

**Understanding
Media** The Extensions
of Man
by Marshall McLuhan

McGraw-Hill New York
Book Company Toronto
London

an illness, he wound up the cosmic clock by an elaborate ritual reenactment or recitation of the original process of creation. Eliade mentions that in Fiji "the ceremony for installing a new ruler is called 'creation of the world.'" The same drama is enacted to help the growth of crops. Whereas modern man feels obligated to be punctual and conservative of time, tribal man bore the responsibility for keeping the cosmic clock supplied with energy. But electric or ecological man (man of the total field) can be expected to surpass the old tribal cosmic concern with the Africa within.

Primitive man lived in a much more tyrannical cosmic machine than Western literate man has ever invented. The world of the ear is more embracing and inclusive than that of the eye can ever be. The ear is hypersensitive. The eye is cool and detached. The ear turns man over to universal panic while the eye, extended by literacy and mechanical time, leaves some gaps and some islands free from the unremitting acoustic pressure and reverberation.

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The Print
How to Dig It

The art of making pictorial statements in a precise and repeatable form is one that we have long taken for granted in the West. But it is usually forgotten that without prints and blueprints, without maps and geometry, the world of modern sciences and technologies would hardly exist.

In the time of Ferdinand and Isabella and other maritime monarchs, maps were top-secret, like new electronic discoveries today. When the captains returned from their voyages, every effort was made by the officers of the crown to obtain both originals and copies of the maps made during the voyage. The result was a lucrative black-market trade, and secret maps were widely sold. The sort of maps in question had nothing in common with those of later design, being in fact more like diaries of different adventures and experiences. For the later perception of space as uniform and continuous was unknown to the medieval cartographer,

whose efforts resembled modern nonobjective art. The shock of the new Renaissance space is still felt by natives who encounter it today for the first time. Prince Modupe tells in his autobiography, *I Was a Savage*, how he had learned to read maps at school, and how he had taken back home to his village a map of a river his father had traveled for years as a trader.

. . . my father thought the whole idea was absurd. He refused to identify the stream he had crossed at Bomako, where it is no deeper, he said, than a man is high, with the great widespread waters of the vast Niger delta. Distances as measured in miles had no meaning for him. . . . Maps are liars, he told me briefly. From his tone of voice I could tell that I had offended him in some way not known to me at the time. The things that hurt one do not show on a map. The truth of a place is in the joy and the hurt that come from it. I had best not put my trust in anything as inadequate as a map, he counseled. . . . I understand now, although I did not at the time, that my airy and easy sweep of map-traced staggering distances belittled the journeys he had measured on tired feet. With my big map-talk, I had effaced the magnitude of his cargo-laden, heat-weighted treks.

All the words in the world cannot describe an object like a bucket, although it is possible to tell in a few words how to *make* a bucket. This inadequacy of words to convey visual information about objects was an effectual block to the development of the Greek and Roman sciences. Pliny the Elder reported the inability of the Greek and Latin botanists to devise a means of transmitting information about plants and flowers:

Hence it is that other writers have confined themselves to a verbal description of the plants; indeed some of them have not so much as described them even, but have contented themselves for the most part with a bare recital of their names . . .

We are confronted here once more with that basic function of media—to store and to expedite information. Plainly, to store is to expedite, since what is stored is also more accessible than what has to be gathered. The fact that visual information about flowers and plants cannot be stored verbally also points to the fact that

science in the Western world has long been dependent on the visual factor. Nor is this surprising in a literate culture based on the technology of the alphabet, one that reduces even spoken language to a visual mode. As electricity has created multiple non-visual means of storing and retrieving information, not only culture but science also has shifted its entire base and character. For the educator, as well as the philosopher, exact knowledge of what this shift means for learning and the mental process is not necessary.

Well before Gutenberg's development of printing from movable types, a great deal of printing on paper by woodcut had been done. Perhaps the most popular form of this kind of block printing of text and image had been in the form of the *Biblia Pauperum*, or Bibles of the Poor. Printers in this woodcut sense preceded typographic printers, though by just how long a period it is not easy to establish, because these cheap and popular prints, despised by the learned, were not preserved any more than are the comic books of today. The great law of bibliography comes into play in this matter of the printing that precedes Gutenberg: "The more there were, the fewer there are." It applies to many items besides printed matter—to the postage stamp and to the early forms of radio receiving sets.

Medieval and Renaissance man experienced little of the separation and specialty among the arts that developed later. The manuscript and the earlier printed books were read aloud, and poetry was sung or intoned. Oratory, music, literature, and drawing were closely related. Above all, the world of the illuminated manuscript was one in which lettering itself was given plastic stress to an almost sculptural degree. In a study of the art of Andrea Mantegna, the illuminator of manuscripts, Millard Meiss mentions that, amidst the flowery and leafy margins of the page, Mantegna's letters "rise like monuments, stony, stable and finely cut. . . . Palpably soled and weighty, they stand boldly before the colored ground, upon which they often throw a shadow. . . ."

The same feeling for the letters of the alphabet as engraved icons has returned in our own day in the graphic arts and in advertising display. Perhaps the reader will have encountered the

sense of this coming change in Rimbaud's sonnet on the vowels, or in some of Braque's paintings. But ordinary newspaper headline style tends to push letters toward the iconic form, a form that is very near to auditory resonance, as it is also to tactile and sculptural quality.

Perhaps the supreme quality of the print is one that is lost on us, since it has so casual and obvious an existence. It is simply that it is a pictorial statement that can be repeated precisely and indefinitely—at least as long as the printing surface lasts. Repeatability is the core of the mechanical principle that has dominated our world, especially since the Gutenberg technology. The message of the print and of typography is primarily that of repeatability. With typography, the principle of movable type introduced the means of mechanizing any handicraft by the process of segmenting and fragmenting an integral action. What had begun with the alphabet as a separation of the multiple gestures and sights and sounds in the spoken word, reached a new level of intensity, first with the woodcut and then with typography. The alphabet left the visual component as supreme in the word, reducing all other sensuous facts of the spoken word to this form. This helps to explain why the woodcut, and even the photograph, were so eagerly welcomed in a literate world. These forms provide a world of inclusive gesture and dramatic posture that necessarily is omitted in the written word.

The print was eagerly seized upon as a means of imparting information, as well as an incentive to piety and meditation. In 1472 the *Art of War* by Volturius was printed at Verona, with many woodcuts to explain the machinery of war. But the uses of the woodcut as an aid to contemplation in Books of Hours, Emblems, and Shepherds' Calendars continued for two hundred years on a large scale.

It is relevant to consider that the old prints and woodcuts, like the modern comic strip and comic book, provide very little data about any particular moment in time, or aspect in space, of an object. The viewer, or reader, is compelled to participate in completing and interpreting the few hints provided by the bounding lines. Not unlike the character of the woodcut and the car-

toon is the TV image, with its very low degree of data about objects, and the resulting high degree of participation by the viewer in order to complete what is only hinted at in the mosaic mesh of dots. Since the advent of TV, the comic book has gone into a decline.

It is, perhaps, obvious enough that if a cool medium involves the viewer a great deal, a hot medium will not. It may contradict popular ideas to say that typography as a hot medium involves the reader much less than did manuscript, or to point out that the comic book and TV as cool media involve the user, as maker and participant, a great deal.

After the exhaustion of the Graeco-Roman pools of slave labor, the West had to technologize more intensively than the ancient world had done. In the same way the American farmer, confronted with new tasks and opportunities, and at the same time with a great shortage of human assistance, was goaded into a frenzy of creation of labor-saving devices. It would seem that the logic of success in this matter is the ultimate retirement of the work force from the scene of toil. In a word, automation. If this, however, has been the motive behind all of our human technologies, it does not follow that we are prepared to accept the consequences. It helps to get one's bearings to see the process at work in remote times when work meant specialist servitude, and leisure alone meant a life of human dignity and involvement of the whole man.

The print in its clumsy woodcut-phase reveals a major aspect of language; namely, that words cannot bear sharp definition in daily use. When Descartes surveyed the philosophical scene at the beginning of the seventeenth century, he was appalled at the confusion of tongues and began to strive toward a reduction of philosophy to precise mathematical form. This striving for an irrelevant precision served only to exclude from philosophy most of the questions of philosophy; and that great kingdom of philosophy was soon parceled out into the wide range of uncommunicating sciences and specialties we know today. Intensity of stress on visual blueprinting and precision is an explosive force that fragments the world of power and knowledge alike. The in-

creasing precision and quantity of visual information transformed the print into a three-dimensional world of perspective and fixed point of view. Hieronymus Bosch, by means of paintings that interfused medieval forms in Renaissance space, told what it felt like to live straddled between the two worlds of the old and the new during this revolution. Simultaneously, Bosch provided the older kind of plastic, tactile image but placed it in the intense new visual perspective. He gave at once the older medieval idea of unique, discontinuous space, superimposed on the new idea of uniform, connected space. This he did with earnest nightmare intensity.

Lewis Carroll took the nineteenth century into a dream world that was as startling as that of Bosch, but built on reverse principles. *Alice in Wonderland* offers as norm that continuous time and space that had created consternation in the Renaissance. Permeating this uniform Euclidean world of familiar space-and-time, Carroll drove a fantasia of discontinuous space-and-time that anticipated Kafka, Joyce, and Eliot. Carroll, the mathematical contemporary of Clerk Maxwell, was quite *avant-garde* enough to know about the non-Euclidean geometries coming into vogue in his time. He gave the confident Victorians a playful foretaste of Einsteinian time-and-space in *Alice in Wonderland*. Bosch had provided his era a foretaste of the new continuous time-and-space of uniform perspective. Bosch looked ahead to the modern world with horror, as Shakespeare did in *King Lear*, and as Pope did in *The Dunciad*. But Lewis Carroll greeted the electronic age of space-time with a cheer.

Nigerians studying at American universities are sometimes asked to identify spatial relations. Confronted with objects in sunshine, they are often unable to indicate in which direction shadows will fall, for this involves casting into three-dimensional perspective. Thus sun, objects, and observer are experienced separately and regarded as independent of one another. For medieval man, as for the native, space was not homogeneous and did not *contain* objects. Each thing made its own space, as it still does for the native (and equally for the modern physicist). Of course this does not mean that native artists do not relate things.

They often contrive the most complicated, sophisticated configurations. Neither artist nor observer has the slightest trouble recognizing and interpreting the pattern, but only when it is a traditional one. If you begin to modify it, or translate it into another medium (three dimensions, for instance), the native fails to recognize it.

An anthropological film showed a Melanesian carver cutting out a decorated drum with such skill, coordination, and ease that the audience several times broke into applause—it became a song, a ballet. But when the anthropologist asked the tribe to build crates to ship these carvings in, they struggled unsuccessfully for three days to make two planks intersect at a 90-degree angle, then gave up in frustration. They couldn't crate what they had created.

In the low definition world of the medieval woodcut, each object created its own space, and there was no rational connected space into which it must fit. As the retinal impression is intensified, objects cease to cohere in a space of their own making, and, instead, become "contained" in a uniform, continuous, and "rational" space. Relativity theory in 1905 announced the dissolution of uniform Newtonian space as an illusion or fiction, however useful. Einstein pronounced the doom of continuous or "rational" space, and the way was made clear for Picasso and the Marx brothers and *MAD*.

example, had encountered by means of the new mathematics and statistics. The photograph might be said, also, to have brought to human attention the subvisual world of bacteria that caused Louis Pasteur to be driven from the medical profession by his indignant colleagues. Just as the painter Samuel Morse had unintentionally projected himself into the nonvisual world of the telegraph, so the photograph really transcends the pictorial by capturing the inner gestures and postures of both body and mind, yielding the new worlds of endocrinology and psychopathology.

To understand the medium of the photograph is quite impossible, then, without grasping its relations to other media, both old and new. For media, as extensions of our physical and nervous systems, constitute a world of biochemical interactions that must ever seek new equilibrium as new extensions occur. In America, people can tolerate their images in mirror or photo, but they are made uncomfortable by the recorded sound of their own voices. The photo and visual worlds are secure areas of anesthesia.

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Press
Government
by News Leak

The headline for an Associated Press release (February 25, 1963) read:

PRESS BLAMED FOR SUCCESS
KENNEDY MANAGES NEWS BOLDLY,
CYNICALLY, SUBTLY, KROCK CLAIMS

Arthur Krock is quoted as saying that "the principle onus rests on the printed and electronic process itself." That may seem like another way of saying that "history is to blame." But it is the instant consequences of electrically moved information that makes necessary a deliberate artistic aim in the placing and management of news. In diplomacy the same electric speed causes the decisions to be announced before they are made in order to ascertain the varying responses that might occur when such decisions actually are made. Such procedure, quite inevitable at the electric speed that involves the entire society in the decision-making process, shocks the old press men because it ab-

dicates any definite point of view. As the speed of information increases, the tendency is for politics to move away from representation and delegation of constituents toward immediate involvement of the entire community in the central acts of decision. Slower speeds of information make delegation and representation mandatory. Associated with such delegation are the points of view of the different sectors of public interest that are expected to be put forward for processing and consideration by the rest of the community. When the electric speed is introduced into such a delegated and representational organization, this obsolescent organization can only be made to function by a series of subterfuges and makeshifts. These strike some observers as base betrayals of the original aims and purposes of the established forms.

The massive theme of the press can be managed only by direct contact with the formal patterns of the medium in question. It is thus necessary to state at once that "human interest" is a technical term meaning that which happens when multiple book pages or multiple information items are arranged in a mosaic on one sheet. The book is a private confessional form that provides a "point of view." The press is a group confessional form that provides communal participation. It can "color" events by using them or by not using them at all. But it is the daily communal exposure of multiple items in juxtaposition that gives the press its complex dimension of human interest.

The book form is not a communal mosaic or corporate image but a private voice. One of the unexpected effects of TV on the press has been a great increase in the popularity of *Time* and *Newsweek*. Quite inexplicably to themselves and without any new effort at subscription, their circulations have more than doubled since TV. These news magazines are preeminently mosaic in form, offering not windows on the world like the old picture magazines, but presenting corporate images of society in action. Whereas the spectator of a picture magazine is passive, the reader of a news magazine becomes much involved in the making of meanings for the corporate image. Thus the TV habit of involvement in mosaic image has greatly strengthened the appeal of these

news magazines, but at the same time has diminished the appeal of the older pictorial feature magazines.

