

Essential  
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## 2

# The Mechanical Bride

### Preface

Ours is the first age in which many thousands of the best-trained individual minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind. To get inside in order to manipulate, exploit, control is the object now. And to generate heat not light is the intention. To keep everybody in the helpless state engendered by prolonged mental rutting is the effect of many ads and much entertainment alike.

Since so many minds are engaged in bringing about this condition of public helplessness, and since these programs of commercial education are so much more expensive and influential than the relatively puny offerings sponsored by schools and colleges, it seemed fitting to devise a method for reversing the process. Why not use the new commercial education as a means to enlightening its intended prey? Why not assist the public to observe consciously the drama which is intended to operate upon it unconsciously?

As this method was followed, "A Descent Into The Maelstrom" by Edgar Poe kept coming to mind. Poe's sailor saved himself by studying the action of the whirlpool and by co-operating with it. The present book likewise makes few attempts to attack

the very considerable currents and pressures set up around us today by the mechanical agencies of the press, radio, movies, and advertising. It does attempt to set the reader at the center of the revolving picture created by these affairs where he may observe the action that is in progress and in which everybody is involved. From the analysis of that action, it is hoped, many individual strategies may suggest themselves.

But it is seldom the business of this book to take account of such strategies.

Poe's sailor says that when locked in by the whirling walls and the numerous objects which floated in that environment:

*I must have been delirious, for I even sought amusement in speculating upon the relative velocities of their several descents toward the foam below.*

It was this amusement born of his rational detachment as a spectator of his own situation that gave him the thread which led him out of the Labyrinth. And it is in the same spirit that this book is offered as an amusement. Many who are accustomed to the note of moral indignation will mistake this amusement for mere indifference. But the time for anger and protest is in the early stages of a new process. The present stage is extremely advanced. Moreover, it is full, not only of destructiveness but also of promises of rich new developments to which moral indignation is a very poor guide.

Most of the exhibits in this book

have been selected because of their typical and familiar quality. They represent a world of social myths or forms and speak a language we both know and do not know. After making his study of the nursery rhyme, "Where are you going, my pretty maid?" the anthropologist C. B. Lewis pointed out that "the folk has neither part nor lot in the making of folklore." That is also true of the folklore of industrial man, so much of which stems from the laboratory, the studio, and the advertising agencies. But amid the diversity of our inventions and abstract techniques of production and distribution there will be found a great degree of cohesion and unity. This consistency is not conscious in origin or effect and seems to arise from a sort of collective dream. For that reason, as well as because of the widespread popularity of these objects and processes, they are here referred to as "the folklore of industrial man." They are unfolded by exhibit and commentary as a single landscape. A whirling phantasmagoria can be grasped only when arrested for contemplation. And this very arrest is also a release from the usual participation.

The unity is not imposed upon this diversity, since any other selection of exhibits would reveal the same dynamic patterns. The fact that the present exhibits are not selected to prove a case but to reveal a complex situation, it is the effort of the book to illustrate by frequent cross-reference to other materials that are not included here. And it is the procedure of the book to use the commentaries on the

exhibits merely as a means of releasing some of their intelligible meaning. No effort has been made to exhaust their meaning.

The various ideas and concepts introduced in the commentaries are intended to provide positions from which to examine the exhibits. They are not conclusions in which anybody is expected to rest but are intended merely as points of departure. This is an approach which it is hard to make clear at a time when most books offer a single idea as a means of unifying a troupe of observations. Concepts are provisional affairs for apprehending reality; their value is in the grip they provide. This book, therefore, tries to present at once representative aspects of the reality and a wide range of ideas for taking hold of it. The ideas are very secondary devices for clambering up and over rock faces. Those readers who undertake merely to query the ideas will miss their use for getting at the material.

A film expert, speaking of the value of the movie medium for selling North to South America, noted that:

*the propaganda value of this simultaneous audio-visual impression is very high, for it standardizes thought by supplying the spectator with a ready-made visual image before he has time to conjure up an interpretation of his own.*

This book reverses that process by providing typical visual imagery of our environment and dislocating it into meaning by inspection. Where visual

symbols have been employed in an effort to paralyze the mind, they are here used as a means of energizing it. It is observable that the more illusion and falsehood needed to maintain any given state of affairs, the more tyranny is needed to maintain the illusion and falsehood. Today the tyrant rules not by club or fist, but, disguised as a market researcher, he shepherds his flocks in the ways of utility and comfort.

Because of the circulating point of view in this book, there is no need for it to be read in any special order. Any part of the book provides one or more views of the same social landscape. Ever since Buckhardt saw that the meaning of Machiavelli's method was to turn the state into a work of art by the rational manipulation of power, it has been an open possibility to apply the method of art analysis to the critical evaluation of society. That is attempted here. The Western world, dedicated since the sixteenth century

to the increase and consolidation of the power of the state, has developed an artistic unity of effect which makes artistic criticism of that effect quite feasible. Art criticism is free to point to the various means employed to get the effect, as well as to decide whether the effect was worth attempting. As such, with regard to the modern state, it can be a citadel of inclusive awareness amid the dim dreams of collective consciousness.

I wish to acknowledge the advantage I have enjoyed in reading unpublished views of Professor David Riesman on the consumer mentality. To Professor W. T. Easterbrook I owe many enlightening conversations on the problems of bureaucracy and enterprise. And to Professor Felix Giovanelli I am in debt not only for the stimulus of discussion but for his prolonged assistance with the many publishing problems which have attended the entire work.

## The Mechanical Bride

Anybody who takes time to study the techniques of pictorial reportage in the popular press and magazines will easily find a dominant pattern composed of sex and technology. Hovering around this pair will usually be found images of hectic speed, mayhem, violence, and sudden death. *Look* and *Life* are only the most obvious places in which to study this cluster of interests. Amid what otherwise may appear as a mere hodgepodge of isolated events, this very consistent pattern stands out. I do not pretend to understand all of it, but it is there for everyone to study, and it is certainly linked to the patterns noted in "Love-Goddess Assembly Line." Many a time have the legs in this exhibit stood on their pedestal by the tall column of *Life's* staff, emblemizing the trick that keeps the big team clicking. They are the slick and visible sign of the dynamo purring contentedly in the Time and Life building, but not only there. And they need to be seen in association with those window displays of car engines on a revolving pedestal, with pistons sliding smoothly

*Noticed any very spare parts lately?*

*Have you got what it takes to hook a date? See us for the highest bid on your old model.*

*"The walk," "the legs," "the body," "the hips," "the look," "the lips." Did she fall off a wall? Call all the king's horses and men.*

while a loudspeaker conveys Strauss waltzes to those on the sidewalk.

