directly on a sociology of artistic perception like that which has been undertaken by Pierre Bourdieu. . . . Why not, then, acknowledge here the debt we owe him?" (136). Nevertheless, Debray hurried to add: "There are other paths by which our analysis of the conditioning of historical possibilities that produced the concept *œuvre d'art* . . . joins up with the conclusions of the sociologist. Yet I venture to say they do not stop only here" (136).

Briefly, two remarks come to mind about this indirect exchange: first, one would say that Bourdieu considers Mediology, more nuanced vis-à-vis the media, only as a theoretical Trojan horse invading the intellectual field at the service of a mediocratic journalism. Second, one could interpret his commentary on Mediology as a defensive gesture, protective of sociological analysis against an emerging discipline which knew how to take up and exploit some questions badly covered by traditional disciplines like sociology or philosophy.

The irony would have stopped there if only later Debray, in his turn, hadn't entered the television polemic, although much later than other mediologists. In a chapter and subsection appropriately entitled "Impérialismes" 'intellectual imperialisms' and "les risques du tout-socio" 'the dangers of going all-sociological' of his work *Transmettre* (*Transmitting Culture*), published in English recently, there appears a dense statement of account in the form of a note, cited above, which occupies almost an entire page in small type and which severely attacks the work of Bourdieu. Therefore, it seems that a conflict, which until then had been latent, had been declared between Bourdieu and the mediologists over a work on television which isn't one and which increasingly resembles a pretext to counter a development of the intellectual field contrary to Bourdieu's enterprise. A development which in the first place concerns the media with which he wrongly associates mediologists.

I end by signaling briefly that this polemical work is to be equally considered in the light of a televisual antecedent which surfaced during the strikes of December 1995. Bourdieu had participated in the show "Arrêt sur images" on the channel "La Cinquième" having to do with the television treatment of the strikes. After the show, Bourdieu complained in *Le Monde diplomatique* (April 1996) that the strict conditions of participation, pre-imposed by him, were not respected by the producer Daniel Schneidermann. During the show, Bourdieu refused to answer a question, alleging, like Derrida, the known limits of the television debate, and then complained about the lack of time to speak ("Analyse d'un passage à l'antenne" 25). To which Schneidermann

replied that Bourdieu had monopolized twenty minutes of the fifty-two-minute show, so that the two other participants had only sixteen each, and argued that a television show constitutes a "model of communication" that is a little more complex than a magisterial lecture at the Collège de France ("Réponse à Pierre Bourdieu" 21). It transpired from this episode that Bourdieu had sought quite well to take over a show—moreover honorable—*in flagrante delicto* . . . of television and to play the "strategy of the victim."[16]

I began with the possibly excessive proposition that a criticism of television was impossible. Following Bourdieu's line of argument, nothing is more sure, and without doubt this is why the work actually speaks little about television. Television is but one element in a bevy of media whose sole aim is to mediate the culture. Now, without turning into a technology-based teleology, and until further notice, each new emerging medium seems to offer democracy a larger possibility of expression of itself than that which preceded it. But at the same time, each new medium imposes new limits, which is the compromise to be made. Hence the sort of technological fatality inherent in Mediology which can only acquiesce to the evolution of media techniques, although it denounces what is called the "fantasy of the engineer," this blind trust in the ultimate virtues of the technique we are now accustomed to in this Internet age.

It was in the Bourdieusian order of things that the sociologist, that is to say, "the one whose task it is to speak of, and explain, things of the social world" (*Méditations pascaliennes* 13)[17] shows an interest in the functioning of the media since important stakes of power and of social representation are fought out there. In this sense, the critical debate surrounding television, in as much as it is a means of transmission playing a primordial role in the fabrication of "make-believe," is evidently fundamental. However, this debate would be in vain if it only had to do with the transmission of the message to the exclusion of the specifics of the medium. Bourdieu's analysis seems to presume a simple and unproblematized transfer of the audio-visual messages. His rigid conception of domination, in contrast to Michel Foucault's theory

of power for example, minimizes the complexity and the conflictuality of the relationship between media and their publics.

