"THE WHOLE EARTH AS VILLAGE": A CHRONOTOPIC ANALYSIS OF MARSHALL McLUHAN'S "GLOBAL VILLAGE" AND PATRICK McGOOHAN'S *THE PRISONER*

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Dedicated to
Patrick McGoohan
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ABSTRACT:

Marshall McLuhan's "global village", and his theories on communications and technology, in conjunction with Patrick McGoohan's television series *The Prisoner* (ATV, 1967-1968) are explored in this thesis. *The Prisoner,* brainchild of McGoohan, is about the abduction and confinement of a British government agent imprisoned within the impenetrable boundaries of a benign but totalitarian city-state called "The Village". The purpose of his abduction and imprisonment is for the extraction of information regarding his resignation as a government spy. Marshall McLuhan originally popularized the phrase "the global village" in *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of the Topographic Man* (1962), asserting that, "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village" (p. 31). This thesis argues that valid parallels exist between McGoohan's conception of "village", as manifested in *The Prisoner*, and McLuhan's global village.

The comprehensive methodological stratagem for this thesis includes Marshall McLuhan's "mosaic" approach, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope", as well as a Foucauldian genealogical/historical discourse analysis. In the process of deconstructing McLuhan's texts and *The Prisoner* as products of the 1960s, an historical "constellation" (to use Walter Benjamin's concept) of the same present has been executed. By employing this synthesized methodology, conjunctions have been made between McLuhan's theories and the series' main themes of bureaucracy as dictatorship, the perversion of science and technology, freedom as illusion, and the individual in opposition to the collective.

A thorough investigation of the global village and *The Prisoner* will determine whether or not Marshall McLuhan and/or Patrick McGoohan visualize the village as an enslaving technological reality.

PREFACE:

I would like to preface my Masters Thesis, "The Whole Earth as Village": A Chronotopic Analysis of Marshall McLuhan's Global Village and Patrick McGoohan's *The Prisoner*, by stating that there were absolutely no discernable epiphanies central to the choice of my thesis topic. Here's how it came about. On occasion, I enjoy delving into the biographies of great men and women. While searching the musty stacks of a disheveled used bookstore in downtown Peterborough, I happened across an obscure psychological treatise on the great jazz innovator Miles Davis. I found this tiny little book, now long lost, to be frightening, informative and highly engaging, all at the same time. I had discovered my muse! From what I remember of the biography, Miles openly acknowledged McLuhan, McGoohan, and their works as inspiration.

Initially, my thesis was to be "Miles, McLuhan and McGoohan: The Iconoclast as Radical Contemporary Artist", or some such thing. There seemed a certain syntactical symmetry residing in their very names ... so I went with that. I soon eliminated Miles for reasons other than his intelligence or ability ... I just couldn't get an unvarnished handle on the man. At the time, however, I regarded both McLuhan and McGoohan to be lesser lights than Miles and much less complicated as well ... boy, was I wrong! Anyway, one of these men was a Canadian, academic maverick, devout Catholic, and social conservative. The other, a thespian: cantankerous, a perfectionist, abrupt in manner, and a bit of a misanthrope. But I liked what I saw, and enjoyed what I read.

It wasn't long before my preliminary research indicated a meaningful common denominator relevant to Thesis scrutiny. The concept of VILLAGE permeated the creative sensibilities of both McLuhan and McGoohan. It is my hope in this Thesis to probe with intent, as those two men did so fantastically well. Therein, lies the genesis of my Thesis topic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores in depth Marshall McLuhan's "global village" and his theories on communications and technology, in conjunction with Patrick McGoohan's cult television series *The Prisoner* (ATV, 1967 – 1968). Canadian academic Marshall McLuhan and British actor Patrick McGoohan, almost simultaneously, defined and redefined "village" in a far-reaching and meaningful paradigm. This thesis will closely analyze McLuhan's aphorism "the global village" and McGoohan's *The Prisoner*; both representative of the 1960s era[1]. *The Prisoner,* brainchild of McGoohan, is about the abduction and confinement of a British government agent imprisoned within the impenetrable boundaries of a benign but totalitarian city-state called "The Village". The purpose of his abduction and imprisonment is for the extraction of information regarding his resignation as a government spy. McLuhan originally popularized his phrase "the global village" in *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of the Topographic Man* (1962), asserting that, "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village" (p. 31). In musing on the "Electronic Age"[2], McLuhan refers to radio, television and the computer as examples of media belonging to this global village. These media transform our environment and our "whole cultural habitat" into a "Happening" ("The Playboy Interview", 1969, p. 258).

This thesis argues that valid parallels exist between McGoohan's conception of "village", as manifested in *The Prisoner*, and McLuhan's global village. Comparing and

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[1] The 1960s is one of the most significant historical eras. Debates on when this time period ended still ensue. For the purpose of this thesis, I will utilize the 1960-1974 time frame.

[2] McLuhan uses "Electronic Age" and "Electric Age" interchangeably. To be consistent, I will use "Electronic Age" keeping the "E" and "A" capitalized.

contrasting similar themes and concepts found within McLuhan's texts and *The Prisoner* will unite these two seemingly disparate villages. Conjunctions will be made between McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner*'s main themes of the perversion of science and technology, bureaucracy as dictatorship, freedom as illusion, and the individual in opposition to the collective. An inspection into how McLuhan's theories coincide with *The Prisoner's* allegories of surveillance and "the whole earth as Village" ("Free for All") will also be conducted.

This chapter introduces the what, how, and why of this project. Included are the following: an introduction to McLuhan and *The Prisoner*, a brief summary of the main texts researched, pertinent theoretical statements of McLuhan's, and an overview of the remaining four chapters. A detailed explanation of the methodological approaches utilized in the process of making conjunctions between McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* will also be provided.

Marshall McLuhan was no mere scholar, but *the* academic celebrity and media guru of his time. Catapulted into the popular culture limelight through the wide-ranging auspices of *Playboy* (1969), Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977), and numerous interviews, including several by Tom Wolfe, author of *Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), he became a bona fide media phenomenon in America[3]. He was chronicled by newspapers such as *The Washington Post, The Toronto Star,* and *The Globe and Mail*, as well as several magazines including *Harper's Bazaar, Look,* and *Vogue*. His aphorisms "the medium is the message" and "the global village" contributed significantly to his celebrity success as "Canada's intellectual comet" (Schickel, 1965, p. 62), "The most important thinker since

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[3] McLuhan also appeared on the *David Frost Show* (1972) and NBC's *Today Show* (1976), amongst others.

Newton, Darwin, Freud, Einstein and Pavlov" (Wolfe, 1965, p. 32), and "first father and leading prophet of the electronic age" (Kappelman, 2001).

Marshall McLuhan's first book *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), serves as an in-depth look into and deconstruction of the world of advertising. Later, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, in which he first introduces the global village, was published in 1962. But it was *Understanding Media* (1964) that spawned "the McLuhan explosion" (*McLuhan's Wake*), making him "oracle of the electric age" (Kuhns, 1971, p. 173). Receiving much media attention, he could never earn the peer respect he had hoped for. McLuhan was primarily interested in studying the effects of man-made artifacts on society, within the context of the present. Years later he would be viewed as being prescient in his predictions.

Reading various nuanced biographies about and interviews with Marshall McLuhan helped enormously in interpreting his texts. With this background knowledge it is easier to more clearly fathom what the creator of aphorisms such as "the medium is the message", "hot and cold media", and "the global village" meant and how he arrived at them. For example, it is important to understand how McLuhan studies the electronic environment and incorporates it into book form. McLuhan explains the purpose and methodological approach to his various texts in "The *Playboy* Interview" (1969):

> My work is designed for the pragmatic purpose of trying to understand our technological environment and its psychic and social consequences. But my books constitute the *process* rather than the completed product of discovery; my purpose is to employ facts as tentative probes, as means of insight, of pattern recognition, rather than to use them in the traditional and sterile sense of classified data, categories, containers. I want to map new terrain rather than chart old landmarks. ... As an investigator, I have no fixed point of view, no commitment to any theory – mine or anyone else's (p. 236)

Having "no fixed point of view", McLuhan's books consist of a compilation of probes which formulate a loose literary mosaic. In many of his works, [specifically *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1968), *Counterblast* (1969), *Culture is Our Business* (1970), and *From Cliché to Archetype* (1970)], he creates a format which forces us to read text and to view images in a completely different manner compared with the traditional rendering of a text from left to right and top to bottom. These books clearly delineate McLuhan's "mosaic" formula, which is to be discussed further in the methodology section of this chapter. The differences between what Marshall McLuhan said about his theories and what cultural commentators and scholars presumed his theories meant, will also be addressed.

Extracting the global village from McLuhan's texts and examining this notion in isolation is not possible. The global village concept is rooted within so many of McLuhan's theories and influences and, as such, *must* be contextualized. Some of McLuhan's inspirations, to be discussed in this thesis, are Albert Einstein's "Theory of Relativity", the launching of Sputnik (August 17th 1957), James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's concept of the "noösphere". Chapter two will concentrate solely on McLuhan's theories by defining the global village, exploring its origins and influences, analyzing its positive and negative effects, and providing his response to the global village including an examination of the role of the artist and the dropout. In addition, a discussion of McLuhan's theories that are further effective in understanding the global village will be provided, including those on media and acoustic, visual and tactile space. Finally, relevant critics and their criticisms of McLuhan's global village will be contrasted.

McLuhan examines twenty-six different media in his most seminal text, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), including a thirty-page chapter on television titled "Television: The Timid Giant". The first part of this book investigates his "medium is the message", classifications of "hot" and "cold" media, and his theories on the "myth of Narcissus", along with others. *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1968), which McLuhan wrote in partnership with Quentin Fiore, examines the loss of personal identity resulting from every new extension of our central nervous system. McLuhan and Fiore argue "every new technology necessitates a new war" because technologies, specifically belonging to the current Electronic Age, "amputate part of ourselves" and endanger our identities both on a private and corporate level (p. 98). Written between the years of 1976 and 1984 and published nine years after McLuhan's death, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (1989) is a collaborative work by McLuhan and his associate Bruce R. Powers. This book extends the notion of an interactive global community, or global village, in the guise of an electronic network in which the boundaries of space and time have been blurred. Furthermore, electronic technologies become what McLuhan labels extensions of our central nervous system (McLuhan, 1964, p. 5). McLuhan's contributions to Benedetti and DeHart's text, *Forward Through the Rear-view Mirror: Reflections On and By Marshall McLuhan* (1997), compel us to question the effect the media and electronic technology have on our environments. In referring to our electronic environments, McLuhan states, "Information and images bump against each other every day in massive quantities, and the resonance of this interfacing is like the babble of a village or tavern gossip session" (p. 48). *McLuhan's Wake* (2002), a 94-minute

documentary comprising mediated images, cartoons illustrating *Finnegans Wake* and cogent narration on McLuhan's theories, informs the viewer well about the man. It is interspersed with footage from McLuhan's various lectures and interviews as well as commentary by his wife Corrine, son Eric, Tom Wolfe, Philip Marchand, Neil Postman, and others. In addition, McLuhan scholars attempt to scrutinize his theories, some divulging why McLuhan was considered the "bringer of doom". The film concentrates on McLuhan's "rear-view mirror" concept, as well as his observations on how our central nervous system becomes intertwined with our environment. McLuhan further emphasizes why private identity is at risk in the Electronic Age.

Marshall McLuhan should be understood in light of how he was evaluated during his time by both the media and scholars in North America. *McLuhan: Hot and Cool* (1967) and *McLuhan: Pro and Con* (1968) feature various academics like George Steiner and Tom Wolfe discussing, critiquing, and debating McLuhan's theories. Selected criticisms will be contrasted to McLuhan's own statements in "The *Playboy* Interview" (published in *Essential McLuhan*), "The *Hot and Cool* Interview" (published in *Marshall McLuhan Essays: Media Research Technology, Art, Communication*), and numerous lectures (published in *Understanding Me*).

McLuhan claims that in order to effectively study the media we must go beyond the content of the media and contemplate "the media themselves and the total cultural environment within which the media function" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 236). McLuhan openly revealed that he derived a singular pleasure in learning how the media operate and not in studying the corresponding effects of media. (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 287). At a luncheon held in 1972 for the Toronto Empire Club, McLuhan

explained: "Personally speaking, my own approach to media study has always been to report the subliminal effects of our own technologies upon our psyches, to report not the program, but the impact of the medium upon the human user" (McLuhan, 1972a, p. 202). It is important to put into perspective McLuhan's approach in analyzing media to better interpret his messages.

In today's cultural environment, McLuhan's theories are every bit as relevant as in his own time. Every passing year much accessible literature is written about him and on his work. In his article, "McLuhan Meets the Net" (1995), Professor Larry Press explains that the global village will become even more relevant as the Internet expands. He speculates that McLuhan would have seen the Net as "a juxtaposition of many mediums" (para. 4). Finally, in a separate section of the article titled "Pointers", he concludes that "McLuhan's writing is aphoristic and non-linear, anticipating hypertext and the web" (para. 6). From this last observation, it is evident that McLuhan was indeed ahead of his time by the manner in which he wrote and conveyed his ideas.

Press' article is complemented by Olivia Ward's 2006 *Toronto Star* article "We Are All McLuhans Now". This article reiterates McLuhan's notion that the invasion of electronic technology makes the global village even more revolutionary or "more alive than ever in the minds of a new generation of cyberthinkers" (para. 7). Ward's article is generously laced with quotes from people who knew McLuhan, or have studied why and how he was both misunderstood and popular at the same time.

Philip Marchand's 2006 *Toronto Star* article, "McLuhan, Frye and the Falling Towers", explores the continuous impact of Marshall McLuhan and Northrop Frye, both former University of Toronto Professors, and "why both men, so often disdained by

academics, still resonate in a post-9/11 world." This article explains that with the rise of advanced Internet technologies people are reconsidering McLuhan's theories. "Slowly but surely, McLuhan's star is rising" (para. 4), proclaims Marchand.

In 2007, journalist John Lorinc wrote a short column on McLuhan and his global village titled "Final thought: The perfect slogan for Toronto coined by citizen genius". In addition to declaring McLuhan as "unarguably Toronto's greatest intellectual export" (para. 3), Lorinc explores why "the global village" "succinctly acknowledges Toronto's best features" (para 2). Today, McLuhan's relevancy remains intact as *the* cultural and academic celebrity of the '60s and '70s. He was both a product of his time and recognized for theorizing on matters ahead of his time (although people did not always fathom his theories while he was conjuring them up). A similar argument can be made about Patrick McGoohan and *The Prisoner*. McGoohan and his television series remain relevant because they too were both a product of their time and are ahead of their time.

Unlike the prodigious number of works published by and about McLuhan, few scholarly texts and articles exist on *The Prisoner* offering little insight into its themes which this thesis investigates. However, several non-scholarly sources, including various "*Prisoner* Companions" [Carrazé and Oswald (1989), Fairclough (2002), White and Ali (1988), Davies (2002)], explore pertinent debates and interpretations of the show. This thesis utilizes many of these non-scholarly texts, but it must be noted that dozens more exist. *The Prisoner* portion of this thesis concentrates on a textual analysis, based on close reading of the text. The relevancy of *The Prisoner*'s themes to social and cultural discourses of the 21st century will be elucidated in the process of deconstructing this text.

Like most series, *The Prisoner* focuses on its single protagonist (played by McGoohan) in weekly episodes, which "do not begin where the previous ended" (Butler, 2002, p. 23). Jeremy Butler (2002) explains that any necessary introduction or "exposition" in each episode is usually contained within the "program's theme song" (p. 90). The episodic story of *The Prisoner* unfolds in the opening two-and-a-half-minute credit sequence, with stirring theme music. This sequence frames the story for viewers by including events the protagonist experiences prior to waking in The Village. After McGoohan's character resigns from his position as a high-ranking government agent, he drives his Lotus 7 purposefully back through the city of London to his townhouse. Unaware that two sinister men driving a hearse follow him home, he packs his suitcase falling faint onto his bed after inhaling some gaseous agent released through the keyhole in his door. In the following scene he wakes up in an apartment in The Village, an exact duplicate of his London dwelling[4]. This visual preamble elicits questions including: Who is this man? Why did he resign? Where is The Village? How did he get here? And, who is the supreme authority of The Village? These questions frame the polysemic nature of the series.

In order to envision the place that the Prisoner (McGoohan's character) so desperately wants to escape from, a brief description of The Village is necessary. The Village is a nameless place systematically referred to as "here" or "this place" and claims to be an "international community" ("Arrival"). The Villagers themselves are also

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[4] Every episode except for "Living in Harmony", "The Girl Who Was Death", and "Fall Out" uses this credit sequence.

nameless and referred to solely by their assigned number, (the Prisoner is Number 6[5]).

The Village comes complete with a video surveillance system, telephone service, radio

station, television station, and newspaper, the *Tally Ho*. Each Number lives in his or her

own "private" residence. All are routinely monitored via surveillance video, strategically

positioned throughout The Village. The Villagers wear colourful costumes to

complement their environment. The Village logo is that of the Penny Farthing

emblazoned on canned food products, on awnings and on personal identification badges,

etcetera. There is even a local Mini Moke Taxi service. On the surface, The Village

appears to be a democratic society offering forms of entertainment (marching bands,

costume balls), hospitality services (a café, a general store), media, and government

organizations (Citizens Advice Bureau, Town Hall, Labour Exchange, hospital, and a

Council that claims to be "democratically elected"). Located at the hub is the Green

Dome housing Number 2, the leader of The Village bureaucracy. As dictator, Number 2

answers only to Number 1. The identity of Number 1 remains unknown until the final

episode.

Prior to his role as Number 6, Patrick McGoohan was known for his role as

British secret service agent John Drake in the spy/espionage television series *Danger*

Man (ATV, 1960-1962, 1964-1967)[6]. Drake was a Cold War on-screen hero for two

years prior to the film series featuring his popular competitor James Bond. Jeffrey S.

Miller (2000) explores McGoohan's roles as John Drake and Number 6. The first part of

Miller's chapter titled "Danger Men: *Secret Agent* and *The Prisoner*" discusses Lew

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[5] Just as he is referred to as the Prisoner and Number 6 throughout the series, so too will
my thesis refer to his character as such.

[6] *Danger Man* a.k.a. *Secret Agent* in the U.S. (launched on CBC in 1961).

Grade's contribution to American television as a major producer of British television programming. In addition to launching Incorporated Television Company (ITC), Grade was responsible for matching actor Roger Moore to *The Saint* (ATV, 1962-1969) and Patrick McGoohan to *Danger Man.* ITC was his subsidiary company created for the purpose of handling the overseas sales of programs, which were part of his Associated Television commercial broadcasting company (ATV) (Miller, 2000, p. 27). These companies were made possible by the launching of Independent Television (ITV) on September 22nd, 1955, which broke the monopoly BBC held over British broadcasting for over twenty years (Davies, 2002, p. 18). Miller's text goes on to explain the birth of *Danger Man*, within the contextualized framework of the Bond film series, in order to understand the import and implication of spy films during that period. It is of relevance to have knowledge of this background information in order to comprehend the how and why of *The Prisoner*.

The *Official Prisoner Companion* (1988) explains that McGoohan tired of his role as Drake. Using his cultural cachet in his role as Drake, he approached Grade with his concept of *The Prisoner*: "I want a change. I've got this thing with me" (qtd. in White & Ali, 1988, p. 120). His proposal included notes and diagrams for a seven-episode TV miniseries (Fairclough, 2006, p. 370). Grade was skeptical that the audience, already conditioned to the character of Drake[7], would empathize with a hero who does not escape. Number 6 can be classified as a hero or an anti-hero for the same reason – his ability to successfully maintain his individuality. His individuality makes him heroic. In

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[7] It is debatable as to whether or not Number 6 is a continuation of the John Drake character. A relevant debate, especially when contained within *Danger Man*'s theme song is the line: "they've given you a number and taken 'way your name".

"Fall Out" The Village finally recognizes him as the "ultimate individual" and he is subsequently petitioned to "lead" them. However, as an "individual" exhibiting motives considered suspicious or even selfish[8], the Prisoner lacks the conventional characteristics of a "hero"[9], and can therefore also be labeled an "anti-hero". What arose from this skepticism is one of the most debated television series of all time with McGoohan as the highest paid British television actor of his time (Davies, 2002, p. 23; White & Ali, 1988, p. 142).

Patrick McGoohan considers only seven *Prisoner* episodes to "really count" [see Table A1] (White & Ali, 1998, p. 122). When asked whether more episodes would have contributed to the execution of other themes, McGoohan explained, "I think seven episodes would have been the total number. Less would have been more, more enigmatic. There are seven episodes I consider completely 'true to the concept'" (qtd. in Carrazé & Oswald, 1989, p. 8). Lew Grade wanted McGoohan to create twenty-six episodes "to give an American network a half-year series with the potential for renewal" (Miller, 2000, p. 46). The final result, agreed upon by Grade and McGoohan, is seventeen episodes. White and Ali (1998) explain that there remain two official episode arrangements for *The Prisoner*: one, the U.K. order [see Table A2] in which the episodes were first screened on British television; and two, the U.S. order [see Table A3] in which

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[8] For example, always looking out for himself or his own gain, even when appearing to help members of The Village community.

[9] Booker (2002) argues that the Prisoner is a "sort of postmodern simulation of a hero rather than a hero proper" (p. 84). Contextualized within the "cinematic realm of noir", Biderman and Devlin (2008) allege that the leading character of noir film is "the dark hero who exemplifies the existential qualities of disturbance, complexity, anguish and despair" (p. 229), and claim that Number 6 is a "noir hero" (p. 231).

the series was introduced to the United States (p. 160)[10].

Utilizing the U.K. order, Gregory (1997) groups the episodes chronologically into three distinct categories. First he classifies episodes one to seven as "separation", then eight to twelve as "initiation", and finally thirteen to seventeen as "return". These categories are related to the basic premise of Joseph Campbell's three stage "monomyth", defining the path of the mythological hero. Only episodes one, two, five and seven deal directly with Number 6's attempt to escape from The Village. The first category is labeled "separation" because, according to Campbell, the initial stage of the hero's quest is a "separation from the 'normal' world into the supernatural". It is only after "Many Happy Returns" (episode seven) that the Prisoner no longer attempts escape by coming to accept The Village for what it is. Number 6 never stops fighting against the powers controlling him. The "initiation" category indicates episodes where Number 6 turns the tables on his captors by attempting to psychologically destroy those who control The Village. This coincides with Campbell's definition of the second stage in which "the hero resists various temptations and overcomes various obstacles, eventually achieving some kind of power". Finally the "return" category suggests that these final five episodes are gradually building up Number 6's return to his London home. Additionally, in each of these episodes Number 6 "triumphs" over Number 2's plan and "returns" to The Village stronger and wiser to the ways of Village bureaucracy (pp. 8-9). Regardless,

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[10] Chris Gregory (1997) explains the reason why there remains no single "official" episode order is because production was still in progress when the first completed episodes were screened in the U.K. (p. 20). *The Prisoner* was filmed in the village of Portmeirion, North Wales and first broadcast in the UK on October 1st, 1967; however, according to *The Prisoner* Six of One society (website located at http://www.sixofone.org.uk/), the world premiere of *The Prisoner* aired in Canada prior to the UK. This series then aired on American television beginning June 1st, 1968.

what is certain is that "Arrival" is the first episode and "Once Upon a Time" and "Fall Out" are sequentially the sixteenth and seventeenth episodes. White and Ali (1988) explain that the order of the episodes is one of the biggest debates that "will never be resolved" and suggest, "It is worthwhile to think about the order and create your own" (pp. 162-163).

It is necessary to introduce essential background information on how a television text can be approached in order to understand the process of analyzing *The Prisoner*. A television text uses different visual and narrative "codes" than either a literary or film text. Keith Selby and Ron Cowdery (1995) point out that "while it is easy to watch television… it is hard to write analytically about it" (p. 1). Treating a television program as a text is reading it as a literary text in conjunction with, and utilizing, other tools for a semiotic and/or image analysis. Graeme Burton, in *Talking Television* (2000), states, "Unarguably, television is polysemic in nature…compris[ing] many signs, generated through a variety of codes: visual, verbal, technical, nonverbal and so on" (p. 27). Jill Marshall and Angela Werndly, authors of *The Language of Television* (2002), agree that a main characteristic of television is "polysemy" (p. 55). According to Burton, defining television as a "polysemic" text raises two opposing arguments: 1) the audience can choose to interpret the text in a variety of different ways, and 2) the audience can interpret the text based on the "anchored" image combined with the "narrative strategies" within the text itself (p. 9). Consequently, according to Marshall and Werndly, a polysemic text implies that many meanings enable a viewer to identify with a "preferred meaning" since no single meaning is ever "imposed on an audience (p. 4).

Miller (2000) establishes that Patrick McGoohan was "executive producer, star, and frequent writer/director of *The Prisoner*" and that he envisioned this narrative as an open text where viewers can formulate their own interpretations (p. 43). By classifying *The Prisoner* as an open text, encouraging multiple readings, James Chapman (2000) suggests, "Debates over the meaning of *The Prisoner* might be likened to a quest for some televisual Holy Grail as commentators attempt to find a definitive answer to the question 'what is it about'?" (p. 49). According to McGoohan, this series was "designed to make people confront their society and their life-style, to ask the big questions" (qtd. in White & Ali, 1988, p. 3). *The Prisoner*'s polysemic text encourages multiple interpretations from its viewership, as McGoohan intended, which is why it is important to understand the power of his authorship over this series. Included in the DVD set of *The Prisoner*, is an interview with the production manager of the series, Bernie Williams. Williams explains that the series was created without a complete script and "the cameras were already rolling" as each single episode was fermenting in Patrick McGoohan's mind. Every day cast and crew were discovering McGoohan's vision. Williams continues:

> I definitely know that Pat was trying to take television to another level, which was to get away from shootouts and car chases. And Patrick was very controlling of the series because it was in Patrick's head; it wasn't from a book, it wasn't a clear idea. And I believe it was a personal journey of Patrick's too and his rebellion from much of what was going on at that time in terms of the computer age coming in and the Cold War.

Similarly, Dixon (1999) alleges that *The Prisoner*'s "political and social subtext" was "certainly uppermost in McGoohan's consciousness" (para. 9). Gregory (1997) reiterates McGoohan's prominent role in the creation of this series: "*The Prisoner* is an extreme example of the primacy of the main actor. This is not only because the hero is the only

regular recurring character but also because Patrick McGoohan is the main creative and controlling force behind the series" (p. 27). Although Dixon recognizes, like Gregory, McGoohan's authorship in *The Prisoner*, he maintains that this series has its roots in two of Ralph Smart's teleseries: 1) the adaptation of H.G. Wells's *The Invisible Man* (1897), and 2) *Danger Man.*

Catherine Johnson's *Telefantasy* (2005) provides a detailed account of how *The Prisoner* was created, produced and marketed. Since McGoohan was undeniably the creative impetus behind *The Prisoner*, Johnson argues, "This single-authored series was the most challenging and unusual series ever filmed for television" (p. 52). Just as Johnson invites us to consider the "serious" side of a single television program, McGoohan wished to take television to another level by providing his audience with an alternative way of examining their societal positions within a larger social framework. He did this purposefully in order to poke holes in the belief in the greater powers of governmental control. The previous quote from Bernie Williams introduces reasons why McGoohan created *The Prisoner* as a non-traditional spy/espionage television series. Essentially, McGoohan responded to the social discourses of his time such as the Cold War and the coming computer age. To use McLuhan's term, McGoohan set out to "probe" the society which he inhabited. In the same manner, *The Prisoner* encourages people to "probe" their own "society" and "life-style". As for its open-ended polysemic text, with so many questions left unanswered, McGoohan explains, "I suppose that [*The Prisoner*] is the sort of thing where a thousand people might have a different interpretation of it, which I think is very gratifying. I am glad that's the way it was, because that was the intention" (qtd. in White & Ali, 1988, p. 1). Furthermore,

McGoohan claims, "I wanted to have controversy, argument, fights, discussions, people in anger waving fists in my face, saying 'how dare you!'" (Troyer & McGoohan, 1977). Williams classified *The Prisoner* as a product of McGoohan's rebellion against government control. This may well be the way in which McGoohan wanted the audience to interpret his series.

The Prisoner is a hybrid television text. Marshall and Werndly (2002) define the television hybrid as "the combined result of two or more original formats [retaining] some characteristics of those forms" (p. 47). As mentioned previously, *The Prisoner* retains elements of many genres belonging to science fiction, action-adventure, and spy/detective shows and is therefore a hybrid television text. Cynthia Walker maintains that, "The television spy series is extremely difficult to categorize generically because of the fluid boundaries between the spy drama and other genres, particularly the detective and thriller genres" (qtd. in Johnson, 2005, p. 55). Similarly, Brian J. Woodman (2005) classifies *The Prisoner* as a "genre hybrid" since, as confirmed by critics and viewers alike, there are several instances of "genre mixing" throughout the series (p. 940). As a hybrid text, defying genre classification, *The Prisoner* relies heavily on the construct of "fictional realism". Fictional realism, according to Marshall and Werndly, is when the boundaries of "cultural realism", defined as "cultural values and beliefs stemming from" reality, are transgressed in a fictional world. On that note, it is pertinent to remember that *The Prisoner* is rooted in social discourses belonging to the '60s era. "It's Your Funeral" features the Prisoner striving to prevent an assassination of a previous Number 2. This episode serves as a commentary on its time by having parallels with both *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), and especially with the real life 1963 assassination of

President John F. Kennedy. "The Girl Who Was Death" and "Fall Out" both feature a space rocket, exemplary of the nuclear arms race at its height in the latter '60s. This thesis argues that not only are there connections between *The Prisoner* and McLuhan's theories, but between both *The Prisoner* and McLuhan's theories and '60s culture. It can therefore be concluded that not only is *The Prisoner* a hybrid genre, but it is a hybrid of fictional and cultural realism.

In the decades following its initial release, *The Prisoner* has achieved cult status by encouraging its viewership to question their place in a regimented society. As White and Ali (1988) state, "People continue to watch and talk about *The Prisoner* because it remains the most unusual, the most provocative, and the most controversial television series ever produced" (p. 1). One of the main questions about the series as a whole is whether or not *The Prisoner* is subversive. According to *The Prisoner Video Companion*, two perspectives in this debate remain. From the "radical" school of thought, *The Prisoner* "is a call for the ultimate political action, revolution". On the other hand, it can be considered an "artistic, creative description for the conflict between the individual and society." *The Prisoner* is not only a product of its time; it is a searing political commentary on the '60s with reference to cold war paranoia, political assassinations, drug hype, socialism and utopian ideals.

Rumours of *Prisoner* revivals and adaptations have been floating about since the mid-1980s. CanWest News featured an article (July 22, 2006) by Chris Knight extolling the virtues of both *The Prisoner* DVD 40th anniversary edition as well as a possible remake of this series by Britain's Sky One network. Knight argues that many of *The Prisoner*'s unanswered questions are what contribute to its "masochistic pleasure" (para.

5). But in the fall of 2007 all hopes of a series remake were put to rest. "No escape for Sky: The Curse of The Prisoner" was the caption for *The Independent*'s article written by Gerard Gilbert (September 25, 2007). Gilbert concludes that "McGoohan is in practice irreplaceable" and that "the actor and the role are inseparable" because "he made the series, both literally ... and figuratively" (para. 15). In August 2006 Christopher Nolan, director of *The Dark Knight* (2008), was in the process of final negotiations with Universal Pictures to direct a *Prisoner* film adaptation (Sciretta). Regardless of what may or may not materialize, the demand for more of *The Prisoner,* forty years after its initial run, remains a testament to its significance in the televisual canon.

In order to parallel McLuhan's theories with themes in *The Prisoner*, it is necessary to be well-versed in the McLuhan texts as well as all seventeen episodes of *The Prisoner*. In understanding how *The Prisoner* and McLuhan's theories were received during their own time, Catharine Kohler Riessman (1993) explains, "Every text is plurivocal, open to several readings and to several constructions. Even for the same reader, a work can provoke quite different readings in different historical contexts" (p. 14). This quote is significant because it exemplifies what both McLuhan and McGoohan hoped to achieve with the reception of their labours. In an interview, McGoohan explains that with repeat "viewings" of *The Prisoner* an individual can formulate "new meanings". He also notes that "new experiences" lead to "new understanding" ("End of the Series")[11]. Just as McLuhan must be analyzed in accordance with the discourses surrounding his theories, *The Prisoner* must also be contextualized in the discourses

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[11] Unable to properly reference this in Works Cited because according to YouTube, where I initially viewed the online 6-minute video, "This video has been removed due to terms of use violation".

surrounding it. While every text is plurivocal, a texts' plurivocality is, according to Alan McKee's analysis, limited by its surrounding discourses. McKee (2003) explains that semiotics endeavours to recognize "that much of the likely interpretation of a text depends on contextual information such as genre, wider discourses in culture and 'intertexts' (other relevant texts)" (p. 131). Therefore, it is only by contextualizing McLuhan and McGoohan within the confines of '60s culture that I will be able to make parallels between McLuhan's global village and *The Prisoner's* Village.