Both book and newspaper are confessional in character, creating the effect of *inside story* by their mere form, regardless of content. As the book page yields the inside story of the author's mental adventures, so the press page yields the inside story of the community in action and interaction. It is for this reason that the press seems to be performing its function most when revealing the seamy side. Real news is bad news—bad news *about* somebody, or bad news *for* somebody. In 1962, when Minneapolis had been for months without a newspaper, the chief of police said: "Sure, I miss the news, but so far as my job goes I hope the papers never come back. There is less crime around without a newspaper to pass around the ideas."

Even before the telegraph speed-up, the newspaper of the nineteenth century had moved a long way toward a mosaic form. Rotary steam presses came into use decades before electricity, but typesetting by hand remained more satisfactory than any mechanical means until the development of linotype about 1890. With linotype, the press could adjust its form more fully to the news-gathering of the telegraph and the news-printing of the rotary presses. It is typical and significant that the linotype answer to the long-standing slowness of typesetting did not come from those directly engaged with the problem. Fortunes had been vainly spent on typesetting machines before James Clephane, seeking a fast way of writing out and duplicating shorthand notes, found a way to combine the typewriter and the typesetter. It was the *typewriter* that solved the utterly different *typesetting* problem. Today the publishing of book and newspaper both depends on the typewriter.

The speed-up of information gathering and publishing naturally created new forms of arranging material for readers. As early as 1830 the French poet Lamartine had said, "The book arrives too late," drawing attention to the fact that the book and the newspaper are quite different forms. Slow down typesetting and news-gathering, and there occurs a change, not only in the physical appearance of the press, but also in the prose style of those

writing for it. The first great change in style came early in the eighteenth century, when the famous *Tatler* and *Spectator* of Addison and Steele discovered a new prose technique to match the form of the printed word. It was the technique of equitone. It consisted in maintaining a single level of tone and attitude to the reader throughout the entire composition. By this discovery, Addison and Steele brought written discourse into line with the printed word and away from the variety of pitch and tone of the spoken, and of even the hand-written, word. This way of bringing language into line with print must be clearly understood. The telegraph broke language away again from the printed word, and began to make erratic noises called headlines, journalese, and telegraphese—phenomena that still dismay the literary community with its mannerisms of supercilious equitone that mime typographic uniformity. Headline produces such effects as

BARBER HONES TONSILS)
FOR OLD-TIMER'S EVENT)

referring to Sal (the Barber) Maglie, the swarthy curve-ball artist with the old Brooklyn Dodgers, when he was to be guest speaker at a Ball Club dinner. The same community admires the varied tonality and vigor of Aretino, Rabelais, and Nashe, all of whom wrote prose before the print pressure was strong enough to reduce the language gestures to uniform lineality. Talking with an economist who was serving on an unemployment commission, I asked him whether he had considered newspaper reading as a form of paid employment. I was not wrong in supposing that he would be incredulous. Nevertheless, all media that mix ads with other programming are a form of "paid learning." In years to come, when the child will be paid to learn, educators will recognize the sensational press as the forerunner of paid learning. One reason that it was difficult to see this fact earlier is that the processing and moving of information had not been the main business of a mechanical and industrial world. It is, however, easily the dominant business and means of wealth in the electric world. At the end of the mechanical age people still imagined that

press and radio and even TV were merely forms of information paid for by the makers and users of "hardware," like cars and soap and gasoline. As automation takes hold, it becomes obvious that information is the crucial commodity, and that solid products are merely incidental to information movement. The early stages by which information itself became the basic economic commodity of the electric age were obscured by the ways in which advertising and entertainment put people off the track. Advertisers pay for space and time in paper and magazine, on radio and TV; that is, they buy a piece of the reader, listener, or viewer as definitely as if they hired our homes for a public meeting. They would gladly pay the reader, listener, or viewer directly for his time and attention if they knew how to do so. The only way so far devised is to put on a free show. Movies in America have not developed advertising intervals simply because the movie itself is the greatest of all forms of advertisement for consumer goods.

Those who deplore the frivolity of the press and its natural form of group exposure and communal cleansing simply ignore the nature of the medium and demand that it be a book, as it tends to be in Europe. The book arrived in western Europe long before the newspaper; but Russia and middle Europe developed the book and newspaper almost together, with the result that they have never unscrambled the two forms. Their journalism exudes the private point of view of the literary mandarin. British and American journalism, however, have always tended to exploit the mosaic form of the newspaper format in order to present the discontinuous variety and incongruity of ordinary life. The monotonous demands of the literary community—that the newspaper use its mosaic form to present a fixed point of view on a single plane of perspective—represent a failure to see the form of the press at all. It is as if the public were suddenly to demand that department stores have only one department.

The classified ads (and stock-market quotations) are the bedrock of the press. Should an alternative source of easy access to such diverse daily information be found, the press will fold. Radio and TV can handle the sports, news, comics, and pictures.

The editorial, which is the one book-feature of the newspaper, has been ignored for many years, unless put in the form of news or paid advertisement.

If our press is in the main a free entertainment service paid for by advertisers who want to buy readers, the Russian press is *in toto* the basic mode of industrial promotion. If we use news, political and personal, as entertainment to capture ad readers, the Russians use it as a means of promotion for their economy. Their political news has the same aggressive earnestness and posture as the voice of the sponsor in an American ad. A culture that gets the newspaper late (for the same reasons that industrialization is delayed) and one that accepts the press as a form of the book and regards industry as group political action, is not likely to seek entertainment in the news. Even in America, literate people have small skill in understanding the iconographic varieties of the ad world. Ads are ignored or deplored, but seldom studied and enjoyed.

Anybody who could think that the press has the same function in America and Russia, or in France and China, is not really in touch with the medium. Are we to suppose that this kind of media illiteracy is characteristic only of Westerners, and that Russians know how to correct the bias of the medium in order to read it right? Or do people vaguely suppose that the heads of state in the various countries of the world know that the newspaper has totally diverse effects in different cultures? There is no basis for such assumptions. Unawareness of the nature of the press in its subliminal or latent action is as common among politicians as among political scientists. For example, in oral Russia both *Pravda* and *Izvestia* handle domestic news, but the big international themes come to the West over Radio Moscow. In visual America, radio and television handle the domestic stories, and international affairs get their formal treatment in *Time* magazine and *The New York Times*. As a foreign service, the bluntness of *Voice of America* in no way compares to the sophistication of the BBC and Radio Moscow, but what it lacks in verbal content it makes up in the entertainment value of its American jazz. The implications of this difference of stress are

important for an understanding of the kinds of opinions and decisions natural to an oral, as opposed to a visual, culture.

A friend of mine who tried to teach something about the forms of media in secondary school was struck by one unanimous response. The students could not for a moment accept the suggestion that the press or any other public means of communication could be used with base intent. They felt that this would be akin to polluting the air or the water supply, and they didn't feel that their friends and relatives employed in these media would sink to such corruption. Failure in perception occurs precisely in giving attention to the program "content" of our media while ignoring the form, whether it be radio or print or the English language itself. There have been countless Newton Minows (formerly head of the Federal Communications Commission) to talk about the Wasteland of the Media, men who know nothing about the form of any medium whatever. They imagine that a more earnest tone and a more austere theme would pull up the level of the book, the press, the movie, and TV. They are wrong to a farcical degree. They have only to try out their theory for fifty consecutive words in the mass medium of the English language. What would Mr. Minow do, what would any advertiser do, without the well-worn and corny clichés of popular speech? Suppose that we were to try for a few sentences to raise the level of our daily English conversation by a series of sober and serious sentiments? Would this be a way of getting at the problems of improving the medium? If all English were enunciated at a Mandarin level of uniform elegance and sententiousness, would the language and its users be better served? There comes to mind the remark of Artemus Ward that "Shakespeare wrote good plays but he wouldn't have succeeded as the Washington correspondent of a New York daily newspaper. He lacked the requisit fancy and imagination."

The book-oriented man has the illusion that the press would be better without ads and without the pressure from the advertiser. Reader surveys have astonished even publishers with the revelation that the roving eyes of newspaper readers take equal satisfaction in ads and news copy. During the Second War, the

U.S.O. sent special issues of the principal American magazines to the Armed Forces, with the ads omitted. The men insisted on having the ads back again. Naturally. The ads are by far the best part of any magazine or newspaper. More pains and thought, more wit and art go into the making of an ad than into any prose feature of press or magazine. Ads are news. What is wrong with them is that they are always good news. In order to balance off the effect and to sell good news, it is necessary to have a lot of bad news. Moreover, the newspaper is a hot medium. It has to have bad news for the sake of intensity and reader participation. *Real news is bad news*, as already noted, and as any newspaper from the beginning of print can testify. Floods, fires, and other communal disasters by land and sea and air outrank any kind of private horror or villainy as *news*. Ads, in contrast, have to shrill their happy message loud and clear in order to match the penetrating power of bad news.

Commentators on the press and the American Senate have noted that since the Senate began its prying into unsavory subjects it has assumed a role superior to Congress. In fact, the great disadvantage of the Presidency and the Executive arm in relation to public opinion is that it tries to be a source of good news and noble directive. On the other hand, Congressmen and Senators have the free of the seamy side so necessary to the vitality of the press.

Superficially, this may seem cynical, especially to those who imagine that the content of a medium is a matter of policy and personal preference, and for whom all corporate media, not only radio and the press but ordinary popular speech as well, are debased forms of human expression and experience. Here I must repeat that the newspaper, from its beginnings, has tended, not to the book form, but to the mosaic or participational form. With the speed-up of printing and news-gathering, this mosaic form has become a dominant aspect of human association; for the mosaic form means, not a detached "point of view," but participation in process. For that reason, the press is inseparable from the democratic process, but quite expendable from a literary or book point of view.

Again, the book-oriented man misunderstands the collective mosaic form of the press when he complains about its endless reports on the seamy underside of the social garment. Both book and press are, in their very format, dedicated to the job of revealing the inside story, whether it is Montaigne giving to the private reader the delicate contours of his mind, or Hearst and Whitman resonating their barbaric yawps over the roofs of the world. It is the printed form of public address and high intensity with its precise uniformity of repetition that gives to book and press alike the special character of public confessional.

The first items in the press to which all men turn are the ones about which they already know. If we have witnessed some event, whether a ball game or a stock crash or a snowstorm, we turn to the report of that happening, first. Why? The answer is central to any understanding of media. Why does a child like to chatter about the events of its day, however jerkily? Why do we prefer novels and movies about familiar scenes and characters? Because for rational beings to see or re-cognize their experience in a new material form is an unbought grace of life. Experience translated into a new medium literally bestows a delightful playback of earlier awareness. The press repeats the excitement we have in using our wits, and by using our wits we can translate the outer world into the fabric of our own beings. This excitement of translation explains why people quite naturally wish to use their senses all the time. Those external extensions of sense and faculty that we call media we use as constantly as we do our eyes and ears, and from the same motives. On the other hand, the book-oriented man considers this nonstop use of media as debased; it is unfamiliar to him in the book-world.

Up to this point we have discussed the press as a mosaic successor to the book-form. The mosaic is the mode of the corporate or collective image and commands deep participation. This participation is communal rather than private, inclusive rather than exclusive. Further features of its form can best be grasped by a few random views taken from outside the present form of the press. Historically, for example, newspapers had waited for news to come to them. The first American newspaper,

issued in Boston by Benjamin Harris on September 25, 1690, announced that it was to be "furnished once a month (or if any Glut of Occurrences happen, oftener)." Nothing could more plainly indicate the idea that news was something outside and beyond the newspaper. Under such rudimentary conditions of awareness, a principal function of the newspaper was to correct rumors and oral reports, as a dictionary might provide "correct" spellings and meanings for words that had long existed without the benefit of dictionaries. Fairly soon the press began to sense that news was not only to be reported but also gathered, and, indeed, to be made. What went *into* the press was news. The rest was not news. "He made the news" is a strangely ambiguous phrase, since to be in the newspaper is both to be news and to make news. Thus "making the news," like "making good," implies a world of actions and fictions alike. But the press is a daily action and fiction or thing made, and it is made out of just about everything in the community. By the mosaic means, it is made into a communal image or cross-section.

When a conventional critic like Daniel Boorstin complains that modern ghost-writing, teletype, and wire services create an insubstantial world of "pseudo-events," he declares, in effect, that he has never examined the nature of any medium prior to those of the electric age. For the pseudo or fictitious character has always permeated the media, not just those of recent origin.

Long before big business and corporations became aware of the image of their operation as a fiction to be carefully tattooed upon the public sensorium, the press had created the image of the community as a series of on-going actions unified by datelines. Apart from the vernacular used, the dateline is the only organizing principle of the newspaper image of the community. Take off the dateline, and one day's paper is the same as the next. Yet to read a week-old newspaper without noticing that it is not today's is a disconcerting experience. As soon as the press recognized that news presentation was not a repetition of occurrences and reports but a direct cause of events, many things began to happen. Advertising and promotion, until then restricted, broke onto the front page,

with the aid of Barnum, as sensational stories. Today's press agent regards the newspaper as a ventriloquist does his dummy. He can make it say what he wants. He looks on it as a painter does his palette and tubes of pigment; from the endless resources of available events, an endless variety of managed mosaic effects can be attained. Any private client can be ensconced in a wide range of different patterns and tones of public affairs or human interest and depth items.

If we pay careful attention to the fact that the press is a mosaic, participant kind or organization and a do-it-yourself kind of world, we can see why it is so necessary to democratic government. Throughout his study of the press in *The Fourth Branch of Government*, Douglas Cater is baffled by the fact that amidst the extreme fragmentation of government departments and branches, the press somehow manages to keep them in relation to each other and to the nation. He emphasizes the paradox that the press is dedicated to the process of cleansing by publicity, and yet that, in the electronic world of the seamless web of events, most affairs must be kept secret. Top secrecy is translated into public participation and responsibility by the magic flexibility of the controlled news leak.

It is by this kind of ingenious adaptation from day to day that Western man is beginning to accommodate himself to the electric world of total interdependence. Nowhere is this transforming process of adaptation more visible than in the press. The press, in itself, presents the contradiction of an individualistic technology dedicated to shaping and revealing group attitudes.