To the mind of the modern girl, legs, like busts, are power points which she has been taught to tailor, but as parts of the success kit rather than erotically or sensuously. She swings her legs from the hip with masculine drive and confidence. She knows that "a long-legged gal can go places." As such, her legs are not intimately associated with her taste or with her unique self but are merely display objects like the grill work on a car. They are date-baited power levers for the management of the male audience.

Thus, for example, the legs "on a Pedestal" presented by the Gotham Hosiery company are one facet of our "replaceable parts" cultural dynamics. In a specialist world it is natural that we should select some single part of the body for attention. Al Capp expressed this ironically when he had Li'l Abner fall desperately in love with the pictorial scrap of a woman's knee, saying (January 21, 1950), "Why *not?* Some boys fall in love with the expression on a gal's *face*. Ah is a knee man!" Four months and many lethal and romantic adventures later, Li'l Abner was closing in on the owner of the knee.

The "Phantom Pencil Seam Nylons" ad presents another set of spare parts against a romantic landscape. Some people have heard of "Ideas with legs," but everybody today has been brought up on pictures like these, which would rather appear to be "legs with ideas." Legs today have been indoctrinated. They are self-conscious. They speak. They have

huge audiences. They are taken on dates. And in varying degrees the ad agencies have extended this specialist treatment to every other segment of the feminine anatomy. A car plus a well-filled pair of nylons is a recognized formula for both feminine and male success and happiness. Ads like these not only express but also encourage that strange dissociation of sex not only from the human person but even from the unity of the body. This visual and not particularly voluptuous character of commercially sponsored glamour is perhaps what gives it so heavy a narcissistic quality. The brittle, self-conscious pose of the mannequin suggests the activities of competitive display rather than spontaneous sensuality. And the smartly turned-out girl walks and behaves like a being who *sees* herself as a slick object rather than is aware of herself as a person. "Ever see a dream walking?" asks a glamour ad. The Hiroshima bomb was named "Gilda" in honor of Rita Hayworth.

Current sociological study of the precocious dating habits of middle-class children reveals that neither sex nor personal interest in other persons is responsible so much as an eagerness to be "in there pitching." This may be reassuring to the parents of the young, but it may create insoluble problems for the same youngsters later on. When sex later becomes a personal actuality, the established feminine pattern of sex as an instrument of power, in an industrial and consumer contest, is a liability. The switch-over from competitive display to personal affec-

tion is not easy for the girl. Her mannequin past is in the way. On the male, this display of power to which he is expected to respond with cars and dates has various effects. The display of current feminine sex power seems to many males to demand an impossible virility of assertion.

*Fair tresses man's imperial race  
ensnare,  
And beauty draws us with a single  
hair.*

Men are readily captured by such gentleness and guile, but, surrounded by legs on pedestals, they feel not won but slugged. To this current exaggeration of date-bait some people reply that the glamour business, like the entertainment world, is crammed with both women-haters and men-haters of dubious sex polarity. Hence the malicious insistence on a sort of abstract sex. But whatever truth there may be in this, there is more obvious truth in the way in which sex has been exaggerated by getting hooked to the mechanisms of the market and the impersonal techniques of industrial production.

As early as 1872, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* explored the curious ways in which machines were coming to resemble organisms not only in the way they obtained power by digestion of fuel but in their capacity to evolve ever new types of themselves with the help of the machine tenders. This organic character of the machines, he saw, was more than matched by the speed with which people who minded

them were taking on the rigidity and thoughtless behaviorism of the machine. In a pre-industrial world a great swordsman, horseman, or animal-breeder was expected to take on some of the character of his interests. But how much more is this the case with great crowds of people who spend their waking energies on using and improving machines with powers so very much greater than theirs.

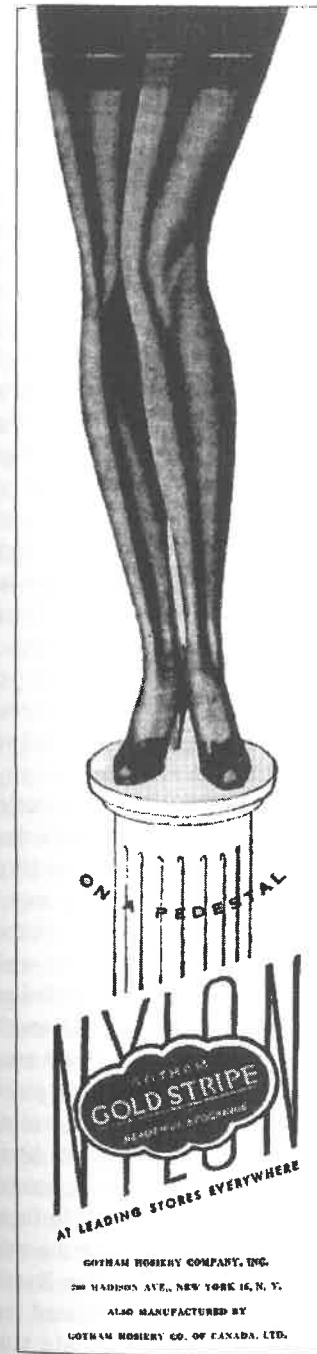
It would be a mistake, therefore, to equate the intensity of the current glamour campaigns and techniques with any corresponding new heights of a man-woman madness. Sex weariness and sex sluggishness are, in measure at least, both the cause and increasingly the outcome of these campaigns. No sensitivity of response could long survive such a barrage. What does survive is the view of the human body as a sort of love-machine capable merely of specific thrills. This extremely behavioristic view of sex, which reduces sex experience to a problem in mechanics and hygiene, is exactly what is implied and expressed on all sides. It makes inevitable both the divorce between physical pleasure and reproduction and also the case for homosexuality. In the era of thinking machines, it would be surprising, indeed, if the love-machine were not thought of as well.

Woman appears as a disagreeable but challenging sex machine in Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County*. But the hero, as an expert sex mechanic, does a skillful job on a variety of these coldly intricate and maxfactorized products of the assem-

bly line. There may be some relation between the fact that England, the first country to develop know-how and industrial technique, was also the first to develop the *ideal* of the frigid woman.

In Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?*, Kit, the heroine, is fascinated by the ferocious little robot that is Sammy. She hates him but is curious to know what it would be like to have this dynamo of pep and drive roaring inside her. With situations of this sort we move over into territory somehow allied to sex and technology but also very closely related to destruction and death. There are some signs that sex weariness may be a factor in the cult of violence, although Wilhelm Reich, the psychologist, argues that it is a mere substitute for sex in those who have acquired the rigidities of a mechanized environment. This view is ably sponsored in G. Legman's *Love and Death*, a study of violence in comic books and literature. And his book certainly doesn't contradict anything said here. But there is surely much to be said also for the view that sadistic violence, real or fictional, in some situations is an attempt to invade persons not only sexually but metaphysically. It is an effort to pass the frontiers of sex, to achieve a more intense thrill than sex affords. There was certainly a good deal of destruction intermixed with the pleasure ideals of the Marquis de Sade.

