COMMUNICATION AND DEMOCRACY IN THE INTERNATIONAL DEBATE

Rafael Roncagliolo

The author postulates that the relationship between communication and democracy "must be approached starting from democracy, what we call a democratic objective, the capacity to understand and locate therein the communicational instruments". At present, a new de-semantization of the term democracy seems to be taking place. Earlier democratic ideas were confined to the political arena. Now there is also talk about "consumption democracy" and "informational participation".

According to Roncagliolo the transnational phase through which our planet is passing in the economic, political and cultural sense, entails the following:

1. Communication media tend to develop into hegemonic apparatuses and dominate socialization agencies, partly displacing family, church and school;
2. The communication and cultural flows are colonization subjects, due to the expansion of transnational corporate structures and the presence of strategic information flows through control of new technologies;
3. Classical liberal thinking on democracy is giving way to the notion of the "unpolitical capability of democracies", upon which "neo-capitalist totalitarianism" is based;
4. Democracy seen as "democracy of consumption";
5. Advertising and technology become "dominant cultural worlds".

García Canclini advocates the need for intensifying work with popular organizations, and he points out that "It is time to accept that the change in the function of cultural production cannot only be a matter of good-willed individuals, or of isolated actions. It should include: a) radical transformations in the institutions in charge of cultural production; b) active and critical participation of artists and intellectuals in organizations devoted to circulation of art and culture, museums, educational centers, mass media, etc.; c) the creation of alternative production and distribution channels linked to popular organizations (political parties, trade unions, neighborhood associations), demanding from them specific but not immediately pragmatic attention to the importance of cultural work."

The author also analyzes mass media influences and ways in which media could improve on contents promoting popular culture.

THE LARGEST SCREEN OF THE WORLD: RADIO AS A VISUAL VEHICLE

Walter Ouro Alves

Revising Orson Welles' commentary that "in radio the screen is much larger", Alves discusses some concepts serving as guidelines to the Radio Production course that Radio Nederland sponsors since 1982 in CIESPAL, Quito. He presents several considerations with the aim of achieving, with media of easy access, the optimal production of relevant contents for a multiple audience.

Presenting precise examples and describing personal experiences, Alves holds that "radio is a visual medium" and that "the idea is necessary to see the program in the script and to listen to it in one's imagination before entering the studio".

With this in mind, he recommends to producers not to lose sight of the audience, and please for the use of short phrases, considering the young that might be listening. He also favors a broad selection of music, from classical till rock, a wide range of literature and the use of a healthy and critical and cultural sense, entails the following:

1. Communication media tend to develop into hegemonic apparatuses and dominate socialization agencies, partly displacing family, church and school;
2. The communication and cultural flows are colonization subjects, due to the expansion of transnational corporate structures and the presence of strategic information flows through control of new technologies;
3. Classical liberal thinking on democracy is giving way to the notion of the "unpolitical capability of democracies", upon which "neo-capitalist totalitarianism" is based;
4. Democracy seen as "democracy of consumption";
5. Advertising and technology become "dominant cultural worlds".

García Canclini advocates the need for intensifying work with popular organizations, and he points out that "It is time to accept that the change in the function of cultural production cannot only be a matter of good-willed individuals, or of isolated actions. It should include: a) radical transformations in the institutions in charge of cultural production; b) active and critical participation of artists and intellectuals in organizations devoted to circulation of art and culture, museums, educational centers, mass media, etc.; c) the creation of alternative production and distribution channels linked to popular organizations (political parties, trade unions, neighbors' associations), demanding from them specific but not immediately pragmatic attention to the importance of cultural work."

The author also analyzes mass media influences and ways in which media could improve on contents promoting popular culture.