It might be well now to observe how the press has been modified by the recent developments of telephone, radio, and TV. We have seen already that the telegraph is the factor that has done most to create the mosaic image of the modern press, with its mass of discontinuous and unconnected features. It is this group-image of the communal life, rather than any editorial outlook or slanting, that constitutes the participant of this medium. To the book-man of detached private culture, this is the scandal of the press: its shameless involvement in the depths of human

contextual products

interest and sentiment. By eliminating time and space in news presentation, the telegraph dimmed the privacy of the book-form, and heightened, instead, the new public image in the press.

The first harrowing experience for the press man visiting Moscow is the absence of telephone books. A further horrifying revelation is the absence of central switchboards in government departments. You know the number, or else. The student of media is happy to read a hundred volumes to discover two facts such as these. They floodlight a vast murky area of the press-world, and illuminate the role of telephone as seen through another culture. The American newspaperman in large degree assembles his stories and processes his data by telephone because of the speed and immediacy of the oral process. Our popular press is a near approximation to the grapevine. The Russian and European newspaperman is, by comparison, a *littérateur*. It is a paradoxical situation, but the press in literate America has an intensely oral character, while in oral Russia and Europe the press has a strongly literary character and function.

The English dislike the telephone so much that they substitute numerous mail deliveries for it. The Russians use the telephone for a status symbol, like the alarm clock worn by tribal chiefs as an article of attire in Africa. The mosaic of the press image in Russia is felt as an immediate form of tribal unity and participation. Those features of the press that we find most discordant with austere individual standards of literary culture are just the ones that recommend it to the Communist Party. "A newspaper," Lenin once declared, "is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator; it is also a collective organizer." Stalin called it "the most powerful weapon of our Party." Khrushchev cites it as "our chief ideological weapon." These men had more an eye to the collective form of the press mosaic, with its magical power to impose its own assumptions, than to the printed word as expressing a private point of view. In oral Russia, fragmentation of government powers is unknown. Not for them our function of the press as unifier of fragmented departments. The Russian monolith has quite different uses for the press mosaic. Russia now needs the press (as we formerly did the book) to translate a tribal

media
→ spiritual
tool

and oral community into some degree of visual, uniform culture able to sustain a market system.

In Egypt the press is needed to effect nationalism, that visual kind of unity that springs men out of local and tribal patterns. Paradoxically, radio has come to the fore in Egypt as the rejuvenator of the ancient tribes. The battery radio carried on the camel gives to the Bedouin tribes a power and vitality unknown before, so that to use the word "nationalism" for the fury of oral agitation that the Arabs have felt by radio is to conceal the situation from ourselves. Unity of the Arab-speaking world can only come by the press. Nationalism was unknown to the Western world until the Renaissance, when Gutenberg made it possible to *see* the mother tongue in uniform dress. Radio does nothing for this uniform visual unity so necessary to nationalism. In order to restrict radio-listening to national programs, some Arab governments have passed a law forbidding the use of private headphones, in effect enforcing a tribal collectivism in their radio audiences. Radio restores tribal sensitivity and exclusive involvement in the web of kinship. The press, on the other hand, creates a visual, not-too-involved kind of unity that is hospitable to the inclusion of many tribes, and to diversity of private outlook.

✓
imagined
communities

If telegraph shortened the sentence, radio shortened the news story, and TV injected the interrogative mood into journalism. In fact, the press is now not only a telephoto mosaic of the human community hour by hour, but its technology is also a mosaic of all the technologies of the community. Even in its selection of the newsworthy, the press prefers those persons who have already been accorded some notoriety existence in movies, radio, TV, and drama. By this fact, we can test the nature of the press medium, for anybody who appears only in the newspaper is, by that token, an ordinary citizen.

Wallpaper manufacturers have recently begun to issue wallpaper that presents the appearance of a French newspaper. The Eskimo sticks magazine pages on the ceiling of his igloo to deter drip. But even an ordinary newspaper on a kitchen floor will reveal news items that one had missed when the paper was in hand. Yet whether one uses the press for privacy in public con-

veyances, or for involvement in the communal while enjoying privacy, the mosaic of the press manages to effect a complex many-leveled function of group-awareness and participation such as the book has never been able to perform.

The format of the press—that is, its structural characteristics—were quite naturally taken over by the poets after Baudelaire in order to evoke an inclusive awareness. Our ordinary newspaper page today is not only symbolist and surrealist in an *avant-garde* way, but it was the earlier *inspiration* of symbolism and surrealism in art and poetry, as anybody can discover by reading Flaubert or Rimbaud. Approached as newspaper form, any part of Joyce's *Ulysses* or any poem of T. S. Eliot's before the *Quartets* is more readily enjoyed. Such, however, is the austere continuity of book culture that it scorns to notice these *liaisons dangereuses* among the media, especially the scandalous affairs of the book-page with electronic creatures from the other side of the linotype.

In view of the inveterate concern of the press with cleansing by publicity, it may be well to ask if it does not set up an inevitable clash with the medium of the book. The press as a collective and communal image assumes a natural posture of opposition to all private manipulation. Any mere individual who begins to stir about as if he were a public something-or-other is going to get into the press. Any individual who manipulates the public for his private good may also feel the cleansing power of publicity. The cloak of invisibility, therefore, would seem to fall most naturally on those who own newspapers or who use them extensively for commercial ends. May not this explain the strange obsession of the bookman with the press-lords as essentially corrupt? The merely private and fragmentary point of view assumed by the book reader and writer finds natural grounds for hostility toward the big communal power of the press. As forms, as media, the book and the newspaper would seem to be as incompatible as any two media could be. The owners of media always endeavor to give the public what it wants, because they sense that their power is in the *medium* and not in the *message* or the program.

22

Motorcar*The Mechanical
Bride*

Here is a news item that captures a good deal of the meaning of the automobile in relation to social life:

I was terrific. There I was in my white Continental, and I was wearing a pure-silk, pure-white, embroidered cowboy shirt, and black gabardine trousers. Beside me in the car was my jet-black Great Dane imported from Europe, named Dana von Krupp. You just can't do any better than that.

Although it may be true to say that an American is a creature of four wheels, and to point out that American youth attributes much more importance to arriving at driver's-license age than at voting age, it is also true that the car has become an article of dress without which we feel uncertain, unclad, and incomplete in the urban compound. Some observers insist that, as a status symbol, the house has, of late, supplanted the car. If so, this shift from the mobile open road to the mani-

23
Ads
*Keeping Upset
 with the
 Joneses*

The continuous pressure is to create ads more and more in the image of audience motives and desires. The product matters less as the audience participation increases. An extreme example is the corset series that protests that "it is not the corset that you feel." The need is to make the ad include the audience experience. The product and the public response become a single complex pattern. The art of advertising has wondrously come to fulfill the early definition of anthropology as "the science of man embracing woman." The steady trend in advertising is to manifest the product as an integral part of large social purposes and processes. With very large budgets the commercial artists have tended to develop the ad into an icon, and icons are not specialist fragments or aspects but unified and compressed images of complex kind. They focus a large region of experience in tiny compass. The trend in ads, then, is away from the consumer

picture of product to the producer image of process. The corporate image of process includes the consumer in the producer role as well.

This powerful new trend in ads toward the iconic image has greatly weakened the position of the magazine industry in general and the picture magazines in particular. Magazine features have long employed the pictorial treatment of themes and news. Side by side with these magazine features that present shots and fragmentary points of view, there are the new massive iconic ads with their compressed images that include producer and consumer, seller and society in a single image. The ads make the features seem pale, weak, and anemic. The features belong to the old pictorial world that preceded TV mosaic imagery.

It is the powerful mosaic and iconic thrust in our experience since TV that explains the paradox of the upsurge of *Time* and *Newsweek* and similar magazines. These magazines present the news in a compressed mosaic form that is a real parallel to the ad world. Mosaic news is neither narrative, nor point of view, nor explanation, nor comment. It is a corporate image in depth of the community in action and invites maximal participation in the social process.

Ads seem to work on the very advanced principle that a small pellet or pattern in a noisy, redundant barrage of repetition will gradually assert itself. Ads push the principle of noise all the way to the plateau of persuasion. They are quite in accord with the procedures of brain-washing. This depth principle of onslaught on the unconscious may be the reason why.

Many people have expressed uneasiness about the advertising enterprise in our time. To put the matter abruptly, the advertising industry is a crude attempt to extend the principles of automation to every aspect of society. Ideally, advertising aims at the goal of a programmed harmony among all human impulses and aspirations and endeavors. Using handicraft methods, it stretches out toward the ultimate electronic goal of a collective consciousness. When all production and all consumption are brought into a pre-established harmony with all desire and all effort, then advertising will have liquidated itself by its own success.

Since the advent of TV, the exploitation of the unconscious by the advertiser has hit a snag. TV experience favors much more consciousness concerning the unconscious than do the hard-sell forms of presentation in the press, the magazine, movie, or radio. The sensory tolerance of the audience has changed, and so have the methods of appeal by the advertisers. In the new cool TV world, the old hot world of hard-selling, earnest-talking salesmen has all the antique charm of the songs and togs of the 1920s. Mort Sahl and Shelley Berman are merely following, not setting, a trend in spoofing the ad world. They discovered that they have only to reel off an ad or news item to have the audience in fits. Will Rogers discovered years ago that any newspaper read aloud from a theater stage is hilarious. The same is true today of ads. Any ad put into a new setting is funny. This is a way of saying that any ad consciously attended to is comical. Ads are not meant for conscious consumption. They are intended as subliminal pills for the subconscious in order to exercise an hypnotic spell, especially on sociologists. That is one of the most edifying aspects of the huge educational enterprise that we call advertising, whose twelve-billion-dollar annual budget approximates the national school budget. Any expensive ad represents the toil, attention, testing, wit, art, and skill of many people. Far more thought and care go into the composition of any prominent ad in a newspaper or magazine than go into the writing of their features and editorials. Any expensive ad is as carefully built on the tested foundations of public stereotypes or "sets" of established attitudes, as any skyscraper is built on bedrock. Since highly skilled and perceptive teams of talent cooperate in the making of an ad for any established line of goods whatever, it is obvious that any acceptable ad is a vigorous dramatization of communal experience. No group of sociologists can approximate the ad teams in the gathering and processing of exploitable social data. The ad teams have billions to spend annually on research and testing of reactions, and their products are magnificent accumulations of material about the shared experience and feelings of the entire community. Of course, if ads were to depart from the center of

this shared experience, they would collapse at once, by losing all hold on our feelings.

It is true, of course, that ads use the most basic and tested human experience of a community in grotesque ways. They are as incongruous, if looked at consciously, as the playing of "Silver Threads among the Gold" as music for a strip-tease act. But ads are carefully designed by the Madison Avenue frogmen-of-the-mind for semiconscious exposure. Their mere existence is a testimony, as well as a contribution, to the somnambulistic state of a tired metropolis.

After the Second War, an ad-conscious American army officer in Italy noted with misgiving that Italians could tell you the names of cabinet ministers, but not the names of commodities preferred by Italian celebrities. Furthermore, he said, the wall space of Italian cities was given over to political, rather than commercial, slogans. He predicted that there was small hope that Italians would ever achieve any sort of domestic prosperity or calm until they began to worry about the rival claims of corn-flakes and cigarettes, rather than the capacities of public men. In fact, he went so far as to say that democratic freedom very largely consists in ignoring politics and worrying, instead, about the threat of scaly scalp, hairy legs, sluggish bowels, saggy breasts, receding gums, excess weight, and tired blood.

The army officer was probably right. Any community that wants to expedite and maximize the exchange of goods and services has simply got to homogenize its social life. The decision to homogenize comes easily to the highly literate population of the English-speaking world. Yet it is hard for oral cultures to agree on this program of homogenization, for they are only too prone to translate the message of radio into tribal politics, rather than into a new means of pushing Cadillacs. This is one reason that it was easy for the retribalized Nazi to feel superior to the American consumer. The tribal man can spot the gaps in the literate mentality very easily. On the other hand, it is the special illusion of literate societies that they are highly aware and individualistic. Centuries of typographic conditioning in patterns of lineal uni-

formity and fragmented repeatability have, in the electric age, been given increasing critical attention by the artistic world. The lineal process has been pushed out of industry, not only in management and production, but in entertainment, as well. It is the new mosaic form of the TV image that has replaced the Gutenberg structural assumptions. Reviewers of William Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch* have alluded to the prominent use of the "mosaic" term and method in his novel. The TV image renders the world of standard brands and consumer goods merely amusing. Basically, the reason is that the mosaic mesh of the TV image compels so much active participation on the part of the viewer that he develops a nostalgia for pre-consumer ways and days. Lewis Mumford gets serious attention when he praises the cohesive form of medieval towns as relevant to our time and needs.

Advertising got into high gear only at the end of the last century, with the invention of photoengraving. Ads and pictures then became interchangeable and have continued so. More important, pictures made possible great increases in newspaper and magazine circulation that also increased the quantity and profitability of ads. Today it is inconceivable that any publication, daily or periodical, could hold more than a few thousand readers without pictures. For both the pictorial ad or the picture story provide large quantities of instant information and instant humans, such as are necessary for keeping abreast in our kind of culture. Would it not seem natural and necessary that the young be provided with at least as much training of perception in this graphic and photographic world as they get in the typographic? In fact, they need more training in graphics, because the art of casting and arranging actors in ads is both complex and forcefully insidious.

Some writers have argued that the Graphic Revolution has shifted our culture away from private ideals to corporate images. That is really to say that the photo and TV seduce us from the *literate* and private "point of view" to the complex and inclusive world of the group icon. That is certainly what advertising does. Instead of presenting a private argument or vista, it offers a way

of life that is for everybody or nobody. It offers this prospect with arguments that concern only irrelevant and trivial matters. For example, a lush car ad features a baby's rattle on the rich rug of the back floor and says that it has removed unwanted car rattles as easily as the user could remove the baby's rattle. This kind of copy has really nothing to do with rattles. The copy is merely a punning gag to distract the critical faculties while the image of the car goes to work on the hypnotized viewer. Those who have spent their lives protesting about "false and misleading ad copy" are godsend to advertisers, as teetotalers are to brewers, and moral censors are to books and films. The protestors are the best acclaimers and accelerators. Since the advent of pictures, the job of the ad copy is as incidental and latent, as the "meaning" of a poem is to a poem, or the words of a song are to a song. Highly literate people cannot cope with the nonverbal art of the pictorial, so they dance impatiently up and down to express a pointless disapproval that renders them futile and gives new power and authority to the ads. The unconscious depth-messages of ads are never attacked by the literate, because of their incapacity to notice or discuss nonverbal forms of arrangement and meaning. They have not the art to argue with pictures. When early in TV broadcasting hidden ads were tried out, the literate were in a great panic until they were dropped. The fact that typography is itself mainly subliminal in effect and that pictures are, as well, is a secret that is safe from the book-oriented community.