A news item of March 2, 1950, reported the five-hour flight of a jet Vampire from coast to coast. When the pilot climbed out, he said only that "It



was rather boring." For the satiated, both sex and speed are pretty boring until the element of danger and even death is introduced. Sensation and sadism are near twins. And for those for whom the sex act has come to seem mechanical and merely the meeting and manipulation of body parts, there often remains a hunger which can be called metaphysical but which is not recognized as such, and which seeks satisfaction in physical danger, or sometimes in torture, suicide, or murder. Many of the Frankenstein fantasies depend on the horror of a synthetic robot running amok in revenge for its lack of a "soul." Is this not merely a symbolic way of expressing the actual fact that many people have become so mechanized that they feel a dim resentment at being deprived of full human status?

This is a different way of phrasing what is for Wilhelm Reich only a behavioristic fact. Too simply, he thinks of our machine landscape as an environment which makes people incapable of genital satisfaction. Therefore, he says, they break out in fascist violence. Complete and frequent genital satisfaction from the cradle to the grave is the only way, he suggests, to avoid the recurrence of the age-old vicious circle of patriarchal authority and mechanical servitude. Reflection on *Moby Dick* in his *Studies in Classic American Literature*, D. H. Lawrence saw deeper:

*So you see, the sinking of the Pequod was only a metaphysical tragedy, after all. The world goes on just the same. The ship of the soul is*

*sunk. But the machine-manipulating body works just the same: digests, chews gum, admires Botticelli, and aches with amorous love.*

Was it not the mistake of D. H. Lawrence to overlook the comedy in a situation of this type? The human person who thinks, works, or dreams himself into the role of a machine is as funny an object as the world provides. And, in fact, he can only be freed from this trap by the detaching power of wild laughter. The famous portrait of a "Nude Descending a Staircase," with its resemblance to an artichoke doing a strip tease, is a cleansing bit of fun intended to free the human robot from his dreamlike fetters. And so with Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God*, Picasso's *Doll Women*, and *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce — the latter especially being a great intellectual effort aimed at rinsing the Augean stables of speech and society with geysers of laughter. It is not a laughter or comedy to be compared with the whimsy-whamsy article of James Thurber or Ogden Nash. For the latter kind is merely a narcotic which confirms the victim in a condition he has neither the energy nor appetite to change.

In a story called "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes," by Fritz Leiber, an ad photographer gives a job to a not too promising model. Soon, however, she is "plastered all over the country" because she has the hungriest eyes in the world. "Nothing vulgar, but just the same they're looking at you with a hunger that's all sex and something

more than sex." Something similar may be said of the legs on a pedestal. Abstracted from the body that gives them their ordinary meaning, they become "something more than sex," a metaphysical enticement, a cerebral itch, an abstract torment. Mr. Leiber's girl hypnotizes the country with her hungry eyes and finally accepts the attentions of the photographer who barely escapes with his life. In this vampire, not of the blood but of spirit, he finds "the horror behind the bright billboard. . . . She's the eyes that lead you on and on and then show you death." She says to him: "I want you. I want your high spots. I want everything that's made you happy and everything that's hurt you bad. I want your first girl. . . . I want that licking. . . . I want Betty's legs. . . . I want your mother's death. . . . I want your wanting me. I want your life. Feed me, baby, feed me."

As an instance of how the curious fusion of sex, technology and death persists amid the most unlikely circumstances, the reader may be interested in a display of "Ten Years of Look" (October 29, 1946), in which the central picture was a wounded man coming home "to face it all another day down another death-swept road." Flanking him was a sprawling pin-up: "Half a million servicemen wrote in for this one." And underneath him in exactly the same posture of surrender as the pin-up girl was a nude female corpse with a rope around the neck: "Enraged Nazis hanged this Russian guerrilla." If only "for increased reading pleasure" readers should study

these editorial ghoul techniques — conscious or not as they may be — and their poetic associations of linked and contrasting imagery.

Perhaps that is what the public wants when it reaches out for the *inside* story smoking hot from the entrails of vice or innocence. That may well be what draws people to the death shows of the speedways and fills the press and magazines with close-ups of executions, suicides, and smashed bodies. A metaphysical hunger to experience everything sexually, to pluck out the heart of the mystery for a super-thrill.

*Life*, on January 5, 1948, ran a big picture captioned "Ten Seconds Before Death." A Chicago woman called the press and told them she was going to commit suicide. A photographer rushed to her apartment and snapped her. "Just as he took this anguished portrait, she brushed by him, leaped out the third-story window to her death."

This is merely an extreme instance of what is literally ghoulishness. The ghoul tears and devours human flesh in search of he knows not what. His hunger is not earthly. And a very large section of the "human interest" and "true story" activity of our time wears the face of the ghoul and the vampire. That is probably the meaning of the popular phrases "the inside dirt," the "real inside dope." There is very little stress on understanding as compared with the immediate bang of "history in the making." Get the *feel* of it. Put that

sidewalk microphone right up against the heart of that school kid who is looking at the Empire State Building for the first time. "Shirley Temple gets her first screen kiss in a picture you'll never forget," and so on.

In all such situations the role of modern technology in providing ever intenser thrills is evident. Mr. Leiber has thus written a very witty parable which shows an intuitive grasp of the mysterious links between sex, technology, and death. Many people were disagreeably surprised by the similar parable of Charlie Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux*. The wistful, self-pitying, chivalrous little figure had gone. Here instead was a lady killer in every sense. As Parker Tyler pointed out in his book *Chaplin: Last of the Clowns*, the early Charlie was a man-child seeking the security of the womb in a harsh world. In *Monsieur Verdoux* he in a sense exchanges womb for tomb. In order to have material comfort and security, he is ready to kill. But womb, tomb, and comfort have always been interchangeable symbols in his world. He was the giant killer in his first pictures, the lady killer in his last. The same mechanism of sentimentality dominates both. In other words, his is a popular dream art which works trance-like inside a situation that is never grasped or seen. And this trance seems to be what perpetuated the widely occurring cluster image of sex, technology, and death which constitutes the mystery of the mechanical bride.

## From DaVinci to Holmes

Joyce's famous remark that, "though he might have been more humble, there's no police like Holmes," contains a world of insight. It includes the modern world and elucidates it at the same instant. Joyce explored popular phraseology and heroes with a precision which this book cannot emulate. In the above phrase which refers to "no place like home," Joyce diagnoses the collapse of family life and the rise of the police state amidst a welter of sentiment which is partly rosy and partly lethal. Homes are now a part of a police system. Holmes, the home-hater and woman-hater, is the hero of the "home-loving" and feminized middle class. The arrogant, sterile Holmes and the happy prolific homes of the late Victorian world are fused in a single image which arrests the mind for contemplation and insight. The passion for Holmes and man-hunting literature (which gives the modern world a major point of correspondence with the symbolic figure of Nimrod and the tower of Babel) goes along

**Why are both scientist and artist crackpots and pariahs in the popular imagination?**

**Holmes, Renaissance titan or Last of the Mohicans?**

**Watson, wife or mother of the virtuoso of crime?**

**The sleuth cult foreshadows the arrival of the police state?**

with the commercial passion for exploiting the values of childhood, femininity, and domesticity. On paper there has never been such a cult of the home. In entertainment there has never been such a cult of the sleuth.