Although some tenuous connections have previously been made between McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner*, nothing of note has been discussed in depth. A brief chapter titled "Your Village" in Britton and Barker's *Reading Between Designs* (2003) is the only text I have located that integrates McLuhan's theories with *The Prisoner*. The strength of this MA thesis resides in an attempt to show, through a scholarly in-depth analysis, that *The Prisoner*, created at the height of Marshall McLuhan's academic and cultural musings, contains themes and elements analogous to his theories formulated during the '60s. After discussing McLuhan's theories in chapter two and *The Prisoner* in chapter three, chapter four outlines parallels between McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner*'s main themes, including: the perversion of science and technology, bureaucracy as dictatorship, freedom as illusion, and the individual in opposition to the collective. Chapter five will reiterate the parallels made. Based on the findings in chapter four, a determination can be made as to whether or not McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* are an endorsement or a critique of '60s culture, or both. Furthermore, any limitations to this project will be noted and suggestions for

further research will be discussed. Finally, I will summarize how this thesis will serve

the greater understanding of popular culture.

Methodology:

In addition to conducting a textual analysis on the global village and *The*

Prisoner, the comprehensive methodological stratagem for this thesis project will include

Marshall McLuhan's "mosaic"/field approach, as well as Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of

the "chronotope". The theoretical approaches of both McLuhan and Bakhtin will be

applied and extended to include a Foucauldian genealogical/historical discourse analysis.

Not only must Marshall McLuhan and Patrick McGoohan be contextualized

historically within the confines of the '60s, but also spatially according to the different

interpretations of their work across Canada, the United States and Britain. According to

Scodari and Thorpe (1992), this contextualization is referred to as "historical criticism",

which examines "media messages of a certain vintage in order to bring a greater

understanding of the time, place and culture from which they emerged" (p. 46). In

exploring the media discourses surrounding McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* TV

series, a strategy can be constructed as an historical/critical examination of the McLuhan

– McGoohan texts.

After having read various socio-cultural, political and historical texts on the '60s

era, I can determine how McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* are products of their time.

Furthermore, this familiarization with the '60s era permits an examination into how the

"village" was portrayed and received within discourses of the '60s. Graeme Burton

(2000) explains that television narratives are ideological in that they "have structures and

structure the way in which we think about our culture and our social relationships" (p.

114). In their introduction White and Ali (1988) argue, "*The Prisoner* was a product of its time...many of the episodes have been properly interpreted as expressions of contemporary issues, be it the Vietnam War or recreational drug use or alternative life styles" (p. 1). This statement acknowledges that *The Prisoner* is a commentary on the ideologies of its time, the 1960s, and, according to Burton (2000), "Frames off of how we think about politics, power and social differences" (p. 114). Therefore, it is only within the parameters of the late '60s (at the height of the hippy movement) that *The Prisoner* could have been produced. By situating the global village and *The Prisoner* within the '60s era, I am able to both deconstruct what Marshall McLuhan and Patrick McGoohan were conveying independently from one another and analyze overlapping parallels between the McLuhan – McGoohan texts.

Michael S. Roth's article "Foucault's 'History of the Present'" (1981) examines "the relationship between the past and the present" in three of Foucault's texts: *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966), and *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Roth also explores how Foucault is writing a "history of the present" (p. 32). Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* attempts to understand the historical-theoretical circumstances of 18th century doctors in order to piece together how they arrived at their conclusions. In an interview with Foucault (1980) regarding his method, he explains, "My books aren't treatises in philosophy or studies in history: at most they are philosophical fragments put to work in an historical field of problems" (qtd. in Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991, p. 74). Therefore, according to Foucault (1980), it is only in tracing the "historical 'a priori' of a period" that one is able to contextualize how something came to be. For example, his *Discipline and Punish* deconstructs the prison institution and penal system as a

"practice of imprisonment" by investigating "how this way of doing things" was "capable of being accepted at a certain moment" in history (qtd. in Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991, p. 75). Roth (1981) further defines this process as "delineating the paradigm through which a thinker operated, and by which firm limits to his perception were set" (p. 36). This complements Foucault's premise in *The Order of Things* (1970): "The history of knowledge can be written only on the basis of what was contemporaneous with it, and certainly not in terms of reciprocal influence, but in terms of *a prioris* established in time" (p. 208). Extending this method to my project entails an examination of examples of 1960s society which complement the discourses surrounding *The Prisoner* and McLuhan's theories during that era. In his essay "Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse" (2001), Stuart Hall explains that, "By 'discourse', Foucault meant 'a group of statements' which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (p. 72). Therefore, by implementing a Foucauldian discourse analysis I will examine statements on the global village and on other McLuhan theories, as well as statements on *The Prisoner*.

In his *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), Mikhail Bakhtin defines the concept of the chronotope as "a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of temporal and spatial categories". From this it can be deduced that Bakhtin is mathematically/scientifically defining his method of deconstructing literature. Bakhtin further explains that the chronotope is "an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring" (pp. 425 - 426). Therefore, just as x-rays reveal the internal biological aspects of the human body, which the human eye

cannot see, the chronotope is a device that deconstructs the surface of texts to reveal

hidden agendas that reflect the culture at the moment in historical time in which these

texts were created. It can be presumed that Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity, which

makes connections between space and time (time being the fourth dimension of space),

influenced Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope. Bakhtin utilizes Einstein's scientific

model from a metaphorical perspective in his application of time-space to the novel,

specifically for "assimilating real historical time and space in literature". Bakhtin further

explains, "We will give the name *chronotope* [literally 'time space'] to the intrinsic

connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in

literature" (p. 84). Therefore time and space are intrinsic and inseparable for Bakhtin's

chronotope. The application of the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope in this thesis rests

on the relationships formed between the McLuhan-McGoohan texts created in relatively

close historical space-time dimensions.

In her book, *Unthinking Modernity: Innis, McLuhan and the Frankfurt School*

(1995), Judith Stamps outlines how McLuhan's notion of "mosaic" or "galaxy" is rooted

within Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin's theory of "constellation". These terms

came about in response to the decentralizing outcome in utilizing the multiple perspective

method, which the Frankfurt School called "negative dialectics" in order to analyze social

phenomena. "Negative dialectics" is the process by which texts are developed that

simulates "a negative dialogue by juxtaposing multiple perspectives on the topics in

question". Therefore, in juxtaposing psychoanalytic, sociological, and technological

perspectives on the same topic, the negative dialectic approach can be understood.

According to Stamps, in utilizing multiple perspectives, "Authors and readers [would]

see their object of study as a totality", but, decentralization occurs because the object of

study cannot be defined "as having a single founding cause or essence." Initially,

McLuhan labeled this decentredness as "no point of view" and then changed it to

"galaxies" or "mosaics" in response to Adorno and Benjamin's "constellations" (pp. 20-

21). In a celestial galaxy, a cluster of stars forms a constellation. To apply this analogy

to the domain of literature, a totality is achieved when new ideas are formed in the

process of placing texts in a literary constellation.

Stamps (1995) claims that, although the content of Adorno and Benjamin's work

differs from McLuhan's, all are consistent in the theoretical application of the

constellation metaphor (p. 134). *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) was McLuhan's first text

to incorporate this mosaic approach. As McLuhan describes in his preface:

> The *Gutenberg Galaxy* develops a mosaic or field approach to its problems. Such
> a mosaic image of numerous data and quotations in evidence offers the only
> practical means of revealing casual operations in history. … Thus the galaxy or
> constellation of events upon which the present study concentrates is itself a
> mosaic of perpetually interacting forms that have undergone kaleidoscopic
> transformation – particularly in our own time (p. 8).

McLuhan and Powers (1989) classify the current simultaneous "all-at-once" world of

electric technology, which collapses the boundaries of time and space, as "mosaic". In its

basic meaning, mosaic is a word used to describe a piece of artwork that patterns smaller

pieces, consisting of different shapes, sizes, and colours, onto its surface to create one

single image. McLuhan uses mosaic as a term to describe his own methodological

approach for interpreting the media. He also investigates the left and right hemisphere of

the brain, each processing information in a different manner, suggesting that in order to

gain a comprehensive awareness of the environment, we must "centre ourselves" within

the "two modes of perception and analysis", visual and acoustic. In re-centring our

perception of the environment, we are essentially situating our mind within a "unified field" and our understanding shifts from a linear model to a "mosaic" one (pp. 48-50).

In conjunction with his mosaic theory, McLuhan accounts for an interplay that takes place between two events or ideas when set in close proximity to each other, which he refers to as a "galaxy". In an interview with Gerald E. Stearn, McLuhan expounds on the concepts of galaxy and mosaic that arose from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. He explains, "The word 'galaxy' really expresses the simultaneous interplay of factors that are not directly connected at all". Furthermore, he defines the mosaic as "a world of intervals in which maximal energy is transferred across the gaps. This is the 'massage' effect." (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 287). If we surmise that McLuhan's definition of galaxy is an extension of the traditional definition (clusters or large groups of stars), and his definition of mosaic is an extension of its previously mentioned artistic allusion, then we can attempt to discern what he is implying and how it is relevant to this thesis. In the same interview McLuhan establishes that *The Gutenberg Galaxy* is presented in the form of an "ideogram", defined as a picture or symbol having no particular name, yet systematically representing the *suggestion* of the object pictured. Therefore, it can be assumed that McLuhan is utilizing "galaxy" and "mosaic" in the same manner as ideograms. This is relevant because it situates his thought processes within the artistic/aesthetic realm.

Janine Marchessault (2005) defines McLuhan's mosaic technique as "an aesthetic approach to laying out a problematic in a dynamic and musical orchestration of parts in order to find underlying patterns" (p. 110). In comparing McLuhan's approach to that of Walter Benjamin, Marchessault argues, "Like Benjamin, McLuhan is interested in

constellations of meaning rather than any finite causalities or unifying framework" (p. 115). McLuhan further explains, "*The Gutenberg Galaxy* is a world in which energy is generated in the intervals, not by the connections." (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 287). The universal galaxy is composed of thousands or even millions of mosaics that are not necessarily connected to one another. However, it is within the spaces found in each mosaic and between the various mosaics, "set within close proximity to each other", that energy flows. Consequently, McLuhan is saying it is within "intervals", the spaces between things, that interaction occurs.

Marchessault introduces us to the ubiquity of *gestalt* psychology in relation to McLuhan's theorization on "intervals". According to Marchessault, *gestalt* psychology "maintains that the human mind will create unity from disparate parts, meaning that the reader fills in the gaps to create a dynamic interaction between parts" (p. 23). William Kuhns (1971) briefly examines McLuhan's writing method. McLuhan has "adopted the technique" of what he calls "quantum logic" from Harold Innis, which, as Kuhns explains, is a strategy that employs "enormous jumps within single sentences" thereby "leaving the reader to figure out what causal connection, if any, exists" (p. 176). It is important to acknowledge this strategy to better comprehend how McLuhan applies his mosaic technique.

After reading several of McLuhan's most popular texts, I have come to the realization that the methodological approach applied in this thesis is similar to what McLuhan labels as a "post-history". In the process of investigating (in the 21st century) the global village and *The Prisoner* (of the '60s), both become part of the current era and yet belong to a post-history. McLuhan and Parker (1969) explain, "If our present means

of exploring and presenting the human past are such as to make simultaneously present all kinds of human pasts, then we have moved into the period of post-history" (p. 131). Similarly, in investigating Michel Foucault's "history of the present", Mitchell Dean (1994) maintains, "History is above all a practice, a practice undertaken in a particular present and for particular reasons linked to that present" (p. 14). Situating McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* as belonging to a "post-history" is necessary because they are being discussed, written about and applied to this day. The relevancy of McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* in the 21st century will be explored in chapter five.

The chapter breakdown for the methodological application of this galaxy/mosaic approach is as follows: 1) Chapter two will present in detail Marshall McLuhan's global village as well as the corresponding intervals within the global village (subsequent theories pertinent to its understanding); 2) Chapter three will present in detail Patrick McGoohan's Village in *The Prisoner,* as well as the corresponding intervals within this Village (subsequent critical analyses necessary in its deconstruction); 3) Chapter four will regard the global village and *The Prisoner*'s Village as mosaics, set within close temporal proximity to each other, that form a galaxy. The conjunctions, the "interplay of factors", found within the intervals of this galaxy will be deconstructed.

Upon reading this thesis in its entirety, an understanding of McLuhan's global village and subsequent theories, in conjunction with an understanding of *The Prisoner* and its Village, should be achieved. Furthermore, an awareness of conjunctions between the McLuhan – McGoohan texts should be procured. In the process of deconstructing McLuhan's global village and *The Prisoner*'s Village, this project contributes to the collective knowledge of popular culture by revealing that the status quo or symmetry of

"village" may possibly be a fractious and frightening anti-mirror of its time. A thorough investigation of the global village and *The Prisoner* will determine whether or not Marshall McLuhan and/or Patrick McGoohan visualize the village as an enslaving technological reality.

CHAPTER TWO: MARSHALL McLUHAN'S GLOBAL VILLAGE

The global village is not created by the motorcar or even by the airplane; it is created by the instant electronic information movement. The global village is at once as wide as the planet and as small as the little town where everybody is maliciously engaged at poking his nose into everybody else's business. The global village is not a world of harmony but of extreme concern with everybody else's business and much involvement in everybody else's life. It's a sort of Ann Landers column. It doesn't necessarily mean harmony and peace and quiet but it does mean huge involvement in everybody else's affairs. So the global village is as big as a planet and as small as the village post office - Marshall McLuhan (qtd. in *The Video McLuhan*, Volume Two).

McLuhan's "global village" is often perceived as a socialist utopia, which, as the above quote succinctly elucidates, it is not. This chapter will investigate Marshall McLuhan's global village using his primary texts to analyze its origins and effects. Secondary source material critiquing the global village will be interspersed throughout. Examining the role of the artist and dropout, as Marshall McLuhan saw it, is the key to understanding his global village. By chapter's end, an awareness of what the global village is, in addition to what critics have presumed it to be, should percolate to the top. This awareness will assist in comprehending the correlation made between McLuhan's global village and McGoohan's "Village" in chapter four.

The work of Buckminster Fuller, James Joyce, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Albert Einstein greatly influenced Marshall McLuhan's invention of the global village. The futuristic, visionary, American architect Buckminster Fuller was responsible for refining and patenting the geodesic dome and calling it "Spaceship Earth". McLuhan theorizes on how Fuller's Spaceship Earth relates to Sputnik and its corresponding environment. In addition, his contemplation of the 1968 Apollo moon landing forced him to recognize the full potential of technology. McLuhan develops the Sputnik analogy using James Joyce's key terms "heliotropic noughttime" and "artifice of

eternity". In the last chapter of *War and Peace in the Global Village* McLuhan explains

that according to Joyce, man's history is man's nature. Beginning with the first satellite,

McLuhan and Fiore (1967) argue that, as the world becomes increasingly controlled by

the electronic environment, "We have been rapt in the 'artifice of eternity' by placing our

own nervous system around the entire globe" and therefore we are living in a "heliotropic

noughttime" (pp. 177-178). Joyce's final novel *Finnegans Wake* (1939) influenced

McLuhan's concept of "rear-view mirrorism" and his realization that the "ordinary man"

has to see the world as artists do in order to progress. McLuhan notes: "The artist uses in

his waking life the powers the ordinary man would use in his dream life. The creative

man has his dream life while awake. This is the meaning of the title *Finnegans Wake*"

(McLuhan, Parker, & Shafer, 1960, p. 272)[1]. The French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin

(1964) coined the term "noösphere", which he describes as a "planetary thinking

network" (p. 8) pertaining to the consciousness of Earth. In the foreword to

Understanding Me, Tom Wolfe explains that a noösphere is a "unification of all the

human nervous systems, all human souls, through technology" (qtd. in McLuhan &

Stains, 2003, p. xvii). Wolfe asserts that although McLuhan "privately acknowledged his

debt to Teilhard de Chardin", he was ideologically conflicted with Teilhard de Chardin,

and as a result chose never to publicly acknowledge his work (*The Video McLuhan*,

Volume One). Finally, Albert Einstein's theories of relativity played a large role in the

manner by which McLuhan thought about "mass man" existing in a world of

simultaneity. McLuhan expounds on mass man in his last taped lecture, at York

University in Toronto, titled "Man and Media". McLuhan (1979a) asserts, "The word

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[1] McLuhan also analyzes what "Finnegans Wake" implies in his *Understanding Media* chapter titled "Reversal of the Overheated Medium".

mass simply means simultaneous. Mass man is man existing simultaneously in the same world. It is a matter of speed, not of numbers. ... If it is simultaneous, it is mass" (p. 292). Understanding McLuhan's thought processes helps to better contextualize how he defines his global village. Fuller, Joyce, Teilhard de Chardin, and Einstein all played significant roles in McLuhan's conception of the global village.

<div align="center">Origins of the Global Village</div>

As mentioned in chapter one, Marshall McLuhan originally popularized the global village aphorism in his theoretical treatise *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. However, McLuhan conceptualized his global village prior to the publication of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as he noted in a letter, dated May 16th 1959, to assistant editor of *Marketing*, Edward S. Morgan. In it McLuhan clearly describes the effects of the Electronic Age as it pertains to the global village. He explains how "a continuous and instantaneous flow of information" from "all directions at the same time" blurs the lines between producer and consumer and also changes how people interact with one another when the dimensions of space and time have been altered. McLuhan states, "The globe becomes a very small village-like affair, under electronic conditions, in which whatever happens to anybody, happens to everybody" (qtd. in Molinaro, McLuhan, & Toye, 1987, pp. 252-253). McLuhan is using "village" as a metaphor to explain the conditions of an electronic environment. Footnoted in this letter is a reference to Wyndham Lewis' *America and Cosmic Man* (1948) in which Lewis states, "The earth has become one big village" (p. 16). McLuhan has, on many an occasion, credited his friend Lewis as one of the theorists who influenced him profoundly. It can be inferred, from the aforementioned footnote, that McLuhan read and owned a copy of *America and Cosmic Man*. Conversely, in an

interview with Communications Professor Louis Forsdale, McLuhan claimed the global village "was just a phrase that popped up. What it means, literally, is that, transmitted at the speed of light, all events on this planet are simultaneous" (qtd. in Sanderson & MacDonald, 1967, p. 23). According to McLuhan, the world of simultaneity, in which individual identity is lost and replaced by a tribal one, belongs to the current Electronic Age. Individual identity becomes lost when man becomes "mass man" living in the world of simultaneity. This has never before in history been more evident than with the advent and dovetailing of technologies such as the computer, Blackberry, and iPhone, which all permit e-mail and instant text messaging with the assistance of the Internet. All of these products are developments of the Electronic Age.

If we are to understand electronic technology and its role in the global village, we should consider McLuhan's theory regarding media and the environments they create: "A medium creates an environment. An environment is a process; it is not a wrapper. It's an action, and it goes to work on our nervous systems and our sensory lives, completely altering them" (McLuhan, 1966, p. 90). McLuhan uses the example of an early Apollo mission to illustrate the full potential of electronic technology. It permitted man[2], while on earth, to instantaneously view, via video camera, the moon landing. The concept of the global village is firmly rooted in his most ubiquitous aphorism "the medium is the message". With each and every new medium or innovation a corresponding environment is created and this is what affects people. McLuhan's medium is the message "really means a hidden environment of services created by an innovation, and the hidden environment of services is the thing that changes people. It is the environment that

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[2] This thesis will refer to man/mankind and woman/womankind as "man" to be consistent with McLuhan.

changes people, not the technology" (McLuhan, 1974, p. 242). Of course the above

quote explains the basic principle of his medium is the message, but the deeper

implication of it is much more complex. The complexity of McLuhan's aphorisms is the

reason why he claims to have avoided defining them in layman's terms[3]. Furthermore,

this is the same reason why I have devoted chapter two to contextualizing the global

village within McLuhan's theoretical web.

Originally McLuhan conjured up the concept of "global theatre" while musing on

the October 4th, 1957 launching of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, and preferred it to

that of the global village. In a lecture entitled "The End of the Work Ethic" (1972a),

delivered in Toronto to members of the Empire Club, McLuhan explains,

> When the planet was suddenly enveloped by a man-made artifact, Nature flipped
> into an art form. The moment of *Sputnik* was the moment of creating Spaceship
> *Earth* and/or the global theatre. Shakespeare and the Globe [Theatre] had seen all
> the world as a stage, but with *Sputnik*, the world literally became a global theater
> with no more audiences, only actors (p. 197).

McLuhan interpreted Sputnik as pivotal in reading Earth and its inhabitants. Sputnik

permitted Earth to become a stage platform for its inhabitants (actors), to perform.

Furthermore, McLuhan implies that with satellite communication the only city remaining

on the planet is the planet itself (*McLuhan's Wake*). *McLuhan's Wake* explains that

satellites turn the planet into a stage and entice people to become performers. An

example of the audience becoming the performance was duly noted by Tom Wolfe in an

interview. Wolfe broached the idea to McLuhan that the audience at Woodstock became

the show and instead of charging eighteen dollars for admission, each audience

participant should have been paid (McLuhan & Wolfe, 1970, p. 164). To use McLuhan's

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[3] McLuhan's aphorisms will be revisited in the conclusion of this chapter.

analogy, the people at Woodstock were not spectators but actors on the stage platform participating in the global theatre. It is at this moment that spectator as consumer, no longer content with merely watching an event, becomes the participant as producer.

McLuhan's global theatre concept came about while studying the effects of early radio, a medium that first challenged the boundaries of space. Television, however, had an even greater impact on his theorems. When one part of the world is made readily available to another part of the world via satellite communication, our perspective changes entirely. The television image, in particular, presents our habitat not in its original natural state but in an artificial reality that the viewers accept as real. Irving J. Weiss, in an article he wrote for *McLuhan: Pro & Con* titled "Sensual Reality in the Mass Media" (1968), explains that television has now become the dominant medium by which people find comfort in viewing familiar events. Weiss accredits McLuhan as the first "media observer" to theorize about the powerful effects of television and also the first to warn us to disregard, "dismiss", or "despise" its image when we perceive it as an authentic portrayal of reality (p. 49).

Subsequently, McLuhan speaks often of a "disembodied" image – that a person presented on the television is without physical body and reduced to a mere image or information pattern which is "disembodied" (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988, p. 153). In the Electronic Age, we experience the news as it happens in *real* time. Take for example the events of September 11th, 2001; for those who were watching their television set, the second tower was seen being hit in real time – live – before their very eyes. But it must be pointed out that when used in news jargon, the word "live" is itself a paradox. It connotes that the viewers of television are witnesses to the events the moment they occur.

However, we witness live news while watching television via satellite communication. And since television and satellites are artificial extensions of man, the images they produce are artificial or non-authentic or, as McLuhan calls them, disembodied. The disembodied images of people flashing across the television screen cannot be confused with those *authentic* people at the broadcast location. Likewise, on-location observers are also *authentic* witnesses to reality. McLuhan is implying that we must not compare the disembodied television image to its authentic counterpart. This analogy is what influenced Jean Baudrillard's concept of the "hyperreal" which means a blurring of the distinction between the real and the imaginary in which the "real" becomes less significant than its imaginary counterpart, or "simulation". Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (1997) conclude that Baudrillard's hyperreal "is thus the death of the real, but it is only a theological death: The real dies only to be reborn, artificially resurrected, within a system of signs" (p. 102). Therefore, for television viewers, the television inhabits the world of "hyperreality" as it creates artificial images from the "theoretical death" of the real in the process of transposing images onto the screen to be read as a "system of signs".

McLuhan makes a connection between Soviet Sputnik and an artistic perspective on the global village. In a lecture titled "Toward an Inclusive Consciousness" (1967c), McLuhan elaborates on this notion of the planet turned art: "With the satellite and the immediate likelihood of satellite broadcasting to all parts of the world simultaneously, the little round schoolhouse has turned the planet into a form of artwork. As satellites go around the planet, the planet becomes not the human habitat so much as an art form" (p. 135). Since art is able to explore and provide us with what our own experiences may not,

the television image, transmitted to us via satellite, becomes "an artform of reality" which has "made the world over in its own image" (Weiss, 1968, pp. 53-54). McLuhan theorizes on the everyday objects we use, including technology, concluding that these become extensions of our central nervous systems and essentially of ourselves. So too, Sputnik can be viewed as an extension of the Earth. McLuhan (1967c) further states, "Any medium of communication is, like an art form, an extension of one or more of our senses" (p. 138). Therefore the artificial images transposed onto the television screen become an extension of our senses. Stylistically, McLuhan has a tendency to poetically rationalize his own theories of electronic technology. Understanding his desire to theorize in an artistic manner is necessary to better follow the analogies he later makes.

McLuhan's work implies that media are more than inert objects and in creating their own environments seem to become a form of nature. In *Counterblast* (1969), McLuhan and Parker[4] declare, "The new media are not bridges between man and nature: *they are nature*" (p. 14). At the moment when man-made satellites were sent to circle our planet these new media replaced nature in the traditional sense as "the entire evolutionary process shifted … from biology to technology" (p. 4). McLuhan (1970) forcefully claims that, "Since Sputnik there is no Nature. Nature is an item contained in a man-made environment of satellites and information" (p. 330). What McLuhan is implying is that nature in the biological sense, or "Darwinian Nature" (p. 143), no longer exists in the Electronic Age when technology not only predetermines how we adapt to our new environment, but also becomes an extension of ourselves. In the Stearn Interview, McLuhan credits Buckminster Fuller for recognizing that the "the space capsule is the

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[4] Harley Parker (1915-1992), visual artist and Professor of Communications, was a frequent collaborator of McLuhan's.

first completely designed human environment" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, pp. 290-291).

McLuhan puts almost inordinate emphasis on Sputnik because it was a shift in not only

the means by which people use their environment, but also a shift in the way people think

about their environment. When people create media in the Information Age then they

remake the world in their own image.

In order to understand how McLuhan assesses the different communications

media it is pertinent to comprehend his classifications of space: visual, acoustic, and

tactile. Visual space is an extension of the eye that is focused, linear, and analytical. The

phonetic alphabet belongs to the uniform, one-at-a-time world of visual space; the literate

man inhabits this space. Acoustic space is an extension of the ear that is synaesthetic,

having no linearity, no single centre, and no margin. In *The Global Village* (1989),

McLuhan and Powers assert, "Acoustic space has the basic character of a sphere whose

focus or centre is simultaneously everywhere and whose margin is nowhere" (p. 55).

Since we hear from all directions at once, we can deduce that sound knows no

boundaries. Tribal man belongs to the world of acoustic space. Finally, tactile space is

an extension of the internal and external physicality of self. Audile-tactile senses are the

most dominant in the Electronic Age. McLuhan points out that neurologists and

sociologists have categorized the left hemisphere of the brain (belonging to visual space)

as "hierarchical reasoning", and the right hemisphere of the brain (belonging to "audile-

tactile" space) as "the dwelling place of primitive man's intuition of myth" (p. 10). Both

The Global Village and *War and Peace in the Global Village* explore the foundation for

war. After analyzing these texts it can be concluded that the global village is really a war

between the senses, or a war between the visual and acoustic brain. The left side of the

brain is "linear and sequential", thereby visual; the right is the "holistic" acoustic side.

McLuhan and Powers (1989) classify the division between the right and left hemispheres

of the brain as a "bifurcated mind" encompassing "two brains straining to be physically

united" (p. 47). Furthermore, McLuhan explains that although the "two minds try to seek

balance" in the Electronic Age, it is the right side that "pushes up into dominance"

(*McLuhan's Wake*). Therefore, the corresponding environmental conditions of the

Electronic Age determine how we interact with it.

Environmental factors greatly influence which hemisphere of the brain will

become dominant (suppressing the less dominant) in our interpretation of the world. In

The Global Village (1989) McLuhan and Powers caution, "The present Electronic Age, in

its inescapable confrontation with simultaneity, presents the first serious threat to the

2500-year dominance of the left hemisphere" (p. 62). The problem with living in the

world of instantaneous electronic technology is that Western man's senses have been

trained according to the visual world and must adjust according to the acoustic. This is

quite a challenge since Western man, in experiencing "nineteenth-century cultural lag"[5]

(p. 68), has the habit of processing the acoustic with the same sensory techniques used for

assessing the visual. In the chapter titled "Visual and Acoustic Space", McLuhan and

Powers deduce that Western Man "thinks with only one part of his brain and starves the

rest of it. By neglecting ear culture, which is too diffuse for the categorical hierarchies of

the left side of the brain, he has locked himself into a position where only linear

conceptualization is possible" (p. 38). It is important to acknowledge the fact that print

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[5] This corresponds to Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (1970). According to Toffler "future shock grows out of increasing lag" between "the pace of environmental change and the limited pace of human response" (p. 4).

created the conditions by which a sense of national unity was achieved. McLuhan alleges that "the boundaries" of any nation are created when "people could [literally] see their own language in print form" (McLuhan, Parker, & Shafer, 1960, pp. 147-148).

According to McLuhan, the medium that best exemplifies his mosaic is television. By reaching more people than any other form of electronic media, television is also the "most significant of the electric media" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 245). When electrified, the original cathode-ray television screen becomes comprised of millions of tiny flashing dots, which the human eye cannot see. The mind, however, processes these spaces or "intervals" between the dots in order to complete the television picture. McLuhan describes the television image as mosaic because he associates it with pointillism, specifically the paintings of Georges-Pierre Seurat. Pointillism is a technique or style of painting using repetition of small distinct dots. When a pointillist painting is viewed as a whole, the mind processes the groups of dots as an image. Furthermore, just as the television image is comprised of primary colours, so too are the dots in a pointillist painting; however, in both instances our mind creates an illusory interpretation of secondary and intermediate colours within the image. McLuhan classifies television as a mosaic medium since "each viewer is thus an unconscious pointillist painter like Seurat, limning new shapes and images as the iconoscope washes over his entire body" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 246). This closely ties in with his reasons for labeling television a "cool medium" that requires a high amount of participation from the viewers to fill in the gaps, so to speak.

McLuhan often theorized about the many effects of television. In the Stearn interview he warns, "Television will dissolve the entire fabric of society in a short time.

If you understood its dynamics, you would choose to eliminate it as soon as possible".

To contextualize, McLuhan is anticipating the effects television has on our sensory

output and our psyche by driving us inward, "Giving people a somber, profound sense of

involvement" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 291). Appearing on NBC's *Tomorrow Show*

with Tom Snyder in 1976, he argued that the "hidden" effect of television is the viewers'

loss of private identity: "They become corporate peer group people just by watching it.

They lose interest in being private individuals" (McLuhan & Snyder, p. 254). McLuhan

also classifies the television as an "addictive", "potent drug" that becomes an "inner trip"

and serves as a "tranquilizer" (McLuhan & McMannus, 1977, p. 270). It is here that

McLuhan began to question his optimistic but guarded take on electric technology.

<u>Positive Effects of the Global Village</u>

McLuhan's optimism for the new electric media was expressed during a talk he

gave in Washington D.C., at the third annual conference on Humanities, titled

"Technology, the Media, and Culture" (1960b). He addressed the insignificance of the

individual in the age of the electronic revolution by announcing, "Having long talked of

the plight of the individual in a mass society we can now get ready to write about the

plight of the mass man in an individualist world" (p. 15). Likewise, at the end of one of

his Marfleet Lectures (1967c), McLuhan provides a reflective statement outlining the

negative and positive aspects of electric media: "This all-at-onceness ... is very confusing

and disturbing, but at the same time very challenging, very exciting" (p. 137).

In the world of televised advertising, the consumer inadvertently and

unconsciously becomes the producer of product design, as determined by what ads he or

she views. This is what McLuhan was referring to in his 1966 lecture "The Medium is

the Massage" claiming that, "The world of electric technology and circuitry as involving the audience as workforce has extraordinary implications" (p. 87). Similarly in *Counterblast* (1969) McLuhan states, "The key fact is that it's the movement of information, itself, in a kind of non-stop global dialogue that makes wealth today" (p. 38). "Time is money", the tired cliché probably most apropos to Wall Street capitalists, has never been more applicable than in the 21st century. In the Electronic Age, when all business transactions can be conducted by the click of a mouse, time is on the side of stock traders and ebay buyers. In addition, *The Global Village* indicates that total coverage of world issues is delivered in the form of low-cost communication when one satellite is able to "talk" to another satellite (McLuhan & Powers, 1989, p. 118).

As predicted by McLuhan, the television (and the Internet) involves the entire globe in "a community of continuous learning". Thus, the global village makes information simultaneously available to everyone. McLuhan argues, "Electric media bring back the village from the distant past where news travels fast" (*McLuhan's Wake*). In his Marfleet Lectures (1967c), McLuhan explains what happens in the instantaneous world of electronic software, further illustrating this "community of continuous learning"; in doing so, his prediction of the Internet is uncannily accurate:

> We're suddenly projected into a world where everything happens at once, that is, electrically. The same information is available at the same moment from every part of the world. Energy is available everywhere at once. And electric retrieval systems enable us to recall anything at all instantly. ... Electrically, it is possible to put every book in the world and every page of every book in the world on one desktop (p. 129).