When the movies came, the entire pattern of American life went on the screen as a nonstop ad. Whatever any actor or actress wore or used or ate was such an ad as had never been dreamed of. The American bathroom, kitchen, and car, like everything else, got the *Arabian Nights* treatment. The result was that all ads in magazines and the press had to look like scenes from a movie. They still do. But the focus has had to become softer since TV.

With radio, ads openly went over to the incantation of the singing commercial. Noise and nausea as a technique of achieving unforgettability became universal. Ad and image making became, and have remained, the one really dynamic and growing part of

the economy. Both movie and radio are hot media, whose arrival pepped up everybody to a great degree, giving us the Roaring Twenties. The effect was to provide a massive platform and a mandate for sales promotion as a way of life that ended only with *The Death of a Salesman* and the advent of TV. These two events did not coincide by accident. TV introduced that "experience in depth" and the "do-it-yourself" pattern of living that has shattered the image of the individualist hard-sell salesman and the docile consumer, just as it has blurred the formerly clear figures of the movie stars. This is not to suggest that Arthur Miller was trying to explain TV to America on the eve of its arrival, though he could as appropriately have titled his play "The Birth of the PR Man." Those who saw Harold Lloyd's *World of Comedy* film will remember their surprise at how much of the 1920s they had forgotten. Also, they were surprised to find evidence of how naive and simple the Twenties really were. That age of the vamps, the sheiks, and the cavemen was a raucous nursery compared to our world, in which children read *MAD* magazine for chuckles. It was a world still innocently engaged in expanding and exploding, in separating and teasing and tearing. Today, with TV, we are experiencing the opposite process of integrating and interrelating that is anything but innocent. The simple faith of the salesman in the irresistibility of his line (both talk and goods) now yields to the complex togetherness of the corporate posture, the process and the organization.

Ads have proved to be a self-liquidating form of community entertainment. They came along just after the Victorian gospel of work, and they promised a Beulah land of perfectibility, where it would be possible to "iron shirts without hating your husband." And now they are deserting the individual consumer-product in favor of the all-inclusive and never-ending process that is the Image of any great corporate enterprise. The Container Corporation of America does not feature paper bags and paper cups in its ads, but the container *function*, by means of great art. The historians and archeologists will one day discover that the ads of our time are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities. The Egyptian

hieroglyph lags far behind in this respect. With TV, the smarter advertisers have made free with fur and fuzz, and blur and buzz. They have, in a word, taken a skin-dive. For that is what the TV viewer is. He is a skin-diver, and he no longer likes garish daylight on hard, skiny surfaces, though he must continue to put up with a noisy radio sound track that is painful.

oppressed by the monotony or uniformity of the Chaplin ballet or by the monotonous, uniform musings of his literary twin, Leopold Bloom.

In 1911 Henri Bergson in *Creative Evolution* created a sensation by associating the thought process with the form of the movie. Just at the extreme point of mechanization represented by the factory, the film, and the press, men seemed by the stream of consciousness, or interior film to obtain release into a world of spontaneity, of dreams, and of unique personal experience. Dickens perhaps began it all with his Mr. Jingle in *Pickwick Papers*. Certainly in *David Copperfield* he made a great technical discovery, since for the first time the world unfolds realistically through the use of the eyes of a growing child as camera. Here was the stream of consciousness, perhaps, in its original form before it was adopted by Proust and Joyce and Eliot. It indicates how the enrichment of human experience can occur unexpectedly with the crossing and interplay of the life of media forms.

The film imports of all nations, especially those from the United States, are very popular in Thailand, thanks in part to a deft Thai technique for getting round the foreign-language obstacle. In Bangkok, in place of subtitles, they use what is called "Adam-and-Eving." This takes the form of live Thai dialogue read through a loudspeaker by Thai actors concealed from the audience. Split-second timing and great endurance enable these actors to demand more than the best-paid movie stars of Thailand.

Everyone has at some time wished he were equipped with his own sound system during a movie performance, in order to make appropriate comments. In Thailand, one might achieve great heights of interpretive interpolation during the inane exchanges of great stars.

30 Radio *The Tribal Drum*

England and America had had their "shots" against radio in the form of long exposure to literacy and industrialism. These forms involve an intense visual organization of experience. The more earthy and less visual European cultures were not immune to radio. Its tribal magic was not lost on them, and the old web of kinship began to resonate once more with the note of fascism. The inability of literate people to grasp the language and message of the media as such is involuntarily conveyed by the comments of sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld in discussing the effects of radio:

The last group of effects may be called the monopolistic effects of radio. Such have attracted most public attention because of their importance in the totalitarian countries. If a government monopolizes the radio, then by mere repetition and by exclusion of conflicting points of view it can determine the opinions of the population. We do not know much about how this monopo-

listic effect really works, but it is important to note its singularity. No inference should be drawn regarding the effects of radio as such. It is often forgotten that Hitler did not achieve control through radio but almost despite it, because at the time of his rise to power radio was controlled by his enemies. The monopolistic effects have probably less social importance than is generally assumed.

Professor Lazarsfeld's helpless unawareness of the nature and effects of radio is not a personal defect, but a universally shared ineptitude.

In a radio speech in Munich, March 14, 1936, Hitler said, "I go my way with the assurance of a somnambulist." His victims and his critics have been equally somnambulist. They danced entranced to the tribal drum of radio that extended their central nervous system to create depth involvement for everybody. "I live right inside radio when I listen. I more easily lose myself in radio than in a book," said a voice from a radio poll. The power of radio to involve people in depth is manifested in its use during homework by youngsters and by many other people who carry transistor sets in order to provide a private world for themselves amidst crowds. There is a little poem by the German dramatist Berthold Brecht:

You little box, held to me when escaping
 So that your valves should not break,
 Carried from house to ship from ship to train,
 So that my enemies might go on talking to me
 Near my bed, to my pain
 The last thing at night, the first thing in the morning,
 Of their victories and of my cares,
 Promise me not to go silent all of a sudden.

One of the many effects of television on radio has been to shift radio from an entertainment medium into a kind of nervous information system. News bulletins, time signals, traffic data, and, above all, weather reports now serve to enhance the native power of radio to involve people in one another. Weather is that medium that involves all people equally. It is the top item on radio, showering us with fountains of auditory space or *lebensraum*.

It was no accident that Senator McCarthy lasted such a very

short time when he switched to TV. Soon the press decided, "He isn't news any more." Neither McCarthy nor the press ever knew what had happened. TV is a cool medium. It rejects hot figures and hot issues and people from the hot press media. Fred Allen was a casualty of TV. Was Marilyn Monroe? Had TV occurred on a large scale during Hitler's reign he would have vanished quickly. Had TV come first there would have been no Hitler at all. When Khrushchev appeared on American TV he was more acceptable than Nixon, as a clown and a lovable sort of old boy. His appearance is rendered by TV as a comic cartoon. Radio, however, is a hot medium and takes cartoon characters seriously. Mr. K. on radio would be a different proposition.

In the Kennedy-Nixon debates, those who heard them on radio received an overwhelming idea of Nixon's superiority. It was Nixon's fate to provide a sharp, high-definition image and action for the cool TV medium that translated that sharp image into the impression of a phony. I suppose "phony" is something that resonates wrong, that doesn't *ring* true. It might well be that F.D.R. would not have done well on TV. He had learned, at least, how to use the hot radio medium for his very cool job of fireside chatting. He first, however, had had to hot up the press media against himself in order to create the right atmosphere for his radio chats. He learned how to use the press in close relation to radio. TV would have presented him with an entirely different political and social mix of components and problems. He would possibly have enjoyed solving them, for he had the kind of playful approach necessary for tackling new and obscure relationships.

Radio affects most people intimately, person-to-person, offering a world of unspoken communication between writer-speaker and the listener. That is the immediate aspect of radio. A private experience. The subliminal depths of radio are charged with the resonating echoes of tribal horns and antique drums. This is inherent in the very nature of this medium, with its power to turn the psyche and society into a single echo chamber. The resonating dimension of radio is unheeded by the script writers, with few exceptions. The famous Orson Welles broadcast about the invasion from Mars was a simple demonstration of the all-inclusive,

completely involving scope of the auditory image of radio. It was Hitler who gave radio the Orson Welles treatment for *real*.

That Hitler came into political existence at all is directly owing to radio and public-address systems. This is not to say that these media relayed his thoughts effectively to the German people. His thoughts were of very little consequence. Radio provided the first massive experience of electronic implosion, that reversal of the entire direction and meaning of literate Western civilization. For tribal peoples, for those whose entire social existence is an extension of family life, radio will continue to be a violent experience. Highly literate societies, that have long subordinated family life to individualist stress in business and politics, have managed to absorb and to neutralize the radio implosion without revolution. Not so, those communities that have had only brief or superficial experience of literacy. For them, radio is utterly explosive.

To understand such effects, it is necessary to see literacy as typographic technology, applied not only to the rationalizing of the entire procedures of production and marketing, but to law and education and city planning, as well. The principles of continuity, uniformity, and repeatability derived from print technology have, in England and America, long permeated every phase of communal life. In those areas a child learns literacy from traffic and street, from every car and toy and garment. Learning to read and write is a minor facet of literacy in the uniform, continuous environments of the English-speaking world. Stress on literacy is a distinguishing mark of areas that are striving to initiate that process of standardization that leads to the visual organization of work and space. Without psychic transformation of the inner life into segmented visual terms by literacy, there cannot be the economic "take-off" that insures a continual movement of augmented production and perpetually accelerated change-and-exchange of goods and services.

Just prior to 1914, the Germans had become obsessed with the menace of "encirclement." Their neighbors had all developed elaborate railway systems that facilitated mobilization of manpower resources. Encirclement is a highly visual image that had

great novelty for this newly industrialized nation. In the 1930s, by contrast, the German obsession was with *lebensraum*. This is not a visual concern, at all. It is a claustrophobia, engendered by the radio implosion and compression of space. The German defeat had thrust them back from visual obsession into brooding upon the resonating Africa within. The tribal past has never ceased to be a reality for the German psyche.

It was the ready access of the German and middle-European world to the rich nonvisual resources of auditory and tactile form that enabled them to enrich the world of music and dance and sculpture. Above all their tribal mode gave them easy access to the new nonvisual world of subatomic physics, in which long-literate and long-industrialized societies are decidedly handicapped. The rich area of preliterate vitality felt the hot impact of radio. The message of radio is one of violent, unified implosion and resonance. For Africa, India, China, and even Russia, radio is a profound archaic force, a time bond with the most ancient past and long-forgotten experience.

Tradition, in a word, is the sense of the total past as *now*. Its awakening is a natural result of radio impact and of electric information, in general. For the intensely literate population, however, radio engendered a profound unlocalizable sense of guilt that sometimes expressed itself in the fellow-traveler attitude. A newly found human involvement bred anxiety and insecurity and unpredictability. Since literacy had fostered an extreme of individualism, and radio had done just the opposite in reviving the ancient experience of kinship webs of deep tribal involvement, the literate West tried to find some sort of compromise in a larger sense of collective responsibility. The sudden impulse to this end was just as subliminal and obscure as the earlier literary pressure toward individual isolation and irresponsibility; therefore, nobody was happy about any of the positions arrived at. The Gutenberg technology had produced a new kind of visual, national entity in the sixteenth century that was gradually meshed with industrial production and expansion. Telegraph and radio neutralized nationalism but evoked archaic tribal ghosts of the most vigorous brand. This is exactly the meeting of eye and ear, of explosion and implo-

sion, or as Joyce puts it in the *Wake*, "In that European end meets Ind." The opening of the European ear brought to an end the open society and reintroduced the Indic world of tribal man to West End woman. Joyce puts these matters not so much in cryptic, as in dramatic and mimetic, form. The reader has only to take any of his phrases such as this one, and mime it until it yields the intelligible. Not a long or tedious process, if approached in the spirit of artistic playfulness that guarantees "lots of fun at Finnegans wake."

Radio is provided with its cloak of invisibility, like any other medium. It comes to us ostensibly with person-to-person directness that is private and intimate, while in more urgent fact, it is really a subliminal echo chamber of magical power to touch remote and forgotten chords. All technological extensions of ourselves must be numb and subliminal, else we could not endure the leverage exerted upon us by such extension. Even more than telephone or telegraph, radio is that extension of the central nervous system that is matched only by human speech itself. Is it not worthy of our meditation that radio should be specially attuned to that primitive extension of our central nervous system, that aboriginal mass medium, the vernacular tongue? The crossing of these two most intimate and potent of human technologies could not possibly have failed to provide some extraordinary new shapes for human experience. So it proved with Hitler, the somnambulist. But does the detribalized and literate West imagine that it has earned immunity to the tribal magic of radio as a permanent possession? Our teenagers in the 1950s began to manifest many of the tribal stigmata. The adolescent, as opposed to the teenager, can now be classified as a phenomenon of literacy. Is it not significant that the adolescent was indigenous only to those areas of England and America where literacy had invested even food with abstract visual values? Europe never had adolescents. It had chaperones. Now, to the teenager, radio gives privacy, and at the same time it provides the tight tribal bond of the world of the common market, of song, and of resonance. The ear is hyperesthetic compared to the neutral eye. The ear is intolerant, closed, and exclusive, whereas the eye is open, neutral, and associative. Ideas of tolerance came

to the West only after two or three centuries of literacy and visual Gutenberg culture. No such saturation with visual values had occurred in Germany by 1930. Russia is still far from any such involvement with visual order and values.

If we sit and talk in a dark room, words suddenly acquire new meanings and different textures. They become richer, even, than architecture, which Le Corbusier rightly says can best be felt at night. All those gestural qualities that the printed page strips from language come back in the dark, and on the radio. Given only the *sound* of a play, we have to fill in *all* of the senses, not just the sight of the action. So much do-it-yourself, or completion and "closure" of action, develops a kind of independent isolation in the young that makes them remote and inaccessible. The mystic screen of sound with which they are invested by their radios provides the privacy for their homework, and immunity from parental behest.