To provide in a few words a pedigree for the figure of the sleuth who dominates thriller fiction may not be very convincing. The quickest way to get a view of the matter is via Holmes, Kipling, and Darwin. However, Kipling's Mowgli and Edgar Queeny's "granitic believer in the law of the jungle," when taken together, open up interrelations between familiar vistas.

In the opening paragraph of Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia*, Holmes is described as follows:

*He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen; but, as a lover, he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions save with a gibe and a sneer . . . Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his.*

Here is the split man of the head-versus-heart, thought-versus-feeling type who appeared in the early seventeenth century. But it was not until Darwin that the head (science) became definitely and consciously antisocial. Mr. Queeny derives his "law of the jungle" versus "crusading idealist" from this later nineteenth-century phase of the older split.

Could anything exceed the sentimentality or the lavish emotion with which Doyle (and all other writers of crime stories) embellish the figure of the detective? It is through the eyes of some doting Watson, dim of brain, or the dewy eyes of the female secretary, wistfully adoring, that the superman is seen and felt by the reader. This Nietzschean figure achieves his self-dramatization not directly, like the nihilistic malcontents of the Elizabethan stage, but on the inner stage of a mass dream. The sleuth is a recognizable descendant of the heroes who died in the odor of Seneca, but here he lives on, indestructibly, to report his own cause to the unsatisfied. Like the malcontent, the sleuth embodies an attitude, a personal strategy for meeting an opaque and bewildering situation. Both reject the attitude of submission and adjustment to obvious social pressures, affirming themselves as vividly as they can. But where have we met Doyle's description before? Writing in 1868, Thomas Henry Huxley said:

*That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in his youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work, that as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all the parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready like a steam engine to be turned to any kind of work. . . .*

To many people in 1868 this sentimental robotism didn't seem especially

laughable as a "human" ideal. Perhaps not everybody even today would be prepared to recognize it for the lethal formula that it is. The connections between "the law of the jungle," "the spirit of enterprise," and "ringside seat" for the diesel-engine show become evident. Between "The Sparrow versus the Hawk" spirit in education and society, and the Holmes-Huxley-Kipling circuit, the relationship appears in Doyle's views of education in his inventory of Holmes's intellectual tools:

1. Knowledge of Literature — Nil
2. Knowledge of Philosophy — Nil
3. Knowledge of Astronomy — Nil
4. Knowledge of Politics — Feeble
5. Knowledge of Botany — Variable, well up in belladonna, opium and poisons generally
6. Knowledge of Geology — Practical but limited
7. Knowledge of Chemistry — Profound
8. Knowledge of Anatomy — Accurate
9. Knowledge of Sensational Literature — Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.

In addition, Holmes is a violinist, an all-around athlete, and a lawyer. That is what Doyle considered the ideal mental kit for the man-hunter. Note the slaving chop-smacking stress on Holmes's "immense" erudition in mayhem and murder. That is seemingly the price our world has paid for



developing a mind that it sentimentally regards as a cold logic engine. And the curious reader will find it profitable to consult Wyndham Lewis's *Art of Being Ruled* on the nature of the modern scientist's obsession with the romance of destruction.

Let us get the habit of looking very closely at the detached scientific mind, to see whether its boasted detachment amounts to very much besides not choosing to link the significance of one part of its actions to other parts. In short, is its "detachment" just irresponsibility? Sherlock Holmes had about as much detachment as Buck Rogers or those who worked on the first atomic project and later dramatized the business for *The March of Time*, ardently playing themselves in this great melodrama of destruction.

Doyle, in common with his age and ours, was obsessed with the psychic stench that rose from his own splintered ego. This stench was not something that he understood or studied, like a Kirkegaard or a Baudelaire. But in it he lived and wallowed with strictly sensational satisfaction, like that passionate fondler of little girls, Lewis Carroll. A better test case for investigation than the sleuth himself would be hard to find, because by every test he is the superman of our dreams.

Even a Hemingway or a Steinbeck has a firmer grasp of realities and is much less emotionally involved in a merely tiny aspect of human affairs than a Doyle or the typical scientist. And it is worth noting the obvious contrast between the Hemingway hero

and the sleuth. The sleuth acts, while the Hemingway hero suffers. The one dishes it out, the other has things done to him. The humanitarian victim type would seem to stem from the period of Don Quixote. His ineffectual benevolence becomes the typical mode of Fielding's *Tom Jones* as also of the romantic heroes of Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens. Nothing could be less like the aggressive and resourceful sleuth than these familiar figures from romantic fiction past and present. They suffer violence. The modern detective evokes it. So that there is a good deal of point in the claim that detective fiction is scientific. For the popular notion of the scientist as the center of a world of fantastic violence and malignity not only coincides with the world of violence portrayed in detective fiction but with the quality of much scientific vision and speculation.

The superman of thriller fiction, then, is a representative of an attitude for which all classes and conditions in our society have either an open or secret admiration. His pedigree, therefore, must be viewed with some curiosity. Among the common features of all sleuths is, first, their individualism and lonely pride; next, their man-of-the-worldishness; third, their multifarious but specialized learning; and, fourth, their passion for action and excitement. All four of these notes are also features of the Renaissance virtuoso. Since then they have become the marks of "the aristocratic type," especially as embodied in the English public-school boy; but there is no space here to trace the stages by which

the intense individualism of this Renaissance scholar-courtier-soldier combination (mainly known to us by Hamlet) became in the Lovelace of Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and for the middle classes of the eighteenth century the representative of feudalism and the Devil. Yet the connection for the commercial or trading mind between the haughty aristocrat and the Devil is perfectly plain for the age of the Marquis de Sade, Lord Byron, Poe, and Baudelaire. It would be impossible to exaggerate the fascination which Byron held for the soul of the Watsonian shopkeeper and his family. Byron was the embodiment of the masochistic middle-class dream. The mixture of fear, awe, admiration, and revulsion which he inspired was such that henceforth all rebellion against the spirit of hawking and huckstering takes in large measure the Byronic form. That is how, for example, the image of the disdainful aesthete was achieved — a mold into which the shopkeeper's son could easily pour himself, since it embodies not only disgust with trade but devotion to beauty.