In a letter, McLuhan (1972b) discusses a future electronic world consisting of do-it-yourself self-publishers[6]: "Everything will be published and it will belong to everybody – power to the people. ... Eventually, every man will become at once a writer, publisher, librarian and critic" (pp. 182-183). In discussing the dominance of video-related technologies McLuhan and Powers (1989) claim that,

> The new telecommunications multi-carrier corporation, dedicated solely to moving all kinds of data at the speed of light, will continually generate tailor-made products and services for individual consumers who have pre-signaled their preferences through an ongoing data base. Users will simultaneously become producers and consumers (p. 83).

In linking instantaneous movement of data with consumption of "tailor-made products", McLuhan has successfully predicted the Internet and its intricacies. Nonetheless, it is important to note McLuhan's main concern: that Western man has difficulty in processing these changes and is always living in the "rear-view mirror".

As the world increasingly resembles one single large village, the boundaries of country and city spaces become blurred while regional and international borders are breached. Man's consciousness is then free to "roam the cosmos" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 268). It is when satellites bestow the ability to be simultaneously everywhere at once that people can "appear at every access point on earth or in outer space". The trade off in sacrificing one's personal and private identity to become part of the collective tribal market of information exchange is the ability to instantly communicate with someone living in another part of the world (McLuhan & Powers,

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[6] DIY self-publishers are today commonly referred to as "bloggers"

1989, p. 118)[7]. The Internet, more than even the telephone, shrinks time and space to nothingness.

McLuhan expanded on his mosaic approach (introduced in chapter one) in the creation of *The Medium is the Massage* (1967) as a book full of aphorisms. In it, he and Fiore probe us to turn the book upside-down, sideways or even in front of a mirror in order to read the backward or inverted message. By using text in a non-traditional manner, our eyes refocus for every page that incorporates a different textual format and automatically become conditioned to process information differently. *The Medium is the Massage* is also comprised of a wide variety of quotes from well-known authors, interspersed with photographs, newspapers, advertisements, and drawings. While this text presents the world of electric technology and its effects in a more positive manner than other McLuhan texts, a closer examination reveals an ironic look into the world of electronic technology. An initial read poses challenges in locating such irony with statements such as "electric technology fosters and encourages unification and involvement" (p. 8) and "electric circuitry has reconstituted dialogue on a global scale" (p. 16). More involved statements which contain compelling arguments, but have a contradictory purpose compared to the previous two, include, "Nobody can really imagine what private guilt can be anymore" (p. 61) and "Information pours upon us, instantaneously and continuously. As soon as information is acquired, it is very rapidly replaced by still newer information" (p. 63). Therefore, negative effects do indeed exist

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[7] Economist and scholar Kenneth E. Boulding (1965) acknowledges that an "increase in the range of media" affects the whole world on a political level, but disputes that this condition implies a return "to the tribal village" (p. 74).

within the global village and McLuhan's warnings are apparent if one's gaze is able to deeply penetrate the irony of his words.

Negative Effects of the Global Village

It must be acknowledged that, as explored in the previous section, McLuhan was once optimistic about electronic technology and its potential. However, it was only at the onset of the emergence of these new electric media that his appreciation and praise for electronic technology emerge. By studying, in greater detail, the media and the manner in which man interacts with the new electronic culture, McLuhan held nothing back in venting his views. In *Counterblast* (1969) McLuhan and Parker argue, "NOBODY yet knows the languages inherent in the new technological culture; we are all technological idiots in terms of the new situation. Our most impressive words and thoughts betray us by referring to the previously existent, not to the present" (p. 16). This is the basic premise of McLuhan's "rear-view mirrorism"[8].

In *McLuhan's Wake* McLuhan explains that in the process of showing his students the effects of advertising he observed that "they were oblivious to the environment of the advertising world and at the same time they were robotically conditioned to it." The narrator of *McLuhan's Wake* labels this as a "loop" in that "you start out as a consumer and you end up consumed" and "the things you make, they mimic you". Since man recreates the world in his own image and since, according to McLuhan, everything man creates becomes an extension of our central nervous system, then we are all a part of this looped process. He determines that, "When we create things in our own image it is

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[8] "Rear-view mirrorism" will be discussed further in chapter two's section titled "Consciousness in the Electronic Age".

difficult for us to see the reflection" (*McLuhan's Wake*). This is closely related to the myth of Narcissus, which will be discussed shortly.

McLuhan considers every kind of technology to be an extension of our auditory, visual, and tactile senses. If one accepts his notion, that every medium becomes an artificial extension of man's own nervous system, then one must come to understand his claim that "the information environment is [man's] own nervous system" (McLuhan & Parker, 1969, p. 36). In addition, he (1967b) deems this extension as part of the evolutionary process (p. 150). According to McLuhan, as soon as our central nervous system flips from the inner to the outer world and becomes intensified due to its technological extension, it goes numb in order to survive, "Insulating and anesthetizing it from conscious awareness of what is happening to it" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 237). But since our senses are numb, so too are our instincts hiding from "that which is not known, that which is strange" (McLuhan, 1967d, p. 145), thereby making us unaware of our environment. McLuhan and Parker (1969) label the Electronic Age as the "age of the unconscious" (p. 42) since "man remains as unaware of the psychic and social effects of his new technology as a fish of the water it swims in" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 237). McLuhan (1964) defines this as "Narcissus narcosis", a form of self-hypnosis in which one becomes "hypnotized by the amputation and extension of his own being in a new technical form" (p. 10).

In *The Global Village* (1989) McLuhan and Powers expound on the legend of Narcissus and clarify how people misconstrue the story. According to legend, Zeus commands Narcissus to gaze into a watery pool in which he sees a reflection of "someone like him". Therefore, according to this analogy, Narcissus "did not fall in love

with an image of himself but rather the face of a seeming stranger." McLuhan and Powers use the story of Narcissus to make the analogy that, since "we cannot gaze too long at a balefully realistic playback of ourselves", we essentially "amputate our bodily and psychological functions" (pp. 86-87). In chapter four of *Understanding Media* (1964) titled "The Gadget Lover: Narcissus as Narcosis", McLuhan shows how the word "narcissus" has roots in the Greek word *narcosis*, meaning numbness. Just as Narcissus became the servomechanism of his own image after his senses were numbed by the extension of his watery reflection, so too people experiencing the current technological culture are becoming servomechanisms with numbed senses (pp. 41-43). Similarly, McLuhan and Powers (1989) argue, "This tailored data will tend to give such a user an illusionary sense of a well-defined identity" (p. 129). In conclusion, people think they gain well-defined identities by surrendering to new technologies, but, in McLuhan's understanding, such identities are illusory.

Neil Compton's essay "The Paradox of Marshall McLuhan" (1968) expands on McLuhan's point: "Eventually, men cease to be conscious that this has happened to them: like Narcissus they mistake their own distorted reflections for reality itself" (p. 119). McLuhan and Parker (1969) explain that when one sense is isolated from our other senses, by the media we use in our current electronic environment, the result is a hypnotic state (p. 22). And, since "purely visual means of comprehending the world are no longer possible" at "high speeds of electric communication" (p. 63), the isolated sense would probably be non-visual. Furthermore, McLuhan and Parker (1969) associate the inclusiveness and speed of the computer, like television preceding it, as having the same effects as LSD, hindering man's goals and objectives (p. 36). In a hypnotic, LSD-like

state, paranoid of his environment, man becomes anxious. This is why McLuhan also labels the Electronic Age as "the age of anxiety" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 237). In numerous lectures McLuhan repeatedly makes correlations between the effects of LSD and the effects of electronic media. His pessimistic correlation between LSD and technological media is taken one step further: "Most media, though, are pure poison – TV, for example, has all the effects of LSD" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 286).

In addition to lulling us into a soporific state, electronic media force us to cope with living under the constant conditions of what McLuhan (1967c) calls "information overload" (p. 135). In the process of being inundated with information from all directions at once, goals and objectives become harder to fulfill since the world changes faster than one "can imagine the objective being achieved" (McLuhan, 1974, p. 237). McLuhan (1972a) suggests that the difficulty in saying "I'm going to move toward that point" is that this point is "already in rapid motion as you are, and long before you take a step in that direction, everything will have changed" (p. 189). In the world of simultaneous happenings, fixed points of view become obsolete. He illustrates this with television: "Since the point of focus for a TV set is the viewer" there remains no single point of view for interpreting its images. Furthermore, in the process of involving us as viewers, television turns us inward (*The Video McLuhan,* Volume One; "The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 246).

McLuhan explains that the more we utilize these electronic media the more we "absorb" them into our systems and "inevitably relate ourselves to them as servomechanisms" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 264). In an interview found in *Understanding Me* he explains why our identity becomes lost in the Electronic Age of

software: "Everything under electric conditions is looped. You become folded over into yourself. Your image of yourself changes completely" (McLuhan & Kermode, 1965, p. 66). Essentially what McLuhan is saying is that, as we incorporate more electronic media into our lives, our identities are defined less by our human attributes and more by our artificial technological extensions. And as these media come to resemble one another, each representing a separate extension of our central nervous system, our "technological" images of ourselves become "looped" and "folded over" causing us to lose our identity or form a new identity[9]. Accepting this explanation as valid is the first step for survival in the global village; the second step is understanding its effects.

McLuhan and Powers (1989) foresee what will be destroyed by the cost of instantaneous movement of information in the Electronic Age of software:

> The computer, the satellite, the data base, and the nascent multi-carrier telecommunications corporation will break apart what remains of the old print-oriented ethos by diminishing the number of people in the workplace, destroying what is left of personal privacy, and politically destabilizing entire nations through the wholesale transfer of uncensored information across national borders via countless microwave units and interactive satellites (p. 92).

One misconception about the global village is that it creates increasingly expanding world communication centres. In fact the opposite is true: "A global village of ever-contracting size" (McLuhan & Parker, 1969, p. 40) is created and the number of people in the workforce decreases. One of the roads by which personal privacy is lost in the Electronic Age is instant credit. We live in an age where most people are governed by credit cards, bank loans and mortgages; "Big Brother" is always watching and knows

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[9] To justify this explanation, ask yourself ... "Do I define myself by electronic media?" That is, do you own a computer, a cell phone, an iPod, a Blackberry, or a television? And is your identity defined by your screensaver, your e-mail address, your *Facebook* page, your website, the music you listen to, and/or the movies or television shows you watch?

every decision we make via electronic transactions; and our inner sanctum is invaded by

these intrusive technologies, most of which operate twenty-four hours a day.

Furthermore, according to McLuhan and Powers (1989) each and every time we use any

form of instantaneous technology we become "discarnate information" (p. 118) with no

place to hide (p. 147) and discarnate man "loses his sense of private identity" (p. 97).

Consequently, when an individual loses his sense of individuality and no longer has an

identity, he finds comfort in latching onto group identity in the form of a tribe.

Print, the first mass medium, created an age of exclusiveness and individuality

belonging to the somewhat isolated bookworm. McLuhan (1972b) illustrates this by

explaining the premise of Ray Bradbury's futuristic novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953): "The

world ahead is shown to fear the book as the cause of dissension and diversity of opinion

and attitude" (p. 176). In creating an inclusive community in which everybody is

involved in everybody else's business and life, electronic media become the complete

opposite of media confined to the age of print. McLuhan (1970) reminds us that "privacy

invasion is now one of our biggest knowledge industries" and because of this, man has

now taken on the characteristics of the "most primitive prober and hunter" (p. 24). The

acoustic world belonging to the electronic media is not "private or civilized but tribal and

collective" (McLuhan, 1972b, p. 178). Therefore the global village completely

eliminates privacy, independence, and a personal identity, which belonged to the Age of

Gutenberg.

One of the biggest misconceptions about McLuhan's global village is that it is a

place of harmony and peace where everybody knows and gets along with everybody else.

A village is usually thought of in terms of a small geographic space with a relatively

small population residing within that space. Combining the word "village" with the word "global" creates a visual image which expands the village space and population to that of the entire world. In "The *Playboy* Interview" (1969), McLuhan explains that "the global-village conditions being forged by the electric technology stimulate more discontinuity and diversity and division than the old mechanical, standardized society; in fact, the global village makes maximum disagreement and creative dialogue inevitable" (p. 259). In *War and Peace in the Global Village,* McLuhan and Fiore investigate how the identity of the individual experiencing the new media disappears within mass consciousness. With the new technology, we are no longer distinct individuals having a distinct point of view, but collectively own a mass-shared point of view. Once again, this coincides with McLuhan's "mass man" analogy.

According to McLuhan, any threat to identity causes people to resort to violence as a means to reassert their individuality. A crowd increasing in mass and numbers at an exponential rate illustrates the notion that the only way to exert one's individuality is to push through this crowd. A possible conclusion to this analogy is that any and every technological change will result in some form of violence. Since the global village creates unharmonious attitudes and intrusive behavior, protecting privacy and defending territory becomes a paramount concern with its resulting conflict or violence. A hostile environment may result when village conditions are claustrophobic and inhabitants allotted less space, or, as Stephanie McLuhan clarifies, "Space is reduced to nothing" ("McLuhan on McLuhan", 2004), causing people to bump into each other all the time. In a physical village with little geographical space residents are bound to encounter one another more often than in a city. Marshall McLuhan further emphasizes, "It never

occurred to me that uniformity and tranquility were the properties of the global village. It

has more spite and envy. The spaces and times are pulled out from between people.

[The global village is] a world in which people encounter each other in depth all the

time". He associates the behavior of invading one's privacy as that of belonging to

primitive tribal man by often quoting his own aphorism: "The tribal-global village"

(McLuhan, Parker, & Shafer, 1960, p. 272).

On more than one occasion, McLuhan alludes to the notion of the tribe when

describing his concept of the global village. Based on the principle rules of inclusion and

exclusion, a tribe appears to have each member in harmonic accordance with every other

member, but when close-knit relations are created, more disagreement, dispute, and

discord results. McLuhan emphasizes that at any point in time the notion of

individualism and the individual is not recognizable within or comprehensible to tribal

cultures. Furthermore, he argues that on a global scale, the tribe becomes a family and

vice versa (Molinaro, McLuhan, & Toye, 1987, p. 253). In the Stearn interview,

McLuhan best explains the type of diversity and unharmonious relationships a global

village environment will create:

> There is more diversity, less conformity under a single roof in any family than
> there is with the thousands of families in the same city. The more you create
> village conditions, the more discontinuity and division and diversity. The global
> village absolutely insures maximal disagreement on all points ... Village is
> fission, not fusion, in depth ... The village is not a place to find ideal harmony.
> Exact opposite (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 272).

When space and time boundaries become reduced in a village environment people

become "fused" with one another, subsequently causing identities to clash resulting in

constant "fission". People then must demonstrate their individuality by often asserting

themselves through violence. According to McLuhan (1979a), "Violence" is "a response

to situations in which you feel you have lost your identity" (p. 280). In *The Video McLuhan* (Volume One) Wolfe notes, "McLuhan warned that the global village was not a prescription for utopia but may easily be a bloodbath". McLuhan made this abundantly clear: "The tribal-global village is far more divisive – full of fighting – than any nationalism ever was" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 272). In the Marfleet Lectures (1967c) he asks a poignant rhetorical question: "When everything happens at once, when everybody becomes totally involved in everybody, how is one to establish identity?" (p. 136). The implied answer is … one does not.

Although the Internet was before McLuhan's time, he did envision it. The Internet has since become the one technological advancement with the most "global" impact. Each time we use our SIN number, send e-mail, upload a *YouTube* video, or post a photo on *Facebook*, we are extending, as discussed earlier, parts of our identity into the ether. And as these parts become lost amongst an infinite amount of information, a sense of isolation results. The consequence of this isolation is frustration, ultimately leading to violence. According to McLuhan and Parker (1969), when identity is lost or confused or destroyed amongst the bombardment of information pouring in "simultaneous[ly] from all directions at once" (p. 142), one's natural instinct is to revert to violence as a "quest for an image" (p. 141) and essentially a valid identity. McLuhan (1964) asserts, "In the Electric Age, when our central nervous system is technologically extended to involve us in the whole of mankind and to incorporate the whole of mankind in us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the consequences of our every action" (p. 4).

Many think that the ability to slot people into classifications (such as race, age, gender, and class) in the age of the Internet makes data processing more efficient and

therefore beneficial; however, these classifications are converted into numbers in order for the computer to read. Therefore, since man desires to be recognized as more than a mere number, this type of numerical categorization tends to create innate psychic discomfort. Once again, as man searches to redefine himself he does so through violent means. McLuhan and Powers (1989) remind us that electronic man "is not flesh and blood; he is an item in a data bank, ephemeral, easily forgotten, and resentful of that fact" (p. 94). McLuhan (1970) argues, "The Negro has to scramble for a new identity, as much as the businessman or the politician or the teenager. It is the quest for new identities that creates violence" (p. 220).

McLuhan (1970) summarizes *War and Peace in the Global Village* as a text "devoted to War as Education and Education as War" further stating that "all technological changes result in war" (p. 140). For example, this particular book discusses clothing and armour as technological weaponry, Napoleon Bonaparte's warfare strategy[10], the development of science as motivated by war, fashion as a return to tribal costume, the "television war" involving the viewer as participant, and the aggressive nature of information technology imposed on children. In a speech delivered to a business audience at the Hilton Hotel in New York City, McLuhan (1967b) credits Ray Bradbury for recognizing that "violence is a quest for identity". McLuhan further explains that, "Whether you do it *à la* John Wayne, or *à la* Negro riots, whether you do it individually or corporately, the quest for identity can only be satisfied by violence" (p.

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[10] McLuhan determines Napoleon's success is due to his recognizing the significance of time. Napoleon claimed that "The loss of time is irreparable in war" and although "I may lose a battle, I shall never lose a minute" (qtd. in McLuhan & Fiore, 1968, p. 107).

149). This is the conclusion to keep in mind while attempting to grasp McLuhan's response to the global village.

McLuhan's Response to the Global Village

> I soon realized that recognizing the symptoms of change was not enough; one must understand the *cause* of change, for without comprehending the causes, the social and psychic effects of new technology cannot be counteracted or modified – Marshall McLuhan ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 266).

In the early '60s McLuhan acknowledges that his writing shifts from dealing with the impact of things to the effects and consequences after impact (McLuhan & Fulford, 1966, p. 99). He (1970) makes us aware that in the process of creating the current electronic culture we are essentially responsible for the "self-invasion of privacy" that new technologies inflict upon us. Furthermore, McLuhan suggests, "The need to escape from *Now* can only be through the looking glass into a timeless world of *déjà vu*" (p. 240). Therefore since we cannot prevent progress or the effects that arise from our creations, we cannot escape the current Electronic Age. Most of his critics misconstrue this as "doom" or "gloom" because they are unable or unwilling to comprehend what his work signifies. McLuhan and Parker (1969) explain that the Electronic Age is not "catastrophic" and that we have the power to change our predicament by realizing that we must first understand the world we inhabit (p. 139). McLuhan (1967c) cites Norman O. Brown's observation that "every breakdown is a breakthrough" and philosophizes that "when perception breaks down, we sometimes make discoveries that might otherwise elude us" (p. 126). In "The *Playboy* Interview" (1969) he warns: "If we understand the revolutionary transformations caused by new media, we can anticipate and control them; but if we continue in our self-induced subliminal trance, we will be their slaves" (p. 239). Hence, we must understand our new environment in order to avoid becoming

servomechanisms to these new technologies. McLuhan suggests that the problem rests in our inability to prepare ourselves for perceiving the new media because we tend to focus on the content and not the actual medium (p. 247).

Since the television child lives within an acoustic and tactile world, he/she must, according to McLuhan (1970), learn to "suppress [these] senses in order to acquire phonetic literacy" (p. 258). Children growing up in the television age come to know and understand the world via their audile-tactile senses. But since the world of print is visual and is understood by our visual senses, it is McLuhan's argument that the only way children acquire "phonetic literacy" is by suppressing their audile-tactile senses. His critics have attempted to portray him as wildly pessimistic, but they were not really listening to what he was actually trying to convey. McLuhan fully recognized the challenges the educational system had in transitioning its students from solely audile-tactile learners to comprehensive learners encompassing the visual world of print. He also acknowledged that making people aware of environmental shifts is the first step to show how they can have an inclusive awareness of their surroundings. In a 1960 telecast, McLuhan states, "This entire global village that we see before us suggests that we are moving educationally into a set of challenges and opportunities which are quite fantastic" (McLuhan, Parker, & Shafer, p. 150). And this process begins by understanding how the TV generation processes and interprets the television image.

Television can be problematic in the way younger children react to it, which can affect the outlook for their future. Children belonging to the TV generation come to readily expect the same kind of instantaneous involvement, the "all-inclusive nowness", television offers, which leads them to disengage from any "specialist *job[s]*" (McLuhan

& Parker, 1969, p. 27). And because of the amount of adult content children are exposed to via television, they "enter grade school as [adults]" (McLuhan, 1970, p. 78). The consequence of exposing children to various electronic media is that they grow up sooner than expected and adopt tribal-like behaviour. Therefore the TV generation produces the tribal man and "when you put the tribal man in a decision-making area, he quickly reveals his loss of direction, and you've got a slump, literally" (McLuhan, 1967b, p. 149). Once again, the global village is essentially comprised of people exhibiting tribal-like behaviour.

<div align="center">Consciousness in the Electronic Age</div>

Understandably, McLuhan (1970) greatly emphasizes the role of the media in our lives. He states that, "Media themselves act directly towards shaping our most intimate self-consciousness" (p. 122). According to McLuhan and Powers (1989), a form of mesmerization occurs when media act together and "change our consciousness so as to create whole new universes of psychic meaning" (p. 87). They define consciousness as "the sum interaction between one's self and the outside world" (p. 52). Therefore the connection between the media and the role of our own consciousness in perceiving the media needs to be further examined.

In his essay "The End and the Means" (1968), philosopher Elémire Zolla critiques McLuhan's theories on electronic consciousness. Zolla explains that the audile-visual man has a collective soul similar to that of a colony of ants. He comes to this conclusion from McLuhan's advocating a "general cosmic consciousness" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 80) and feels that McLuhan's hopeful tone about the collective consciousness is highly deceptive. Zolla describes present-day society as already having the "appearance of an

ant heap maintained by platitudes and false problems that steer the men-ants, though they are unaware of this, along the paths of their vacuous, laborious, up-to-date lives" (p. 181). In the same manner, McLuhan (1967e) explains, "Electric circuitry merges the individual and the mass environment", and concludes that "to create an anti-environment for such electric technology would seem to require a technological extension of consciousness itself" (p. 112).

We begin to understand the new age of instantaneous information and our unique roles within this environment only by understanding the "preceding" world, or what McLuhan calls, "the rear-view mirror". McLuhan explains that "because of the invisibility of any environment during the period of its innovation, man is only consciously aware of the environment that *preceded* it; in other words, an environment becomes fully visible only when it has been superseded by a new environment: thus we are always one step behind in our view of the world". Therefore since we are currently living within the "Electronic Age of software", we are still assessing the world according to the "mechanical age of hardware" ("The *Playboy* Interview", 1969, p. 238). Additionally, since we are exposed to the effects of the new media at an alarmingly fast pace, there is little time to prepare for the impact these effects have on our senses. McLuhan (1967c) informs us, "If you are really curious about the future, just study the present, because what we ordinarily see in any present is really what appears in the rear-view mirror. What we ordinarily think of as present is really a past" (p. 135). Similarly, in an interview with Tom Wolfe on the power of the news media, McLuhan warns: "The future is not what it used to be. It is here. And when you look into the rear-view mirror what you ordinarily see is not the car you passed but the truck that's coming up on you

fast. Never look back. They may be gaining on you. So you can't lose. You can't win. The present includes the past and the future" (McLuhan & Wolfe, 1970, p. 172). What is in the past is not part of our present and this, McLuhan is saying, is most problematic with our inability to understand the present electronic revolution.

Bonanza (1959-1973) was a television series set in 1860s America depicting idealized values and simplicity of lifestyles and desires in a wholesome package. McLuhan references *Bonanza,* one of the most popular American television westerns, to exemplify his rear-view mirror concept. McLuhan (1967c) explains: "Modern suburbia lives in *Bonanza*-land[11]. It looks back nostalgically and sentimentally to the frontier as a kind of safe, and at the same time, admirable and desirable world" (pp. 125-126). Acknowledging and understanding that rear-view mirrorism exists is the first step in processing McLuhan's response to the global village.

<u>Defining the Dropout</u>

McLuhan defines the dropout in relation to his observations on the current Electronic Age. In "The *Playboy* Interview" (1969) McLuhan explains that, because of electronic media, people are dropping out of the "old fragmented society" and are dropping in to "the new integrated global-village community" (p. 263). He (1972a) also classifies the dropout as a victim of his/her circumstance or environment.

Tom Wolfe elaborates on the role of the dropout within youth culture. Based on McLuhan's theories concerning the effects of status-quo classroom education in the age of electronic software, Wolfe (1965) predicted that within fifteen years "a whole nation of young psychic drop-outs – *out of it"* would ensue. Since children today grow up as

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[11] This concept is explored further in chapter four.

audile-tactile learners it becomes more of a challenge for them to relate to "visual, literate, *print*-minded teachers". Subsequently, since children of the computer age grow up in an environment having no boundaries or sense of sequence, Wolfe explains that learning via compartmental categorical subjects is, for them, "*unnatural*" (p. 38). In a similar vein, McLuhan (1967c) explains that children feel "rejected and ejected" when they "encounter the old literary establishment of classified knowledge" (p. 118). Recognizing this problem in the '50s, McLuhan (1954) asserts, "Education is now facing a tremendous problem of transition between two worlds. In fact, they both coexist" (p. 150). The key notion here is "coexist". To summarize, since children who have grown up in the Electronic Age are conditioned as audile-tactile learners, it is a challenge for them to relate to and coexist with the world of print, a world "organized by means of classified information" (McLuhan, 1964, vii) that comprises the school classroom.

The metaphor of "village" is most readily understood in relation to the hippie movement of the 1960s. Tom Wolfe explains that the hippie generation of the '60s loved McLuhan and accepted him, although they did not necessarily understand him. According to McLuhan, "I can't say I have given them too much cause for comfort. I have observed what sort of form their behavior seems to indicate is behind their life. They desire a more rich social life involvement and the mere finding of little niches and jobs won't satisfy them". Therefore hippies choose freedom from common societal structures and institutions. For observers of the '60s phenomenon, hippies may have initially been thought of as dropouts, but in hindsight they were, essentially, lower-to-upper-middle class youth, who adopted little more than an affectation of being different. The hippie is traditionally seen as a non-conformist, *but*, in the process of seeking his/her

identity within a group, becomes a conformist. For McLuhan, who may have had knowledge of early communal experiments of the late 1950s, hippies were (and are) involved in a process of "tribalization" in the form of an intimate family (*The Video McLuhan,* Volume One).

McLuhan establishes the role of the dropout in relation to a person's involvement with their work. According to McLuhan, the more an individual concentrates on work and becomes caught up in the routine of managing several tasks at once, the less involved he/she becomes with each single task. In comparison, a leisurely activity consists of a single specialized task and is more enjoyable for the individual and consequently he/she becomes more involved. Therefore as an individual moves up the corporate ladder and accumulates specialized knowledge, the more involved they become in single fragmented leisurely tasks. Barrington Nevitt and Marshall McLuhan's *Take Today: The Executive as Dropout* (1972) is derived from this very notion.

McLuhan also explores the correlation between leisure and the dropout within the Electronic Age. One of the more notable aspects of the 21st century is that computers perform the most routine and mundane of tasks, which, in turn, provide more free time for personal leisure. McLuhan and Powers (1989) confirm that, "Having more leisure will encourage people to 'drop out' [in order] to enhance their sense of identity… and 'tune in' on themselves" (p. 143). Of course, here they are redirecting Timothy Leary's famous countercultural phrase from the mid-sixties, "Turn on, tune in, drop out". Leary constructed this phrase to promote the mind-altering, mind-enhancing benefits of LSD. Although rejecting the effects of LSD, McLuhan and Powers are simply extending this effect to the consequences of electronic technology.

In the process of dropping out of one mode and dropping in to another mode, an individual, according to McLuhan (1979a), is attempting to establish a "new interval of resonance" in order to "get back in touch". McLuhan explains that when "you have suddenly been flipped from one situation to another without warning and you suddenly are minus your identity", then "you don't know who you are. You don't know where you are" (p. 280). Furthermore, McLuhan emphasizes that violence ensues when a dropout is unsuccessful in getting "back in touch": "When our identity is in danger, we feel certain that we have a mandate for war. The old image must be recovered at any cost". McLuhan describes the premise of *Take Today*, in a letter (dated November 22, 1972) drafted soon after its publication, as "the loss of identity through sudden new electric environments, the consequence being the quest for identity via violence" (qtd. in Molinaro, McLuhan, & Toye, p. 458). As the previously mentioned examples from *War and Peace in the Global Village* indicate, the effects of any technology can instigate war.

<u>Defining the Artist</u>

McLuhan possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of artists and art movements. He often refers to specific artists and uses them to illustrate the point he is making at the time. His knowledge of art is directly linked to his love of art and his close associations with various artists (e.g. Wyndham Lewis, novelist/painter). McLuhan is, however, quite vague in stating exactly who and what type of individual falls under the category of "artist". Looking at the various references McLuhan makes, from James Joyce, Edgar Allen Poe, Lewis Carroll, and Wyhndam Lewis to Arthur Rimbaud, Charles Baudelaire, and the French painter Georges-Pierre Seurat, it can readily be discerned that he uses the word "artist" as an umbrella term for poets, symbolists, painters and writers. Geoffrey

Wagner (1967) addresses McLuhan's ambiguity in defining and classifying the artist by referencing examples from *The Gutenberg Galaxy* such as "Hopkins and the symbolists" and the "painterly strategy of Cézanne" (p. 159). It is evident here that McLuhan is examining individuals belonging to and making an impact during the 19th century.

It is the *process* of attaining their final product that indicates how artists relate to the world and interpret the effects of their environment differently from the rest of society. Two examples McLuhan (1970) provides are Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allen Poe. Both Doyle's and Poe's method was "that of the artist: work backward from effect to the cause" (p. 256). Poets, McLuhan alleges, use language as an instrument to "probe" the environment in order to make discoveries ("The *Hot* and *Cool* Interview", 1967, p. 78). Symbolists Arthur Rimbaud and Charles Baudelaire were aware that "writing as a structure really cannot deal with much speech" so they began to explore various literary techniques "as a way of capturing the multi-facet-ness of speech" ("The *Hot* and *Cool* Interview", 1967, p. 60).

Like Rimbaud and Baudelaire, modern architects at the turn of the century, such as Frank Lloyd Wright "began to study not what they wanted to express, but what were the means available for expression". According to McLuhan, Wright was an artist who, just as the symbolists, "Quickly discovered that the medium is the massage or message" (McLuhan, 1966, p. 93). Western man does not think like the artist and is only concerned with the causes of the Electronic Age, and not with comprehending the effects of corresponding technologies. This is partially because, as McLuhan states, "At instant speeds the cause and effect are at least simultaneous" (qtd. in Sanderson & MacDonald,

1997, p. 80) and man becomes so caught up with participating in events that he ignores the effects.

Artists achieve a personal sense of equilibrium, according to McLuhan, by creating anti-environments that counter the more common human environment. In *Culture is Our Business* (1970), a book of probes and quotes interspersed with pictures on every other page, McLuhan states, "Without an anti-environment all environments are invisible. The role of the artist is to create anti-environments as a means of perception and adjustment" (p. 192). Therefore, artists establish their environment by contrasting it to the more normal mass environment and the purpose of their art is to "explore environments that are otherwise invisible" ("The *Hot and Cool* Interview", 1967, p. 71). Moreover, the key to understanding identity is to understand the environment that one's identity inhabits. According to McLuhan, it is the artist who is "usually engaged in somewhat excitedly explaining to people the character of the new environments and new strategies of culture necessary to cope with them" (McLuhan & Kermode, 1965, p. 67). Artists contend with the surface aspects of any environment and can present us with new ways of interpreting our own environment. McLuhan references Lewis Carroll's seminal work, *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), to illustrate how the issue of electronic technology is confronted when the boundaries of time and space are "subjected to total discontinuity and ... disconnectedness" (McLuhan & Kermode, 1965, p. 165). But it must be pointed out that as environments shift and change so too must our methods for understanding them.