With radio came great changes to the press, to advertising, to drama, and to poetry. Radio offered new scope to practical jokers like Morton Downey at CBS. A sportscaster had just begun his fifteen-minute reading from a script when he was joined by Mr. Downey, who proceeded to remove his shoes and socks. Next followed coat and trousers and then underwear, while the sportscaster helplessly continued his broadcast, testifying to the compelling power of the mike to command loyalty over modesty and the self-protective impulse.

Radio created the disk jockey, and elevated the gag writer into a major national role. Since the advent of radio, the gag has supplanted the joke, not because of gag writers, but because radio is a fast hot medium that has also rationed the reporter's space for stories.

Jean Shepherd of WOR in New York regards radio as a new medium for a new kind of novel that he writes nightly. The mike is his pen and paper. His audience and their knowledge of the daily events of the world provide his characters, his scenes, and moods. It is his idea that, just as Montaigne was the first to use the page to record his reactions to the new world of printed books, he is the first to use radio as an essay and novel form for recording our

common awareness of a totally new world of universal human participation in all human events, private or collective.

To the student of media, it is difficult to explain the human indifference to social effects of these radical forces. The phonetic alphabet and the printed word that exploded the closed tribal world into the open society of fragmented functions and specialist knowledge and action have never been studied in their roles as a magical transformer. The antithetic electric power of instant information that reverses social explosion into implosion, private enterprise into organization man, and expanding empires into common markets, has obtained as little recognition as the written word. The power of radio to retribalize mankind, its almost instant reversal of individualism into collectivism, Fascist or Marxist, has gone unnoticed. So extraordinary is this unawareness that *it* is what needs to be explained. The transforming power of media is easy to explain, but the ignoring of this power is not at all easy to explain. It goes without saying that the universal ignoring of the psychic action of technology bespeaks some inherent function, some essential numbing of consciousness such as occurs under stress and shock conditions.

The history of radio is instructive as an indicator of the bias and blindness induced in any society by its pre-existent technology. The word "wireless," still used for radio in Britain, manifests the negative "horseless-carriage" attitude toward a new form. Early wireless was regarded as a form of telegraph, and was not seen even in relation to the telephone. David Sarnoff in 1916 sent a memo to the Director of the American Marconi Company that employed him, advocating the idea of a music box in the home. It was ignored. That was the year of the Irish Easter rebellion and of the first radio *broadcast*. Wireless had already been used on ships as ship-to-shore "telegraph." The Irish rebels used a ship's wireless to make, not a point-to-point message, but a diffused broadcast in the hope of getting word to some ship that would relay their story to the American press. And so it proved. Even after broadcasting had been in existence for some years, there was no commercial interest in it. It was the amateur operators or hams and their fans, whose petitions finally got some action in favor of the

setting up of facilities. There was reluctance and opposition from the world of the press, which, in England, led to the formation of the BBC and the firm shackling of radio by newspaper and advertising interests. This is an obvious rivalry that has not been openly discussed. The restrictive pressure by the press on radio and TV is still a hot issue in Britain and in Canada. But, typically, misunderstanding of the nature of the medium rendered the restraining policies quite futile. Such has always been the case, most notoriously in government censorship of the press and of the movies. Although the medium is the *message*, the controls go beyond programming. The restraints are always directed to the "content," which is always another medium. The content of the press is literary statement, as the content of the book is speech, and the content of the movie is the novel. So the effects of radio are quite independent of its programming. To those who have never studied media, this fact is quite as baffling as literacy is to natives, who say, "Why do you write? Can't you remember?"

Thus, the commercial interests who think to render media universally acceptable, invariably settle for "entertainment" as a strategy of neutrality. A more spectacular mode of the ostrich-head-in-sand could not be devised, for it ensures maximal pervasiveness for any medium whatever. The literate community will always argue for a controversial or point-of-view use of press, radio, and movie that would in effect diminish the operation, not only of press, radio and movie, but of the book as well. The commercial entertainment strategy automatically ensures maximum speed and force of impact for any medium, on psychic and social life equally. It thus becomes a comic strategy of unwitting self-liquidation, conducted by those who are dedicated to permanence, rather than to change. In the future, the only effective media controls must take the thermostatic form of quantitative rationing. Just as we now try to control atom-bomb fallout, so we will one day try to control media fallout. Education will become recognized as civil defense against media fallout. The only medium for which our education now offers some civil defense is the print medium. The educational establishment, founded on print, does not yet admit any other responsibilities.

Radio provides a speed-up of information that also causes acceleration in other media. It certainly contracts the world to village size, and creates insatiable village tastes for gossip, rumor, and personal malice. But while radio contracts the world to village dimensions, it hasn't the effect of homogenizing the village quarters. Quite the contrary. In India, where radio is the supreme form of communication, there are more than a dozen official languages and the same number of official radio networks. The effect of radio as a reviver of archaism and ancient memories is not limited to Hitler's Germany. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have undergone resurgence of their ancient tongues since the coming of radio, and the Israeli present an even more extreme instance of linguistic revival. They now speak a language which has been dead in books for centuries. Radio is not only a mighty awakener of archaic memories, forces, and animosities, but a decentralizing, pluralistic force, as is really the case with all electric power and media.

Centralism of organization is based on the continuous, visual, lineal structuring that arises from phonetic literacy. At first, therefore, electric media merely followed the established patterns of literate structures. Radio was released from these centralist network pressures by TV. TV then took up the burden of centralism, from which it may be released by Telstar. With TV accepting the central network burden derived from our centralized industrial organization, radio was free to diversify, and to begin a regional and local community service that it had not known, even in the earliest days of the radio "hams." Since TV, radio has turned to the individual needs of people at different times of the day, a fact that goes with the multiplicity of receiving sets in bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, cars, and now in pockets. Different programs are provided for those engaged in diverse activities. Radio, once a form of group listening that emptied churches, has reverted to private and individual uses since TV. The teenager withdraws from the TV group to his private radio.

This natural bias of radio to a close tie-in with diversified community groups is best manifested in the disk-jockey cults, and in radio's use of the telephone in a glorified form of the old trunk-line wire-tapping. Plato, who had old-fashioned tribal ideas of

political structure, said that the proper size of a city was indicated by the number of people who could hear the voice of a public speaker. Even the printed book, let alone radio, renders the political assumptions of Plato quite irrelevant for practical purposes. Yet radio, because of its ease of decentralized intimate relation with both private and small communities, could easily implement the Platonic political dream on a world scale.

The uniting of radio with phonograph that constitutes the average radio program yields a very special pattern quite superior in power to the combination of radio and telegraph press that yields our news and weather programs. It is curious how much more arresting are the weather reports than the news, on both radio and TV. Is not this because "weather" is now entirely an electronic form of information, whereas news retains much of the pattern of the printed word? It is probably the print and book bias of the BBC and the CBC that renders them so awkward and inhibited in radio and TV presentation. Commercial urgency, rather than artistic insight, fostered by contrast a hectic vivacity in the corresponding American operation.

31
Television
*The Timid
 Giant*

Perhaps the most familiar and pathetic effect of the TV image is the posture of children in the early grades. Since TV, children—regardless of eye condition—average about six and a half inches from the printed page. Our children are striving to carry over to the printed page the all-involving sensory mandate of the TV image. With perfect psycho-mimetic skill, they carry out the commands of the TV image. They pore, they probe, they slow down and involve themselves in depth. This is what they had learned to do in the cool iconography of the comic-book medium. TV carried the process much further. Suddenly they are transferred to the hot print medium with its uniform patterns and fast lineal movement. Pointlessly they strive to read print in depth. They bring to print all their senses, and print rejects them. Print asks for the isolated and stripped-down visual faculty, not for the unified sensorium.

The Mackworth head-camera, when worn by children watching TV, has revealed that their eyes follow, not the actions, but the reactions. The eyes scarcely deviate from the faces of the actors, even during scenes of violence. This head-camera shows by projection both the scene and the eye movement simultaneously. Such extraordinary behavior is another indication of the very cool and involving character of this medium.

On the Jack Paar show for March 8, 1963, Richard Nixon was Paared down and remade into a suitable TV image. It turns out that Mr. Nixon is both a pianist and a composer. With sure tact for the character of the TV medium, Jack Paar brought out this *pianoforte* side of Mr. Nixon, with excellent effect. Instead of the slick, glib, legal Nixon, we saw the doggedly creative and modest performer. A few timely touches like this would have quite altered the result of the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. TV is a medium that rejects the sharp personality and favors the presentation of processes rather than of products.

The adaptation of TV to processes, rather than to the neatly packaged products, explains the frustration many people experience with this medium in its political uses. An article by Edith Efron in *TV Guide* (May 18–24, 1963) labeled TV “The Timid Giant,” because it is unsuited to hot issues and sharply defined controversial topics: “Despite official freedom from censorship, a self-imposed silence renders network documentaries almost mute on many great issues of the day.” As a cool medium TV has, some feel, introduced a kind of *rigor mortis* into the body politic. It is the extraordinary degree of audience participation in the TV medium that explains its failure to tackle hot issues. Howard K. Smith observed: “The networks are delighted if you go into a controversy in a country 14,000 miles away. They don’t want real controversy, real dissent, at home.” For people conditioned to the hot newspaper medium, which is concerned with the clash of *views*, rather than involvement in *depth* in a situation, the TV behavior is inexplicable.

Such a hot news item that concerns TV directly was headlined “It finally happened—a British film with English subtitles to explain the dialects.” The film in question is the British comedy

"Sparrows Don't Sing." A glossary of Yorkshire, Cockney, and other slang phrases has been printed for the customers so that they can figure out just what the subtitles mean. Sub subtitles are as handy an indicator of the depth effects of TV as the new "rugged" styles in feminine attire. One of the most extraordinary developments since TV in England has been the upsurge of regional dialects. A regional brogue or "burr" is the vocal equivalent of gaiter stockings. Such brogues undergo continual erosion from literacy. Their sudden prominence in England in areas in which previously one had heard only standard English is one of the most significant cultural events of our time. Even in the classrooms of Oxford and Cambridge, the local dialects are heard again. The undergraduates of those universities no longer strive to achieve a uniform speech. Dialectal speech since TV has been found to provide a social bond in depth, not possible with the artificial "standard English" that began only a century ago.

An article on Perry Como bills him as "Low-pressure king of a high-pressure realm." The success of any TV performer depends on his achieving a low-pressure style of presentation, although getting his act on the air may require much high-pressure organization. Castro may be a case in point. According to Tad Szulc's story on "Cuban Television's One-man Show" (*The Eighth Art*), "in his seemingly improvised 'as-I-go-along' style he can evolve politics and govern his country—right on camera." Now, Tad Szulc is under the illusion that TV is a hot medium, and suggests that in the Congo "television might have helped Lumumba to incite the masses to even greater turmoil and bloodshed." But he is quite wrong. Radio is the medium for frenzy, and it has been the major means of hotting up the tribal blood of Africa, India, and China, alike. TV has cooled Cuba down, as it is cooling down America. What the Cubans are getting by TV is the experience of being directly engaged in the making of political decisions. Castro presents himself as a teacher, and as Szulc says, "manages to blend political guidance and education with propaganda so skillfully that it is often difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends." Exactly the same mix is used in entertainment in Europe and America alike. Seen outside the United

States, any American movie looks like subtle political propaganda. Acceptable entertainment has to flatter and exploit the cultural and political assumptions of the land of its origin. These unspoken presuppositions also serve to blind people to the most obvious facts about a new medium like TV.

In a group of simulcasts of several media done in Toronto a few years back, TV did a strange flip. Four randomized groups of university students were given the same information at the same time about the structure of preliterate languages. One group received it via radio, one from TV, one by lecture, and one read it. For all but the reader group, the information was passed along in straight verbal flow by the same speaker without discussion or questions or use of blackboard. Each group had half an hour of exposure to the material. Each was asked to fill in the same quiz afterward. It was quite a surprise to the experimenters when the students performed better with TV-channeled information and with radio than they did with lecture and print—and the TV group stood *well* above the radio group. Since nothing had been done to give special stress to any of these four media, the experiment was repeated with other randomized groups. This time each medium was allowed full opportunity to do its stuff. For radio and TV, the material was dramatized with many auditory and visual features. The lecturer took full advantage of the blackboard and class discussion. The printed form was embellished with an imaginative use of typography and page layout to stress each point in the lecture. All of these media had been stepped up to high intensity for this repeat of the original performance. Television and radio once again showed results high above lecture and print. Unexpectedly to the testers, however, radio now stood significantly above television. It was a long time before the obvious reason declared itself, namely that TV is a cool, participant medium. When hotted up by dramatization and stingers, it performs less well because there is less opportunity for participation. Radio is a hot medium. When given additional intensity, it performs better. It doesn't invite the same degree of participation in its users. Radio will serve as background-sound or as noise-level control, as when the ingenious teenager employs it as a means of

privacy. TV will not work as background. It engages you. You have to be *with* it. (The phrase has gained acceptance since TV.)

A great many things will not work since the arrival of TV. Not only the movies, but the national magazines as well, have been hit very hard by this new medium. Even the comic books have declined greatly. Before TV, there had been much concern about why Johnny couldn't read. Since TV, Johnny has acquired an entirely new set of perceptions. He is not at all the same. Otto Preminger, director of *Anatomy of a Murder* and other hits, dates a great change in movie making and viewing from the very first year of general TV programming. "In 1951," he wrote, "I started a fight to get the release in motion-picture theaters of *The Moon Is Blue* after the production code approval was refused. It was a small fight and I won it." (*Toronto Daily Star*, October 19, 1963)

He went on to say, "The very fact that it was the word 'virgin' that was objected to in *The Moon Is Blue* is today laughable, almost incredible." Otto Preminger considers that American movies have advanced toward maturity owing to the influence of TV. The cool TV medium promotes depth structures in art and entertainment alike, and creates audience involvement in depth as well. Since nearly all our technologies and entertainment since Gutenberg have been not cool, but hot; and not deep, but fragmentary; not producer-oriented, but consumer-oriented, there is scarcely a single area of established relationships, from home and church to school and market, that has not been profoundly disturbed in its pattern and texture.