Dupin, the first detective, is thus an aesthete and a dandy. He was created by Poe, himself the aesthete and the dandy. Holmes arrived some decades later. The Byronic markings are strong on Holmes. Also the quarterings of the aesthete in his capricious interest in music, in "murder as a fine art," and his contempt for domesticity. That the preoccupation with crime is, equally in Poe and De Quincey, an expression of sadistic revolt against a sordid world



devoted to money and the police protection of "ill-gotten gains," needs very little investigation. That the lonely aesthete-detective is at once a rebel against the crude middle-class conformity and also a type of extreme initiative and the individualism helps however to explain the ambiguity of his appeal for the same middle class. He is at once a type of disinterested aristocratic superiority and of middle-class failure to create new social values. It is easy to note in this the same ambiguity that presides over commercial ads which feature simultaneously quality and cheapness, refinement and availability.

However, a major feature of the modern sleuth notably absent from Poe's Dupin is the quality of the man-hunter. The superman features don't change from Da Vinci to Byron and Heathcliff, but the man-hunting proclivities, the endless sniffing out along the road to the supreme metaphysical thrill of murder, are not evident until



Holmes. Byron and Poe were content with the aura of incest as a mark and gesture of antisocial thrill and also of emotional avarice. Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Wilde explored other sexual variants of the antisocial. But murder, the cerebral itch to hunt down the inmost guilt and secret essence of man, that is the thrill sought by the man-hunter and shared by the thriller fans. Of course, it is vaguely present in all confessional literature of the romantic period, but usually in connection with other interests. Whereas in the literature of crime detection the concentration of specialized thrill is crudely focused on the hunt and the kill.

During the fifty years between Poe's Dupin and the appearance of Holmes, the European cult of Fenimore Cooper's redskins provides the necessary explanation of the rise of that hybrid of aesthete and man-hunter which dominates the popular mind today. The noble savage, utterly above society and commerce, with his unspoiled faculties of a superhuman perfection and keenness, his nose for danger, his eye for clues, and his stomach for scalps — here is the complex image built up sentimentally by Rousseau, digested by Darwin, and expressed by Doyle as the type at once of the sleuth and of the scientific mind.

### 3

## Culture Is Our Business

### **Invisible Environment**

Fish don't know water exists till beached.

## A MESSAGE TO THE FISH

**I sent a message to the fish,  
I told them "this is what I wish" (Through the  
Looking-Glass)**

The hypnotic effect of yesterday's successes nourishes the bureaucratic egos.

**A newspaper is a corporate symbolist poem,  
environmental and invisible, as poem.**

Since in any situation 10 percent of the events cause 90 percent, we ignore the 10 percent and are stunned by the 90 percent. 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. Hamlet's sleuth technique for coping with the hidden environment around him was that of the artist: "As I perchance hereafter shall think meet to put an antic disposition on"...  
(I, v, 171-72)

**Hugh Trevor-Roper explains the process of making environments invisible and invincible as follows: "Any society, as long as it is, or feels itself to be, a working society, tends to invest in itself: a military society tends to become more military, a bureaucratic society more bureaucratic...the dominant military or official or commercial classes cannot easily change their orientation...." (The Rise of Christian Europe, London, Thames and Hudson, 1965)**

"Numbed to death by booze and tranquillizers" is an average strategy for "keeping in touch" with a runaway world.



## WITHOUT CENTERS OR MARGINS

**The telegraph press mosaic is acoustic space as much as an electric circus.**

One touch of Nature makes the whole world tin.

**Auditory and tactile space have always been interleaved. If facility is the space of the interval, the interval is the cause of closure and rhythm, or upbeat and downbeat.**

Acoustic space is totally discontinuous, like touch. It is a sphere without centers or margins, as Professor Botts of the University of Toronto explained a generation ago.

**Why was a visually oriented, literate, world indifferent to all but Euclidean space—until Lewis Carroll and Albert Einstein?**

Audile-tactile space is the space of involvement. We "lose touch" without it. Visual space is the space of detachment and the public precautions we call "scientific method" and scholarly or citational erudition.

**Jazz As Easy As Conversation. (N.Y. Times, Aug. 18/68)**

Speech Scientist Wants to Use the Sound of the Human Voice to Help Protect Confidential Information.



### Now—answers are friendlier

In fact, everyone in the company has a better outlook with the simple addition of Muzak by Muzak. Every quarter hour of Muzak programming changes by plan. Even your best employees get the lift they need, at the right time, to ease the monotony of daily routine. Muzak requires no complicated on-premise

equipment. No tapes. No records. Muzak programs come from one central distribution point. All you have to do is turn it on. And—your Muzak sound system can be used for paging and public address as well!

Unlike ordinary entertainment music, Muzak is a modern-management tool which improves com-

munications; combats employee fatigue, boredom and tension. The proven way of improving on-time job performance. Controlled tests have proved that Muzak programming can increase efficiency 87%—reduce stress over 17%. Write for details. *Muzak*

Muzak—A Division of Weather Corporation, 229 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003

**GIVE ME  
THE MOON FOR A BLANKET**

**Soviets say moon soil can shelter men.  
(Toronto Globe and Mail, April 10/68)**

A bedbug can detect the presence of a man two whole city blocks away, and a woman—well. . . . Our society is well known to the bedbug. (Erb, p. 51.)

**"Happiness is for the Pigs" is the title of an  
essay by Herman Tennesen. (The Journal of  
Existentialism, Winter, 1966)**

Anthony Jay quotes "Pussycat, pussycat, where have you been?" as insight into the tendency of people to reduce all reality to their own dimensions and interests. The cat didn't see the Queen, but saw a little mouse under the royal chair. Such is the clue in the headline: "Did Not Believe Nazis Killing Jews: The German Chancellor heard it all as Allied propoganda." (Kiesinger, Toronto Globe and Mail, July 5/68)

**E. R. Leach, the anthropologist, notes that  
mere classification as "immoral" rendered  
80,000 elegant London courtesans quite  
invisible to Dickens and his readers. They  
were a tourist attraction famous throughout  
Europe....**

In the same way, both Stalin and Hitler were looked upon as saints by millions of their fellow countrymen, even in the midst of the holocaust. . . . the Russian and German peoples simply "refused to know" what was going on right under their noses." (Runaway World?, Oxford Press, 1968)

**Since Sputnik, the earth has been wrapped in  
a dome-like blanket or bubble. Nature ended.  
Art took over the ambidextrous universe. We  
continue to talk of a machine world.**

It just sits there  
and does what it's told-

-230,922  
miles away.



Surveyor, built for NASA and Jet Propulsion Laboratory, responds immediately to 256 different kinds of commands from earth.