Once again, McLuhan's "rear-view mirror" rationale implies that one must first study the present while experiencing the past, in order to predict the future. The only

way we know how to relate to the world we live in is through the lens of the previous world [e.g. Industrial World → Renaissance; Electronic Age → 19th Century]. This is a dilemma that McLuhan was attempting to comprehend. An example he provides, which is rooted in rear-view mirrorism, is that of "revival". In *McLuhan's Wake* he states, "We live by revival … Clothes tell us who we are or were". Anecdotally, just in the past eight years or so, the bob haircut, the bellbottom, the jumpsuit, and the short black pant have all come back in style exemplifying not only revival, but also man's desire to experience the rear-view mirror. McLuhan and Parker (1969) consider all media to be art forms that teach us new ways of perceiving environments. Since most people live in the rear-view mirror, McLuhan and Parker claim that the new media can only be "entrusted" to the artists who have the ability to interpret the present environment. In "The *Playboy* Interview" (1969), McLuhan further explains, "Inherent in the artist's creative inspiration is the process of subliminally sniffing out environmental change. It's always been the artist who perceives the alterations in man caused by a new medium, who recognizes that the future is the present, and uses his work to prepare the ground for it" (p. 237). Therefore, as McLuhan (1979a) concludes, artists essentially bridge "the gap between evolution and technology" (p. 285).

McLuhan rationalizes that the artist differs from the average working man because for the artist the boundaries between work and play are completely blurred. He (1967c) argues, "An artist today is never working. He's doing what he wants to do. He's playing and he's at leisure at all times, especially when he's working hardest" (p. 133). Five years after this statement, McLuhan introduces the notion that an artist's understanding is a direct result of apprehending how his own mind functions. McLuhan

(1972a) surmises that, "The artist is always at leisure because he must keep his mind at play, and he is never more at leisure than when seeking the solution of tough technical problems" (p. 191). This idea of "keeping the mind at play" means that the artist does not let his mind get bogged down with unnecessary knowledge. The *true* artist does not allow technique or procedure or information get in the way with the process of creation. The artist does not latch on to one specific manner of doing things and because of that he is able to approach his work with an honest and open-ended perspective. In the 1974 lecture "Living at the Speed of Light", McLuhan insisted those in education approach decision-making from a new perspective by utilizing his comparison of the scientist and the "ignorant person":

> The scientist has great trouble looking forward past his problem because his knowledge gets in the way. It is only the very ignorant person who can get past that problem because he is not fogged over by knowledge. When you're looking for new answers to new questions, it is knowledge itself that blocks progress. It is knowledge that creates real ignorance... (p. 239).

Ignorance is defined as a lack of knowledge or education and has nothing to do with intelligence. Albert Einstein, deemed slow by his grade school teachers, remains one of the greatest thinkers of the past century. He once said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution" (qtd. in Viereck, 1926). By extrapolating from the above, derived from his own subjective frame of reference, Einstein, first and foremost, considered himself a scientific artist. It is the artist who has abundant imagination; it is the artist who can think outside the box in order to see the forest *and* the trees. Einstein's quote complements Oscar Wilde's (1891) remark, "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that

nothing worth knowing can be taught" (p. 16). As an institution, education structures thinking in a way that makes it difficult to recognize other ways of thinking outside the boundaries of academia. Even McLuhan (1970) recognizes that in the Electronic Age, "The Ivory Tower becomes the control tower of human navigation" (p. 143).

<div align="center">Critics and Criticisms of McLuhan's Global Village</div>

After digesting critics of McLuhan's global village I have realized that many have misunderstood McLuhan's theories because they disliked him so intently as an academic. Sociologist Tom Narin best summarizes how McLuhan's academic peers *and* the media often misconstrued his message. In the opening sentence from "McLuhanism: The Myth of Our Time" (1968), Narin states, "The difficulties of interpreting Marshall McLuhan are notorious. Academics hate him, ad-men love him, most people feel he is perversely and uncomfortably important" (p. 140). *McLuhan's Wake* provides a few reasons why McLuhan was dismissed by many of his academic colleagues:

1) his colleagues labeled him a "charlatan" since he was profiting from media and journalism, including a cameo appearance in the Woody Allen film, *Annie Hall*. They were critical of McLuhan because they were jealous of him as a famous literary celebrity and media guru;

2) his colleagues saw him as the harbinger of "doom" when proclaiming that, "literacy is on the skids";

3) Marshall McLuhan, in pursuing the study of the media and communication in such a playful manner, was seen as a prime motivator in the decline of Western Civilization.

Envisioning McLuhan's global village as a utopian construct clearly indicates the failure

of many critics to correctly analyze his texts. For example, Michael J. Arlen (1967), a

television critic, claims that, "McLuhan is so cheery and accommodating to the hard

bewilderments of technology" (p. 85). Similarly, writing in 1968, Neil Compton alleges

that McLuhan has embraced an "impractical utopianism in which ... Big Government

and Big Business have become the allies of avant-garde artists in the cause of electronic

togetherness" (p. 121).

Harold Rosenberg of the *New Yorker* speculated that since McLuhan spoke of

computers he was in favor of them. McLuhan responded: "Look, I'm just the messenger.

I would think the features of the new media I've outlined would inspire sufficient

revulsion in anyone within an earshot to avoid them like the plagues they're about to

become" (qtd. in Fitzgerald, 2001, pp. 111-112). In a previously cited Fulford interview,

McLuhan clarifies his personal conviction: "I'm resolutely opposed to all innovation, all

change... Anything I talk about is almost certainly to be something I'm resolutely

against, and it seems to me the best way of opposing it is to understand it, and then you

know where to turn off the button" (McLuhan & Fulford, 1966, pp. 101-102).

One reason people do not understand Marshall McLuhan is because "they're not

prepared to use their wits" (McLuhan & Snyder, 1976, p. 248). Janine Marchessault

(2005) points out that McLuhan approached media using "humor and satire" which is the

reason scholars have "refused to take him seriously" (p. 5). Secondly, McLuhan, at

times, tends to write in a poetic manner lessening the impact of his message. For

example, in *The Global Village* (1989) he writes, "Earth in the next century will have its

collective consciousness lifted off the planet's surface into a dense electronic symphony

where all nations – if they still exist as separate entities – may live in a clutch of spontaneous synesthesia, painfully aware of the triumphs and wounds of one another" (p. 95). This is, as he predicted, the current electronic global village which we now inhabit. Lastly, academics and media alike discount that McLuhan mostly theorized on the *effects* of things. He once told Tom Wolfe that he has "always been very careful never to predict anything that had not already happened" (McLuhan & Wolfe, 1970, p. 172).

Philip Marchand (1989) points out that McLuhan loved to influence people via his celebrity status. However, McLuhan told one reporter in the mid-seventies, "What's worse is that all the publicity never helped me getting people to understand what I say" (p. 271). Even one of McLuhan's students, Donald F. Theall, author of *The Medium is the Rear-View Mirror: Understanding McLuhan* (1971), misconstrued McLuhan's approach to dissecting media. Responding to Theall's manuscript, McLuhan writes, "My approach to the media is never from a point of view but is in fact a 'swarming' … As for the book in general, Don, I think you take me too 'seriously'". Furthermore, McLuhan advises Theall that, "It is really more fun to join the quest for discoveries than to try to classify and evaluate the processes in which I am involved" (qtd. in Gordon, 1997, p. 253). McLuhan was and remains a misunderstood media prognosticator. Nevertheless, attempts at interpreting his work need to be made.

Narin (1968) attributes the rise of the global village of the latter sixties not to television, as McLuhan does, but to European (French and English) imperialism. According to Narin, the global village stems not from "a village" construct but from "a cruel class society tearing humanity in two". He concludes that, "The techniques which made" and "sustain" the global village "are overwhelmingly pre-electronic". Narin is not

so much critical of McLuhan's conclusions regarding the effects of new media but of how McLuhan explains the birth of these new media. He claims "McLuhan's mythical history and sociology" is essentially responsible for evading a "*historical* understanding" of such media. He explains that McLuhan, in the process of imputing communications media as an agent of change, is subsequently attacking "our capacity to understand ourselves as social and historical beings " (p. 150). By ignoring that McLuhan was singularly in the process of "probing" and not the process of writing a historical treatise, Narin subsequently misses the boat[12].

In addition to condemning Marshall McLuhan's character on a personal level (the most obvious, calling him "a jerk" and "a misogynist"), Brian Fawcett's "What McLuhan Got Wrong About the Global Village and Some Things He Didn't Foresee" (2004) is, essentially, a short essay attacking the peripheral aspects of McLuhan's theoretical global village. What Fawcett does *not* fathom is that, McLuhan's predictions, prior to his death on December 31st 1980, were undeniably more prescient and accurate than the annual gaggle of New Year's Eve psychics prognosticating ad nauseam. Fawcett merely alleges, in a subtle but constant vituperative onslaught, that McLuhan was nowhere near as precise about the ephemera of his entertaining theories and predictions as he should have been. Brian Fawcett claims to be "more of a student of McLuhan than a critic" (p. 208), but is neither.

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[12] Narin also discounts the fact that many of McLuhan's ideas germinated from his historical investigation in the study of the Trivium of Rhetoric, Grammar and Logic for his PhD Thesis on the Rhetoric of Thomas Nashe.

Finally, a panel discussion[13] titled "Trouble in the Global Village" (2004) explores the global village metaphor as it relates to our lives in the current Electronic Age. This panel attempts to situate the global village concept within advertising, business corporations, the Internet, "the universalization of commodity exchange" (p. 233), do-it-yourself broadcasting, and education. All of these topics are pertinent in understanding how the current Electronic Age is a global village habitat, but this discussion lacks focus and has much redundancy. From the outset, the panel host, Professor Leslie Shade, incorrectly classifies McLuhan's concept as something that "appeals to [a] utopian sensibility of bringing the world together" (p. 229). Professor Kroker, also part of the four-member panel, agrees with this presumption by stating "Marshall McLuhan was creatively conceiving the utopian possibilities of the Global Village" (p. 232). The only constructive analysis is that of John, a "floor" participant, who suggests that much of the confusion in understanding McLuhan's global village is because "it is not a metaphor –it's a metonym" which "means one thing is a projection of another thing" (p. 250). But John's remark is not commented on at all by the panelists. Another floor participant and McLuhanite, by the name of Richard Cavell[14], adds to John's statement by claiming, "It's also important to understand that 'Global Village' is a paradox and a dynamic relationship, such that one produces the other". Cavell continues, "I think also affecting the issue of clarity is that here we are discussing one of the most massive intellectuals of the twentieth century and yet Canada has not kept his books in print" (p. 253). Once again, his comment, like John's, was readily dismissed.

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[13] With Canadian author Brian Fawcett, Professors Robert Babe and Arthur Kroker; hosted by Communications Professor Leslie Shade.

[14] Author of *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (2002) and essay contributor to the Moss and Mora text which features "Trouble in the Global Village"

Marchessault's (2005) chapter on "Globalization and Time" provides an explanation for the failure to understand McLuhan. Just as Cavell was attempting to convey, she argues that in order to understand McLuhan's global village one must first accept the paradoxes engrained within his theories; mainly, 1) "technologies function both as physical extensions of human bodies and as invisible environments" (pp. 202-203); 2) "the global village rests upon the distance between things transformed through technology" (p. 206); 3) "space and time are both different and bound together in space-time" (p. 209); 4) "technology as extension leads to fierce amputation, a discarnate separation from the world" (p. 211), and 5) McLuhan's global village is a "centre-without-margins" which "collapses the global into the local" (p. 221). The McLuhan paradoxes Marchessault points out are specific reasons why so many scholars have misinterpreted his work. She breaks down this chapter into the three sections on "Space-Time Compression", "Globality" and "Localities" while contrasting McLuhan's theories with Harold Innis' *Bias of Communication* (1951), Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Walter Benjamin's Mechanical Reproduction, and Carl Jung's Collective Unconscious, to name a few. These categories testify to just how intricate McLuhan's global village is, and how it has to be situated within other relevant discourses.

Furthermore, much of the difficulty in understanding McLuhan resides in not knowing the academic dialect in which he spoke and taught. McLuhan is known for, and was made famous by, his use of aphorisms. But he saw the aphorism as more than a mere phrase; he used it as a teaching tool. McLuhan explains his fill-in-the-blank method of teaching: "For instruction, you use incomplete knowledge so people can fill things in – they can round it out and fill it in with their own experience" (Benedetti & DeHart, 1997,

p. 45). He instructs in the same manner as he theorizes on the "cool" medium of television and its effects; just as the television viewer completes the screen image, so too must his pupils interpret the spaces between his words and ideas. Eric McLuhan, following in his father's footsteps, defines the aphorism and compares it to poetry. He states, "The aphorism is a poetic form that calls for a lot of participation on the part of the reader. You have to chew on an aphorism and work with it for a while before you understand it fully" (Benedetti & DeHart, 1997. p. 45). Therefore a high degree of participation from the reader is necessary in order to not only understand McLuhan's aphorism, but also situate it within his body of work.

Conclusion

Although there remains much more detail to the numerous critiques about the global village, they are, for the most part, unnecessary. I argue that McLuhan's aphorisms *appear* prescient because the majority of the population is, to use McLuhan's analogy, living in the rear-view mirror. To reiterate the most important points: 1) the global village is not a utopian construct nor does it appeal to any kind of utopian sensibility; 2) the media in our lives create corresponding environments that determine how our sensory outputs respond; 3) what is most at risk in the current Electronic Age is individual identity and privacy; 4) the effects of the global village cannot be prevented, they can only be understood; and 5) the solution to understanding these effects is determined by how the dropout and artist deconstruct them. Change is not something that should be feared, but something that must be accepted. Therefore, once we realize that we are living in the global village we should grasp the above five frameworks pertaining to this habitat in order to adapt.

CHAPTER THREE: *THE PRISONER*'S VILLAGE

The Village is the ultimate in indoctrination and the subjection of the individual. The establishment has taken over entirely. Individual freedom is dead. People no longer want to think for themselves, even if they are capable of doing so. The Prisoner of the title is the one man who is resisting. And freedom of the individual, one feels, is what McGoohan is driving at. There is a second theme: the Prisoner's efforts to escape. This provides the suspense and excitement of a physical nature that one associates with a man like McGoohan (*TV Times*, September 30-October 6 1967, qtd. in Johnson, p. 52).

This thesis argues that, depending on one's perspective, what may be one man's paradise is another man's prison. However, *The Prisoner*'s Village can only be classified as a totalitarian regime which challenges the prevailing established democracy. In the eyes of Number 6, The Village represents the ultimate prison. Biderman and Devlin (2008) argue that Number 6 is "all alone in a world that appears upside down, a world where, through his eyes, everyone else has gone mad" (p. 235). This chapter will outline the narrative structure of *The Prisoner* and situate the series within utopian discourse. The following main themes embodied within *The Prisoner* will be examined: bureaucracy as dictatorship, the perversion of science and technology, freedom as illusion, and the individual in opposition to the collective. Various episode examples will be used to illustrate these underlying themes and paint, in the reader's mind, an accurate image of *The Prisoner*'s Village.

Narrative Structure

The Prisoner's episodes are open-ended with Number 6 as the only recurring character appearing in all seventeen[1]. All episodes feature a new Number 2[2], as each, in

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[1] Apart from Number 2's "butler" played by Angelo Muscat
[2] However two Number 2s serve this position more than once – Leo Mckern in "The Chimes of Big Ben", "Once Upon a Time" and "Fall Out", and Colin Gordon in "A. B. and C." and "The General".

turn, fails in the task of retrieving information from Number 6 by brutal coercion. Bernie Williams explains that featuring a new Number 2 each week creates a sense of intrigue which entices viewers to tune in to discover what new ploys will be employed in an attempt to break down Number 6 (*The Prisoner Video Companion*). Although each episode has a conflict (mainly between protagonist Number 6 and antagonist Number 2), no real resolution is ever reached. According to Graeme Burton (2000), *The Prisoner* is a series in which "nothing much happen[s] structurally except that Patrick McGoohan [is] pursued endlessly (but grippingly) by ill-defined threats" (p. 111). Although many questions are left unanswered, the final two episodes ("Once Upon a Time" and "Fall Out") serve as closure for the series when the Prisoner leaves The Village and returns to his London home. Therefore, when all seventeen episodes are viewed as a whole, *The Prisoner* is a closed text.

Most narratives employ the sequential logic of Roland Barthes' "hermeneutic code". According to Bernadette Casey, author of *Television Studies: The Key Concepts* (2002), it is the "hermeneutic code that will make most narratives absorbing or compelling" (p. 140). Barthes' formula consists of three stages: 1) the "enigma", which prompts viewers to ask question(s) as to how and why the narrative is unfolding in such a manner; 2) the "delay", which prolongs answer(s) to the question(s) and maintains an open-ended enigma to sustain viewers interest; and, 3) the "resolution", in which satisfaction is attained in the process of discovering the answer(s) (Casey, 2002, pp. 139-140). In the case of *The Prisoner*, the controversy and feeling of animosity from the (1968) viewing public rests in the fact that no final resolutions to the main enigmas of this series are ever revealed (e.g. Why did Number 6 resign? Which side controls The

Village?). Since nothing is quite resolved, *The Prisoner* leaves its viewers hanging.

Moreover, in the final episode the Prisoner returns to his London home only to have his

front door open automatically and emit a familiar electronic tone, just as doors do in The

Village. This ending prompts new questions (Is the Prisoner really free?). Chapman

(2002) states, "It was not only critics who felt cheated by the lack of resolution: ATV's

telephone switchboard was jammed by viewers complaining about the unresolved ending

in the final episode" (p. 57). Even Patrick McGoohan had to "go into hiding" to avoid

confrontation with *Prisoner* fans because, as he attests, "Everyone wanted to know who

Number 1 was. When they finally did see it, there was a riot and I was going to by

lynched" (qtd. in Sellers, 2006, p. 137).

Allegory Debate

McGoohan has stated, on more than one occasion, that *The Prisoner* was meant to

be an "allegorical conundrum". In a 1989 interview he clarifies, "Explanation lessens

what the piece was supposed to be: an allegorical conundrum for people to interpret

themselves. If one gives answers to a conundrum, it is no longer a conundrum. If,

however, you are more confused after talking to me than you were before, then the

conundrum continues" (Carrazé, Gelli, & McGoohan, p. 6). McGoohan's "conundrum"

echoes McLuhan's "probe" in that the intended purpose of both *The Prisoner* and

McLuhan's theories is to compel people to ask questions. Gay Clifford, author of *The*

Transformations of Allegory (1974), explains exactly what "allegory" means and entails:

> The worlds of allegory are only half familiar and they are rarely safe. Neither
> protagonist nor readers can predict with any security what phenomena they will
> encounter or precisely what these phenomena will signify. We have to immerse
> ourselves in the world of each allegory until we discover its peculiar and
> persuasive internal logic (p. 3).

Suspending disbelief enables immersion into the world of *The Prisoner* and encourages viewers to formulate their own hypotheses about its allegories. *The Prisoner*'s "internal logic" has several interpretations. Chris Gregory (1997) claims that *The Prisoner* can be understood from an allegorical perspective reflecting two types of struggles: 1) between the individual and society, and 2) between the psychological forces within the individual (p. 214).

However, various scholars have contested *The Prisoner*'s allegorical nature. Catherine Johnson (2005) argues that the fictional world created by *The Prisoner* "invites hesitation between supernatural, generic and allegorical explanations for the events depicted" (p. 59). Johnson alleges that surrealistic elements evoked throughout the series removes this hesitation by "offering surreal answers to the questions posed (Number 6 is Number 1, the whole world is The Village, and so on) ultimately suggesting an allegorical reading" (p. 63). Therefore, if one agrees with the premise that *The Prisoner*'s suggestive answers are surreal in nature and this series is laced with fantastic imagery (a basic definition of surrealism), then *The Prisoner* can be interpreted as an allegory. Similarly, Mark Bould (2005) challenges McGoohan's "allegorical conundrum" statement by situating *The Prisoner* within postmodern discourse and claiming that the series falls under what Brian McHale calls "postmodernist allegories". As a "postmodernist allegory", *The Prisoner*'s "literal" and "allegorical" readings "become chaotically intertwined". Bould concludes that *The Prisoner* "is not an allegory" but remains "a conundrum that flirts with meaning" (p. 102). However, since one of *The Prisoner*'s debates is whether or not, within this fictional world, The Village

exists in its physical form or whether it is a manifestation of the Prisoner's mind, then any literal reading, postmodern or not, becomes obscured.

Yet another perspective on *The Prisoner*'s allegorical categorization goes beyond a mere fictional interpretation. Johnson (2005) argues that *The Prisoner* encompasses both the "popular" and "serious" sides of television programming by "combining the excitement of the action adventure drama with stories that will make viewers think" (p. 52). Similarly, like Johnson, White and Ali (1988) maintain that since the series is not meant to encourage its viewership to "escape from the mundane realities of present life" but to question these realities, *The Prisoner* exceeds any science fiction and/or fantasy genre classification. White and Ali conclude, *"The Prisoner* is an allegorical statement about the modern day political realities" (p. 154). More specifically, Buxton (1990) comments on the problematic nature of having a fictional television series deal with contemporary non-fictional societal issues. He argues that *The Prisoner* "suffers from an ideological thinness, an obsessive concern with individual freedom in a setting which is too facile to allow the issue to be treated with the necessary complexity" (p. 95). Buxton's argument outlines the problems of both a polysemic text and McGoohan's intended "allegorical conundrum".

Despite these debates, one thing is for certain: McGoohan created a premise whereby questions are posed to which no direct answers are provided. Like McLuhan, he definitely "probes" viewers to use their own cerebral acumen. In an even more bold attempt, McGoohan's response to questions regarding the purpose and meaning of *The Prisoner* is as follows: "It's up to the public to work it out. To each his own

interpretation. I still don't want to give one answer. What I have in my head is an allegorical conundrum. Unravel it yourself" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 163).

McGoohan fuels this allegory by keeping both the fictional location and the real production location of The Village ambiguous. In "The Chimes of Big Ben" we find out from Nadia that The Village is in "Lithuania, on the Baltic, thirty miles from the Polish border". In "Many Happy Returns" its location is calculated by a Naval Commander and RAF Group Captain to be "off the coast of Morocco, southwest of Portugal and Spain". We can assume the latter to be the correct fictional location as the Prisoner spots The Village in this area when traveling with a pilot in a military jet. Finally, it is not until "Fall Out"'s closing credits that we are made aware *The Prisoner* was filmed on location in Portmeirion, North Wales.

<div align="center">Utopia, Dystopia, or Anti-Utopia?</div>

Clifford (1974) explains the importance of Utopia and Dystopia in relation to allegory: "The Utopia and Dystopia both entail a degree of allegorization, the first of ideal principles, the second of hostile ones; both have always made use of the figure of the outsider, generally a traveler" (p. 24). *The Prisoner* contains both utopic and dystopic "principles", which can be read interchangeably depending on one's perspective. And these multiple readings add to *The Prisoner's* "allegorical conundrum".

It is pertinent to frame *The Prisoner* within utopian discourse in order to contextualize the main themes discussed in this chapter. At first glance, *The Prisoner's* Village appears to be an idyllic democratic society striving to maintain utopic ideals. Citizens wake to the mirthful greetings and announcements which can be heard everywhere via loudspeakers. An example of such an announcement is "Good morning!

It's another lovely day so rise and shine. Life's for the living" ("Dance of the Dead"). In The Village people are referred to by a number in lieu of a name. Each resident is allotted equal space and amenities, and all wear the same unisex style of clothing effectively desexualizing The Village population. The Village is made to seem even more self-contained when Number 2 proclaims to Number 6 that The Village is "a democratic society in some ways" and tells him, "Be happy. Everything you need is here" ("Dance of the Dead").

Upon arrival in The Village, the Prisoner has numerous questions unanswered by anybody he asks. He is first informed by the maid, "It's wiser not to ask questions". The Village has its own set of slogans, which also serve as rules. On The Village walls are posted: "Questions are a burden to others; answers, a prison for oneself", "A still tongue makes a happy life", and "Humour is the essence of a democratic society". These resemble *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s maxim "WAR IS PEACE; FREEDOM IS SLAVERY; IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH" (Orwell, 1949, p. 6). The real Western world of the 1960s and of today would read these binary oppositional statements as paradoxical because in a capitalist regime the pursuit of freedom is celebrated and the quest for knowledge encouraged. Just as the inhabitants of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s Stalinist-like regime were taught *how* the war between Oceania and Eastasia began but not *why* (Orwell, 1949, p. 83), asking *why* in *The Prisoner*'s Village is never encouraged. The most apparent example is when Number 6 feeds a question (WHY?) into the mechanical teaching apparatus called "The General"; unable to process the question, The General self-destructs.

In addition to abiding by these slogans, there are other rules that are never clearly laid out. For example, in "Dance of the Dead", when the maid finds a black cat in Number 6's apartment she dutifully informs him, "You're not allowed animals. It's a rule". One particular Village motto, "Of the People, By the People, For the People" ("It's Your Funeral"), appropriated from President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (November 19, 1863), maintains the façade of democracy within this community. The episode which most closely examines democracy in action is "Free For All" where Number 6 decides to run in the election for the position of Number 2. Standing in front of the Citizens' Council, Number 6 declares: "This farce. This 20th century Bastille that pretends to be a pocket democracy". White and Ali (1988) point out that since "there is no room for change" within the "inflexible", "manipulative", and "totalitarian" Village, believing that there is a "possibility" for "change within the system" is Number 6's flaw (p. 33).

One of the most visually compelling scenes in the series is when Number 6, wearing a tuxedo, and the female Number 2, dressed as Peter Pan, have an exchange of words on the beach prior to the costume ball. Number 2 tries to convince Number 6 that "this is your world. I am your world". When the Prisoner comments, "Your administration's effective. Though you've no opposition", Number 2 responds, "An irritation we've dispensed with. Even best friends agree democracy is remarkably inefficient" ("Dance of the Dead"). This statement alludes to the notion that within The Village any form of opposition has been eliminated and an illusion of democracy has been maintained, thereby confirming that The Village is indeed a dictatorship or totalitarian regime.

Since The Village is located in a remote and vague location, its inhabitants are not subjected to the same socio-cultural pitfalls and follies that belong to the rest of industrialized society (assuming that there exists a world beyond Village boundaries[3]). Residents (or prisoners) of this self-contained place are subjected only to the control of Village authorities. The Village inhabitants have either accepted their fate or have been conditioned to accept their fate, and, in doing so, have emotionally adjusted to enjoy the life The Village offers. They seem to relish community activities such as chess games or art classes. Although Booker (2002) alleges that Villagers are "largely oblivious to the subtle system of controls that ensures their complete conformity" (basing his argument on the "invisible forces" of control in modern bourgeois societies theorized by Foucault), there is nothing *subtle* about Village control. Some conditioning methods (most notably featured in "A Change of Mind") include lobotomies (referred to as "instant social conversion"), previously challenged in Ken Kesey's 1962 novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and aversion therapy, as explored in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Therefore, just as The Village may *appear* to be a democracy, so too does it manifestly *appear* to be a utopia and exhibit utopian ideals; but, as we all know, appearances can be deceptive. Even The Village's vibrant colours are misleading and, as

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[3] Adding to the allegory, the series presents us with debates regarding the actuality of The Village itself. *Briefly*, critics such as Johnson, Booker, and especially Bould, have analyzed *The Prisoner* within postmodern discourse and in so doing, elaborate on this debate. Bould references Baudrillard's theory of Disneyland, "presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real", to define The Village. Therefore, if The Village is a self-contained modernist utopia "presented as imaginary" (Bould, 2005, p. 98), then anything outside of its confines is the real world. However, Baudrillard (1994) explains that this "real" world is only "hyperreal" basing its actuality on "simulacra" (copies of the real). "Simulation", Baudrillard argues, "is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (p. 1).

Biderman and Devlin (2008) argue, are "specifically used to help disarm the existential anguish and isolation triggered by the demand for conformity" (p. 232).

The Prisoner is often compared to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)[4] and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). By this direct comparison *The Prisoner* is identified as dystopian. Dystopic elements pertaining to The Village include constant surveillance, curfews, and a mandate for each prisoner to conform and become part of the collective, similar to Orwell's "thought police". The mind-enhancing drugs used on Villagers parallel Huxley's drugged population. Beneath the quaint architecture, the colourful costumes, and uplifting daily announcements, there remains something disconcerting about The Village. White and Ali (1988) argue that The Village "appears to be an idyllic sort of place, a utopia: colourful, lively, peaceful, a place of leisure. But there's a dark underbelly to this community" (p. 12). In the process of conforming to Village life, each prisoner *must* also surrender their identity and relinquish any independent mind-set. Number 2 warns Number 6, "Rebels must be kept under closest possible surveillance with a view to extinction if the rebellion is absolute" ("The General"). One of the most prominent instances of mob rule and group think is when the Prisoner resists the totalitarian mentality, adopted by fellow Villagers, in conforming to Village life. But, Number 6 is captured by The Village throng and is physically forced to undergo a *supposed* lobotomy[5] so that he too adopts this disposition ("A Change of Mind"). The Prisoner is further isolated from the community when he is sentenced to death "in the name of the people" for "malicious[ly] breaking the Rules" in his

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[4] Jeffrey S. Miller (2000) indicates that "*Saturday Review, Time* and the *New York Times* all compare McGoohan's creation to the dystopia of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*" (p. 46).
[5] Number 6 was drugged and given the illusion that he had undergone a lobotomy.

"acquiring" a radio. Although he only experiences a metaphorical death, the Prisoner comes to realize just how alone he is and that no one is trustworthy ("Dance of the Dead").

Johnson (2005) examines a particular feature of The Village in that "*The Prisoner* does not simply introduce the 'chaos and anarchy' of the fantastic into a stable and fictional world. Rather, it situates its very narratives within an already unstable fictional world in which the veneer of civilization exists only as an effect" (p. 57). People are taken to the isolated Village to keep hidden their top "secrets" from the rest of the world. Number 6 informs Colonel 'J' "The Village is a place where people turn up. People who have resigned from a certain sort of job [or] have defected. The specialized knowledge in their heads is [of] value to one side or the other" ("The Chimes of Big Ben"). He further defines The Village as "A place to put people who can't be kept around, people who know too much or too little; a place with many ways of breaking a man" ("Many Happy Returns"). Similarly, when the Prisoner announces to the Villagers that he is running for election, he proclaims, "At some time, in some place, all of you held positions of a secret nature, and had knowledge invaluable to an enemy. Like me, you are here, either to have that knowledge protected or extracted" ("Free For All"). It must be noted that Number 6, prior to his life in The Village, is not a normal citizen (any blue/white collar worker), but a government spy. In this scenario, Village authorities must take matters to the extreme. Their job is to find out why the Prisoner resigned. The drastic measures they employ to extract information evoke Cold War scares and communist witch hunts occurring during the time in the world beyond Village

boundaries. And this is indirectly acknowledged by the several "us or them" and "Iron curtain" remarks made throughout the series.

One of the biggest ambiguities of *The Prisoner* is that Number 6 and the viewing audience do not know which side – East or West – controls The Village. In "Arrival" the first question the Prisoner asks Number 2 is, "Who brought me here?" and, as usual, his question is ignored. "Sides" are always referred to as "us" or "them" leaving everything very ambiguous. We can deduce that, since the Prisoner lived and worked in London as an agent for the British government, "us" refers to Britain, U.S.A., or Western civilization. Therefore, "them" includes, specifically, the Cold War nemesis Soviet Russia. During the 1960s, fear of communist infiltration into North America was widespread and "The Chimes of Big Ben" explores the notion that The Village may be run by communists. Colonel J's "Iron Curtain" remark at the end of the episode suggests that the Prisoner just might be working as a Soviet spy; Number 6 suspects that his former employers may be in charge of The Village. Earlier in this episode Number 2 makes one of the most important statements regarding the issue of sides. He tells Number 6 that "it doesn't matter who Number 1 is" or "which 'side' runs The Village" because "both sides are becoming identical". Number 2 further explains that "a perfect blueprint for world order" has been created within The Village's "international community" and this is the solution and "hope" for the future.

In "Many Happy Returns" the Prisoner visits his previous place of employment in London. In an attempt to convince former colleagues, a Colonel and his superior Thorpe, of The Village's existence, the Prisoner attests that he's "going to solve" the problem of discovering "which side runs The Village". Throughout the series, the Prisoner is

constantly asking questions regarding allegiances. Facing the Citizens' Council, Number 6 demands, "To what country or race do you owe allegiance? Whose side are you on?" ("Free For All"). When Number 6 shatters the mental faculty of Number 2, he once again demands, "Who are you working for?" When a whimpering Number 2 responds, "For us! For us!" the issue is rendered ambiguous yet again ("Hammer Into Anvil"). Furthermore, the Prisoner hesitates when Seltzman inquires as to whether or not "his own people" are the perpetrators of the mind swap experiment. He finally says, "No. I'm positive", but his response is not convincing ("Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling").