The psychic and social disturbance created by the TV image, and not the TV programming, occasions daily comment in the press. Raymond Burr, who plays Perry Mason, spoke to the National Association of Municipal Judges, reminding them that, "Without our laymen's understanding and acceptance, the laws which you apply and the courts in which you preside cannot continue to exist." What Mr. Burr omitted to observe was that the Perry Mason TV program, in which he plays the lead, is typical of that intensely participational kind of TV experience that has altered our relation to the laws and the courts.

The mode of the TV image has nothing in common with film

or photo, except that it offers also a nonverbal *gestalt* or posture of forms. With TV, the viewer is the screen. He is bombarded with light impulses that James Joyce called the "Charge of the Light Brigade" that imbues his "soulskin with subconscious inklings." The TV image is visually low in data. The TV image is not a *still* shot. It is not photo in any sense, but a ceaselessly forming contour of things limned by the scanning-finger. The resulting plastic contour appears by light *through*, not light *on*, and the image so formed has the quality of sculpture and icon, rather than of picture. The TV image offers some three million dots per second to the receiver. From these he accepts only a few dozen each instant, from which to make an image.

The film image offers many more millions of data per second, and the viewer does not have to make the same drastic reduction of items to form his impression. He tends instead to accept the full image as a package deal. In contrast, the viewer of the TV mosaic, with technical control of the image, unconsciously reconfigures the dots into an abstract work of art on the pattern of a Seurat or Rouault. If anybody were to ask whether all this would change if technology stepped up the character of the TV image to movie data level, one could only counter by inquiring, "Could we alter a cartoon by adding details of perspective and light and shade?" The answer is "Yes," only it would then no longer be a cartoon. Nor would "improved" TV be television. The TV image is *now* a mosaic mesh of light and dark spots which a movie shot never is, even when the quality of the movie image is very poor.

As in any other mosaic, the third dimension is alien to TV, but it can be superimposed. In TV the illusion of the third dimension is provided slightly by the stage sets in the studio; but the TV image itself is a flat two-dimensional mosaic. Most of the three-dimensional illusion is a carry-over of habitual viewing of film and photo. For the TV camera does not have a built-in angle of vision like the movie camera. Eastman Kodak now has a two-dimensional camera that can match the flat effects of the TV camera. Yet it is hard for literate people, with their habit of fixed points of view and three-dimensional vision, to understand the properties of two-dimensional vision. If it had been easy for them, they

would have had no difficulties with abstract art, General Motors would not have made a mess of motorcar design, and the picture magazine would not be having difficulties now with the relationship between features and ads. The TV image requires each instant that we "close" the spaces in the mesh by a convulsive sensuous participation that is profoundly kinetic and tactile, because tactility is the interplay of the senses, rather than the isolated contact of skin and object.

To contrast it with the film shot, many directors refer to the TV image as one of "low definition," in the sense that it offers little detail and a low degree of information, much like the cartoon. A TV close-up provides only as much information as a small section of a long-shot on the movie screen. For lack of observing so central an aspect of the TV image, the critics of program "content" have talked nonsense about "TV violence." The spokesmen of censorious views are typically semiliterate book-oriented individuals who have no competence in the grammars of newspaper, or radio, or of film, but who look askew and askance at all non-book media. The simplest question about any psychic aspect, even of the book medium, throws these people into a panic of uncertainty. Vehemence of projection of a single isolated attitude they mistake for moral vigilance. Once these censors became aware that in all cases "the medium is the message" or the basic source of effects, they would turn to suppression of media as such, instead of seeking "content" control. Their current assumption that content or programming is the factor that influences outlook and action is derived from the book medium, with its sharp cleavage between form and content.

Is it not strange that TV should have been as revolutionary a medium in America in the 1950s as radio in Europe in the 1930s? Radio, the medium that resuscitated the tribal and kinship webs of the European mind in the 1920s and 1930s, had no such effect in England or America. There, the erosion of tribal bonds by means of literacy and its industrial extensions had gone so far that our radio did not achieve any notable tribal reactions. Yet ten years of TV have Europeanized even the United States, as witness its

changed feelings for space and personal relations. There is new sensitivity to the dance, plastic arts, and architecture, as well as the demand for the small car, the paperback, sculptural hairdos and molded dress effects—to say nothing of a new concern for complex effects in cuisine and in the use of wines. Notwithstanding, it would be misleading to say that TV will retribalize England and America. The action of radio on the world of resonant speech and memory was hysterical. But TV has certainly made England and America vulnerable to radio where previously they had immunity to a great degree. For good or ill, the TV image has exerted a unifying synesthetic force on the sense-life of these intensely literate populations, such as they have lacked for centuries. It is wise to withhold all value judgments when studying these media matters, since their effects are not capable of being isolated.

Synesthesia, or unified sense and imaginative life, had long seemed an unattainable dream to Western poets, painters, and artists in general. They had looked with sorrow and dismay on the fragmented and impoverished imaginative life of Western literate man in the eighteenth century and later. Such was the message of Blake and Pater, Yeats and D. H. Lawrence, and a host of other great figures. They were not prepared to have their dreams realized in everyday life by the esthetic action of radio and television. Yet these massive extensions of our central nervous systems have enveloped Western man in a daily session of synesthesia. The Western way of life attained centuries since by the rigorous separation and specialization of the senses, with the visual sense atop the hierarchy, is not able to withstand the radio and TV waves that wash about the great visual structure of abstract Individual Man. Those who, from political motives, would now add their force to the anti-individual action of our electric technology are puny subliminal automatons aping the patterns of the prevailing electric pressures. A century ago they would, with equal somnambulism, have faced in the opposite direction. German Romantic poets and philosophers had been chanting in tribal chorus for a return to the dark unconscious for over a century

before radio and Hitler made such a return difficult to avoid. What is to be thought of people who wish such a return to preliterate ways, when they have no inkling of how the civilized visual way was ever substituted for tribal auditory magic?

At this hour, when Americans are discovering new passions for skin-diving and the wraparound space of small cars, thanks to the indomitable tactile promptings of the TV image, the same image is inspiring many English people with race feelings of tribal exclusiveness. Whereas highly literate Westerners have always idealized the condition of integration of races, it has been their literate culture that made impossible real uniformity among races. Literate man naturally dreams of visual solutions to the problems of human differences. At the end of the nineteenth century, this kind of dream suggested similar dress and education for both men and women. The failure of the sex-integration programs has provided the theme of much of the literature and psychoanalysis of the twentieth century. Race integration, undertaken on the basis of visual uniformity, is an extension of the same cultural strategy of literate man, for whom differences always seem to need eradication, both in sex and in race, and in space and in time. Electronic man, by becoming ever more deeply involved in the actualities of the human condition, cannot accept the literate cultural strategy. The Negro will reject a plan of visual uniformity as definitely as women did earlier, and for the same reasons. Women found that they had been robbed of their distinctive roles and turned into fragmented citizens in "a man's world." The entire approach to these problems in terms of uniformity and social homogenization is a final pressure of the mechanical and industrial technology. Without moralizing, it can be said that the electric age, by involving all men deeply in one another, will come to reject such mechanical solutions. It is more difficult to provide uniqueness and diversity than it is to impose the uniform patterns of mass education; but it is such uniqueness and diversity that can be fostered under electric conditions as never before.

Temporarily, all preliterate groups in the world have begun to feel the explosive and aggressive energies that are released by the onset of the new literacy and mechanization. These explosions

come just at a time when the new electric technology combines to make us share them on a global scale.

The effect of TV, as the most recent and spectacular electric extension of our central nervous system, is hard to grasp for various reasons. Since it has affected the totality of our lives, personal and social and political, it would be quite unrealistic to attempt a "systematic" or visual presentation of such influence. Instead, it is more feasible to "present" TV as a complex *gestalt* of data gathered almost at random.

The TV image is of low intensity or definition, and, therefore, unlike film, it does not afford detailed information about objects. The difference is akin to that between the old manuscripts and the printed word. Print gave intensity and uniform precision, where before there had been a diffuse texture. Print brought in the taste for exact measurement and repeatability that we now associate with science and mathematics.

The TV producer will point out that speech on television must not have the careful precision necessary in the theater. The TV actor does not have to project either his voice or himself. Likewise, TV acting is so extremely intimate, because of the peculiar involvement of the viewer with the completion or "closing" of the TV image, that the actor must achieve a great degree of spontaneous casualness that would be irrelevant in movie and lost on stage. For the audience participates in the inner life of the TV actor as fully as in the outer life of the movie star. Technically, TV tends to be a close-up medium. The close-up that in the movie is used for shock is, on TV, a quite casual thing. And whereas a glossy photo the size of the TV screen would show a dozen faces in adequate detail, a dozen faces on the TV screen are only a blur.

The peculiar character of the TV image in its relation to the actor causes such familiar reactions as our not being able to recognize in real life a person whom we see every week on TV. Not many of us are as alert as the kindergartener who said to Garry Moore, "How did you get off TV?" Newscasters and actors alike report the frequency with which they are approached by people who feel they've met them before. Joanne Woodward in an interview was asked what was the difference between being

a movie star and a TV actress. She replied: "When I was in the movies I heard people say, 'There goes Joanne Woodward.' Now they say, 'There goes somebody I think I know.'"

The owner of a Hollywood hotel in an area where many movie and TV actors reside reported that tourists had switched their allegiance to TV stars. Moreover, most TV stars are men, that is, "cool characters," while most movie stars are women, since they can be presented as "hot" characters. Men and women movie stars alike, along with the entire star system, have tended to dwindle into a more moderate status since TV. The movie is a hot, high-definition medium. Perhaps the most interesting observation of the hotel proprietor was that the tourists wanted to see Perry Mason and Wyatt Earp. They did not want to see Raymond Burr and Hugh O'Brian. The old movie-fan tourists had wanted to see their favorites as they were in *real* life, not as they were in their film roles. The fans of the cool TV medium want to see their star in *role*, whereas the movie fans want the *real thing*.

A similar reversal of attitudes occurred with the printed book. There was little interest in the private lives of authors under manuscript or scribal culture. Today the comic strip is close to the pre-print woodcut and manuscript form of expression. Walt Kelly's *Pogo* looks very much indeed like a gothic page. Yet in spite of great public interest in the comic-strip form, there is as little curiosity about the private lives of these artists as about the lives of popular-song writers. With print, the private life became of the utmost concern to readers. Print is a hot medium. It projects the author at the public as the movie did. The manuscript is a cool medium that does not project the author, so much as involve the reader. So with TV. The viewer is involved and participant. The *role* of the TV star, in this way, seems more fascinating than his private life. It is thus that the student of media, like the psychiatrist, gets more data from his informants than they themselves have perceived. Everybody experiences far more than he understands. Yet it is experience, rather than understanding, that influences behavior, especially in collective matters of media and technology, where the individual is almost inevitably unaware of their effect upon him.

Some may find it paradoxical that a cool medium like TV should be so much more compressed and condensed than a hot medium like film. But it is well known that a half minute of television is equal to three minutes of stage or vaudeville. The same is true of manuscript in contrast to print. The "cool" manuscript tended toward compressed forms of statement, aphoristic and allegorical. The "hot" print medium expanded expression in the direction of simplification and the "spelling-out" of meanings. Print speeded up and "exploded" the compressed script into simpler fragments.

A cool medium, whether the spoken word or the manuscript or TV, leaves much more for the listener or user to do than a hot medium. If the medium is of high definition, participation is low. If the medium is of low intensity, the participation is high. Perhaps this is why lovers mumble so.

Because the low definition of TV insures a high degree of audience involvement, the most effective programs are those that present situations which consist of some process to be completed. Thus, to use TV to teach poetry would permit the teacher to concentrate on the poetic process of actual *making*, as it pertained to a particular poem. The book form is quite unsuited to this type of involved presentation. The same salience of process of do-it-yourself-ness and depth involvement in the TV image extends to the art of the TV actor. Under TV conditions, he must be alert to improvise and to embellish every phrase and verbal resonance with details of gesture and posture, sustaining that intimacy with the viewer which is not possible on the massive movie screen or on the stage.

There is the alleged remark of the Nigerian who, after seeing a TV western, said delightedly, "I did not realize you valued human life so little in the West." Offsetting this remark is the behavior of our children in watching TV westerns. When equipped with the new experimental head-cameras that follow their eye movements while watching the image, children keep their eyes on the faces of the TV actors. Even during physical violence their eyes remain concentrated on the facial *reactions*, rather than on the eruptive *action*. Guns, knives, fists, all are ignored in prefer-

ence for the facial expression. TV is not so much an action, as a re-action, medium.

The yen of the TV medium for themes of process and complex reactions has enabled the documentary type of film to come to the fore. The movie *can* handle process superbly, but the movie viewer is more disposed to be a passive consumer of actions, rather than a participant in reactions. The movie western, like the movie documentary, has always been a lowly form. With TV, the western acquired new importance, since its theme is always: "Let's make a town." The audience participates in the shaping and processing of a community from meager and unpromising components. Moreover, the TV image takes kindly to the varied and rough textures of Western saddles, clothes, hides, and shoddy match-wood bars and hotel lobbies. The movie camera, by contrast, is at home in the slick chrome world of the night club and the luxury spots of a metropolis. Moreover, the contrasting camera preferences of the movies in the Twenties and Thirties, and of TV in the Fifties and Sixties spread to the entire population. In ten years the new tastes of America in clothes, in food, in housing, in entertainment, and in vehicles express the new pattern of interrelation of forms and do-it-yourself involvement fostered by the TV image.

It is no accident that such major movie stars as Rita Hayworth, Liz Taylor, and Marilyn Monroe ran into troubled waters in the new TV age. They ran into an age that questioned all the "hot" media values of the pre-TV consumer days. The TV image challenges the values of fame as much as the values of consumer goods. "Fame to me," said Marilyn Monroe, "certainly is only a temporary and a partial happiness. Fame is not really for a daily diet, that's not what fulfills you. . . . I think that when you are famous every weakness is exaggerated. This industry should behave to its stars like a mother whose child has just run out in front of a car. But instead of clasping the child to them they start punishing the child."