Surveyor,  
designed  
and built  
by Hughes

**HUGHES**

## THE BOOK ARRIVES TOO LATE

**The Concept of Dread, by Soren Kierkegaard, appeared in 1844, first year of the commercial telegraph (Baltimore to Washington). It mentions the telegraph as a reason for dread and nowness or existenz.**

All the fuss and feathers about existentialism was the direct result of pulling out the connections between events as in a telegraph newspaper, pulling the story line of art as in symbolism.

**The existentialist trauma had a physical basis in the first electric extension of our nervous system.**

Professor Morse's telegraph is not only an era in the transmission of intelligence, but it has originated in the mind of an entirely new class of ideas, a new species of consciousness. Never before was anyone conscious that he knew with certainty what events were at that moment passing in a distant city—40, 100 or 500 miles off. For example, it is now precisely 11 o'clock. The telegraph announces as follows: 11 o'clock—Senator Walker is now replying to Mr. Butler upon the adoption of the two-thirds rule. It requires no small intellectual effort to realize that this is a fact that now is, and not one that has been. Baltimore is 40 miles from Washington. It is a most wonderful achievement in the arts. (From David Tanner's manuscript on Print Technology in America, to be published by McGraw-Hill)



**The New York Review of Books has been called cliquish, intellectual, opinionated and snobbish. For \$7.50 a year you can be, too.**

For \$7.50 a year, you too can be feared and envied.

What will your middle-brow friend say when you point out to him that his two favorite Book-of-the-Month Club authors, Tynbaw and Snow, "... have one quality in common. They are more highly thought of by readers used by themselves than they are by their colleagues in the literary trade." (You need not credit A. J. P. Taylor for the observation.)

Imagine the reaction of your Jewish friends—any of your friends, for that matter—as you quote I. F. Stone's critique of Zhdanov in his article on Sartre's important symposium, "Le conflit israélo-arabe."

Or if you want to bring a Malotov cocktail to your next cocktail party, arm yourself with Tom Hayden's "The Occupation of Newark," in which the establishment ver-

sion of what went on there is blown to bits by fact after carefully-sifted fact.

But controversial opinion isn't the only trouble you'll buy for your \$7.50.

Could you admit to an ugly mob of Robert Lowell enthusiasts, his brand-new Promethean Band checked, hard-covered, to their breasts, that you'd read the complete text last year in The New York Review?

Obviously, life as a New York Review reader isn't for everybody. Even some who become subscribers are going to be sorry.

To ease your regret if you should happen to be one of these, we've written an unusual offer into our coupon: a no-questions-asked refund of the entire annual subscription fee, that you can call for any time you feel like it during the life of the subscription.

Any time, that is, that you feel like thumbing your nose at us.

I wouldn't mind being looked up by an intellectual mob. I want to become a subscriber for the year ahead at only \$7.50, saving \$2.10 from the regular price.

But for any reason, at any time during the life of my subscription—I want to go back to the security and comfort of my former state as a non-subscriber, I'll let you know, and this coupon constitutes your agreement to refund my entire annual fee and stop sending The New York Review.

\* Send bill, C \$7.50 enclosed. Please add an extra month for wrong handwriting each.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

The New York Review of Books  
Subscriber Service Department, E-1  
P.O. Box 76, New Haven, Conn 06501

## FREEDOM FROM THE PRESS

**Are you brushing your teeth with secondhand water?**

A good lie can travel half around the world before the truth can get out of bed. (Mark Twain)

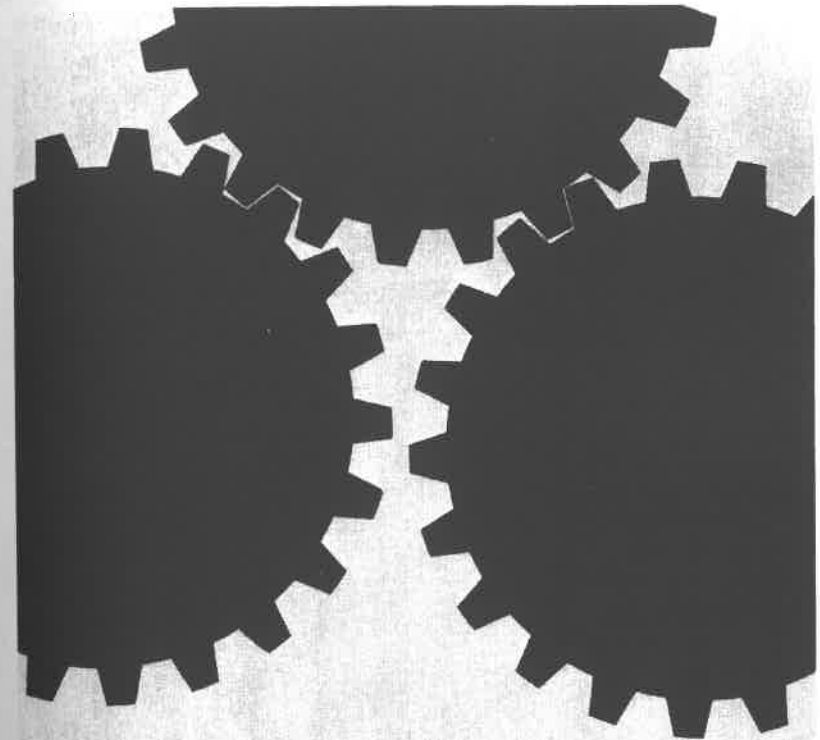
**Thanks eversore much, Point Carried! I can't say if it's the weight you strike me to the quick or that red mass I was looking at... Honours to you and may you be commended for our exhibitiveness! (FW)**

British sociologist D. G. MacRae says the reason why the huge potential of the ad world has not been tapped by his colleagues is that "we do not want our prejudices disturbed by knowledge." If ads disappeared, so would most of our information service environment—the Muzak of the eye.

**Like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson had a bad press. In 1807 he observed: "Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put in that polluted vehicle. I will add that the man who never looks at a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them...."**

Death and taxes: Remember when you could be sure of them?

**"Unless you've tried our embalming fluid, you haven't lived." (Ad in Casket and Sunnyside)**



**Creative advertising, creative journalism and creative readership, combined into one powerful selling force.**

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

Editions published: Eastern, Midwest, Pacific Coast and Southwest/Distributed everywhere every business day.

## **Media Mix**

Having adapted Beethoven's Sixth Symphony for "Fantasia," Walt Disney commented: "Gee! This'll make Beethoven."



## THE FURLOINED EMPIRE

**In his History of the Fur Trade, H. A. Innis explains how the North American colonies, British and American, were deeply indebted to the fur traders for their origins.**

Washington and Jefferson were land surveyors eager to advance settlement of the fur traders' territories. Hence conflict. Settlers ruined trap lines. The igloo was also a fur-lined job. Until the trapper got the Eskimo on the trail, there were no igloos. The Eskimos still live in stone houses, ignored by cameramen as not photogenic. Multi-sensuous hunters, they proved the greatest mechanics at Gander, to the surprise of the American Air Force.