Moreover, Bourdieu had to admit that his investigation of the media dragged him across a pre-existing corpus of research which he had unfortunately decided to ignore. The reasons for his failure to recognize are bound to questions of occupation of the media-intellectual field which reduce themselves to somber turf histories and compartmentalization. They are equally bound to ideologico-political questions on the economy which go beyond the strict order of this cathodic analysis. And as in many French intellectual debates, the passion for the controversy means that one tends to forget the supposed objet of the debate—television in this case. That is why this crucial episode very quickly sank to the level of a polemic to the great disappointment of Bourdieu himself.

To end on a more conciliatory note, I might add that Debray, Bourdieu and Derrida nevertheless share a commonality. Ultimately, they are all concerned, albeit from different perspectives, about the preservation of a national cultural trace in relation to the non-territoriality of images and its homogenizing effects. This question lies among the most debated aspects of globalization in today's France and is most likely the one that differentiates French intellectuals from their American counterparts in media studies. French intellectuals are for the most part essentially *conservateurs* in the sense of *conservateur de musée*, or museum curator. They give preference to diachrony rather than synchrony, to the medium rather than—or at least—as well as to the message, and to civilization rather than to the representation and identity politics of distinct groups and subcultures.

Notes

1. See Louis Bériot's *Médiocratie française.*

2. My translation. The French reads: "se donne pour tâche d'explorer les voies et moyens de l'efficacité symbolique."

3. The purpose of Mediology is to develop a theory of the transmission of ideas through history in order to understand how ideas become action. On its most ambitious level, the mediological method investigates how abstract ideas such as Marx's can end up as world-changing ideologies. In this instance, a mediologist will investigate what took place from the perspective of transmission and diffusion between the writings of a philosopher who hardly sold any books (fewer than a thousand) during his lifetime and a full-fledged ideology known as Marxism in the twentieth century.

4. My translation. The French reads: "La télé est une affaire de *diffusion*, et renvoie à une mission *diffuse*."

5. The text of *On Television* is the transcript of two televised conferences at the Collège de France broadcast by the Paris-Première channel.

6. Daniel Bougnoux's article is available on the Internet. See the site of *Cahiers de médiologie* (www.mediologie.com) under the rubric "Travail médiologique." No pagination.

7. All translations of Bougnoux's text are mine. The French reads: "La TV ne démontre pas, elle préfère montrer."

8. The French reads: "les couches sémiotiques qui précèdent et soutiennent le langage, au niveau de l'image et de l'indice."

9. "Les Guignols de l'info" is a popular program on the channel "Canal Plus" that exploits this revealing aspect of television with the most raging irony through devastating parodic sketches. It is incidentally intriguing that Bourdieu, with his utterly serious and self-professed scientific sociological method, considers "Les Guignols de l'info" and *Le Canard enchaîné*, a satirical journal, as deconstructing agents close to his sociological practice.

10. The French reads: "la parole, sa pointe ou son fil logique tiennent à la TV moins de place dès lors que le sens afflue par d'autres canaux. Ce qui n'est pas forcément une perte."

11. The French reads: "ce qu'elle privilégie le concret, l'individu, l'émotion, qu'elle est immédiatement compréhensible (car moins codée que la langue ou le texte)."

12. The French reads: "L'un des bonheurs de la TV est de favoriser par son dispositif l'attention flottante, donc notre liberté de téléspectateur."

13. The French reads: "casse assez souvent celui-ci en nous montrant ses coulisses et en nous faisant toucher, sous le grain de l'image, l'indice!"

14. The French reads: "qui apporte aux images ... leur syntaxe et leur sens."

15. The parentheses have disappeared in the translated version. The French reads: "(ce qui n'empêche pas certains détenteurs auto-désignés d'une science qui n'existe pas, la 'médiologie,' de proposer, avant même toute enquête, leurs conclusions péremptoires sur l'état du monde médiatique)."

16. During revision of this article, Daniel Schneidermann published a book entitled *Du Journalisme après Bourdieu* retracing all the details of the incident without adding any significant information on this matter.

17. My translation. The French reads: "celui qui a pour tâche de dire les choses du monde social."

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