In addition to the external politics surrounding the debate of "sides", there is an internal political agenda within The Village. Not knowing who is a prisoner like himself, Number 6 runs for the office of Number 2 in a desperate attempt to, as he declares to the Villagers, "Discover who are the prisoners and who are the warders" ("Free For All"). Observing that the game of outdoor chess, using Villagers as human chess pieces, does not distinguish the black from white chessmen, Number 6 asks one of the two players (the old man with a walking stick), "How come both sides look alike?" The old man explains, "Their dispositions, the moves they make. You soon know who's for and who's against you" ("Checkmate"). In this episode, the Prisoner uses this "simple psychology" to determine which prisoners are capable of collaborating with him in an escape plan. Carrazé and Oswald (1989) allege that the failure "of all bids for collective freedom" in The Village world is "symbolic" (p. 128)

McGoohan definitely wanted to make a statement against totalitarian regimes, the most profound being Hitler's Nazi Germany. Number 2 actually salutes to Dr. Seltzman and says "heil" when the scientist demands that "for once [he's] giving the orders" ("Do

Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling"). Dr. Schnipps, the mad scientist who thinks he is Napoleon and attempts to blow up London with a rocket in "The Girl Who Was Death", was originally supposed to think he was Adolf Hitler (Fairclough, 2006, p. 330). Lastly, both Number 2 in "Free For All" and the head magistrate in "Fall Out" raise their arm in the same fashion as Hitler achieving immediate silence from the crowd, thereby inadvertently commenting on the power dictators hold over their followers.

There are a few instances that acknowledge both turmoil and a desire for power exist in the outside world. The Rook in "Checkmate" comments on world disorder and explains that he was brought to The Village because he "invented a new electronic defence system" that he "thought all nations should have" because "it would have ensured peace". However, until "Fall Out", there is no indication of war or a concern for war. The underground bunker for the final episode serves as a commentary on the Cold War. Compared to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s Ministry of Peace, dictatorship in *The Prisoner* is not so obviously regimented. Once again, depending on one's perspective, what is one man's paradise is another man's prison. And since the dystopian elements are regarded as such mainly through the eyes of Number 6, The Village remains *his* prison. *The Prisoner* therefore cannot be classified exclusively as either a utopian or dystopian text. *The Prisoner* can only be classified as an anti-utopian exercise, defined as an imaginary place, which questions the very construct of utopias.

John Huntington's *The Logic of Fantasy: H.G. Wells and Science Fiction* (1982) deconstructs the elements of utopias, dystopias, and anti-utopias in situating the works of famous science-fiction writer H.G. Wells within utopian discourse. Huntington proposes, "If the utopian-dystopian form tends to construct single, fool-proof structures which solve

dilemmas, the anti-utopian form discovers problems, [and] raises questions and doubts".

He further asserts that the anti-utopia is "a mode of relentless inquisition, of restless

skeptical exploration of the very articles of faith on which utopias themselves are built".

And finally, Huntington argues, "At the core of the anti-utopia is, not simply an ideal or a

nightmare, but an awareness of conflict, of deeply opposed values that pure utopia and

dystopia tend to override" (p. 142). Using Huntington's definition, *The Prisoner* can be

said to raise both questions and doubts surrounding the supposed democratic and utopian

Village. Furthermore, Number 6 remains relentless in his pursuit to discover where The

Village is located and who controls it, stopping at nothing to reveal its conflicting nature.

Bureaucracy as Dictatorship

The Village bureaucrats dictate to their citizens. A brainwashed Number 6,

running for the position of Number 2, expresses The Village mandate in his

proclamation: "You can enjoy yourselves and you will. … The price is cheap. All you

have to do in exchange is give us information" ("Free For All"). In "Dance of the Dead"

we learn that even feelings can be engendered as the Town Crier announces that at the

carnival "There will be music! Dancing! Happiness! … By order".

Number 2 only answers to Number 1, who until "FallOut" is identified solely by

the conversations Number 2 has with him on the red cordless phone located in the Green

Dome. This is most evident in "A. B. and C." where the conversations between Number

2 and Number 1 are most explicit. When the phone rings at the beginning of this episode,

we can assume it is regarding Number 6. We hear Number 2 say: "Yes sir. I *am* doing

my best. He's very difficult. I know it's important. He's no ordinary person but if I had

a free hand … Yes, sir. I know *I'm* not indispensable". We are reminded of Number 2's

lack of control and power when, referring to Rover resting in his chair, Number 2 yells

into the red phone, "And you can remove that damn thing too. I'm not an inmate"

("Once Upon A Time").

Number 2 is wholly impotent in creating a sense of paranoia within Number 6 and

unable to destroy his mental and emotional equilibrium. With every failed attempt to get

"information" from Number 6, a new Number 2 appears. Since no single Number 2 is

ever successful in breaking down Number 6 and finding out the "why" of his resignation,

each is, in turn, replaced. Every Number 2 erroneously believes in the philosophy, as

dictated by the Number 2 in "Hammer into Anvil", that "every man has his breaking

point and Number 6 is no exception". Ironically, in this episode, Number 6 endeavours

to psychologically break down Number 2 and succeeds. Aware of the all-seeing-eye of

Village surveillance and assuming that Number 2 is watching his every move, Number 6

does some unusual things[6] which convince Number 2 that he is communicating with an

enemy. By the end of the episode Number 6 metaphorically becomes the "hammer" and

Number 2 the "anvil". Similarly, in "Once Upon a Time" Number 6 turns the tables on

Number 2 by discerning the weakness of "degree absolute", the psychological battle of

wills. Number 6 and Number 2 test the method of "degree absolute" when they are

locked in a room together and each challenges the other until one man has a complete

breakdown. It is in this scene Number 6 recognizes that Number 2 is not much different

from himself, inquiring as to why Number 2 does not resign. In an earlier episode

Number 6 poses the question, to the same Number 2: "Has it ever occurred to you that

you're just as much a prisoner as I am?" ("The Chimes of Big Ben").

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[6] These include (to list two) submitting bizarre messages to the *Tally Ho*, and using a
mirror to direct random SOS signals to the skies from the beach shore.

The Perversion of Science and Technology

The Village employs scientific methods, technological gadgetry, and psychological procedures in a perverse manner. Cameras and microphones are employed to spy on Villagers twenty-four hours a day, television is used as a brainwashing device, and various drugs are administered in order to break the resistance of prisoners. No matter how one examines The Village, an individual's privacy is continuously invaded. This next section will further investigate surveillance and technology as implemented in The Village.

Surveillance

Technological surveillance is one Village method that is used to exert power over another being. Gregory (1997) summarizes that, within The Village "surveillance may no longer be controlled by 'Big Brother', but wherever you go, someone somewhere may 'Be Seeing You'" (p. 210). The prisoners are continually observed by The Village's round-the-clock optical surveillance system, impeding their ability to express themselves as individuals. In The Village, several surveillance cameras are not only in each prisoner's "private" residence, but outside in the heads of the ornate statuary positioned strategically throughout The Village [see Figure 1C]. The irony is that, although the door of each Village resident says "private", there is in fact no privacy whatsoever. Furthermore, control room attendants monitor all activity in The Village and inside each citizen's residence. The iconography of the control room resembles a geodesic dome [see Figure 2C] with a revolving seesaw mechanism in the centre, which has two attendants seated on opposite ends peering into a telescope/periscope [see Figure 3C].

In addition to all else, there is Rover, The Village "watch dog", which enforces the law by physical means. Rover and the smaller mini-Rovers are big white meteorological balloons which act as security devices to prevent Villagers from escaping. These "guard dogs" are controlled by "yellow" and "orange" and "red" alerts operated via a push button by Number 2 or by control room attendants on the order of Number 2. Should any citizen attempt to escape or cross Village boundaries, whether by land or sea or sky, Rover will stop them in their tracks. Rover will, on "orange alert", engulf and suffocate the person to the point that they pass out and have to be revived by ambulance attendants. On "red alert", the most severe, Rovers are programmed to smother their victims to death. Rovers are also anthropomorphosized as actual "dogs". When Rover rounds up the Prisoner and his Double[7] on Number 2's behalf, the Double says, "Must be confusing for it – not knowing which one to bite" ("The Schizoid Man"). In an interview with Barrington Calia of *New Video Magazine* (1985) McGoohan explains:

> The Rovers are the sheepdogs of the allegory. When people start to ask too many questions or assert their individuality, the Rovers act as a stifling force. If one begins to stray from the herd, Rovers are sent to bring them back. Again, *The Prisoner* is an allegory, enabling me to express this suffocating society in that way" (p. 178).

McGoohan's statement confirms the allegorical nature of *The Prisoner* and stresses how individuality within The Village is suppressed by all means.

Another instance in which technology is humanized is in "It's Your Funeral" where machines are programmed to calculate the behaviour patterns of Villagers. This is done in order to provide Number 2 with prognosis reports which predict the actions of any single Villager at any given time. The attendant explains to Number 2 that the reason

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[7] The Double is a man impersonating Number 6 in a ploy by Number 2 to entice the Prisoner to question his own identity as Number 6, consequently shattering his psyche.

why she cannot provide him with "percental appraisals", which determine the efficiency of these machines, is because "each time they've refused to give up the requested information simply by not returning the data". Number 2 comments that "they'll want their own trade union next".

Number 6 constantly makes reference to the fact that he is being watched. At the beginning of "It's Your Funeral" Number 6 tells the girl who walks into his room to "go back and tell them I wouldn't listen. But what's the point? They already know". Assuming that the girl is working for Number 2 and knowing that Number 2 is probably watching him on the big screen that very moment, the Prisoner yells about the room "I won't go for it. You may as well stop trying". At the end of "The Girl Who Was Death", Number 6 looks directly into the camera, and says "goodnight children, everywhere". As previously discussed, The Prisoner takes advantage of the surveillance for his benefit in "Hammer into Anvil". Finally, discovering that his dreams are being manipulated in "A. B. and C.", he consciously changes the outcome of the last dream he is subjected to by Number 2. Number 2 thinks that the Prisoner resigned because "he was going to sell out". "A", "B", and "C" dream scenarios feature the three supposed persons (referred to only as "A", "B" and "C") which Number 2 predicts Number 6 may have sold out to had Village authorities not apprehended him. The Prisoner makes sure that Number 14 and Number 2 are aware that he knows of their invasive procedure when he dreams himself saying, "We mustn't disappoint them, the people who are watching".

Television

When the Prisoner attempts to obstruct the television screen with a pillow in "Dance of the Dead", it "emits an electronic squeal" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 399), without

it even being turned on. The television is most notably featured in "The General" as a device to hypnotize or brainwash the entire Village population for the purpose of "Speed Learn". Number 12, an associate of Number 2's, explains to the education boardroom members, "The miniaturized course can be projected through the Sublimator at a speed thousands of times faster than the eye can record. It is imposed directly onto the cortex of the brain and is, with occasional bursts, virtually indelible". At the beginning of the episode we see this process occur within fifteen seconds when the Prisoner turns on his set and is hypnotized by a bright spiral psychedelic image spinning round and round on the television screen. By the end of the session he can recite information by rote on everything about "Europe after Napoleon".

<u>Technology</u>

The reliance Number 2 ("Hammer Into Anvil") places on technology and its corresponding gadgetry backfires when he attempts to discover whether or not Number 6 is a spy. In addition to a device that reads the slightest imprint on a page, and a machine for decoding "secret" messages, Number 2 uses something called an "oscilloscope" which measures voices like fingerprints by converting sound waves into visible lines. Number 2 discovers, just too late, that technology is not as reliable as he thought it would be. When confronted by Number 6 at episode's end, the expression on Number 2's face connotes a realization that had he valued his own common sense over that of The Village machinery Number 6 would probably not have duped him. A fingerprint test is conducted on the Prisoner and his Double in "The Schizoid Man" where we are informed, by 6's Double, "The trouble with science is that it can so easily be perverted". The Prisoner readily agrees with his impersonator that he would be "more likely

convinced by a human being" than a machine to verify his identity. In addition to deceiving Number 6 with a doppelganger, Village doctors conduct intensive conditioning therapy on him which also forces him to question his entire identity.

A more intricate scientific method featured in *The Prisoner* is seen in "A. B. and C." where, with the aid of drugs and machines, the mind of Number 6 is manipulated by Number 2 and his assistant Number 14. In the same manner as the fingerprint testing device and the oscillator, the Prisoner's thoughts and dreams are looked at in terms of "energy". This energy is subsequently "converted into electrical impulses", like sound waves, and finally "convert[ed] into pictures" shown on a large display screen. Number 14 manipulates the Prisoner's consciousness when she becomes a character in his dreams by infiltrating his subconscious electronically, further intensifying the situation. "Living in Harmony" and "The Girl Who Was Death" are two episodes that, according to Britton and Barker (2003), exemplify "dream-like scenarios [that] turn out to be manifestations of the psychological war between prisoner and captor" (p. 117). But in all three episodes we discover the extent to which Number 6's mental resistance outsmarts any technology that is used to tamper with his psyche.

"Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling" introduces us to the "Seltzman machine", one of the most futuristic scientific devices featured in *The Prisoner*. This machine enables its controllers to perform a "mind swap" procedure whereby one man's "psyche" can be transferred into another man's body, effectively splitting the identity of two people. This episode has a science fiction premise but takes on characteristics in common with the spy genre. The debate concerning which "side" controls The Village is also revisited. The Seltzman machine can be utilized to "break the security of any

nation". We learn that power does not necessarily reside in the hands of the scientists but in the hands of those who control their inventions. White and Ali (1998) comment that, although "technological standards may increase" within The Village, "ethical" standards "do not" (p. 27). Similarly, Booker (2002) alleges that since Village officials use technology in a "sinister" fashion, technologies are regarded negatively in this series (p. 86).

Finally, the most warped technological advancement in which science is perverted is the "operating theatre", featured in "Fall Out", that resurrects a dead Number 2. Simple Westernized tools, such as a hair stylist's chair blow dryer, are used to conduct this procedure. Although it may seem ridiculous to use these props in this manner, in the fantasy world of *The Prisoner* they are legitimized and credible. The technologies explored in *The Prisoner* not only situate the series within the spy genre, but also serve as a warning when modern tools are not used as intended.

Freedom as Illusion

One of the major themes in *The Prisoner* is the illusion of freedom within The Village, including one's physical freedom and the freedom of individual thought and speech. Describing the local taxi service to Nadia, the Prisoner explains, "They'll take you anywhere you like - so as long as you end up back here - that's what 'local' means" ("Chimes of Big Ben"). Buxton (1990) argues, "The only way to exist (in the existentialist sense) in The Village is to escape … but where?" (p. 95). Number 6 is not the only one who deems The Village a prison. In "Checkmate" the Rook admits that he hopes "to die" since "there's nothing else". When the watchmaker, a common Village citizen/prisoner, plans to assassinate Number 2 in "It's Your Funeral" he declares, "What

I am doing is for principle. We are in this prison for life. All of us. But I have met no one here who has committed a crime". Although the watchmaker was conspiring with the help of Number 2's assistant, we can assume that he thoroughly believed in this particular cause. "It's Your Funeral" can be seen as a commentary on the ineffectiveness of "the protest" so prevalent in much of the 1960s.

The car and the open road are two examples of illusory metaphors of freedom in *The Prisoner*. Number 6, before he is abducted and brought to The Village, is seen driving a classic Lotus 7. This opening sequence is, according to Chris Gregory, similar to the "crop-dusting" sequence in Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959). As his sports car approaches the viewer and becomes larger, the scene captures the "empty panorama" just as Hitchcock's scene did by showing Cary Grant running toward the viewer on a vast open road. Ironically, Number 6 is taken away from his Lotus 7 and put into a situation where he is denied the privilege of owning a vehicle. The Prisoner driving on the lonely empty city street becomes an illusion of freedom.

Another ironic symbol of freedom mocking any escape from The Village is an old ship permanently docked by the seashore. In actuality, the bottom of this small ship is embedded in stone. More specifically, this landmark is a constant reminder of Number 6's many failed escapes from The Village, since most of his attempted escapes are made by sea ("Arrival", "The Chimes of Big Ben", "Checkmate"), especially when he builds his own raft when leaving a deserted Village in "Many Happy Returns".

The Village is a place where manufactured fun is provided. This is similar to O'Brien's argument at the end of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in that "the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness

was better" (Orwell, 1949, p. 275). The idea presented to Number 6 is that he can only be happy in The Village if he no longer resists authority; that seeking freedom by means of escape will not bring him happiness. When Number 6 asks Number 2 if he has a choice in attending the annual carnival, Number 2 responds, "You do as you want, as long as it's what the majority wants". In the same episode Number 6 attempts to follow a girl through the open Town Hall gate, but an invisible barrier prevents him from passing. The nearby gardener explains, "It's fussy who it lets in" ("Dance of the Dead").

Another iconographical example that reminds Village prisoners (and specifically Number 6) about this illusory freedom is the statue of Atlas. From Number 6's point-of-view ("Arrival") we see the Greek god crouched down carrying the planet earth on his shoulders. One meaning connoted by this statue is that man, no matter how hard he fights and how much strength he possesses, is always bowed down by the weight of the world. Another meaning could be that since Atlas was made to carry the world on his back as punishment for battling against Zeus, Number 6 too will be punished if he fights against authority by not complying with the rules of The Village.

In "Chimes of Big Ben" the Prisoner alludes to this illusion of freedom when he explains the meaning behind his three-piece wooden abstract, made for the "Arts & Crafts Competition", to the exhibition judges. He defines the solid piece as "The barrier to human truth and progress" and the hollow piece as "The barrier has gone. The door is open. We can escape". Later that evening, he and Nadia retrieve and assemble his art ensemble into a boat, which they use to reach the next closest landmass. When the Prisoner thinks he has successfully escaped The Village and is in London, he reacts negatively when grilled with questions from his former employer Colonel 'J': "I have

risked my life – and hers – to come home because it's different here – isn't it?" Shortly after this he realizes that they, in fact, never left the confines of The Village. This is the first episode to hint at the prophesy of "the whole earth as Village", which is to be discussed further in chapter four.

In "Arrival" we learn that citizens of The Village have placidly accepted that they are merely numbers. As an old man playing chess says in this episode "we are all pawns in life"[8]. The Prisoner is informed by a fellow Villager that "in here you have only so much time to give them what they want before they take it", confirming the intent of all Number 2s to extract information "by hook or by crook". The old man also warns Number 6, "There's no point fighting battles you can't win". According to Patrick McGoohan, what this series alludes to is that "there is no freedom. Freedom is a myth" (Troyer & McGoohan, 1977). Although Number 6 firmly declares, to the first Number 2 he meets, that he will not be "pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered", it happens to him regardless throughout the entire series. In "Free for All" Number 6 is, or at least appears to be, democratically elected as the new Number 2. At the end of the episode, while in the Green Dome, he screams hysterically into the phones: "I will immobilize all electronic controls. You are free to go", and then attempts to flee The Village himself. He is, of course, captured and beaten by Village thugs. Although the Prisoner is set free in "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling", his psyche inhabits another man's physical body. Both men are kept under close surveillance the entire time. When declared a "Person" and an "Individual" in "Fall Out", Number 6 is finally given the freedom to return to his London home. However, when he is invited by the head

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[8] This notion is illustrated literally in "Checkmate"

magistrate to address the assembly, his freedom of speech is again illusory. The Prisoner is shouted down by the full bewigged magistrate body as they chant, in unison, "Aye, aye, aye" every time he says "I". They elevate this disruptive behaviour by rising to their feet and clapping rhythmically to their loud chants. Finally, every episode, including "Fall Out", ends with prison bars closing down upon an image of the Prisoner's face. Biderman and Devlin (2008) argue that, as within the noir tradition, "The self takes centre stage" thereby subjecting the selfhood and identity of Number 6 to investigation. They further explain, "His selfhood suffers the most acute withdrawal when he is deprived his freedom through imprisonment" (p. 230).

The Individual in Opposition to the Collective

Not only does The Village challenge the Prisoner's individuality, but also examines the power of the collective. As Tame (1994) argues:

> McGoohan's Village is a portrayal of the essentials in our society – with its vicious bromides of 'social responsibility', its dominant ideologies of altruism and collectivism, its conformity, and the paternalistic coercion of the 'Welfare State' …The theme of The Prisoner was strikingly clear …the individual versus the collective (p. 2).

Since the role of the individual can only be defined in opposition to the collective in *The Prisoner's* Village, defining the collective is necessary. Notions associated with the individual include the personal, the self, and the independent; the collective is associated with the masses in the dynamic of the social clique. McGoohan, in a 1977 interview with TV Ontario's Warner Troyer, states, "[The Village is] a place that is trying to destroy the individual by every means possible; trying to break his spirit so he accepts that he is Number 6 and will live there happily as Number 6 forever after. And this is the one rebel they can't break" (Troyer & McGoohan). Number 6 embodies the obstinate individual

who remains relentless in his quest to escape the confines of the mysterious Village. But as the series progresses his paramount goal becomes focused on maintaining his individuality and identity, as well as keeping his secrets his own, be they of national import or not. "I will not make any deals with you. I've resigned. I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed or numbered. My life is my own", bellows Number 6 to Number 2 in "Arrival". At the end of the credit sequence we see Number 6 on the beach shouting, "I am not a number, I am a free man". According to Davies (2002), Number 6 is symbolic of every rugged, autonomous individual who will stop at nothing to fight for his freedom (p. 51). Number 2 defines Number 6 as an "individual" and claims that individuals are "always trying" ("Dance of the Dead").

Just as Number 6 successfully manipulates the content of his Dreams in "A. B. and C.", at the conclusion of "Living in Harmony" we learn just how intuitive he really is. Given hallucinatory drugs, placed in a scenario that depicts the mythical old west, and convinced that his hallucinations are real, Number 6 wakens to realize that he is himself and in The Village. Number 8, who plays the psychotic gunfighter (The Kid) in the virtual reality western sequence, is astounded that the Prisoner can "separate fact from fantasy so quickly".

A utopian society gives the illusion of democracy where law plays a central role in the production of social transformation. However, the people do not have any authority in the creation and execution of law. The philosophy behind utopias is that all the individual members are vital components of the fabric of society; the individuals cannot exist without society and society cannot survive without each and every individual member working together. *The Prisoner* introduces this philosophy in "Fall Out"

through the song "Dem Bones" sung ad nauseam throughout this episode by Number 48, a prototypical hippie. "Dem Bones" signifies the irony of the aforementioned trial. The head magistrate continues to call the Prisoner a "true individual" while still addressing him by Number 6 instead of his name. It makes no sense to single out any Number individually from the collective body of Numbered persons in The Village according to the aforementioned philosophy of utopias.

The reason for The Village's inhabitants to be addressed only as a number is (according to Number 2 in "Arrival") for "official purposes". The collective represents not only The Village prisoners, but also all societal members who serve as their warders. Regardless of any presumed ranking system (i.e. Number 1 as the leader and Number 2 one level below Number 1), *every* individual is part of the collective. Furthermore, every individual, including Number 2, is pawn to Number 1.

Number 6 represents the ultimate individual imprisoned by a totalitarian bureaucracy dependent on science, technology, and surveillance to control its citizens. Individualism in *The Prisoner* can be seen as either a rejection of society or society rejecting the individual. An example whereby Village society rejects the individual can by found in "Checkmate" when Villagers play the role of giant chess pieces on a huge chessboard, a visual illustration of Lewis Carroll's surreal world of *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872). When The Rook makes a chess move by his own free will, the paramedics take him to the psychiatric ward of the hospital. Although Number 6 (playing the Queen's pawn) deems it a great move, the Villager playing the role of Queen explains to Number 6 that the Rook was taken away because "the cult of the individual will not be tolerated". This parallels the idea behind *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s term "ownlife",

"meaning individualism and eccentricity" (Orwell, 1949, p. 85). That too was not tolerated in the Orwellian world. Similarly, the tribunal in "Dance of the Dead", foreshadowing the trial in "Fall Out", accuses Number 6 of exerting "dangerously independent and antisocial behaviour" for living by his own free will. What is ironic is that his individuality is admired in "Fall Out" and is the reason why he is petitioned to be The Village leader.

Britton and Barker (2003) claim that Number 6's individuality remains a "double-edged sword". They describe Number 6 as "embod[ying] the dangers as well as the ideal of 'doing your own thing'" (pp. 101-102). In "Free For All" Number 2 introduces the Prisoner to the Villagers as someone "whose outlook is particularly militant and individualistic". Not every episode is about the Prisoner's escape, but Number 6 perpetually fights for his individuality and sanity. In "The Schizoid Man" Number 6 struggles to relocate his identity after being drugged and brainwashed. He wakes up with a beard and different colour hair, his dominant hand is now the left instead of the right, and he's living in a different apartment as Number 12. A "Double" impersonates Number 6 for the sole purpose of provoking him to question his identity and essentially his own mind. Number 6 eventually ascertains the man impersonating him is clearly an imposter because the authorities overlooked one minor detail – a bruise under his thumb still in the process of healing. In the end it is the Double who breaks down and confesses his true identity.

The Prisoner, as suggested by White and Ali (1988), is a "call to individualism" (p. 166). Although Number 6's rebellious behaviour is a contributing factor in his anti-hero categorization, the entire philosophy held by Number 6 is that he is "not a number"

and his "life is [his] own". Number 6 represents *the* individual who embraces individuality. Despite everything, Number 6 never cracks under pressure, never accepts his circumstances in The Village, and always defends himself both physically and psychically. Finally, "Fall Out" features the head magistrate affirming that the Prisoner "must no longer be referred to as Number 6, or a number of any kind. He has gloriously vindicated the right of the individual to be an individual".

Pathos

The overriding pathetic qualities of Number 6 are his determination to escape (regardless of the inevitability of being forcibly returned to The Village), his willingness to believe the truthfulness of female characters (as opposed to the male characters), and his overwhelming need to both unmask the identity of Number 1 and ascertain which side controls The Village. In "The Chimes of Big Ben", Number 6 comes to trust the newest member of The Village, Nadia (Number 7). The Prisoner agrees to "join in" with the community by carving something for the art exhibition, under the condition that Number 2 no longer makes Nadia undergo any more psychological tests. As mentioned previously, the Prisoner and Nadia appear to escape by being hidden in a big wooden crate by Nadia's friend Karel. Supposedly being shipped via steamer to London, they remain in the crate for eighteen hours; all the while, Nadia fails in her attempt to get Number 6 to confess his reasons for resigning. Nadia appears to be a prisoner but is in fact part of the establishment, as we later find out. This example shows us Number 6's determination to escape as well as his weakness for trusting women.

In "Many Happy Returns", Number 6 wakes to a completely deserted Village. He makes a large wooden raft and packs a few amenities to escape, yet again, by sea. After

twenty-five days on the raft he finally makes it back to London. Number 6 revisits his old place of employment and speaks to his former associates in an attempt to convince them that The Village exists. They calculate, based on Number 6's travel documentation[9], where The Village might be located. Number 6, instead of reveling in his successful escape, is determined to find out for himself if his calculations are correct. He travels in a two-seater military jet with a man who he thinks is an official R.A.F. pilot. But once they locate The Village, the pilot ejects Number 6 from the plane[10]. He parachutes back where he started, in The Village. He then stoically returns to his apartment. The brass band begins playing and all of a sudden The Village is no longer deserted. The Prisoner's almost insane desire to re-visit the place that held him captive for months, instead of running in the opposite direction, indicates he either lets his obsession get the better of him or that he is becoming unbalanced. More so than not, the Prisoner is merely guilty of exhibiting curiosity, which, instead of "killing the cat", brings Number 6 back. The Prisoner is driven by more than curiosity; his strong disdain for The Village ferments to the point where he intends to "escape and then come back and smash [The Village] off the face of this earth, obliterate it" ("The Chimes of Big Ben").

"Fall Out"

The Prisoner was and remains rooted in 1960s culture. Using Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope" *The Prisoner* can be seen to be an "x-ray of forces at work" (pp. 425-426) in '60s culture. First airing in 1967, at the height of the Vietnam War and

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[9] A daily journal he kept while at sea, including details such as hours slept, compass notation, direction and time of sunrise and sunset, etcetera.

[10] This sequence also revisits the debate surrounding "sides". The Prisoner once again suspects his own people run The Village. But the viewer sees the actual pilot get knocked out by an unknown man who takes his place on the jet. Now the viewer is even more confused than Number 6.

eight weeks after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. (Miller, 2000, p. 50), *The Prisoner* remains a commentary on its time. Furthermore, the climactic last episode ends with an actual revolution. The control room's futuristic telescopes/periscopes which the attendants use to watch the Villagers, have been replaced with machine guns. And the bomb-shelter or bunker construct alludes directly to the U.S./Russian Cold War.

During "Fall Out" a Kafkaesque trial challenges the individuality of three prisoners, each representing a distinct type of "individual" (referred to as "rebels" by the head magistrate). The first is Number 48 garbed as the traditional rebellious hippie youth who, as Miller (2000) explains, represents the children of the 1950s rebelling against bourgeois lifestyles (p. 48). Number 48 is accused "with the most serious of social etiquette – total defiance of the elementary laws which sustain our community – questioning the decision of those we vetoed to govern us – unhealthy habits of speech and dress ... and the refusal to observe, wear, or respond to his number". The second "rebel" is Number 2, played by Leo McKern, representing the authority figure who goes against the establishment, essentially "biting the hand that feeds him". The head magistrate declares that "these attitudes are dangerous and ... are to be stamped out". And finally, the third is Number 6, who has "gloriously vindicated the right of the individual to be individual" ("Fall Out"). In the end, Number 6 assists the other two in obtaining their freedom from The Village.

The Jury is comprised of an assembly of masked delegates representing the following portfolios: "Welfare", "Pacifists", "Activists", "Identification", "Defectors", "Therapy", "Reactionists" and "Nationalists". Therefore, we can deduce that the collective is anything but a free-market capitalist regime where the freedom to be an

individual is supposedly accepted and encouraged. *The Prisoner* does not directly critique democracy. *The Prisoner* closely examines the *illusion* of democracy within, and analogous to, any totalitarian regime. This series serves as a warning against an individual's totalitarian tendencies. As previously discussed, had Number 6 been a "normal citizen" prior to The Village, *The Prisoner* could then be interpreted as a commentary on capitalism. (As an aside, none of the faceplates in front of each jury member says "capitalist" or "capitalism"). Nevertheless, *The Prisoner* remains a commentary on anything but capitalism that may exist within a capitalist country.

Initially, Number 1 is represented as a rocket ship or nuclear missile having a "1" painted below what appears to be an electronic eye that blinks and emits smoke. After the three "revolutionaries", including the Prisoner, are presented to the delegates, Number 6 follows the head magistrate to an elevator that lowers him to the base of the rocket ship. Number 6 climbs a winding metal staircase leading to the rocket core to discover a hooded figure with a large Number 1 painted on the front of his cape. Number 6 confronts Number 1 in a desperate attempt to find out who he is. He forcibly removes two masks Number 1 is wearing to reveal that Number 1 is actually himself (Number 6). In a more Freudian sense, the simian mask Number 1 wears beneath the comedy/tragedy mask can be said to represent the bestial "id" of Number 6. Once it was removed, what was left was the ego of Number 6. Fueling the allegory, Number 6 and Number 1 appear to be one and the same but theoretically they are not; Number 1 simply represents Number 6's alter ego. This scene may also elicit a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde interpretation whereby the duel nature of man is challenged when the evil side controls the good side; but, as McGoohan argues, this analogy is "too simplistic" (Troyer & McGoohan, 1977).

According to McGoohan, "The whole point of *The Prisoner*, which the last episode ma[kes] clear, is that each man is a prisoner unto himself. Number 1 [is] actually man's biggest enemy – himself, and that is what one is constantly fighting each day. The biggest enemy we have is ourselves" (Troyer & McGoohan, 1977). Therefore, the Prisoner's real enemy is his own psyche and escape is impossible. This analogy is, what McGoohan implies, symbolic for each of us. Wheeler Winston Dixon (1999) maintains that because of McGoohan's undeniable creative input into several aspects of *The Prisoner*, "It stands to reason that much of the series' context is highly personal in nature and constitutes an attempt by McGoohan to reclaim, and thus reframe, his fictive alter ego" (Para. 9).

Biderman and Devlin's (2008) assessment of Number 6's selfhood and identity, within the noir realm of *The Prisoner*, is sound, but their argument concerning the interpretation of "Fall Out" is flawed. They maintain that in order to understand the final episode it must be identified as "surreal" and separated "from the other sixteen" and "should not be taken literally" (p. 240). However, by suggesting this, Biderman and Devlin interpret the preceding sixteen episodes as literal in their analysis of selfhood; they do not view the entire series as allegorical. I argue that not only must the series as a whole be read allegorically, but elements of surrealism exist in other episodes as well and subsequently *The Prisoner* embodies "fictional realism".

Throughout the series it has strongly been alluded to that Number 6 and Number 1 are one and the same. In "Arrival", when the Prisoner asks who Number 1 is, Number 2 replies, "you are Number 6", making it appear as if Number 2 is purposefully avoiding any direct answers. If, however, it is read as "you *are*, Number 6" then the Prisoner *is*

directly told that he is Number 1. In "Free For All" Number 2 tells the Prisoner that should he win the election "you're the boss". When the Prisoner responds, "Number 1 is the boss", no comment is made. Referring to Number 6, Number 2 remarks to Number 14, "I sometimes think he's not human" ("A. B. and C."). In "Dance of the Dead" the Prisoner is told by Number 2 that the reason he does not have a proper costume for the ball is "perhaps because you don't exist". These last two examples coincide with the interpretation that Number 1 may not even be human, but some sort of sentient extraterrestrial being. In "Fall Out" the head magistrate utters to the Prisoner, "You see all", just as the blinking eye of the rocket sees all. Finally, as we learn in "Many Happy Returns", the Prisoners London home has a numeral "1" on the front door thereby cementing the idea or theory that the Prisoner is indeed Number 1.