**As the totem pole is tied to the lineality of the missionaries' Bible, so the igloo was made possible by the primus stove.**

The Eskimo, like any pre-literate, leaps easily from the Paleolithic stone age to the electric age, by-passing the Neolithic specialism.

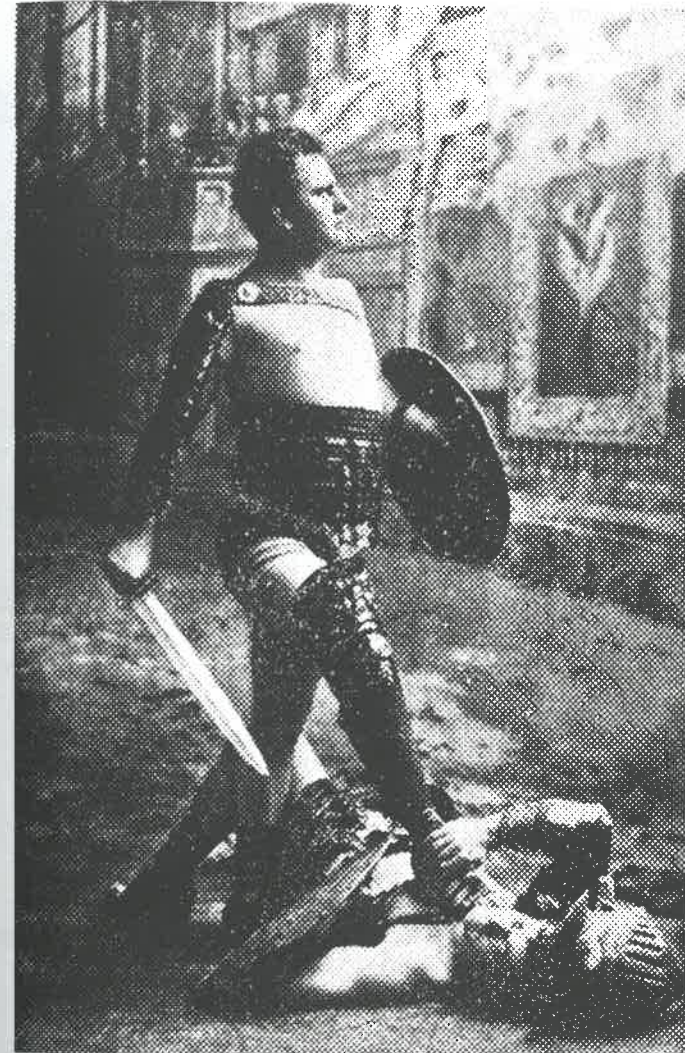


**"WE'RE SURE GOING  
TO HAVE SOME WRECKS NOW!"**

**Disneyland is itself a wondrous media mix. Cartoons drove the photo back to myth and dream screen. E. S. Carpenter, in his review of *The Disney Version* (Richard Schickel, Simon and Schuster), points to another media mix in Disney's life: "The only splash of color in Disney's private life was a model train that circled his home.... Much of his social life consisted of donning an engineer's cap.... He enjoyed planning wrecks.... 'Boy, we're sure going to have some wrecks now!'"**

The N.Y. Times of July 16/68, under the head "Steaming Along," shows "Rhodesia's Hot Prospect for the Olympic Marathon" training for the event by puffing along beside a full-size steam locomotive. As media mix this has all the pathos of *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*.

**The present ad mixes a dozen media but leaves us in doubt as to whether the commuter has slaughtered the plane pilot or the ticket agent.**



After TWA Blue Chip Service, you arrive ready to do business in Chicago.

Aren't you a little tired of feeling like a commuter?

*Oxford 5-6000. Jets every hour on the half hour.*

**TELEVISION KILLS  
TELEPHONY IN BROTHERS' BROIL (FW)**

**The present ad is more concerned with smothering than brothering and is as rich an example of media illiteracy as could be asked for.**

"It's what's happening so don't fight it, baby!"

**TV is not only an X-ray "zerotruster" or fire god like Zoroaster, but it is entirely subliminal in its impact, as is the case with all other new media.**

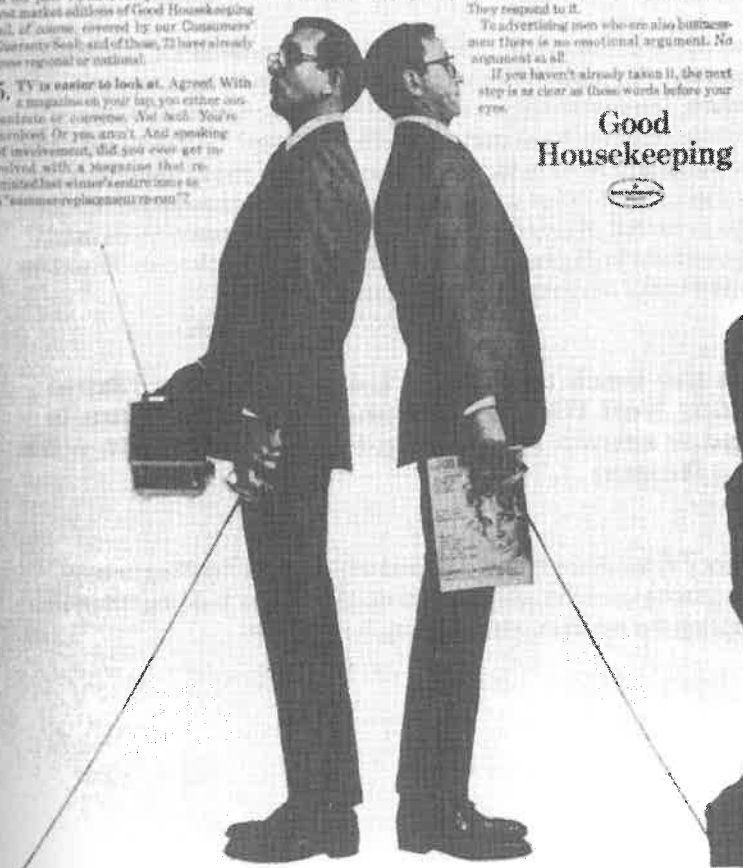
The Reader's Digest portrays Prince Hamlet holding aloft a TV set on the platform of Elsinore as if he had encountered a spirit: Tv or not Tv? That's Not the Question. The reason it is not the question, of course, is that The Reader's Digest offers the advertiser a bigger market.

