2/2024 W MEDIA LITERACY AN CHANGE THE WORLD on Adams & Arlene Goldbard Democracy requires craical thinking Almost everyone agrees that the ability to read and write should be a fundamental human right. extended to everyone. We understand that a person who cannot read is in thrall to those who can. You cannot enter the developed world as a all human subject unless you can break and mister the code of the word. Today, literacy doesn't stop with words and numbers. To enter social and political debates as a full participant one must also break the thrall of the magle box and master its secrets. If we fail to adopt media literacy–a basic knowledge of how and why niedia images are chosen as an essential goal of public cultural policy, we doom ourselves to be forever in the grip of the powerful interests who own and control the mass media. The global proliferation of electronic mass media has excited deep feeling and passionate debate. Most alarming to observers around the world has been the passivity the mass media seem to breed in most people, it displaces and undermines social life, community activities, and other creative pursuits. We jokingly call it being couch potatoes. As a society, we need to foster a more dynamic relationship between the citizenry and the media, one that does not stop when the program ends and the TV is turned off. For those who aspire to greater democracy in public life, our greatest challenge is transforming the media into a tool for democratic change. Achieving this will require starting from square one. People without some special interest in the field find it hard to grapple with the idea that media is a public and political issue. This is not surprising since one of the things our mass media do best is pound home the inevitability of the way that they are currently organized, ideally suited to their role as the pep squad for our consumer society. Their self–ratifying quality makes it hard even to imagine that the media can be changed in any way. The nassive, interlocking complex of business interests that make up the mainstreans media have been allowed to develop pretty much as they wish, in the pursuit of commercie success. Meanwhile, the essential public issue– the media role as our primary public forum, its tendency to erode democratic life–has been pushed further and further into the background It is necessary that we think about and promote a public policy that looks at what role media should play in our society and how people can participate in shaping television anc other mass media that affect all of our lives. Suc a public policy could counter the imbalances that result from the domination of a country's cultural industries by commercial interests. We cannot expect the commercial arena to accommodate the goals that should be the essence of this public policy: nurturing diversa stimulating and supporting creativity, and encouraging active participation and interactie in community and political life. Media' is technically plural (the singular is medienor it is used both as singular and plural in modem trape. Thent you may see either "media ib" or "media are" and both arc on Source: The Independent Füm & Video Mouthly Ange September 1989 ENDING TIME TOTAL TIME 491 WORDS MIN WORD Scanné avec CamScanne

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