Utopia, Dystopia, Anti-Utopia and The Real World

According to Michel Foucault, it is only in tracing the "historical 'a priori' of a period" that a proper contextualization of how something originated can be made. *The Prisoner's* Village can therefore be examined and paralleled with the socio-political and cultural discourses of the '60s. An article titled "The Private I", published in *Time* magazine on June 21st 1968, pigeonholes *The Prisoner*'s Village as "a detention camp for retired spies, defectors, nuclear scientists and others whose memories are weighted with state secrets". This article further divulges that "among the purposeful ambiguities of the series is that neither the prisoner nor the viewer is ever certain which side of the Iron Curtain he is on" (para. 2). These political *Prisoner* frameworks have possible semblance to something that existed and may still exist in the real world.

Cold War paranoia and the idea of government spies being sent to "detention camps" cannot be dismissed. George Markstein, the series' script editor, having first-hand knowledge as a military journalist, asserts that this is exactly what *The Prisoner*'s Village symbolizes – a non-fictitious place. Davies (2002) outlines Markstein's position: "George Markstein claimed that during the Second World War some government agents who 'knew too much' were sent to an establishment called Inverlair Lodge in a remote part of Scotland for 'a holiday'" (p. 44). White and Ali (1988) affirm that this was probably done through the auspices of the Inter-Services Research Bureau (ISRB) (p. 131). Furthermore, an article titled "Official Secret: The Life of George Markstein" adds that his 1974 espionage novel *The Cooler* "featured a similar place called Inverloch Lodge" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 478). Tony Williams' article "Authorship Conflict in *The Prisoner*" (1990) indicates that "Many Happy Returns" and "Living in Harmony" are two episodes "designed to suggest that the forces controlling the British establishment and the Village were identical" (p. 69).

Utopic elements inside The Village are mainly due to its colourful surrealistic architecture and landscape, part of the actual eclectic village of Portmeirion. Steven Paul Davies in his unauthorized companion to *The Prisoner* (2002), states, "What the architect who designed it, Clough Williams-Ellis, was trying to do was to show that architecture should be fun. It's a wild fantasy village that conjures up a terrific surreal atmosphere" (p. 25). The significance of the Italianate hotel resort of Portmeirion continues to grow. *Toronto Star* movie critic Peter Howell investigates whether "Portmeirion is a prisoner of *The Prisoner*" in his recent article "Serving Time in The Village Prison" (2008, February 7). Howell personally visited Portmeirion to explore the remaining nostalgia for *The*

Prisoner. A descendant of Williams-Ellis' claims that Portmeirion's "visitor numbers increased from 50,000 to 100,000 following *The Prisoner* and remained at that level for many years" (para. 23), and also continues to host the Six of One annual convention. Howell concludes that Portmeirion's "solitude and reserve" (para. 28) is what both attracts tourists and maintains a sense of mystery.

Conclusion

Chris Gregory (1997) outlines the ambiguity in viewers' understanding of *The Prisoner* during its time and how its status developed with the aid of video. The viewer had to pay close attention to the screen as Number 1's mask was removed in "Fall Out" to reveal that he and Number 6 were one and the same. In the video age, Gregory argues, we have the opportunity to freeze the frame to verify this, but viewers in 1968 did not have this luxury. For McGoohan, "I thought I wasn't going to pander to a mentality so low that it couldn't perceive what I was trying to say" so, by showing only "fifty-two frames" of this sequence, viewers "had to be a little quick to pick it up". Also, with only a mere three television channels in Britain, the transmission of *The Prisoner* during that time was "an event" and "Fall Out" was "thus a product of a particular moment in television history, and almost certainly an unrepeatable one" (p. 183). Therefore, had the series been created in the 21st century, it would impact the viewers far less than when it first aired in 1968. And, as Gregory concludes, "It would be unlikely to be a mass audience phenomenon" (p. 187), which is the very contributing factor for its "cult status". White and Ali (1988) determine that *The Prisoner*'s cult status is precisely because it remains "a dynamic catalyst of ideas, one that steadfastly refuses to knuckle under to

quick and glib interpretations". They delineate this to be the reason why "we're still watching it" and "still debating it" (p. 4).

Regardless of what has been elucidated in this chapter, many of *The Prisoner's* allegories and philosophical debates can be "attributed to the influence of McGoohan's own ideas and worldview" (Britton & Barker, 2003, p. 98). Individualism is something McGoohan has exemplified in his life and the content of his work: "The greatest fight before anyone of us today is to be a true individual, to fight for what you believe in and stick to that. If I have a drum to beat, it's the drum of the individual" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 149). Booker (2002) confirms that McGoohan's vision was realized in that Number 6 "becomes a champion of individualism in an era when individualism was widely celebrated, but in which these celebrations clearly responded to an anxiety that true individuals were a thing of the past" (p. 72). In "Fall Out" we learn that Number 6 prevailed against all odds. The Village authorities failed to break him. However, the question the series probes is: "Does or can individualistic identity exist in a society that demands conformity?" (Taylor, 1987, p. 2). And the implied answer is ... no.

CHAPTER FOUR: VILLAGE AS PROPHESY –
MARSHALL McLUHAN'S GLOBAL VILLAGE AND *THE PRISONER'S* VILLAGE

Marshall McLuhan's "global village" and *The Prisoner's* Village were essentially products of the turbulent '60s. This chapter investigates creative overlapping between these two villages and argues the reason for this overlapping is because they were both a product of the same time. As shown in chapter two, Marshall McLuhan attempted to understand the current electronic environment by studying its effect on modern Western societies. As we move further into the Electronic Age we learn that in order to understand the global village we must cease living in the "rearview mirror". Chapter two also explains that the global village is not a utopian construct, as it has so often been categorized. In his interview with Gerald E. Stearn, McLuhan alleges, "People leave small towns to *avoid* involvement. ... The village is not a place to find ideal peace and harmony. Exact opposite. ... I don't *approve* of a global village. I say we live in it" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 272). *The Prisoner's* Village challenged societal discourses of its time. Chapter three examines the role of the individual in a totalitarian society giving the illusion of democracy. *The Prisoner* also forces us to question conformist tendencies that flourish in our *own* societies. Number 6 is a prisoner of his circumstance – initially as a government spy, then as a part of The Village collective, and finally, as we discover in "Fall Out", a prisoner unto and within himself. A literal connection between the global village and *The Prisoner* is underlined by Number 2's utopian ideal of The Village as a platform for "all the earth [as] one big Village" in order to achieve "the perfect blueprint for world order" ("Chimes of Big Ben").

The global village and *The Prisoner* both strive to inform us that it is virtually impossible to escape "village" imprisonment. However there is hope; for McLuhan the artists and the dropouts serve as redeemers for society, and for McGoohan redemption comes with the individual's awareness of self. But the hope rests only in understanding the circumstances of the village we all inhabit. The conjunctions made in this chapter between *The Prisoner* and the global village are categorized as follows: the perversion of science and technology, bureaucracy as dictatorship, freedom as illusion, and the individual in opposition to the collective. From this it can be argued that *The Prisoner*'s Village visually exemplifies many of McLuhan's themes and theories associated with his global village.

The Perversion of Science and Technology

Science and technology are perverted in both McLuhan's global village and McGoohan's *Prisoner*. Some of the ways include, but are not limited to, 1) the dehumanization of the individual; 2) the use of education and television for universal brainwashing; 3) the corporate culture of advertising; and 4) the loss of individual freedom and privacy in a world of surveillance. In this section both Marshall McLuhan and Patrick McGoohan are shown to be cultural prophets ahead of their time.

Dehumanized and Disembodied

The perversion of science and technology within The Village can be initially detected in the elimination of all names – place, product, and personal. The moment when people's names are being replaced with random numbers (between 1 to 3 digits in length) is the moment when dehumanization begins. In Yevgeny Zamyatin's seminal 1924 novel *We*, the "One State" is comprised of people identified only by numbers. In

retrospect, Patrick McGoohan says, "There is a basis of reality throughout [*The Prisoner*] if you can spot it. This is the point of it all … we're all being puppeted. We're all becoming Numbers" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 171). With his *Prisoner* McGoohan was commenting on the reality that with every passing day we are being identified by and reduced to a mere number – from our SIN to our drivers' licenses. On another occasion he stated: "The trouble with the world is that it tries to make everyone the same… one day they take another look in the mirror and wham! They are the same…and where their face is they've grown a number" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 522).

In the same manner, Marshall McLuhan theorized on how human beings are transformed into disembodied selves or discarnate information just by using technological media. The telephone is a technological device which permits communication across borders and time zones, and, McLuhan alleges, in doing so the dimensions of space and time collapse. The actual distance from location points between telephone receivers is irrelevant.

Villagers, reduced to mere numbers, are "discarnate" in the sense that they are not identified by face or physical being but by the number on their lapels. On arrival at The Village the Prisoner is told that he can *only* be identified by a number. In *The Prisoner*, the technology of the telephone comes into play in the first few minutes of "Arrival". The disoriented Prisoner runs out of his apartment into The Village and attempts to place a call on a dial-less telephone just to be told by the Operator that the telephone only permits local calls. Technology does not respond for the Prisoner as it should. Furthermore, when the operator asks for his "number", the Prisoner, not knowing that he has been categorized as Number 6, tells the Operator that he does not have one. "No

number, no call", is her response. On meeting Number 2, the Prisoner is further

dehumanized when he is referred to as "a valuable piece of property". However *The*

Prisoner alludes to the fact that human numerical categorization exists outside of The

Village when Number 6 identifies himself as ZM73 to his former government colleagues

("Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling")[1].

Television and Education

The Prisoner and McLuhan's theories on media explore ways in which television

can be used as a device for control. These texts also invite television viewers to

challenge their own use of this medium. Britton and Barker (2003) claim that *The*

Prisoner "was the first television series to be about television" in that "not only [does] it

explore the technical and expressive possibilities of the medium, but it also probe[s] the

viewer's status as watcher" (p. 96). As noted earlier, Britton and Barker correlate *The*

Prisoner with McLuhan's theories on television as a cool medium. Due to the great

ambiguity as well as its allegorical nature, *The Prisoner* relies on its audience to fill-in

the gaps of this series, the same technological "gaps" that McLuhan explores.

According to Britton and Barker (2003), "It is impossible to overstate the degree

in which McLuhan's definition of 'cool' is pertinent to *The Prisoner*" (p. 102).

According to McLuhan, cool media involve the viewer's multiple senses in order to fill-

in-the-blanks of the low definition medium. Therefore cool media, like the mosaic TV

image, are high in participation. Britton and Barker deem *The Prisoner* "cooler" than

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[1] Carl Jung (1957) argues that, as a "member of a species", man "must be described as a statistical unit" and that there is no escaping this; but it is impossible to "understand" man and his "individual features" through the lens of his "unit" categorization (p. 18).

other TV dramas since viewers not only have to involve themselves in what they are watching, but have to "participate imaginatively" (p. 100).

McLuhan classifies the TV image as "mosaic" because it is composed of millions of tiny dots which flash across the screen at "some three million dots per second" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 313). In *The Global Village* (1989), McLuhan and Powers explain the interplay that occurs between the two hemispheres of the brain when watching television. The left side of the brain becomes mesmerized by the flashing dots and subconsciously lulled into a non-dominant state thus making the right hemisphere dominant. The stimulation of the televised moving images and complementary sound alert the right side of the brain. Due to this interplay of neutral and alert states the mind becomes "massaged" and conditioned to respond to any suggestion proposed by the television image. According to McLuhan and Powers, this is the process by which viewers become "fair game for the non-rational sell" (p. 87).

Just as it was the norm in the late '60s to own a television set, a colour T.V. can be found in each of the Villager's private residence. In *The Prisoner* television is used in three different fashions: first, as a two-way communicative device for Number 2 to interact with each Villager (what those living in the 21st century identify as videoconferencing); second, television is used in the traditional manner of broadcasting news, although only local state news is featured on Village television; finally, in "The General" television is used as a visual and auditory device to transmit information for "Speed Learning". In this instance television is used as an educational device for social control of the entire Village. This third and final example comments directly on the widespread notion that television is merely a brainwashing mechanism.

"The General" exemplifies McLuhan's theories regarding the process by which the mind reacts to the effects of television. Number 6 also falls victim to the "non-rational sell" as theorized by McLuhan. Immediately following the fifteen-second session he answers, without hesitation, a round of questions posed by Number 2 on the subject matter of the Speed Learn session. Number 6 tests the experiment by asking the same set of questions to The Village operator only to discover that she repeats verbatim the exact words and phrases he just finished saying. Realizing that he has been brainwashed, the Prisoner listlessly hangs up the phone.

Prior to the session, the Professor introduces Speed Learn by proclaiming, "It is quite simply the most important, most far reaching, most beneficial development in mass education since the beginning of time. A marriage of Science and Mass Communication which results in the abolition of years of tedious and wasteful schooling". However, as Number 6 discovers by episode's end, The General is a large computer which, as Chris Gregory (1997) suggests, is nothing more than "a device for the 'mind control' of large populations" (p. 211). Appearing on NBC's *Tomorrow Show* with Tom Snyder, McLuhan explained that "television fosters and favours a world of corporate participation in ritualistic programming" and, because people become part of a corporate group just by watching TV, "They lose interest in being private individuals" (McLuhan & Snyder, 1976, p. 253). In the same manner it can be inferred that Villagers participate in Speed Learning not because they are forced to, but because they want to integrate themselves into the larger corporate culture. In doing so, Villagers define themselves solely by how well they can recite facts that have been programmed into their minds via the television. As McLuhan (1964) suggests, "Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of

man – the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society" (pp. 3-4). This statement sums up the exact intentions of Speed Learn as illustrated through "The General".

Marshall McLuhan and *The Prisoner* propose that television is little more than a vehicle for corporate brainwashing. At the end of "Free For All" Number 6 watches four men wearing sunglasses, sitting in chairs and staring at a glowing Rover which, as Britton and Barker (2003) argue, parodies the "near-catatonic state of the television junkie" (p. 97). This interpretation complements McLuhan's aforementioned association between the effects of TV and the effects of LSD[2]. McLuhan strongly warned that TV is a "potent drug. It's addictive. It is an inner trip, and it is a tranquilizer" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 270). "The General" further exemplifies this since Speed Learn is, in fact, a process by which information is subliminally instilled in one's mind by watching strobing images flash across the screen.

Orson Welles once said to Patrick McGoohan, "The most dangerous thing on earth is television" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 46). This may be true because of the "somnambulistic" effect it has on a large majority of the viewing population. According to McLuhan (1964), during "periods of new technology" the initial "onset of experience" created by these technologies is cooled off by a "censor"[3] which, in turn, "brings on a lifelong state of psychic *rigor mortis*, or of somnambulism" (p. 24). Similarly, McGoohan warns of the danger of television: "As long as people feel something, that's the great thing. It's when they're walking around not thinking and feeling – that's where

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[2] See chapter two.
[3] The "censor" will be discussed in further detail later on in this chapter.

all the dangerous stuff is" (Fairclough, 2002, p. 7). Both McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* parallel the drugged society mesmerized by entertainment screens, belonging to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932).

The Prisoner and the global village caution us about the effects of computers, technology, television, and, especially, our educational system that may feed us an abundant amount of rote knowledge without exercising our imaginations. Therefore, in warning us, McGoohan and McLuhan challenge the way we interact with technology and the knowledge it provides. McLuhan (1960a) determined that with the concentration of media, including television, radio, film, newspapers and magazines, the "sheer quantity of information" provided "far exceeds the quantity of information conveyed by school instruction and texts". Therefore, students are learning mostly from "outside the classroom" walls. The situation is exacerbated when "many teachers naturally view the offerings of the new media as entertainment rather than education" (p. 1) since they do not envision television as a valuable teaching tool. The natural consequence is that educators will one day become obsolete. *The Prisoner* tests the obsolescence of educators and its result when they are replaced with machines. While walking on the deserted beach at the beginning of "The General", Number 6 finds a tape recorder playing a message spoken by The Village Professor who teaches the Speed Learning course using the computer known as The General. On the tape the Professor admits, "You are being tricked. Speed Learn is an abomination. It is slavery. If you wish to be free, there is only one way. Destroy the General! Learn this and learn it well. The General must be destroyed". McGoohan is also commenting on the educational system in that educators should be teaching students to question, not to memorize trite facts: "I

think the first discipline a child should be taught is to continue to ask his own questions and find his own answers" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 156).

As previously established, the artists and the dropouts, inhabiting the same global sphere as us, are able to discern patterns and predicaments that we are all challenged with every day. As explored in chapter two, the mind of the artist and the dropout is not bogged down with unnecessary knowledge. In discussing "The General", Patrick McGoohan conveys the exact same thing McLuhan argues regarding the way an artist's mind functions:

> The right sort of education enables one to think organized thoughts. There are people who know something about every subject under the sun. But they are just a reference library. Knowing too much stuff, that is closing up your mind. You will find all the great inventors –Edison, Bell – I can't think of one who was highly educated. The exploration of their mind wasn't surrounded by too much education. The mind was set free. The innate power of creation was there (qtd. in Langley, 2007, pp. 16-17).

McGoohan mentions two of the greatest scientists of the 19th century and McLuhan explains why these types of individuals are more creative and are subsequently considered artists. McLuhan was also against convention and "groupthink". He discussed the reason why learning by rote, as taught by academics, does not teach individuals to question or understand the larger issues. Number 6 in "Once Upon A Time" conveys this same disdain for academic convention. During the "second stage" of the seven-stage process of the previously discussed psychological method of "Degree Absolute" (based on Shakespeare's "The Seven Stages of Man") Number 2, acting as one of the Prisoner's childhood teachers, tells him to "report to me in the morning". It is at this moment that an extreme close-up of Number 6's face connotes a long look of disgust for academia, its corresponding structure, and for authority of all kind.

Towards the end of "Once Upon A Time" we learn vaguely why the Prisoner resigned. We already know that the Prisoner resigned from some sort of espionage organization of "high standing" in the British government. We can deduce that this type of top-secret job required the Prisoner to know "information" that is not made public. It is this "information" that is considered so valuable which the Prisoner so desperately protects. Earlier in the episode we discover that he values loyalty and throughout his life he has not been, nor does he consider himself, "a rat". He maintains his loyalty by protecting this "information". When Number 2 asks the Prisoner repeatedly why he resigned, he admits that he "resigned for peace of mind because too many people know too much". When still questioned he yells to Number 2, "I know too much about you!" This reason correlates to McLuhan's global village in that the Prisoner has become a human "data bank". The reason for his resignation is because these "secrets" are so overwhelming that he wants to get away. However, McLuhan has firmly declared that there is no escape from the global village and all we can do is try to understand it. McLuhan (1979a) explains, "Now at the speed of light, there is no foreseeable future. You are there literally. It does not matter what situation you choose to consider. There is literally no possible future. You are already there the moment you name the situation" (p. 293).

Patrick McGoohan's explanation of "no escape" and that "freedom is a myth" is affirmed by two specific episodes in which the Prisoner attempts to escape from The Village – "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling" and "Many Happy Returns". In the former, the Prisoner discovers that he is kept under close surveillance as in The Village. When he finally arrives in Austria to find Professor Seltzman, the first person he speaks

to is a waiter who says "Welcome to the village sir". It is evident that whichever side controls The Village is confident that even though the Prisoner may escape the confines of The Village, he will soon be re-captured. These two episodes indicate, "The whole earth [has become] one big village".

<div align="center">Advertising – A Mindless Force</div>

Advertising, and the way it affects or controls the individual, is examined and subsequently critiqued by Marshall McLuhan and (indirectly) by Patrick McGoohan. Through their texts, both McLuhan and McGoohan challenge our understanding of the advertising world. Rudolph E. Morris (1967) concludes that *The Mechanical Bride* "shows to what an extent in our democratic society the individual is subjugated to the iron rule of the collective mind" (p. 88). McLuhan challenged his students to question their environment by showing them advertisements that they thought they understood but in actuality did not. *McLuhan's Wake* further explains how advertising is the means by which individuals are *massaged* by the media and shows that the only way to understand the media is to get inside the media. *Culture is Our Business* is devoted entirely to advertising and dissecting advertisements. McLuhan uses this text to teach us how to question the obvious. William Kuhns (1971) describes *Culture is Our Business* as a book which reflects "the function of advertising as a form of cultural homeostasis" (p. 173). Without getting into the distinctions of how advertising works within the cool medium of television versus the hot medium of a billboard or magazine advertisement, one thing is for certain: there is a subliminal degree to which the mind becomes enslaved to the "irrational sell". McLuhan's texts serve to open our senses (mainly our visual sense) to

the obvious so that we can (to an extent) prevent advertising companies from over-manipulating and exploiting us.

The final chapter of Gregory's *Decoding The Prisoner* (1997), titled "The Whole Earth as Village", explores the role of advertising inside *The Prisoner*'s Village. Gregory describes The Village as having a resemblance to a "modern international corporation" with its own "corporate logo", the Penny Farthing. In addition, Gregory argues that The Village slogans serve as advertisements for its "corporate culture". Furthermore, these slogans are more than merely advertisements; they are mandates for conformity. Gregory argues, "They exhort the Villagers to 'conform' in much the same way as advertising slogans encourage consumers to 'conform' to the lifestyle or image they are selling" (pp. 211-212). Gregory also observes that just as Village authorities seek "information" and just as the Prisoner stops at nothing to secure his own personal "information", "the key 'commodity' in the modern world is frequently said to be 'information'" (p. 211).

In his 1977 TVOntario interview with Warner Troyer, McGoohan argues that "watching too many" commercials is a contributing factor for the "brainwashed" and soul-less individual. He claims that if commercials "made enough people skeptical, the people who were made skeptical wouldn't be buying all the junk that they're advertising and then they'd be out of business". Similarly, Britton and Barker (2003) conclude that, "*The Prisoner* like hippiedom, embodied a heartfelt condemnation of technology-oriented Western materialism" (p. 101). As an aside, McLuhan points out that the best advertisement is usually the last one that follows the last item on the news every day. Since this is the final item people see on the segment, this is what they recall and might purchase.

Gregory theorizes on the purpose of surveillance in the modern Western world as a "response to the need to protect consumer products" and argues that advertising is a vehicle to express the "ideology of consumerism" (p. 211). Therefore, since the main consumer product in *The Prisoner*'s Village is "information" and Villagers are imprisoned because they are the carriers of "information", then surveillance exists in The Village because authorities have a sworn duty to contain that information. Instead of supporting the ideology of consumerism, Number 6 is aware of it and rejects it.

<u>Surveillance</u>

There is a significant resemblance between McLuhan's theories on technological surveillance and The Village's surveillance system. In *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), McLuhan and Fiore begin by describing the effect electric technology has on our lives: "The medium, or process of our time – electric technology – is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life" (p. 8). McLuhan and Fiore use the example of electronic surveillance as a type of technology that imposes itself on humanity: "Electrical information devices for universal, tyrannical womb-to-tomb surveillance are causing a very serious dilemma between our claim to privacy and the community's need to know" (p. 12). McLuhan and Fiore are referring to our identities as part of an "electrically computerized dossier bank" (p. 12). In a 1974 lecture titled "Living at the Speed of Light", McLuhan states, "No form of secrecy is possible at electric speed" (p. 237). According to McLuhan, surveillance "has become one of the main occupations of mankind, just watching other people and keeping a record of their goings-on" (McLuhan & McManus, 1977, p. 267). For this reason it is difficult for an individual to soundly maintain his identity. McLuhan's "tyrannical

womb-to-tomb" conclusion may have partially contributed to his being referred to as a "bringer of doom" by media types. However, he could not reiterate enough the imposition electronic technology has on an individual's privacy and identity.

The Prisoner's Village shows us the profound infringement of technology on the private aspects of our lives. Even outside in the open, Villagers are recorded with surveillance cameras and microphones. When Number 6 first meets Number 2 in the Green Dome, Number 2 shows him that they have all sorts of information recorded electronically, even how Number 6 takes his coffee ("Arrival"). The entire raison d'être of The Village Control Room is to observe Villagers and nothing more. Surveillance in *The Prisoner* is an openly voyeuristic means of control [see Figure 1C]. Patrick McGoohan became somewhat flustered in an interview with Barrington Calia when she characterized Number 6 as "paranoid". "Paranoid?" McGoohan reacted; "For God's sake, he wasn't paranoid at all. Is it paranoid to defend one's right to privacy?" (qtd. in White & Ali, 1988, p. 180).

The Prisoner's surveillance system closely resembles that of Jeremy Bentham's theoretical model of the "Panopticon". In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Michel Foucault[4] discourses on the disciplinary mechanism of Bentham's 1830s construct. Through the Panopticon, relationships of power and of power-knowledge are revealed in its prison structure. The individuals subjected to this technological mechanism become vulnerable to its power and the power of those who control it. The prison inmate is "seen but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject

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[4] Booker (2002) argues, "The pessimistic tone of the series resonates closely with much of the work of Foucault, whose own gloom[y] eccentric political vision ... tended toward the libertarian pole" (p. 76).

in communication". Therefore the Panopticon is "a machine for dissociating the seen/being seen dyad" (p. 202). The Panopticon, like The Village surveillance system, reminds its prisoners that their every move is being observed and that knowledge is displayed through mechanisms of bureaucracy. Knowing that "BIG BROTHER IS ALWAYS WATCHING YOU", forces one to be on guard. And just as in The Village control room, "Any individual taken almost at random can operate the machine" (Foucault, 1975, p. 202). The two Village watchers, seated on opposite ends of the revolving seesaw-like Panopticon mechanism, are simply regarded as an extension of that mechanism [see Figure 3C].

Similarly, since any Number 2 can be replaced, what remains constant is the purpose Number 2 serves – that of extracting "information". Therefore, Number 2's importance rests not in who fulfills this purpose, but that it *is* fulfilled. Foucault deduces that "the Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms" (Foucault, 1975, p. 204). This explains how all the Number 2's are constantly under observation by Number 1.

Foucault labels the Panopticon as a cage, just as Number 6 labels The Village as a prison. As Foucault (1975) argues, The Panopticon is "also a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals. To experiment with medicines and monitor their effects. To try out different punishments on prisoners, according to their crimes and character" (p. 203). The purpose of the prison structure is to make prisoners accept that escape is not possible.

McLuhan's "vanishing point" is a point of no return; it is the moment when, despite any time-space boundaries, the artist and the dropout reach the pinnacle of

clarification. Janine Marchessault (2005) links McLuhan's analogy of the "vanishing point" with Foucault's theorization of the Panopticon. Marchessault claims, "Like McLuhan, Foucault sees the modern subject as constituted in and through the vanishing point". She quotes Foucault's *The Order of Things* to further explain how the subject is balancing between "the object of knowing and the subject that knows". Marchessault concludes that the effectiveness of the Panopticon is because it is never seen. She argues that the Panopticon is "felt" like the "tactile in depth participation McLuhan describes" (p. 197).

Bureaucracy as Dictatorship

Surveillance is one means by which control is maintained. This next section informs us that dictatorship takes on many forms, some of which remain below our intellectual radar. Both the global village and *The Prisoner* inform us that the purpose of bureaucracy is to maintain conformity.

Time and Space Reduced to Nothing

In a small town or village environment news travels fast since it does not have to go far to reach all of its residents. *The Prisoner* illustrates the instantaneous connection between the creation and reception of news stories. This is emphasized in "Free for All" when Number 6 runs in the election for the position of Number 2. Number 6 is somewhat suspicious when he experiences first hand how information travels in an instantaneous manner. Number 6's day begins with a call from Number 2, who also appears on 6's television screen. Within moments after Number 6 hangs up the phone, Number 2 enters his apartment. Number 6 is at first adamantly opposed and then receptive about running in the election. His sole purpose for running is to discover the

identity of Number 1, who is to be revealed to him if he gets elected. After Number 2's

public introduction, Number 6 is permitted to say a few words. During his impromptu

speech he declares his candidacy for the position of Number 2. The giant placards held

by the Villagers are turned to reveal a photo of the Prisoner with the words "Vote for

Number 6". Immediately following his interview with the *Tally Ho* reporter Number 113

and photographer Number 113B, a newspaper article entitled "Number 6 Speaks His

Mind" is instantaneously made available. It was only seconds before that the last

snapshot of Number 6 was taken for the *Tally Ho*. These examples closely mimic the

speed in which space and time are reduced to almost nothing in McLuhan's global

village.

Chris Gregory (1997) asserts that *The Prisoner*'s Village has similarities with the

bigger village of the world and that in this manner it is "a microcosm of the great global

village itself" (pp. 209-214). This supports my argument that McGoohan's Village is a

miniaturized version of McLuhan's global village. Similarly, Dixon (1999) indirectly

connects *The Prisoner* to the global village by summarizing its purpose: "All is collapsed,

all is nothing, we live in the domain of the eye and the always now". This statement

comments on the effects of electronic technology in The Village. Dixon continues,

"Time and space have been rendered meaningless by the domain of The Village; the

world of the Empire has contracted from a sphere of global influence to the confines of a

Pinewood soundstage" (p. 15). The Prisoner tells the character playing the Queen in

"Checkmate", "In this place everyone's near – far too near". Just as McLuhan's global

village extends beyond what the eye can see and the mind can fathom, a character in the

Prisoner's dream sequence alludes to this by saying "to you, to me, news is air. We breathe it deeply, draw it from far and wide" ("A. B. and C.").

As discussed in chapter two, when the boundaries of time and space collapse in the global village everyone can be simultaneously everywhere. McGoohan's Village visually illustrates this notion in several ways. Booker (2002) points out that in *The Prisoner* "the collapse of all historical periods into simultaneity" dissolves "traditional boundaries and distinctions" (p. 91). *The Prisoner* exemplifies Booker's conclusion in two manners: 1) the different historical periods alluded to in the content of the episodes[5]; and 2) the vast number of historical periods alluded to by the several architectural styles in The Village[6]. Similarly, Johnson argues that "the bricolage of historical and national cultural signifiers creates a surreal location that appears to transcend time and space" (p. 57). In his mish-mash of architectural pieces from around the world, Williams-Ellis was striving to create an atmosphere that elicits a feeling of everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Political Framework

What has been discussed thus far will now be contextualized within an overall political framework. McLuhan's theories on tribalism are linked to his global village, just as McGoohan's Village is with utopian discourse. McLuhan concludes that the global village creates tribal conditions and therefore contains people exhibiting tribal behaviour. He uses this notion to explain its implications in the world of politics. In "The Playboy Interview" (1969) McLuhan states, "Political democracy as we know it

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[5] For example: The French Empire in "Dance of the Dead" and "The Girl Who Was Death"; 19th century America in "Living in Harmony"

[6] Portmeirion consists of a collection of buildings that were disassembled from around the world and reassembled (Booker, 2002, p. 132).

today is finished. Let me stress again that individual freedom itself will not be submerged in the new tribal society, but it will certainly assume different and more complex dimensions" (pp. 260-261). Furthermore, he predicts the future of political involvement "as we leave the age of political parties, political issues and political goals, and enter an age where the collective tribal image and the iconic image of the tribal chieftain is the overriding political reality" (p. 261). McLuhan is describing a world in which totalitarianism is law under the auspices of a single dictator. In his Marfleet Lectures (1967c), McLuhan states: "This all-at-onceness creates a kind of total memory which is a return to tribalism in the sense of a comprehensive inclusive consciousness" (p. 104).

The major premise of *The Prisoner* is based on the loss of individual freedom and individual identity within a tribal society. The data bank in *The Prisoner*, controlled by Number 2 (and presumably Number 1), consists of all the most detailed and intimate pieces of information on each and every member of The Village. This computerized data bank exemplifies the "total memory" McLuhan associates with tribal consciousness. To synopsize, what McLuhan emphasizes is that tribal consciousness promotes collective thought and disregards the individual thinking being.

The Prisoner exemplifies this reality, specifically "Free for All" in which Number 6's possible candidacy for the role of Village dictator is merely an illusion. Number 6 is subliminally fed empty political platforms which he employs in his campaign: "The community can rest assured that their interests are very much my own and that anything I can do to maintain the security of the Citizens will be my primary objective". The crowd is also programmed to respond with cheers to whatever Number 6 says thereby making

the content of what he says irrelevant. Finally, *The Prisoner* explores how politicians have little power against the media that, for better or worse, twist their words and their message. When Number 6 says "no comment" to most of the questions posed by the *Tally Ho* journalist Number 113, Number 113 records phrases and political platforms the Prisoner did not say or indicate in any way whatsoever. Subsequently, these are printed in the *Tally Ho*.

Freedom as Illusion

The illusion of freedom is an essential theme to investigate, prominent in both the global village and *The Prisoner*. Both McLuhan and McGoohan thought that modern society was heading beyond the point of no return. Knowing that progress cannot be prevented, these men attempted to understand the environments which birthed such anti-individual technological inventions.