**Medea Mystery: McLuhan's phone call from Roy Thompson (owner of the London Times) for a private chat about media. Chat blossoms (unbeknownst to McLuhan) into BBC show, also televised across U.S.A.**

**Some emotional arguments you hear about TV vs. magazines.**

1. Pictures in TV commercials move. That's true. And there's a lot of excitement and drama in that. On the other hand, magazine pictures stand still. In case you have to move. Or leave the room. And by the by, do you know who really invented the video-playback? Magazines did. We call it Looking-A-The-Ad-A-Second Time.
  2. TV is colorful and has impact for everybody. Right. Magazine impact is limited to the audience you're trying to reach. Like, for example, women who want to read about products and ideas that help make them more efficient housewives—and more attractive wives. They turn on Good Housekeeping Magazine for the precise purpose of doing just that. As to color, magazine color reaches 100% of the home that own color-vision eyes.
  3. TV packs a lot into a minute. It has to. At rates up to \$1,000 per second.
  4. TV is the proven medium for new products. What percentage of them, with TV as the dominant or only medium, survive the test market stage? We don't know. But in the past 4 years, 180 products have been introduced in test market editions of Good Housekeeping Guaranty Seal, and of those, 73 have already gone regional or national.
  5. TV is easier to look at. Agreed. With a magazine on your lap, you either see, contact, or converse. Not both. You're involved. Or you aren't. And speaking of involvement, did you ever get involved with a magazine that reprinted last winter's entire issue as a summer replacement? You can't.
  6. With TV they can't turn the page and skip your ad. No. But they can turn the dial. Or turn to human conversation. And besides, no advertising medium can reach as effectively as magazines. But the right environment in magazines can give effective advertising its maximum opportunity to be read, thought about, believed, and acted upon. Most important, when the audience goes out and plunks down 50¢ for that environment they're going to be doing some reading. Even if that magazine stays around the house mobile. And it does. As proven by voluminous research. And a gadget called the magazine rack.
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Now that we've given vent to our emotions, let's agree that of course TV, when it's at its best, is a powerful medium that does stand alone in many areas of entertainment and impact. But in advertising it works best as part of a well-balanced media mix.
- That's why so many advertisers depend on magazines and TV. Selective magazines such as Good Housekeeping. Each month, nearly 13,000,000 women seek out Good Housekeeping. They seek out the advertising. They believe it. They respond to it.
- To advertising men who are also businessmen there is no emotional argument. No argument at all.
- If you haven't already taken it, the next step is as clear as those words before your eyes.

**Good Housekeeping**  

**"IF IT WEREN'T FOR EDISON,  
WE'D BE WATCHING TV BY CANDLELIGHT"**

**The invisibility of color TV, the supposition that it has some relation to black-and-white TV has proved a corker. Siegfried Giedion's phrase: "anonymous history" (in introducing Space-Time & Architecture) was an attempt to cope with the difficulty of introducing a new design form to people imbued with many unconscious habits of perception. Color is not so much a visual as a tactile medium (as Harley Parker and I explain in To the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting).**

The cones of the eye in interface create the experience of color:  
"The center or macula lutea of the eye is responsive to hue and texture. The periphery, on the other hand, is concerned with darkness and lightness and also with movement. . . . The macula and the periphery work in tandem. However, peripheral vision can exist by itself. While color vision is inclusive, black-and-white is partial. (The potential of any technology is always dissipated by its user's involvement in its predecessor.) The iconic thrust of color TV will be buried under mountains of old pictorial space."

**On the back of this ad from TV Guide (June 8/68) Neil Hickey reports that "television is under attack for failing to communicate with the Negro;..."**

Color TV, far more than black-and-white, gives the Negro easy dominance over the white man's image. Hickey is doing the usual. Ignoring the medium and watching the content.

**A color TV set  
is only as good  
as the picture tube.**

Most picture tubes look alike. And just as a pretty cabinet can enclose a poor set, so can a look-alike tube enclose a poor picture.

That's where Sylvania comes in. When we developed the original Color Bright 85<sup>®</sup> it was the brightest picture tube ever made. Richer reds, brighter blues, glowier greens.

And you still can't buy a better replacement tube. At any price.

So why take chances?

And just as tubes look alike, so do servicemen. But some don't always have what you need. And others are hard to find. The servicemen shown here install Color Bright 85. So when you have to replace the most important part of your set, don't let appearances fool you.





## SHEEP IN WOLFE'S CLOTHING

**Tramp covered with newspapers on park bench to buddy: "As a former media man, I use newspapers for coverage in depth and radio to find out what's going on." (Broadcasting, February 19/68)**

At the beginning of his very flattering essay on myself in The Pump House Gang (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), Tom Wolfe has a drawing of me which at once suggests another title for his essay ("What if he's right?"), namely, "I'd Rather Be Wrong." At the end of his essay he confronts me with a waitress in a topless restaurant to whom I uttered the assurance: "The topless waitress is the thin edge of a trial balloon!" (I.e., the silicone bust.)

**Anthropologist Leach is quite right in pointing out that the TV generation is "growing more conformist, not less." But it is not a visual or pictorial conformity that is developing. The hairless ape has begun to attach a great significance to his hair. "Fair tresses man's imperial rod and snare, And beauty draws us with a single hair." He points out that: "quite a lot of alarm is generated by sheep in wolves' clothing."**

The young are really the hairs to a generation of incompetence.

**The young are really the hairs to a generation of incompetence.**

**TOM WOLFE**  
is **OUT FRONT** again  
with not **ONE...**

but **YES**  
**TWO** great books!!!

A dazzling collection of reports on the growing tendency among young people to quit the rat race and start their own league. \$5.95  
**THE PUMP HOUSE GANG**

The story of novelist Ken Kesey and his mystic brotherhood of LSD-takers, The Merry Pranksters. \$5.95 • **THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST**



Published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.  
FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX

## HURRY UP, PLEASE, IT'S TIME!

**"Assuery as there's a bonum in your ossthealogy!" (FW)**

Time was perhaps the first magazine to apply the format of the telegraph press (i.e., the mosaic of items without connection) to the periodical. Just a dateline. The Time formula of mosaic in place of connected editorial features permits the juxtaposition of esoteric and trival — the formula for creating environments, not just a point of view.

**Mosaic transparency and simultaneity appears in the ad itself. The mosaic as such is an acoustic, tribal form, feathers in the hat of Time.**

"Only Time lets advertisers select three occupational cross-sections of its readers . . . (Note how the tribal caste system here bloometh.)



### Only TIME offers this new kind of marketing selectivity: Demographic Editions

Only TIME lets advertisers select three occupational cross-sections of its readers and advertise only to them, with no overlap. Like TIME's National Edition, all three Demographic Editions go to the better-off, better-positioned clients in their respective fields. Each Demographic Edition carries the same editorial and advertising contents as the National Edition except for additional pages of advertising addressed to the occupational group you want to reach.

As in the past, of course, if your primary market is Chiefs in every field . . . use TIME's National Edition.

Demographic Edition	Rate Base	Cost per \$25K reach
Doctors	75,000	\$1000
College Students	200,000	\$3125
Executives	175,000	\$1500