The movie community is now getting clobbered by TV, and lashes out at anybody in its bewildered petulance. These words of the great movie puppet who wed Mr. Baseball and Mr. Broad-

way are surely a portent. If many of the rich and successful figures in America were to question publicly the absolute value of money and success as means to happiness and human welfare, they would offer no more shattering a precedent than Marilyn Monroe. For nearly fifty years, Hollywood had offered "the fallen woman" a way to the top and a way to the hearts of all. Suddenly the love-goddess emits a horrible cry, screams that eating people is wrong, and utters denunciations of the whole way of life. This is exactly the mood of the suburban beatniks. They reject a fragmented and specialist consumer life for anything that offers humble involvement and deep commitment. It is the same mood that recently turned girls from specialist careers to early marriage and big families. They switch from jobs to roles.

The same new preference for depth participation has also prompted in the young a strong drive toward religious experience with rich liturgical overtones. The liturgical revival of the radio and TV age affects even the most austere Protestant sects. Choral chant and rich vestments have appeared in every quarter. The ecumenical movement is synonymous with electric technology.

Just as TV, the mosaic mesh, does not foster perspective in art, it does not foster lineality in living. Since TV, the assembly line has disappeared from industry. Staff and line structures have dissolved in management. Gone are the stag line, the party line, the receiving line, and the pencil line from the backs of nylons.

With TV came the end of bloc voting in politics, a form of specialism and fragmentation that won't work since TV. Instead of the voting bloc, we have the icon, the inclusive image. Instead of a political viewpoint or platform, the inclusive political posture or stance. Instead of the product, the process. In periods of new and rapid growth there is a blurring of outlines. In the TV image we have the supremacy of the blurred outline, itself the maximal incentive to growth and new "closure" or completion, especially for a consumer culture long related to the sharp visual values that had become separated from the other senses. So great is the change in American lives, resulting from the loss of loyalty to the consumer package in entertainment and commerce, that every enterprise, from Madison Avenue and General Motors to Hollywood

and General Foods, has been shaken thoroughly and forced to seek new strategies of action. What electric implosion or contraction has done inter-personally and inter-nationally, the TV image does intra-personally or intra-sensuously.

It is not hard to explain this sensuous revolution to painters and sculptors, for they have been striving, ever since Cézanne abandoned perspective illusion in favor of structure in painting, to bring about the very change that TV has now effected on a fantastic scale. TV is the Bauhaus program of design and living, or the Montessori educational strategy, given total technological extension and commercial sponsorship. The aggressive lunge of artistic strategy for the remaking of Western man has, *via* TV, become a vulgar sprawl and an overwhelming splurge in American life.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the degree to which this image has disposed America to European modes of sense and sensibility. America is now Europeanizing as furiously as Europe is Americanizing. Europe, during the Second War, developed much of the industrial technology needed for its first mass consumer phase. It was, on the other hand, the First War that had readied America for the same consumer "take-off." It took the electronic *implosion* to dissolve the nationalist diversity of a splintered Europe, and to do for it what the industrial *explosion* had done for America. The industrial explosion that accompanies the fragmenting expansion of literacy and industry was able to exert little unifying effect in the European world with its numerous tongues and cultures. The Napoleonic thrust had utilized the combined force of the new literacy and early industrialism. But Napoleon had had a less homogenized set of materials to work with than even the Russians have today. The homogenizing power of the literate process had gone further in America by 1800 than anywhere in Europe. From the first, America took to heart the print technology for its educational, industrial, and political life; and it was rewarded by an unprecedented pool of standardized workers and consumers, such as no culture had ever had before. That our cultural historians have been oblivious of the homogenizing power of typography, and of the irresistible strength of

homogenized populations, is no credit to them. Political scientists have been quite unaware of the effects of media anywhere at any time, simply because nobody has been willing to study the personal and social effects of media apart from their "content."

America long ago achieved its Common Market by mechanical and literate homogenization of social organization. Europe is now getting a unity under the electric auspices of compression and interrelation. Just how much homogenization via literacy is needed to make an effective producer-consumer group in the postmechanical age, in the age of automation, nobody has ever asked. For it has never been fully recognized that the role of literacy in shaping an industrial economy is basic and archetypal. Literacy is indispensable for habits of uniformity at all times and places. Above all, it is needed for the workability of price systems and markets. This factor has been ignored exactly as TV is now being ignored, for TV fosters many preferences that are quite at variance with literate uniformity and repeatability. It has sent Americans questing for every sort of oddment and quaintness in objects from out of their storied past. Many Americans will now spare no pains or expense to get to taste some new wine or food. The uniform and repeatable now must yield to the uniquely askew, a fact that is increasingly the despair and confusion of our entire standardized economy.

The power of the TV mosaic to transform American innocence into depth sophistication, independently of "content," is not mysterious if looked at directly. This mosaic TV image had already been adumbrated in the popular press that grew up with the telegraph. The commercial use of the telegraph began in 1844 in America, and earlier in England. The electric principle and its implications received much attention in Shelley's poetry. Artistic rule-of-thumb usually anticipates the science and technology in these matters by a full generation or more. The meaning of the telegraph mosaic in its *journalistic* manifestations was not lost to the mind of Edgar Allan Poe. He used it to establish two startlingly new inventions, the symbolist poem and the detective story. Both of these forms require do-it-yourself participation on the part of the reader. By offering an incomplete image or process, Poe

involved his readers in the creative process in a way that Baudelaire, Valéry, T. S. Eliot, and many others have admired and followed. Poe had grasped at once the electric dynamic as one of public participation in creativity. Nevertheless, even today the homogenized consumer complains when asked to participate in creating or completing an abstract poem or painting or structure of any kind. Yet Poe knew even then that participation in depth followed at once from the telegraph mosaic. The more lineal and literal-minded of the literary brahmins "just couldn't see it." They still can't see it. They prefer not to participate in the creative process. They have accommodated themselves to the completed packages, in prose and verse and in the plastic arts. It is these people who must confront, in every classroom in the land, students who have accommodated themselves to the tactile and nonpictorial modes of symbolist and mythic structures, thanks to the TV image.

Life magazine for August 10, 1962, had a feature on how "Too Many Subteens Grow Up Too Soon and Too Fast." There was no observation of the fact that similar speed of growth and precociousness have always been the norm in tribal cultures and in nonliterate societies. England and America fostered the institution of prolonged adolescence by the negation of the tactile participation that is sex. In this, there was no conscious strategy, but rather a general acceptance of the consequences of prime stress on the printed word and visual values as a means of organizing personal and social life. This stress led to triumphs of industrial production and political conformity that were their own sufficient warrant.

Respectability, or the ability to sustain visual inspection of one's life, became dominant. No European country allowed print such precedence. Visually, Europe has always been shoddy in American eyes. American women, on the other hand, who have never been equaled in any culture for visual turnout, have always seemed abstract, mechanical dolls to Europeans. Tactility is a supreme value in European life. For that reason, on the Continent there is no adolescence, but only the leap from childhood to adult ways. Such is now the American state since TV, and this state of evasion of

adolescence will continue. The introspective life of long, long thoughts and distant goals, to be pursued in lines of Siberian railroad kind, cannot coexist with the mosaic form of the TV image that commands immediate participation in *depth* and admits of no delays. The mandates of that image are so various yet so consistent that even to mention them is to describe the revolution of the past decade.

The phenomenon of the paperback, the book in "cool" version, can head this list of TV mandates, because the TV transformation of book culture into something else is manifested at that point. Europeans have had paperbacks from the first. From the beginnings of the automobile, they have preferred the wraparound space of the small car. The pictorial value of "enclosed space" for book, car, or house has never appealed to them. The paperback, especially in its highbrow form, was tried in America in the 1920s and thirties and forties. It was not, however, until 1953 that it suddenly became acceptable. No publisher really knows why. Not only is the paperback a tactile, rather than a visual, package; it can be as readily concerned with profound matters as with froth. The American since TV has lost his inhibitions and his innocence about depth culture. The paperback reader has discovered that he can enjoy Aristotle or Confucius by simply slowing down. The old literate habit of racing ahead on uniform lines of print yielded suddenly to depth reading. Reading in depth is, of course, not proper to the printed word as such. Depth probing of words and language is a normal feature of oral and manuscript cultures, rather than of print. Europeans have always felt that the English and Americans lacked depth in their culture. Since radio, and especially since TV, English and American literary critics have exceeded the performance of any European in depth and subtlety. The beatnik reaching out for Zen is only carrying the mandate of the TV mosaic out into the world of words and perception. The paperback itself has become a vast mosaic world in depth, expressive of the changed sense-life of Americans, for whom depth experience in words, as in physics, has become entirely acceptable, and even sought after.

Just where to begin to examine the transformation of Amer-

ican attitudes since TV is a most arbitrary affair, as can be seen in a change so great as the abrupt decline of baseball. The removal of the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles was a portent in itself. Baseball moved West in an attempt to retain an audience after TV struck. The characteristic mode of the baseball game is that it features one-thing-at-a-time. It is a lineal, expansive game which, like golf, is perfectly adapted to the outlook of an individualist and inner-directed society. Timing and waiting are of the essence, with the entire field in suspense waiting upon the performance of a single player. By contrast, football, basketball, and ice hockey are games in which many events occur simultaneously, with the entire team involved at the same time. With the advent of TV, such isolation of the individual performance as occurs in baseball became unacceptable. Interest in baseball declined, and its stars, quite as much as movie stars, found that fame had some very cramping dimensions. Baseball had been, like the movies, a hot medium featuring individual virtuosity and stellar performers. The real ball fan is a store of statistical information about previous explosions of batters and pitchers in numerous games. Nothing could indicate more clearly the peculiar satisfaction provided by a game that belonged to the industrial metropolis of ceaselessly exploding populations, stocks and bonds, and production and sales records. Baseball belonged to the age of the first onset of the hot press and the movie medium. It will always remain a symbol of the era of the hot mommas, jazz babies, of sheiks and shebas, of vamps and gold-diggers and the fast buck. Baseball, in a word, is a hot game that got cooled off in the new TV climate, as did most of the hot politicians and hot issues of the earlier decades.

There is no cooler medium or hotter issue at present than the small car. It is like a badly wired woofer in a hi-fi circuit that produces a tremendous flutter in the bottom. The small European car, like the European paperback and the European belle, for that matter, was no visual package job. Visually, the entire batch of European cars are so poor an affair that it is obvious their makers never thought of them as something to look at. They are something to put on, like pants or a pullover. Theirs is the kind of space sought by the skin-diver, the water-skier, and the dinghy

sailor. In an immediate tactile sense, this new space is akin to that to which the picture-window fad had catered. In terms of "view," the picture window never made any sense. In terms of an attempt to discover a new dimension in the out-of-doors by pretending to be a goldfish, the picture window does make sense. So do the frantic efforts to roughen up the indoor walls and textures as if they were the outside of the house. Exactly the same impulse sends the indoor spaces and furniture out into the patios in an attempt to experience the outside as inside. The TV viewer is in just that role at all times. He is submarine. He is bombarded by atoms that reveal the outside as inside in an endless adventure amidst blurred images and mysterious contours.

However, the American car had been fashioned in accordance with the *visual* mandates of the typographic and the movie images. The American car was an enclosed space, not a tactile space. And an enclosed space, as was shown in the chapter on Print, is one in which all spatial qualities have been reduced to visual terms. So in the American car, as the French observed decades ago, "one is not on the road, one is in the car." By contrast, the European car aims to drag you along the road and to provide a great deal of vibration for the bottom. Brigitte Bardot got into the news when it was discovered that she liked to drive barefoot in order to get the maximal vibration. Even English cars, weak on visual appearance as they are, have been guilty of advertising that "at sixty miles an hour all you can hear is the ticking of the clock." That would be a very poor ad, indeed, for a TV generation that has to be *with* everything and has to *dig* things in order to get at them. So avid is the TV viewer for rich tactile effects that he could be counted on to revert to skis. The wheel, so far as he is concerned, lacks the requisite abrasiveness.

Clothes in this first TV decade repeat the same story as vehicles. The revolution was heralded by bobby-soxers who dumped the whole cargo of visual effects for a set of tactile ones so extreme as to create a dead level of flat-footed dead-panism. Part of the cool dimension of TV is the cool, deadpan mug that came in with the teenager. Adolescence, in the age of hot media, of radio and movie, and of the ancient book, had been a time of fresh, eager,

and expressive countenances. No elder statesman or senior executive of the 1940s would have ventured to wear so dead and sculptural a pan as the child of the TV age. The dances that came in with TV were to match—all the way to the Twist, which is merely a form of very unanimated dialogue, the gestures and grimaces of which indicate involvement in depth, but “nothing to say.”

Clothing and styling in the past decade have gone so tactile and sculptural that they present a sort of exaggerated evidence of the new qualities of the TV mosaic. The TV extension of our nerves in hirsute pattern possesses the power to evoke a flood of related imagery in clothing, hairdo, walk, and gesture.

All this adds up to the compressional implosion—the return to nonspecialized forms of clothes and spaces, the seeking of multi-uses for rooms and things and objects, in a single word—the iconic. In music and poetry and painting, the tactile implosion means the insistence on qualities that are close to casual speech. Thus Schönberg and Stravinsky and Carl Orff and Bartok, far from being advanced seekers of esoteric effects, seem now to have brought music very close to the condition of ordinary human speech. It is this colloquial rhythm that once seemed so unmelodious about their work. Anyone who listens to the medieval works of Perotinus or Dufay will find them very close to Stravinsky and Bartok. The great explosion of the Renaissance that split musical instruments off from song and speech and gave them specialist functions is now being played backward in our age of electronic implosion.

One of the most vivid examples of the tactile quality of the TV image occurs in medical experience. In closed-circuit instruction in surgery, medical students from the first reported a strange effect—that they seemed not to be watching an operation, but performing it. They felt that they were holding the scalpel. Thus the TV image, in fostering a passion for depth involvement in every aspect of experience, creates an obsession with bodily welfare. The sudden emergence of the TV medico and the hospital ward as a program to rival the western is perfectly natural. It would be possible to list a dozen untried kinds of programs that

would prove immediately popular for the same reasons. Tom Dooley and his epic of Medicare for the backward society was a natural outgrowth of the first TV decade.

Now that we have considered the subliminal force of the TV image in a redundant scattering of samples, the question would seem to arise: “What possible *immunity* can there be from the subliminal operation of a new medium like television?” People have long supposed that bulldog opacity, backed by firm disapproval, is adequate enough protection against any new experience. It is the theme of this book that not even the most lucid understanding of the peculiar force of a medium can head off the ordinary “closure” of the senses that causes us to conform to the pattern of experience presented. The utmost purity of mind is no defense against bacteria, though the confreres of Louis Pasteur tossed him out of the medical profession for his base allegations about the invisible operation of bacteria. To resist TV, therefore, one must acquire the antidote of related media like print.