Rear-view Mirrorism

Progress in the Electronic Age is addressed by both Marshall McLuhan and Patrick McGoohan. Whereby McLuhan discusses progress in the context of "rearview mirrorism", McGoohan illustrates this via the iconographical symbol of the Penny Farthing. A Penny Farthing is the awkwardly large bicycle invented in 1869 with its two wheels based on the comparative sizes of the penny and farthing coins of that time. Within *The Prisoner* it is used as The Village logo. An actual Penny Farthing bicycle is on display in the Dome of Number 2. McGoohan purposefully chose this as an "ironic" symbol of technological progress because, as he states, "The feeling is that we are going too fast ... I wish we could go a bit slower, but we can't" (qtd. in White & Ali, 1988, p. 122). McGoohan elaborates further: "The permissive society has come about because

scientific knowledge is increasing so much faster than the ability of a thinking human being can keep up with it spiritually. Initially it was the nuclear bomb race, then the moon race. Everything is happening so fast. There is no time for mediation" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 180). Furthermore, in the 1985 Barrington Calia interview, McGoohan explains that before we learn "about the latest inventions" a new one arises, thereby "making what you've learned obsolete" (p. 178). This complements Marshall McLuhan's ideas about the current Electronic Age. He believed that technology is increasing at such a rate that we are always deconstructing our current society through the "rear-view mirror" using the knowledge for understanding the previous modes of communication. McLuhan however did not believe we should slow down but that we need to understand our current society without looking through the lens of the previous one. He felt that the only way to appease any affliction with society progressing "too fast" and the only way to be free from "rear-view mirrorism" is to take the time to understand our current Electronic Environment.

The TV Western

The iconic television Western has been explored by McLuhan as well as by McGoohan in the *Prisoner* episode "Living in Harmony"[7]. According to McLuhan, the Western is a genre which modern suburbia turns to because it represents "literally the simplicity where the human spirit can expand in all its original vigor" (McLuhan, 1967c, p. 137). "Living in Harmony" features Number 6 as a nameless cowboy who has

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[7] "Living in Harmony" was the only *Prisoner* episode that was censored and not aired in the U.S. until 1984 because the CBS thought it was promoting drug use (White & Ali, 1988, p. 148).

resigned from his position as sheriff and wanders into a town called Harmony[8]. The town judge wants Number 6 to become the Sheriff of Harmony and offers him both badge and gun. To save a woman's life he agrees to this extortion by choosing to wear the badge but not the gun. The judge, played by Number 2, intends to break the Prisoner's spirit so that he becomes a violent tribal leader, essentially going against his innate value system.

"Living in Harmony" challenges the second and third questions McLuhan poses at the beginning of his final chapter ("Horse Opera and Soap Opera") in *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of the Industrial Man* (1951). McLuhan's questions are as follows: "How long can the urban male live imaginatively on the frontier of eighty years ago?" and "Why is the American heart split between the frontier and the small town?" (p. 154). What he says of the TV Western rings true in an analysis of "Living in Harmony". McLuhan argues that since the frontier "disappeared" long ago, the public has not experienced it and therefore "as the frontier recedes historically, it looms larger and larger imaginatively" (p. 156). At the end of "Living in Harmony" Number 6 realizes that the events he had undergone were induced via hallucinatory drugs. Once the drugs ware off, he discerns that the people he encountered in the fantasy world of Harmony are only cardboard cutouts. This furthers McLuhan's description of the cowboy as an "emotionally hardened and unresponsive" man who can "act" but "cannot feel" (p. 157). Although the character that Number 6 portrays (the Sheriff) has feelings, Number 6 himself does not feel anything in this fictitious drama. As viewers, we are experiencing this "celluloid West" on the private video terminal of Number 2. The frontier west had

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[8] "Living in Harmony" is often compared to Sergio Leone's 1960s/early '70s "spaghetti" westerns starring Clint Eastwood [*A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), amongst others].

long gone by the time of *The Prisoner* and this episode plays off of a sentimentalized past or, as McLuhan would call it, "A stylized world of timeless properties" (p. 156). In addition to men and women, guns and horses, saloons and whisky, "Living in Harmony" fits into McLuhan's categorization of "equestrian dash and characters of ruthless and exuberant individualism" (p. 156). In the modern world McLuhan defines the new enemy as technology, the "slick and anonymous machine" (p. 156). The portrayal of the village in "Living in Harmony" situates Number 6 in a nostalgic past challenging the nostalgia associated with the frontier myth.

A major theme that harmonizes with both McLuhan's global village and *The Prisoner*'s Village is ... one man's pleasure is another man's poison. "Living in Harmony" explores McLuhan's (1951) further questions: "Is it an ideal past specially constructed to justify the ideal future? Or is it just an ideal contrast to a present reality?" (p. 156). I argue that the former is what *The Prisoner*'s Village authorities view the frontier as ("pleasure") and the latter is what Number 6 deciphers by episode's end ("poison"). Woodman (2005) states, "The themes of *The Prisoner* series are strangely similar to the themes of many westerns" (p. 949). Therefore, Harmony is no different from The Village and in no way does the Prisoner view it as "ideal".

Taking a leave of absence from the University of Toronto in the fall of 1967, McLuhan became Professor of Humanities at Fordham University for one year. At his first lecture McLuhan addressed the reasons why people live in the rear-view mirror. He talked of modern society preferring to escape into a *Bonanza-land*[9] where people avoid facing the complex and terrifying present environment at all costs. He believed people

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[9] See chapter two.

feel this way because they are unable to comprehend their current hectic electric environment.

The Individual in Opposition to the Collective

In *The Global Village* McLuhan nicely summarizes the position of the individual within the electronic world, which neatly coincides with the position Number 6 has within The Village. McLuhan and Powers (1989) assert, "Electronic man, having found himself in an area of simultaneous information also finds himself increasingly excluded from the older more traditional (visual) world in which space and reason seem to be uniform, connected and stable" (pp. 13-14). Number 6, against his will, is taken to a village in which information is extracted and Big Brother is always watching. In a talk given to a group of academics, McLuhan (1959) addresses the problematic effect of the electronic revolution. He talks of "displaced persons living in a world that has little to do with the one in which [they] grew up" (p. 1). McGoohan captures this notion in "Arrival" when Number 6's emotions are most aggressive because he is feeling so displaced. Simply put, The Village itself is beyond his inability to comprehend.

Britton and Barker (2003) attest that "the essential purpose of *The Prisoner* was to raise questions about the relationship between self and society in the technocracy of the global village" (p. 102). As mentioned in chapter three, it is important to outline the elements belonging to that of the collective since the individual can only be defined in opposition to the collective. According to a generic, common theory on the masses, the masses, represented as a collective, are irrational; the self, represented as the individual, is rational. This is rooted in the theory of crowd behavior in that members belonging to a crowd are not seen as individuals having a unique point of view but a collective, sharing

a unified mass consciousness. Marshall McLuhan (1967a) explores behavioral aspects of the crowd in his essay "Media and the Inflation CROWD". Here he states, "The greater the proximity and the greater the numbers, the greater the loss of individual significance and control" (p. 57). In the crowd people push and yell at one another and essentially revert back to their primal selves. These same "selves" are what instigate the collective into the group dynamic and subsequently group action. The social movements of the '60s are prime examples (student riots, Vietnam protests, etcetera).

Biderman and Devlin (2008) philosophize about the how and the why Villagers become "the crowd" or what Nietzsche calls "the herd". First, physical freedom is denied when prisoners are confined within Village boundaries. Second, "conceptual freedom" is lost when they are conditioned to "mentally conform to the rules and ideas of society". Biderman and Devlin conclude that when "both physical and conceptual freedom is lost, one's individual selfhood is obliterated" (p. 233). It is at this point that prisoners become susceptible to methods of Village control, reiterating Foucault's premise of "power relations". *The Prisoner* explores such examples as brainwashing ("The General"), mob hysteria and social manipulation ("Free For All"; "A Change of Mind"; "Dance of the Dead"), aversion therapy ("Checkmate"; "A Change of Mind"); and lobotomies ("A Change of Mind"). Biderman and Devlin argue that without a "unique selfhood" Villagers have "lost their individuality" and are "inauthentic" by "think[ing], talk[ing] and act[ing] in accordance with society" (p. 233). Essentially, by this stage "the reflective dimension of self" (pp. 235-236) has been erased and society has succeeded.

Not only has McLuhan theorized on violent outcomes when individuals lose their identities, but so too has McGoohan. Patrick McGoohan explains the premise for the

conclusion of *The Prisoner* ending in a violent revolt: "He starts shooting guns! This was always part of the original conception; I'd been aiming for it since the beginning. In fact, around the world today we have constant strife, and sometimes in the course of history you will find in a build-up of these frustrations it comes to a conflict area where a war can clear the air". Additionally, he explains that the celebratory jig by the three individuals who escape The Village is reflective of "freedom after violence" (Fairclough, 2006, p. 423). Similarly, McLuhan claims that after experiencing a loss of identity, people react violently in order to re-locate a new identity.

In "The Playboy Interview" (1969) McLuhan states, "Schizophrenia and alienation may be the inevitable consequences of phonetic literacy" (pp. 242-243). I introduce this quote because its implications support the theme of "the individual in opposition to the collective" within *The Prisoner*. Number 6 represents the alienated individual living amongst the collective thinking mass of The Village. In *The Medium is the Massage* (1967) McLuhan and Fiore argue, "Print technology created the public. Electric technology created the mass. The public consists of separate individuals walking around with separate, fixed points of view. The new technology demands that we abandon the luxury of this posture, this fragmentary outlook" (p. 67). Therefore, in applying this rationale to *The Prisoner*, Number 6 remains a product of phonetic literacy and The Village collective is a product of electric technology. Kenneth Griffith[10] discusses the relevancy of *The Prisoner* as a commentary on modern technologies in the 21st century and argues, "Technological 'miracles' such as the Internet encourage totalitarianism" (qtd. in Fairclough, 2002, p. 162).

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[10] Kenneth Griffith – the actor who played Dr. Schnipps in "The Girl Who Was Death" and the head magistrate in "Fall Out".

When asked in an interview about the relations between people and events in the new Electronic Age, McLuhan claims that when an individual has a point-of-view, he/she is "not really with a situation". He further explains that, "In the new situation of being with, you don't have a point of view. You merely identify at all levels with your whole being" (Seldes et. al., 1960, pp. 36-37). During "Fall Out" the head magistrate tells hippie Number 48 that "you've never been with it! – I mean with us", meaning that Number 48 did not identify with The Village collective. His actions confirm this accusation. Number 48 belts out "Dem Bones" accenting his individualism, which brings chaos to the assembly of delegates.

Regardless of what society dictates to the individual via bureaucracy, authority, rules/laws, or government, *The Prisoner* prophesies, "There is no absolute freedom; there are no final victories over oppression; and we are all, ultimately our own worst enemies" (Britton & Barker, 2003, p. 122). Furthermore, McGoohan states, "The series was conceived to make it appear that our hero was striving to be 'completely free', 'utterly himself'. Too much [freedom] and society would be overrun by rampant extremists and … anarchy [would reign]. The intent was satirical. Be as free as possible within our situation, but the war is [always] with Number 1" (Carrazé, Gelli, & McGoohan, 1989, p. 6). Buxton (1990) argues that, in an "existentialist" sense, "Fall Out" encourages "viewers to recognize their own unfreedom" so that they essentially "confront the jailer within themselves" (p. 95).

In his chapter on Hot and Cold Media in *Understanding Media* (1964), McLuhan discusses how the "censor" protects our central nervous system and the effect it has on our psychological perspectives. He starts by explaining that "any intense experience

must be 'forgotten', 'censored' and reduced to a very cool state before it can be 'learned' or 'assimilated'". What McLuhan is saying is that the intensity and nature of any extreme experience can be so overwhelming, chaotic or emotional that to assimilate the information via that particular experience, it must be reduced or made simple. This is necessary in order to transform the intensity of the original experience to something plausibly understandable. The censor, like the space between two beautiful notes of music, is needed in order to make sense of this information. The censor is the space, or cushion, between the 'hot' medium and its 'cool' understanding. McLuhan continues, "The 'censor' protects our central nervous system of values, as it does our physical nervous system by simply cooling off the onset of experience a great deal". Once the censor has taken effect and the experience has been "reduced to a very cool state" then the experience can be "[re-]learned" or "assimilated" minus the intensity, chaos or emotion. Furthermore, McLuhan explains, "For many people this cooling system brings on a lifelong state of psychic rigor mortis or somnambulism, particularly observable in periods of new technology" (p. 24).

McLuhan's notion of the censor and somnambulism can be readily linked to *The Prisoner*. As we have seen, Villagers are not curious about their current situation and accept being called by numerical designation. The watchmaker tells Number 6 that punishing the entire Village for the assassination of Number 2 may "shake them out of their lethargy" and "make them strong enough to fight" ("It's Your Funeral"). The Village employs a combination of censoring, as described by McLuhan, and brainwashing techniques. The glimmer of hope Number 6 holds onto is his individuality as The Village's ultimate "dropout". At the end of "A Change of Mind" he addresses the

assembly of Villagers: "You still have a choice. You can still salvage your rights as individuals. Your rights to truth and free thought! Reject this false world of Number 2. Reject it! Now!"

<div align="center">Fall Out and the "Looped Existence"</div>

For McLuhan the global village is a loop that we all exist within. "Fall Out" best exemplifies this loop through the Prisoner's ultimate and final return to his beloved London. The final battle occurs in a fortified underground bunker while the Beatles' "All you need is love" is playing. The lyrics of this song are paradoxical in contrast to the bunker equipped with guards, guns, and an armed missile. Both "Fall Out" and McLuhan's theories regarding "the loop" relate to the Vietnam War. The reality is that war will exist always and the desire for peace will never die. *The Prisoner,* although rooted in 1960s culture, appeals to common socio-political cultural norms that are universal and will forever remain. Furthermore, when the Prisoner returns to his London home, the door opens automatically as it does in The Village and, according to McGoohan, "You know it's going to start all over again. Because we continue to be prisoners. When the door opens on its own, you know that someone's in there waiting to start it all over again. He's got no freedom. Freedom is a myth. There's no final conclusion" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 175). This forcefully reiterates McLuhan's loop theory.

"Fall Out" best exemplifies how The Village tolerates no display of individuality or recognition of the individual. When Number 6 is finally permitted to leave following the last Kafkaesque trial, and given the opportunity to speak by the judge, his voice is not heard over the chanting of the masked jury. Each time that Number 6 speaks the word

'I', the jury, in unison, drowns him out. The word 'I' speaks to the single, individual,

thinking self, which has no place in the realm of the collective. Therefore even though

Number 6 is finally granted the freedom of speech as an individual, no form of free

speech is tolerated within the confines of this totalitarian state. Interviewed on the BBC

by Frank Kermode in January of 1965, Marshall McLuhan was asked "if the concept of

the liberty of the individual, of the freedom of speech, … could well disappear in the

other kind of culture we're now moving into?", to which he responded: "It could indeed

if it hasn't already" (McLuhan & Kermode, p. 60).

The moment in "Fall Out" where Number 6 comes face to face with Number 1,

(himself), is wholly allegorical in nature. Number 1 is initially understood to be a

cognizant missile with an all-seeing mechanical eye that blinks when it is spoken to

(mainly by the head magistrate). Number 6 initially meets Number 1 in the rocket where

Number 1 is acting as control man of the rocket. If we consider the rocket to be the all-

encompassing data bank of The Village, we are better able to see how this closely

resembles McLuhan's predictions of the individual in the Electronic Age. As electronic

information overload swamps the West, and as individual man was "not designed to live

at the speed of light", then the physical body separated from the mind floating in the

electronic ethos will "make man implode upon himself" (McLuhan & Powers, 1989, p.

97). McGoohan states, "The most evil thing on Earth, when one really searches" is

"constantly fighting [oneself] until one's demise" ("The End of Series"). Therefore, both

McGoohan and McLuhan maintain that it is our sense of self that we must do battle with

and conquer.

McLuhan's theorization on the myth of Narcissus can be extended to *The Prisoner*. In *Understanding Media* (1964) McLuhan explains that "the point of this myth is the fact that men at once become fascinated by any extension of themselves in any other material other than themselves" (p. 41). If one accepts the notion that Number 1 is simply an extension of Number 6 then this theory fits. To use McLuhan's analogy, when Number 6 is unaware of who or what Number 1 represents, then Number 6 can be considered "numb" to the effects of Number 1. McLuhan argues, "To behold, use or perceive any extension of ourselves in technological form is necessarily to embrace it". McLuhan further emphasizes, "It is this continuous embrace of our own technology in daily use that puts us in the Narcissus role of subliminal awareness and numbness in relation to them as servomechanisms" (p. 46).

In *The Medium is the Massage* (1964) McLuhan claims, "Rationality and visuality have long been interchangeable terms, but we do not live in a primarily visual world anymore" (p. 45). Based on this statement we can assume that print technology produced the rational world. But, questions still remain: Is McLuhan suggesting that since the world of electric technology is no longer primarily visual then the world of electric technology is no longer rational? Is mass man belonging to the technological world of software no longer a lucid-thinking, sentient being? In a 1977 TVO interview, McLuhan iterates that "everybody tends to merge his identity with other people at the speed of light. It's called being mass man" (McLuhan & McManus, 1977, p. 268). McLuhan, taking from Einstein's theories, is using the word "mass" not in a quantifiable manner. Therefore the answer to both the previous rhetorical questions is YES. Mass man cannot think as a rational individual in the environment of electronic software.

Conclusion – *The Prisoner* as Prophesy and McLuhan as Prophet

Chris Gregory (1997) labels *The Prisoner* a "prophecy" and defines this as "an inspired warning of the future" (p. 210). The technological environment portrayed in *The Prisoner* is futuristic and, like the series itself, exists as a warning for the future and for our involvement in the Electronic Revolution. Marshall McLuhan was hailed "prophet of the electronic age" for preparing and warning Western civilization of the effects technology has on our environment. Credit cards, surveillance cameras, and news at the speed of light are just a few examples that both McLuhan and McGoohan anticipated would be commonplace in the near future. SIN numbers, pin numbers, employee numbers, health card numbers, driver's license numbers, and all kinds of passwords are the currency of the new electronic environment.

Like *The Prisoner*, Marshall McLuhan, in *The Medium is the Massage*, implies that we are all numbers [see Figure 1D]. Philip Marchand (1989) defines McLuhan's "real" message, or "hidden message" that underlies all his work on media: "Put not thy trust in the worldly extensions of mankind" (p. 213). Essentially, we must not let technologies control our lives; to do so would be to relinquish our own freedom and individuality to them. Chris Gregory interprets the warning McGoohan puts forth in *The Prisoner* as "humanity [being] in constant danger of sacrificing its vitality, of destroying its identity, of losing its soul" (p. 214). Gregory concludes that the Prisoner's struggle represents "the struggle of everyone of us to maintain our individuality within society" and this "will always continue" (p. 177). McLuhan and McGoohan as intellects and artists were in concert escorting the 1960s directly into the new millennium. Their

collective accomplishments will resonate in the realm of both academia and the small screen for many, many decades.

What is most profound about both the global village and *The Prisoner* is their prophetic semblance to modern reality. The global village *is* our electronically-controlled world; *The Prisoner*'s Village is, as Woodman (2005) argues, "A metaphorical manifestation of the world at large" (p. 941). Just as we should attempt to fathom our constantly changing environments, we should also embrace the prophetic accuracies of the McLuhan – McGoohan texts. Only then will we be able to *see* our "village" world.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

At the same chronological point in history, both Marshall McLuhan and Patrick

McGoohan left answers to many questions up to the individual. McLuhan's theories and

The Prisoner captured the zeitgeist of the turbulent 1960s. Although there is no

empirical evidence to suggest that McGoohan was influenced by McLuhan, *The Prisoner*

has, to a degree, shed light on McLuhan's theories and vice versa. This interdisciplinary

thesis has outlined possible conjunctions between the McLuhan – McGoohan texts and

how "the global village" and *The Prisoner* reflected the discourses of the 1960s. In the

process of making conjunctions between the global village and *The Prisoner*, my thesis

fulfills McLuhan's "fill-in-the-blank" and McGoohan's "allegorical conundrum"

objective. In addition to reiterating the methodological framework and discussing the

relevance of the global village and *The Prisoner*, this chapter will address some of the

similarities between McLuhan and McGoohan and their fecund imaginations. Outlining

other avenues to approach this topic, as well as suggestions for further research, will be

provided.

Marshall McLuhan and Patrick McGoohan as Dropouts and Artistic Mavericks

Even though McLuhan was an academic and is still studied in academia, he was

not all that well suited to the role of a standard academician. This is due to the manner in

which he conjured up his theories, wrote, and subsequently taught. McLuhan, in a letter

to Robert Fulford (June 1st, 1964), explains, "I do not move along lines. I use points like

the dots in a wire-photo. That is why I must repeat and repeat my points" (qtd. in

Molinaro, McLuhan, & Toye, p. 300). In "The *Hot* and *Cool* Interview" McLuhan

elaborates on the reason he considers his own unique prose to be art: "When I sit down to

write about complicated problems moving on several planes, I deliberately move into multi-level prose" (qtd. in Moos & Morra, 2004, p. 71). Like the pointillist techniques employed by Seurat, McLuhan's work remains a complex and blurred mosaic until one uses the unfettered objectivity of an artist/dropout mindset to discern it. Only a genuine artist can create such a mosaic.

Similar to McLuhan and academia, Patrick McGoohan refused to conform to the world of television and film. Just as McGoohan resigned from his previous television role as John Drake, Number 6 resigns from his "top secret" government espionage position. In a 1977 television interview with Warner Troyer ("The Prisoner Puzzle"), McGoohan reveals that he originally decided to do *The Prisoner* out of "boredom" with "television" and with portraying John Drake for so long.

Even more significant is McGoohan's refusal to conform to Hollywood. Kenneth Griffith claims that McGoohan is a great actor and should have been "one of the biggest stars that hit the cinema". Griffith surmises that the reason why McGoohan was not a big star is because "of course, he doesn't play the game, the game to get on" ("Kenneth Griffith Interview"). Davies (2002) confirms this observation: "Perhaps *The Prisoner* is also intentionally allegorical of Patrick McGoohan himself. Number 6 resigns – was McGoohan also 'resigning' from a business which he regarded as shallow and too full of 'show'?" (p. 163). McGoohan intimated to a journalist, "Taken by itself [fame] is a nuisance because it comes close to destroying privacy, which I regard as one of man's most precious rights" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 179). McGoohan simply refused to "pander to a mentality so low that it couldn't perceive what [he] was trying to say". In order to be successful in Hollywood he would have had to compromise his values, his

morals - essentially his individuality. In the Warner Troyer interview McGoohan explains that the best works of entertainment are those which do not try to appeal to a mass audience, but rather those which, like *The Prisoner*, have a story the creators think is "important" and "a statement they want to make".

Like McLuhan, McGoohan too can be considered an artist in his creation of *The Prisoner*. Christian Durante claims, "McGoohan is a poet so he addresses his cry to us in the form of a television work of art" (qtd. in Carrazé & Oswald, 1995, p. 22). In justifying *The Prisoner*'s polysemic text, White and Ali (1988) maintain, "Like great art, it is able to sustain multiple interpretations – each one valid and each with advocates" (pp. 163-164). Similarly, Davies (2002) concludes that *The Prisoner* "like any artwork of genius, can be interpreted in diametrically opposing ways" (p. 10). Therefore, as a polysemic text, *The Prisoner* remains McGoohan's "artwork of genius".

<u>The Relevance of McLuhan's Theories and *The Prisoner* TODAY</u>

In the 1960s McLuhan, along with Dr. Timothy Leary, Martin Luther King, and author/hipster Ken Kesey, ushered in a new and wonderful paradigm of thought and exploration. In the same manner as Kesey, McLuhan loosened the chains of academic discourse by employing a disarmingly enthusiastic, engaging way of expressing difficult concepts. And like Leary, he was often dismissed as a charlatan in spite of his contribution.

Although the global village and *The Prisoner* are rooted in 1960s culture, with references to the Vietnam War, hippies, and increasing bureaucratic control, never before has the intrusive global communications network been of greater concern than today. Global concerns of terrorist threats, war, and weapons of mass destruction have not

abated at all. Langley (2007) argues, "With today's vast planetary communication network, even the watchers are spied upon by increasingly more sophisticated practices and devices" (p. 235). Therefore, I argue that the global village and *The Prisoner* remain and will continue to be important touchstones of popular culture which viewers can relate to in their own way.

As more and more pop culture artifacts reference or allude to *The Prisoner* in one way or another, the series becomes even more relevant. Roland Topor, a surrealist artist, affirms, "The matchless strength of *The Prisoner* … makes it the best science fiction film of all time. … It continues well beyond the final credits. It carries on into subsequent programmes on our television screens" (qtd. in Carrazé & Oswald, 1995, p. 10). Just about anything worthy of being classified as relevant popular culture is often referenced or parodied on the long-running animated sitcom, *The Simpsons* (1989-present). Not only is Rover featured in "The Computer Wore Menace Shoes" (episode 6, season 12), but McGoohan too has a cameo.

Other examples of homage to *The Prisoner* include a series of science-fiction novels [Thomas M. Disch; Roger Langley], a four-part graphic novel [*Shattered Visage* (1986) by Dean Motter], a play adaptation [by The Post Mortem Theatre Company], as well as Iron Maiden's albums *The Number of the Beast* (featuring the song "The Prisoner") and *Power Slave* (featuring the song "Back in the Village").

Methodology Revisited

McLuhan's Post-History

Written in the 21st century, age of ubiquitous electronic technology, my thesis exemplifies both McLuhan's classification of simultaneity and "post-history". Although

in print form, the content of my thesis takes on characteristics belonging to the academic niche of acoustic space. In a McLuhan lecture titled "Art as Survival in the Electric Age" (1973), he explains, "One of the peculiarities of the electric age is that we live simultaneously in all cultures of the past. All of the past is here and all of the future is here" (p. 213). My thesis argues that McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner* are relevant to the present. The themes explored (including the perversion of science and technology, bureaucracy as dictatorship, freedom as illusion, and the individual in opposition to the collective) are equally significant today as they were in the 1960s.

The Success of a Chronotopic Analysis

Bakhtin investigates the diversity of dialogue (what he calls the "dialogical") within "the novel" and the intersection of such dialogues is essentially the "chronotope". According to Bakhtin (1981), "The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied" (p. 250). Although his *The Dialogic Imagination* concentrates on the chronotope for the analysis of novels, this concept can be extended to other kinds of cultural texts. My thesis has utilized the spacio-temporal functions of Mikhail Bakhtin's "chronotope" for investigating the intersection of Marshall McLuhan's global village and Patrick McGoohan's *The Prisoner*. As previously discussed, since the McLuhan – McGoohan "texts" are products of the 1960s, the chronotope is an appropriate tool for analyzing the conjunctions between them as it "function[s] as the primary means for materializing time in space" (p. 250).

Bakhtin argues that each "major" chronotope "can include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes" and that "complex interactions" exist among chronotopes (p. 252). He states that they are "mutually exclusive, they co-exist, they may be

interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex relationships". Furthermore, he stresses that the interactions between various chronotopes are merely "dialogical" and that the "dialogue cannot enter into the world represented in the work" (p. 252). What Bakhtin is saying is that only the points of intersection between works, whether complementary or contradictory, are considered chronotopic. This coincides with McLuhan's theories concerning the intervals between galaxies where "interaction occurs". My thesis has investigated the conjunctions between the global village and *The Prisoner* thereby focusing on the chronotopic points of intersection as well as the galactic intervals.

The Village Connection

Learned or Information-Obsessed?

McLuhan's global village, consisting of interactive communication networks encompassing the whole of mankind, puts into question the very nature of this communication. Is it knowledge that man is searching for or is it simply a matter of acquiring as much information within as little time as possible? *The Prisoner* puts this question to the test. In "The General" we learn that learning by rote is in fact learning to adjust to an information-centric society.

Human Numerical Categorization

Patrick McGoohan has admitted that *The Prisoner*'s numerical categorization of its citizens was based on his own "impatience with the numerology of society and the way we're made into ciphers". This is further rooted in the notion that, according to McGoohan, "We're progressing too fast" and since we "can't rebel against everything", including progress, "[We've] got to live with it – that's what makes us prisoners" (Troyer

& McGoohan, 1977). In the same respect, McLuhan concluded that technological progress infringes on privacy and that, in the Electronic Age, private identity is at risk.

<center>Privacy Invasion and Identity Loss</center>

The global village blurs the boundaries of time and space in the same manner that *The Prisoner*'s Village negates space-time boundaries. The "electronic network" of the global village is best exemplified by The Village's all-pervasive surveillance network. In the posthumously published article "Living at the Speed of Light" (1979b), McLuhan both bluntly and accurately predicts a first world society where electronic technology intersects with low human expectations. Published in *Macleans* less than a week after his death, this article eerily forecasts the phenomenally quickened rise of communist China "under electronic conditions in a single generation" (p. 32) as well as the dissolution of private identity defined as "the narcissistic involvement of everybody in everybody else's image" (p. 33)[1]. The height of McLuhan's dire pessimism resides chillingly in his statement: "Canada (along with North America) will become a society of non-achievers, intent on *being* rather than *becoming*" (p. 33). One particular *Prisoner* episode that articulates this "narcissistic involvement" and "society of non-achievers" is "A Change of Mind". Number 6's privacy is violated, as is his desire for privacy, when he is deemed "anti-social". Refusing to integrate into The Village community makes him an "unmutual" and an outcast. It is not long before he is physically corralled by a mob of Villagers and brought to The Village hospital where he is forced to undergo a procedure called "Instant Social Conversion".

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[1] This can easily be equated with *Facebook*.

<u>Violence</u>

As previously discussed in chapter one, McLuhan and Fiore argue, "Every new technology necessitates a new war". This war is initiated by people trying to control new media using outdated methods for understanding them. Part of the reason for the revolutionary war in "Fall Out" is because of the technocratic society within The Village. But, as McLuhan theorized, "It is the environment that changes people, not the technology" (see chapter two). Similarly, it is not Village technology that changes its inhabitants; it is the Village environment that changes them. Like the global village's artist and dropout, Number 6 remains *the* individual always attempting to understand his new environment. On another level, people resort to violence when they "have suddenly been flipped from one situation to another without warning" and are thereby "minus" identity (McLuhan, 1979a, p. 280). The Prisoner struggles to relocate his identity. Just as McLuhan has claimed that men "mistake their own distorted reflections for reality" (as discussed in chapter two), the Prisoner's reality in The Village has become distorted. When Number 6 discovers that he and Number 1 are one and the same, he lashes out violently.

Thesis Approach Reconsidered

<u>Psychoanalysis and Sociology</u>

For the purpose of making conjunctions between the McLuhan – McGoohan texts, I decided to use Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope. However, further research could entail a psychoanalytic and sociological approach. Some psychoanalytic theorists that should be considered include Sigmund Freud, John Locke, Carl Jung, and Jacques

Lacan. The sociological theories of Erving Goffman, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman partially complement the theories of the aforementioned psychoanalysts.

Sigmund Freud explores the origin of civilization in his 1930 novel *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Freud explains that "science and technology" enabled man to create "things" in order to acquire "cultural acquisition" (p. 75). Furthermore, he claims that these things are responsible for mankind "becom[ing] a kind of prosthetic God" (p. 76). Contrasting Freud's theories to McLuhan's assertion that electronic technology "mimics us" (*McLuhan's Wake*) and his "Narcissus narcosis" theory, would be interesting. The question as to whether or not electronic technology is "an extension of our central nervous system" and a "realistic playback of ourselves", as McLuhan suggests (see chapter two), can be debated further. It should be noted that Richard Cavell's *McLuhan in Space* (2003) has outlined the main difference between Freud and McLuhan: "Whereas Freud sought to present civilization as natural, in that it grew out of certain basic desires, civilization was for McLuhan the product of a specific set of technologies" (p. 45).

In another respect, Freud's theories dealing with the "latent" content of dreams, which consist of submerged or repressed feelings and secrets, were highly influential in the field of psychology during the '60s. A Freudian analysis of *The Prisoner* episodes dealing with dreams and consciousness (specifically "A. B. and C." and "Living in Harmony") would prove beneficial.

Freud's studies on the unconscious launched the field of psychoanalysis. These theories can be contrasted with those of John Locke, Carl Jung, Erving Goffman, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman when investigating "the individual in opposition to the collective" within both the global village and *The Prisoner*. Locke, known for having

distinguished and defined modern consciousness as the consciousness of oneself, has discussed the creation of the individual in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689). Jung investigates "ego-consciousness" in his book *The Undiscovered Self* (1957). From a sociological perspective, Goffman's theory of social interaction as theatrical performance, Berger and Luckman's exploration of the social determination of individual consciousness, and Berger's (1963) claim that society has already created a "kaleidoscope of roles and identities" (p. 106) that we are to embody for different situations, can all be applied to this thesis. The theories of Goffman, Berger, and Luckman can be used, to analyze the confrontation between Number 6 and Number 1 in *The Prisoner* as well as McLuhan's assertion of identity loss in a village environment, in order to determine whether "society exists only as individuals are conscious of it" or whether "individual consciousness is socially determined" (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 78).

Jacques Lacan's notion of the "real" and of the "imaginary" could also be applied to both the global village and *The Prisoner*[2]. The moment when Number 6 pulls off the masks of Number 1 to reveal that a replica of himself is looking back, makes both the Prisoner and the viewing audience question who the "real" Number 6 is and which one is "imaginary". This scene fuels the interpretation that The Village may possibly be a figment of the Prisoner's imagination or the manifestation of his dreams. Lacan's theories coincide nicely with Baudrillard's "simulacra". We learn that in "Living in Harmony" the Prisoner experiencs an hallucinogen-induced illusion, which is one

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[2] In addition to theorizing on "the subject" and "the real", Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973) analyzes the "Freudian unconscious".

example which forces him to question and then put into perspective the authentic and the non-authentic – using his auditory, tactile, and visual senses.

The Baudrillard Connection

Another avenue for deconstructing the global village and *The Prisoner* would be a thorough investigation into and application of Jean Baudrillard's theories. As previously discussed, his theories of "the hypperreal" and of "simulacra" correspond with McLuhan's theories on television and the "disembodied" (see chapter two's section "Origins of the Global Village"), as well as the postmodern discourse surrounding *The Prisoner* (see chapter three's section "Utopia, Dystopia, or Anti-Utopia?"). Although there remains no text discussing *The Prisoner* – Baudrillard connection, nonetheless, Baudrillard's theories definitely frame the postmodern debate surrounding "the real" and "imaginary" of *The Prisoner*'s Village. As for the McLuhan – Baudrillard connection, several have investigated this, especially Gary Genosko's *McLuhan and Baudrillard: The Masters of Implosion* (1999). Genosko explores how Baudrillard "turns McLuhan's sense of implosion inside out" (p. 94), contrasts "the 'tribes' of the global village" (p. 106) to Baudrillard's theories of "retribalization" (p. 110), and situates both men within postmodern discourse. A Baudrillardian application exploring the McLuhan – McGoohan texts within postmodernity would be a relevant investigation.

Further Research

Further investigation into the origins of *The Prisoner* might be of valid consideration for the continuation of this thesis project. With so many of McLuhan's theories and predictions complementing so many aspects of *The Prisoner*, it would be interesting to find out whether Patrick McGoohan was indeed familiar with McLuhan's

work. Interviewing Patrick McGoohan would be a constructive possibility for future research. However, there remains a significant barrier in attempting this task: McGoohan purposefully avoids discussing his work. Kenneth Griffith maintains, "It's impossible to get close to McGoohan because he's such a volatile and private man" (qtd. in Davies, 2002, p. 60). A former *Prisoner* Appreciation Society member, Barbara Pruett, had the distinct pleasure of interviewing McGoohan in 1985. She articulated McGoohan's personality, persona, and character in an article she wrote: "You almost never learn how he arrived at his thoughts and beliefs. It's impossible to talk at length with him, without coming away from the conversation impressed by the versatility and intellect of the man" (qtd. in Langley, 2007, p. 240).

The possibility of interviewing Eric and Stephanie McLuhan, as well as director David Cronenberg is also a consideration. Cronenberg studied under McLuhan in the early '70s and his horror film *Videodrome* (1983) might be considered a loose exposé on McLuhan and his theories about the effects of television. Additionally, Booker (2002) points out that *Videodrome* displays similar "motifs" to those from *The Prisoner* episode "The General" (p. 82); for example, the television is used as a device for mind control of large populations in both works. From this it could be deduced that both McLuhan and McGoohan had an impact on Cronenberg, (and Cronenberg did pay homage to McGoohan by casting him in his sci-fi thriller *Scanners* (1981)).

Conclusion

Late in his life, McLuhan was often emotional about the future onslaught of surveillance satellites and computers that would result in mankind's loss of personal freedom and identity (Marchand, 1989, p. 250). *The Prisoner* illustrates well McLuhan's

predictions. Within the confines of the small Village, Villagers are subjected to a loss of personal freedom and privacy; their humanity has been diminished (as they have become mere numbers), their resistance has been compromised, and their psyches so weakened that conformity is inevitable and escape is futile. *The Prisoner* suggests that it is impossible for the individual to flourish in a totalitarian regime. Gregory (1997) believes *The Prisoner* serves as a prophesy for the future: "His warning is essentially the same as that delivered by many other widely misunderstood prophets throughout the ages – that humanity is in constant danger of sacrificing its vitality, of destroying its identity, of losing its soul" (p. 214).

Marshall McLuhan and Patrick McGoohan both see the "village" as an enslaving technological reality, but *only* if individuals do not 1) understand their environment, and 2) challenge their environment. McLuhan affirms, "The idea of immunity from environment and environment created by media … is a cherished illusion" (McLuhan & Stearn, 1967, p. 281). McGoohan aptly explains, "Number 1 tries to run The Village his way if we let him. We have to up and challenge the so-and-so". To merely allow the circumstances of our lives inhibit our freedoms and essentially our individuality is what is most problematic to mankind, preventing adaptation and change. For Patrick McGoohan, "The Village is symbolic – we are all prisoners of this or that, many things – each his own Village" (Carrazé, Gelli, & McGoohan, 1989, p. 6).

In the same manner that McLuhan's pedagogy has encouraged many to theorize on and re-appropriate his global village, McGoohan's exegesis, or lack thereof, has fueled the ongoing conundrum of *The Prisoner*. The very fact that *The Prisoner* is an allegorical, polysemic text and that McLuhan's theorems are mosaics, leaves all

interpretation and formulation of meaning to the individual, thereby putting emphasis solely on the individual. Patrick McGoohan and Marshall McLuhan encouraged us to use our own imaginations and formulate our own conclusions. If, in the 21st century, the planet becomes one big global village and our imprisonment within it has no physical boundaries, then the solution to understanding this village world rests in how we decode our environment. For McLuhan, the boundaries of the Matrix are to be exploded open by the artist and the dropout. For McGoohan, once we realize our own dual nature, our psyche can lead us to a total awareness. The success of both McLuhan's theories and *The Prisoner*'s impact remains a conundrum. How could something the majority of the population do not understand become so popular? Both McLuhan and *The Prisoner* did not set out to solve any conundrums, but intended to question and "probe" our own environment and our individual roles within that environment. McLuhan and McGoohan jointly challenged societal discourses. Not only are *The Prisoner* and the global village a critique of 1960s culture, but the timeless, universal qualities of these texts renders them important socio-political and cultural critiques of the 21st century.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table A1: Patrick McGoohan's *Prisoner* Order

1. "Arrival"
2. "Free for All"
3. "Dance of the Dead"
4. "Checkmate"
5. "The Chimes of Big Ben"
6. "Once Upon a Time"
7. "Fall Out"

Table A2: The U.K. *Prisoner* Order

1. "Arrival"
2. "The Chimes of Big Ben"
3. "A. B. and C."
4. "Free for All"
5. "The Schizoid Man"
6. "The General"
7. "Many Happy Returns"
8. "Dance of the Dead"
9. "Checkmate"
10. "Hammer into Anvil"
11. "It's Your Funeral"
12. "A Change of Mind"
13. "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling"
14. "Living in Harmony"
15. "The Girl Who Was Death"
16. "Once Upon a Time"
17. "Fall Out"

Table A3: The U.S. *Prisoner* Order

1. "Arrival"
2. "The Chimes of Big Ben"
3. "A. B. and C."
4. "Free for All"
5. "The Schizoid Man"
6. "The General"
7. "Many Happy Returns"
8. "Dance of the Dead"
9. "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling"
10. "It's Your Funeral"
11. "Checkmate"
12. "Living in Harmony"
13. "A Change of Mind"
14. "Hammer into Anvil"
15. "The Girl Who Was Death"
16. "Once Upon A Time"
17. "Fall Out"

Appendix B

Table B1: *The Prisoner* Episodes (UK Order) – Main Credits and Summary

Overall Credits:
Executive Producer: Patrick McGoohan
Producer: David Tomblin
Script Editor (episodes 1-12 and 16): George Markstein
Theme Music: Ron Grainer
Artistic Director: Jack Shampan
Director of Photography: Brendan J. Stafford
Made for ITC Productions by Everyman Films Ltd.
Recurring Characters: Patrick McGoohan (Number 6/the Prisoner); Angelo Muscat (The
    Butler); Peter Swanwick (The Supervisor in episodes 1-2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 16-17)

The Episodes:

1 – "Arrival"
Initial UK Transmission Date: October 1st, 1967
Director: Don Chaffey
Guest Stars: Guy Doleman (Number 2); George Baker (New Number 2);
    Paul Eddington (Cobb); Virginia Maskell (Woman)
Summary: After resigning as a top secret spy for the British government, the shows
    protagonist is abducted from his London home and brought to a remote town in an
    unknown location referred to only as The Village. The Village refers to its
    citizens as numbers; the protagonist is known as Number 6. Number 6 is the
    Prisoner.

2 – "The Chimes of Big Ben"
Initial UK Transmission Date: October 8th, 1967
Director: Don Chaffey
Guest Stars: Leo McKern (Number 2); Nadia Gray (Nadia/Number 7); Richard Wattis
    (Fotheringay); Finlay Currie (Old General); Kevin Stoney (Colonel)
Summary: Number 6 plans an escape with the newest member of The Village, Nadia.
    Everyone is suspect as to which side of the Iron Curtain they belong to, including
    the Prisoner.

3 – "A. B. and C."
Initial UK Transmission Date: October 15, 1967
Director: Pat Jackson
Guest Stars: Colin Gordon (Number 2); Sheila Allen (Number 14); Katherine Kath
    (Madame Engadine); Peter Bowles (A); Annette Carrell (B)
Summary: Number 2 uses a "wonder drug" to manipulate Number 6's dreams in an
    attempt to discover who the Prisoner may have been planning to sell out to after
    his resignation. Suspecting Number 2s ploy, Number 6 consciously changes the
    outcome of his dreams.

4 – "Free For All"
Initial UK Transmission Date: October 22, 1967
Director: Patrick McGoohan
Guest Stars: Eric Portman (Number 2); Rachel Herbert (Number 58)
Summary: Number 6 runs in the annual election for the position of Number 2 and
    challenges democracy within The Village, but finds that democracy is merely an
    illusion.

5 – "The Schizoid Man"
Initial UK Transmission Date: October 29, 1967
Director: Pat Jackson
Guest Stars: Anton Rodgers (Number 2); Jane Merrow (Alison)
Summary: The Prisoner is made to think he is Number 12 when a Double impersonates
    him. More than his number has changed – his appearance, his taste preferences,
    and his mannerisms have also been altered.

6 – "The General"
Initial UK Transmission Date: November 5, 1967
Director: Peter Graham Scott
Guest Stars: Colin Gordon (Number 2); John Castle (Number 12); Peter Howell
    (Professor); Betty McDowall (Professor's Wife)
Summary: The television is used as a device to subliminally transmit propaganda to
    Villagers. The information transmitted is a "speedlearn" course taught by the
    Professor with the assistance of a large computer referred to as 'The General'.
    Number 6 questions this type of learning process and sets out to "destroy the
    General".

7 – "Many Happy Returns"
Initial UK Transmission Date: November 12, 1967
Director: Patrick McGoohan (using pseudonym "Joseph Serf")
Guest Stars: Georgina Cookson (Mrs. Butterworth/Number 2); Donald Sinden (The
    Colonel); Patrick Cargill (Thorpe)
Summary: Number 6 takes full advantage of an opportunity to flee The Village when he
    wakes to find it completely deserted. He builds a raft and sets out to sea for
    twenty-five days. He eventually returns to London. But he is determined to find
    out where The Village is located.

8 – "Dance of the Dead"
Initial UK Transmission Date: November 19, 1967
Director: Don Chaffey
Guest Stars: Mary Morris (Number 2); Norma West (Number 240);
    Duncan MacRay (The Doctor); Aubrey Morris (Town Crier)
Summary: An episode with many riddles, many questions, and few answers. The Village
    prepares for the carnival. Attendance is mandatory and everyone but Number 6 is
    in costume. At the carnival Number 6 is put on trial, resembling that of the French

Revolution. The outcome of the trial is just as bizarre as some of the random situations Number 6 encounters.

9 – "Checkmate"
Initial UK Transmission Date: November 26, 1967
Director: Don Chaffey
Guest Stars: Peter Wyngarde (Number 2); Ronald Radd (The Rook);
　　　　Rosalie Crutchley (The Queen); Patricia Jessel (Psychiatrist);
　　　　George Coulouris (Old Man/Chessplayer)
Summary: A human chess game forces the Prisoner to realize that fellow Villagers have individualistic tendencies. Number 6 seeks out these individuals to plan a group escape by sea.

10 – "Hammer into Anvil"
Initial UK Transmission Date: December 3, 1967
Director: Pat Jackson
Guest Stars: Peter Cargill (Number 2); Basil Hoskins (Number 14)
Summary: Number 6 turns the tables on Number 2 to break down his mental acuity. Number 6 uses Village surveillance to his advantage in an attempt to make Number 2 believe he is a spy investigating Village authority.

11 – "It's Your Funeral"
Initial UK Transmission Date: December 10, 1967
Director: Robert Asher
Guest Stars: Darren Nesbit ("new" Number 2); Annette Andre (Watchmaker's daughter)
　　　　Martin Miller (Watchmaker); Mark Eden (Number 100/Number 2's Associate);
　　　　Andre Van Gysengham ("old" Number 2)
Summary: Number 6 tries to prevent the assassination of Number 2 so that fellow prisoners will not be punished.

12 – "A Change of Mind"
Initial UK Transmission Date: December 17, 1967
Director: Patrick McGoohan (using pseudonym "Joseph Serf")
Guest Stars: John Sharp (Number 2); Angela Browne (Number 86)
Summary: Number 6 is deemed "anti-social" for simply desiring privacy. He is further labeled "Unmutual", "Rebel", and "Reactionary". Finally, after resisting he is physically corralled by a mob of Villagers and brought to The Village hospital where he is forced to undergo a procedure called "Instant Social Conversion".

13 – "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling"
Initial UK Transmission Date: December 24, 1967
Director: Pat Jackson
Guest Stars: Nigel Stock (The Colonel/The Prisoner); Clifford Evans (Number 2);
　　　　Zena Walker (Janet); Hugo Schuster (Seltzman); John Wentworth (Sir Charles)
Summary: The Prisoner wakens in his London home. It is not until he looks into the

mirror that he realizes his mind has been transferred into another man's body via "The Seltzman machine". Only Dr. Seltzman can reverse the mind swap procedure. The Prisoner's mission is to locate Dr. Seltzman.

14 – "Living in Harmony"
Initial UK Transmission Date: December 31, 1967
Director: David Tomblin
Guest Stars: Alexis Kanner (The Kid); David Bauer (The Judge); Valerie French (Cathy)
Summary: The Prisoner finds himself in a 19th century American frontier town called Harmony. As in The Village, he cannot escape. To save a woman's life, he accepts the position of town Sheriff.

15 – "The Girl Who Was Death"
Initial UK Transmission Date: January 7, 1968
Director: David Tomblin
Guest Stars: Justine Lord (Sonia); Kenneth Griffith (Dr. Schnipps);
        Alexis Kanner (Photographer)
Summary: The Prisoner follows a woman in white who he suspects is responsible for a political death during a cricket match. But the woman in white is always one step ahead of him and attempts to kill him. This woman turns out to be the daughter of a mad scientist known as Dr. Schnipps who intends to destroy London with a rocket. This spy spoof turns out to be a children's storybook told to a group of Village children by the Prisoner.

16 – "Once Upon A Time"
Initial UK Transmission Date: January 28, 1968
Director: Patrick McGoohan
Guest Stars: Leo McKern (Number 2)
Summary: Leo McKern resumes his role as Number 2. In a final attempt at breaking down Number 6's resistance, Number 2 uses a psychological procedure known as "Degree Absolute". Degree Absolute is the ultimate battle of wills between Number 6 and Number 2.

17 – "Fall Out"
Initial UK Transmission Date: February 4, 1968
Director: Patrick McGoohan
Guest Stars: Alexis Kanner (Number 48); Leo McKern (Number 2);
        Kenneth Griffith (Head Magistrate)
Summary: Number 6 is given the opportunity to finally meet Number 1. But before he does so, Number 48 and Number 2 undergo a Kafkaesque trial. The Prisoner is recognized as the "only individual" and is given the opportunity to address the assembly. The Prisoner is "free to go" and return to his London home, but before doing so he begins a revolution.

Table B2: Films Referred to in the Text

A Fistful of Dollars. (1964). (dir. Sergio Leone). Italy, Spain, and West Germany.

Annie Hall. (1977). (dir. Woody Allen). USA.

For a Few Dollars More. (1965). (dir. Sergio Leone). Italy, Spain, West Germany, and Monaco.

The Last Knight (2008). (dir. Christopher Nolan). USA.

The Manchurian Candidate. (1962). (dir. John Frankenheimer). USA.

North by Northwest. (1959). (dir. Alfred Hitchcock). USA.

Scanners. (1981). (dir. David Cronenberg). Canada.

Videodrome. (1983). (dir. David Cronenberg). Canada.

Table B3: TV Programs Referred to in the Text

Bonanza. (1959-1973). USA: NBC National Broadcast Corporation

Danger Man. (aka *Secret Agent*) (1960-1962; 1964-1967). UK: ATV Associated Television Company Ltd.
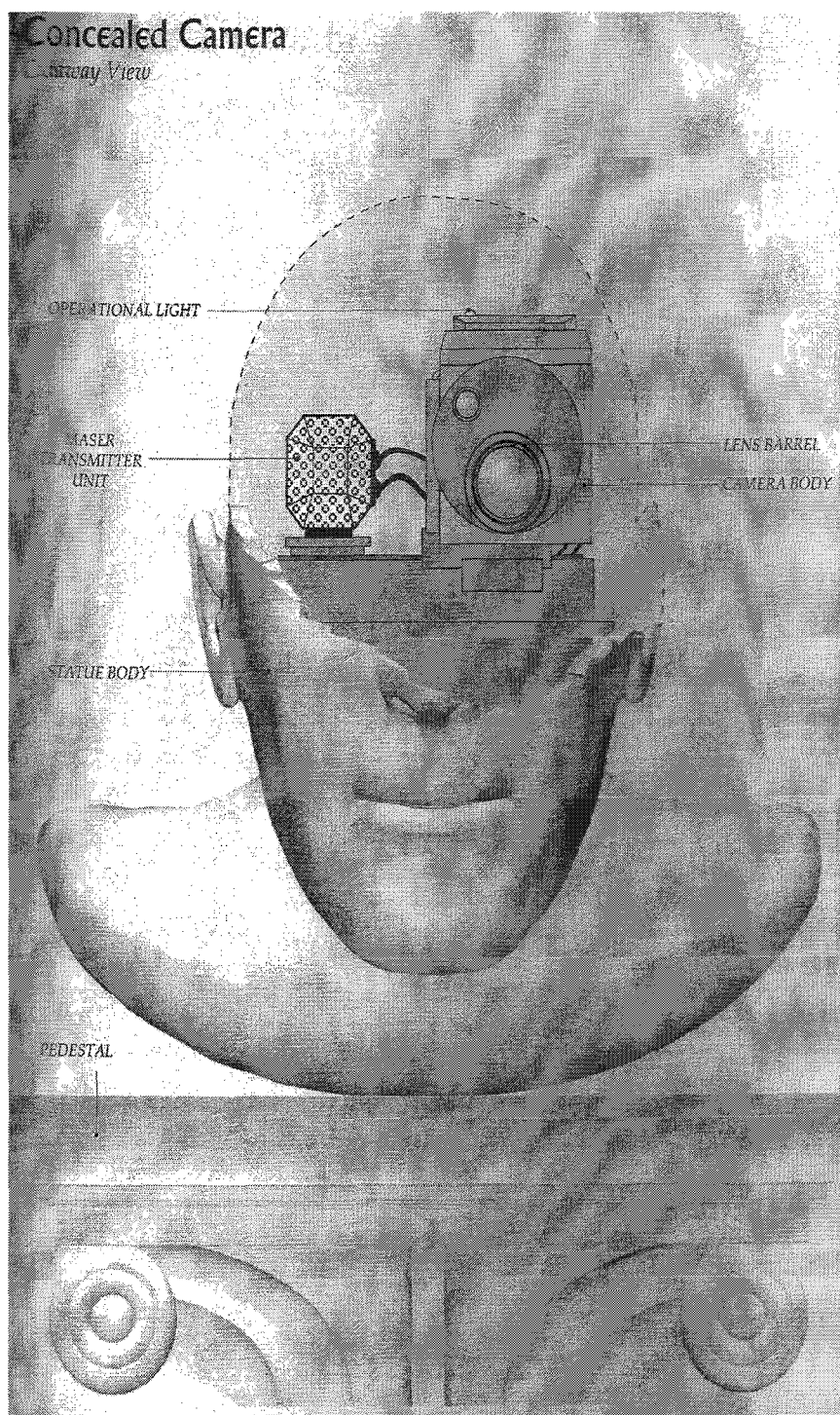
The Invisible Man. (1958). UK: ATV Associated Television Company Ltd.

The Saint. (1962-1969). UK: ATV Associated Television Company Ltd.

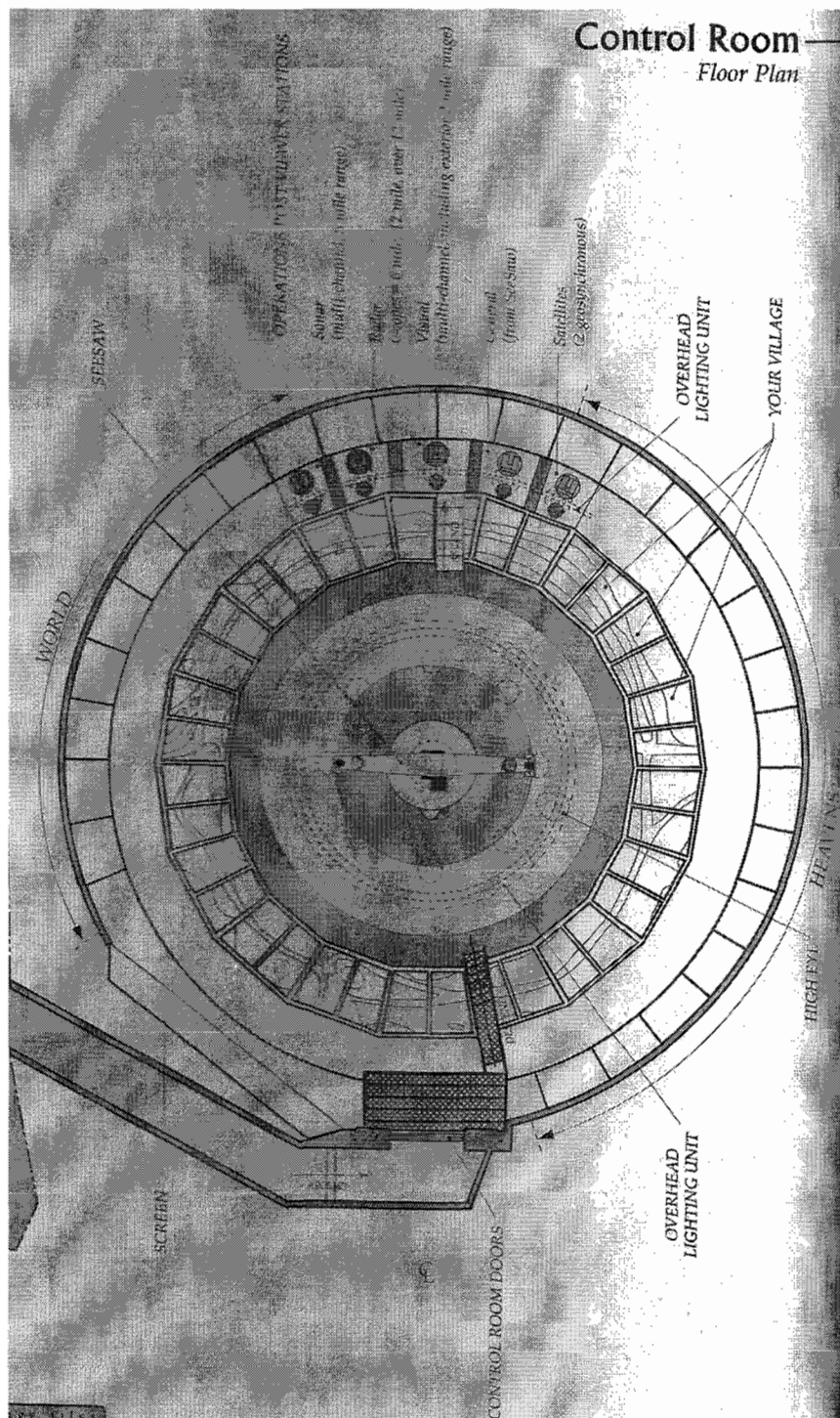*The Simpsons.* (1989-present). USA: Fox/Gracie Films.

Appendix C

Figure 1C: The Village's Concealed Camera
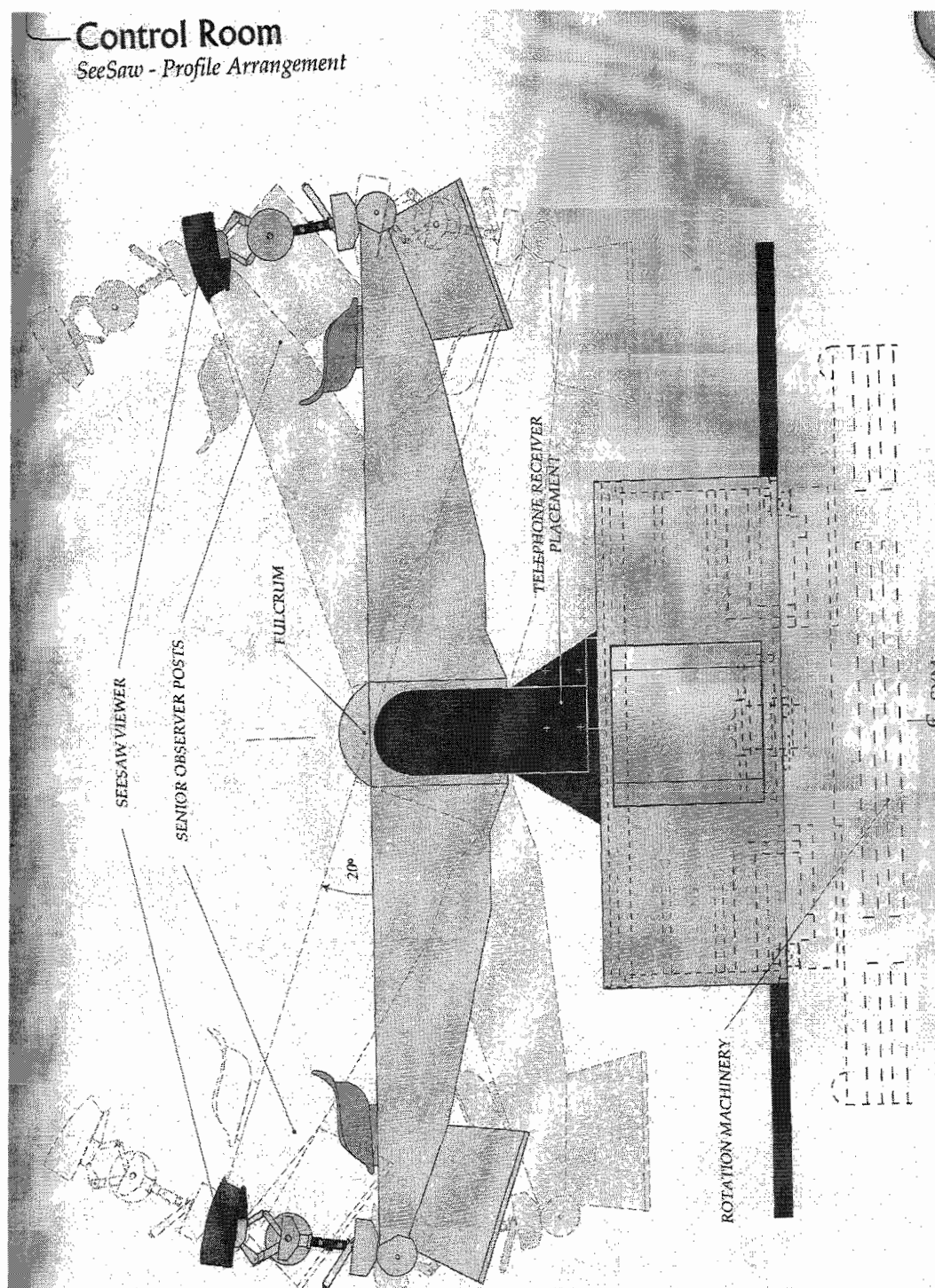

The Village Files (Palgut, 2002, p. 27)

Figure 2C: Control Room Floor Plan
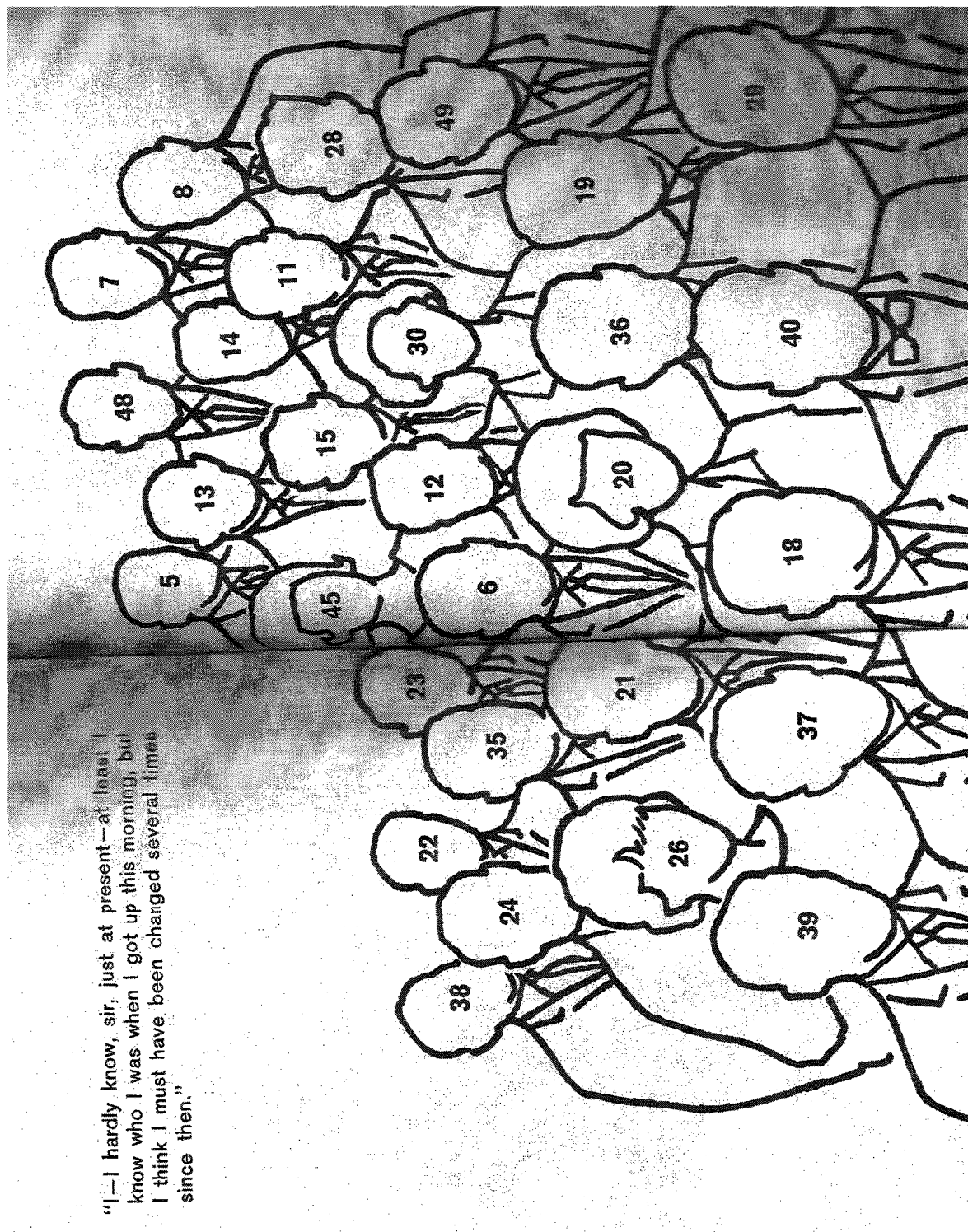

The Village Files (Palgut, 2002, p. 20)

Figure 3C: Revolving See-Saw Observation Mechanism

The Village Files (Palgut, 2002, p. 21)

Appendix D

Figure 1D: Human Numerical Categorization

The Medium is the Massage (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, pp. 154-155).