It is an especially touchy area that presents itself with the question: “What has been the effect of TV on our political life?” Here, at least, great traditions of critical awareness and vigilance testify to the safeguards we have posted against the dastardly uses of power.

When Theodore White’s *The Making of the President: 1960* is opened at the section on “The Television Debates,” the TV student will experience dismay. White offers statistics on the number of sets in American homes and the number of hours of daily use of these sets, but not one clue as to the nature of the TV image or its effects on candidates or viewers. White considers the “content” of the debates and the deportment of the debaters, but it never occurs to him to ask why TV would inevitably be a disaster for a sharp intense image like Nixon’s, and a boon for the blurry, shaggy texture of Kennedy.

At the end of the debates, Philip Deane of the London *Observer* explained my idea of the coming TV impact on the election to the *Toronto Globe and Mail* under the headline of “The Sheriff and the Lawyer,” October 15, 1960. It was that TV would prove so entirely in Kennedy’s favor that he would win the elec-

tion. Without TV, Nixon had it made. Deane, toward the end of his article, wrote:

Now the press has tended to say that Mr. Nixon has been gaining in the last two debates and that he was bad in the first. Professor McLuhan thinks that Mr. Nixon has been sounding progressively more definite; regardless of the value of the Vice-President's views and principles, he has been defending them with too much flourish for the TV medium. Mr. Kennedy's rather sharp responses have been a mistake, but he still presents an image closer to the TV hero, Professor McLuhan says—something like the shy young Sheriff—while Mr. Nixon with his very dark eyes that tend to stare, with his slicker circumlocution, has resembled more the railway lawyer who signs leases that are not in the interests of the folks in the little town.

In fact, by counterattacking and by claiming for himself, as he does in the TV debates, the same goals as the Democrats have, Mr. Nixon may be helping his opponent by blurring the Kennedy image, by confusing what exactly it is that Mr. Kennedy wants to change.

Mr. Kennedy is thus not handicapped by clear-cut issues; he is visually a less well-defined image, and appears more nonchalant. He seems less anxious to sell himself than does Mr. Nixon. So far, then, Professor McLuhan gives Mr. Kennedy the lead without underestimating Mr. Nixon's formidable appeal to the vast conservative forces of the United States.

Another way of explaining the acceptable, as opposed to the unacceptable, TV personality is to say that anybody whose *appearance* strongly declares his role and status in life is wrong for TV. Anybody who looks as if he might be a teacher, a doctor, a businessman, or any of a dozen other things all at the same time is right for TV. When the person presented *looks* classifiable, as Nixon did, the TV viewer has nothing to fill in. He feels uncomfortable with his TV image. He says uneasily, "There's something about the guy that isn't right." The viewer feels exactly the same about an exceedingly pretty girl on TV, or about any of the intense "high definition" images and messages from the sponsors. It is not accidental that advertising has become a vast new source of comic effects since the advent of TV. Mr. Khrushchev is a very filled-in or completed image that appears on TV as a comic car-

toon. In wirephoto and on TV, Mr. Khrushchev is a jovial comic, an entirely disarming presence. Likewise, precisely the formula that recommends anybody for a movie role disqualifies that same person for TV acceptance. For the hot movie medium needs people who look very definitely a *type* of some kind. The cool TV medium cannot abide the typical because it leaves the viewer frustrated of his job of "closure" or completion of image. President Kennedy did not look like a rich man or like a politician. He could have been anything from a grocer or a professor to a football coach. He was not too precise or too ready of speech in such a way as to spoil his pleasantly tweedy blur of countenance and outline. He went from palace to log cabin, from wealth to the White House, in a pattern of TV reversal and upset.

The same components will be found in any popular TV figure. Ed Sullivan, "the great stone face," as he was known from the first, has the much needed harshness of texture and general sculptural quality demanded for serious regard on TV. Jack Paar is quite otherwise—neither shaggy nor sculptural. But on the other hand, his presence is entirely acceptable on TV because of his utterly cool and casual verbal agility. The Jack Paar show revealed the inherent need of TV for spontaneous chat and dialogue. Jack discovered how to extend the TV mosaic image into the entire format of his show, seemingly snaffling up just anybody from anywhere at the drop of a hat. In fact, however, he understood very well how to create a mosaic from other media, from the world of journalism and politics, books, Broadway, and the arts in general, until he became a formidable rival to the press mosaic itself. As Amos and Andy had lowered church attendance on Sunday evenings in the old days of radio, so Jack Parr certainly cut nightclub patronage with his late show.

How about Educational Television? When the three-year-old sits watching the President's press conference with Dad and Grandad, that illustrates the serious educational role of TV. If we ask what is the relation of TV to the learning process, the answer is surely that the TV image, by its stress on participation, dialogue, and depth, has brought to America new demand for crash-programming in education. Whether there ever will be TV

in every classroom is a small matter. The revolution has already taken place at home. TV has changed our sense-lives and our mental processes. It has created a taste for all experience *in depth* that affects language teaching as much as car styles. Since TV, nobody is happy with a mere book knowledge of French or English poetry. The unanimous cry now is, "Let's *talk* French," and "Let the bard be *heard*." And oddly enough, with the demand for depth, goes the demand for crash-programming. Not only deeper, but further, into all knowledge has become the normal popular demand since TV. Perhaps enough has been said about the nature of the TV image to explain why this should be. How could it possibly pervade our lives any more than it does? Mere classroom use could not extend its influence. Of course, in the classroom its role compels a reshuffling of subjects, and approaches to subjects. Merely to put the present classroom on TV would be like putting movies on TV. The result would be a hybrid that is neither. The right approach is to ask, "What can TV do that the classroom cannot do for French, or for physics?" The answer is: "TV can illustrate the interplay of process and the growth of forms of all kinds as nothing else can."

The other side of the story concerns the fact that, in the visually organized educational and social world, the TV child is an underprivileged cripple. An oblique indication of this startling reversal has been given by William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. On the one hand, it is very flattering for hordes of docile children to be told that, once out of the sight of their governesses, the seething savage passions within them would boil over and sweep away pram and playpen, alike. On the other hand, Mr. Golding's little pastoral parable does have some meaning in terms of the psychic changes in the TV child. This matter is so important for any future strategy of culture or politics that it demands a headline prominence, and capsulated summary:

WHY THE TV CHILD CANNOT SEE AHEAD

The plunge into depth experience via the TV image can only be explained in terms of the differences between visual and mosaic space. Ability to discriminate between these radically different

forms is quite rare in our Western world. It has been pointed out that, in the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is not king. He is taken to be an hallucinated lunatic. In a highly visual culture, it is as difficult to communicate the nonvisual properties of spatial forms as to explain *visuality* to the blind. In the ABC of Relativity Bertrand Russell began by explaining that there is nothing difficult about Einstein's ideas, but that they do call for total reorganization of our imaginative lives. It is precisely this imaginative reorganization that has occurred via the TV image.

The ordinary inability to discriminate between the photographic and the TV image is not merely a crippling factor in the learning process today; it is symptomatic of an age-old failure in Western culture. The literate man, accustomed to an environment in which the visual sense is extended everywhere as a principle of organization, sometimes supposes that the mosaic world of primitive art, or even the world of Byzantine art, represents a mere difference in degree, a sort of failure to bring their visual portrayals up to the level of full visual effectiveness. Nothing could be further from the truth. This, in fact, is a misconception that has impaired understanding between East and West for many centuries. Today it impairs relations between colored and white societies.

Most technology produces an amplification that is quite explicit in its separation of the senses. Radio is an extension of the aural, high-fidelity photography of the visual. But TV is, above all, an extension of the sense of touch, which involves maximal interplay of all the senses. For Western man, however, the all-embracing extension had occurred by means of phonetic writing, which is a technology for extending the sense of sight. All non-phonetic forms of writing are, by contrast, artistic modes that retain much variety of sensuous orchestration. Phonetic writing, alone, has the power of separating and fragmenting the senses and of sloughing off the semantic complexities. The TV image reverses this literate process of analytic fragmentation of sensory life.

The visual stress on continuity, uniformity, and connectedness, as it derives from literacy, confronts us with the great technological means of implementing continuity and lineality by fragmented repetition. The ancient world found this means in the

brick, whether for wall or road. The repetitive, uniform brick, indispensable agent of road and wall, of cities and empires, is an extension, via letters, of the visual sense. *The brick wall is not a mosaic form*, and neither is the mosaic form a visual structure. The mosaic can be *seen* as dancing can, but is not *structured* visually; nor is it an extension of the visual power. For the mosaic is not uniform, continuous, or repetitive. It is discontinuous, skew, and nonlineal, like the tactual TV image. To the sense of touch, all things are sudden, counter, original, spare, strange. The "Pied Beauty" of G. M. Hopkins is a catalogue of the notes of the sense of touch. The poem is a manifesto of the nonvisual, and like Cézanne or Seurat, or Rouault it provides an indispensable approach to understanding TV. The nonvisual mosaic structures of modern art, like those of modern physics and electric-information patterns, permit little detachment. The mosaic form of the TV image demands participation and involvement in depth of the whole being, as does the sense of touch. Literacy, in contrast, had, by extending the visual power to the uniform organization of time and space, psychically and socially, conferred the power of detachment and noninvolvement.

The visual sense when extended by phonetic literacy fosters the analytic habit of perceiving the single facet in the life of forms. The visual power enables us to isolate the single incident in time and space, as in representational art. In visual representation of a person or an object, a single phase or moment or aspect is separated from the multitude of known and felt phases, moments and aspects of the person or object. By contrast, iconographic art uses the eye as we use our hand in seeking to create an inclusive image, made up of many moments, phases, and aspects of the person or thing. Thus the iconic mode is not visual representation, nor the specialization of visual stress as defined by viewing from a single position. The tactual mode of perceiving is sudden but not specialist. It is total, synesthetic, involving all the senses. Perverted by the mosaic TV image, the TV child encounters the world in a spirit antithetic to literacy.

The TV image, that is to say, even more than the icon, is an extension of the sense of touch. Where it encounters a literate

culture, it necessarily thickens the sense-mix, transforming fragmented and specialist extensions into a seamless web of experience. Such transformation is, of course, a "disaster" for a literate, specialist culture. It blurs many cherished attitudes and procedures. It dims the efficacy of the basic pedagogic techniques, and the relevance of the curriculum. If for no other reason, it would be well to understand the dynamic life of these forms as they intrude upon us and upon one another. TV makes for myopia.

The young people who have experienced a decade of TV have naturally imbibed an urge toward involvement in depth that makes all the remote visualized goals of usual culture seem not only unreal but irrelevant, and not only irrelevant but anemic. It is the total involvement in all-inclusive *nowness* that occurs in young lives via TV's mosaic image. This change of attitude has nothing to do with programming in any way, and would be the same if the programs consisted entirely of the highest cultural content. The change in attitude by means of relating themselves to the mosaic TV image would occur in any event. It is, of course, our job not only to understand this change but to exploit it for its pedagogical richness. The TV child expects involvement and doesn't want a specialist *job* in the future. He does want a *role* and a deep commitment to his society. Unbridled and misunderstood, this richly human need can manifest itself in the distorted forms portrayed in *West Side Story*.

The TV child cannot see ahead because he wants involvement, and he cannot accept a fragmentary and merely visualized goal or destiny in learning or in life.

MURDER BY TELEVISION

Jack Ruby shot Lee Oswald while tightly surrounded by guards who were paralyzed by television cameras. The fascinating and involving power of television scarcely needed this additional proof of its peculiar operation upon human perceptions. The Kennedy assassination gave people an immediate sense of the television power to create depth involvement, on the one hand, and a numbing effect as deep as grief, itself, on the other hand. Most people were amazed at the depth of meaning which the

event communicated to them. Many more were surprised by the coolness and calm of the mass reaction. The same event, handled by press or radio (in the absence of television), would have provided a totally different experience. The national "lid" would have "blown off." Excitement would have been enormously greater and depth participation in a common awareness very much less.

As explained earlier, Kennedy was an excellent TV image. He had used the medium with the same effectiveness that Roosevelt had learned to achieve by radio. With TV, Kennedy found it natural to involve the nation in the office of the Presidency, both as an operation and as an image. TV reaches out for the corporate attributes of office. Potentially, it can transform the Presidency into a monarchic dynasty. A merely elective Presidency scarcely affords the depth of dedication and commitment demanded by the TV form. Even teachers on TV seem to be endowed by the student audiences with a charismatic or mystic character that much exceeds the feelings developed in the classroom or lecture hall. In the course of many studies of audience reactions to TV teaching, there recurs this puzzling fact. The viewers feel that the teacher has a dimension almost of sacredness. This feeling does not have its basis in concepts or ideas, but seems to creep in uninvited and unexplained. It baffles both the students and the analysts of their reactions. Surely, there could be no more telling touch to tip us off to the character of TV. This is not so much a visual as a tactual-auditory medium that involves all of our senses in depth interplay. For people long accustomed to the merely visual experience of the typographic and photographic varieties, it would seem to be the *synesthesia*, or tactual depth of TV experience, that dislocates them from their usual attitudes of passivity and detachment.

The banal and ritual remark of the conventionally literate, that TV presents an experience for passive viewers, is wide of the mark. TV is above all a medium that demands a creatively participant response. The guards who failed to protect Lee Oswald were not passive. They were so involved by the mere sight of the TV cameras that they lost their sense of their merely practical and specialist task.

Perhaps it was the Kennedy funeral that most strongly impressed the audience with the power of TV to invest an occasion with the character of corporate participation. No national event except in sports has ever had such coverage or such an audience. It revealed the unrivaled power of TV to achieve the involvement of the audience in a complex *process*. The funeral as a corporate process caused even the image of sport to pale and dwindle into puny proportions. The Kennedy funeral, in short, manifested the power of TV to involve an entire population in a ritual process. By comparison, press, movie and even radio are mere packaging devices for consumers.

Most of all, the Kennedy event provides an opportunity for noting a paradoxical feature of the "cool" TV medium. It involves us in moving depth, but it does not excite, agitate or arouse. Presumably, this is a feature of all depth experience.