THE DEATH OF THE FAMILY MAGAZINE: A SHIFT IN THE MEDIA OF THE POPULAR ARTS

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ABSTRACT

THE DEATH OF THE FAMILY MAGAZINE: A SHIFT IN THE MEDIA OF THE POPULAR ARTS

By

Stephen Charles Holder

This study offers examinations of the major problems that beset the family magazines, and the problems were many and overlapping. As suggested throughout the paper, the problems were organic; that is, they accrued to the family magazine genre as a whole and to the obligations of the family magazines. None of the problems is alone sufficient explanation for the death of the genre; rather, the problems indicated were synergistic. Basically, the problems of the family magazines fall into the three broad spheres of the magazines' obligations: (1) obligation to readers, (2) obligation to advertisers, and (3) obligation to themselves.

The failure of the family magazines to meet reader needs was a result of failure to fulfill the six basic obligations upon which the magazines' formulas were based. Those obligations are: (1) information, (2) entertainment, (3) escape, (4) assistance in opinion formation, (5) reinforcement of moral values, and (6) provision of a "consumers' showcase." In order to be successful, the family

magazines were left behind. Attempts to shift the magazines' image, such as Curtis's ill-fated "sophisticated muckraking" program, succeeded only in alienating the ritual readers who demanded that their magazines appear regularly with recognizable form and content.

Secondly, the family magazines failed increasingly to meet the needs of advertisers. This failure shows the real impact that television has had. As Marshall McLuhan has pointed out, television brought us out of the linear age and into the spatial age of communications. Television has become the most natural form of mass communication in America; when two media compete for the same market, the one that is most attractive and most accessible will win. TV became the first choice of advertisers for several reasons: (1) it had the inherent advantage of a spatial medium; (2) it had tremendous flexibility in reaching specialized audiences, both geographically and by interest groups; (3) it gave the advertiser almost complete control over the response of the consumer audience; and (4) it became increasingly inexpensive to use compared with magazines. Moreover, advertisers knew that television had attracted the family audience away from magazines. This was true because: (1) TV offered "whole-family" entertainment, solving the problems of "Where shall we go?" and "What shall we do?"; (2) TV offered greater "accessibility" for consumers than did magazines; (3) TV brought

magazines needed to fill those roles in some way that the other media could not. Originally, family magazines enjoyed a special place based on these roles; that is, they were virtually without competition from other media in their relationship with the American people. But the family magazine formula was unable to adapt to a number of things: the rapid acceleration of an increasingly technological society, the rise of the great youth market, the increasingly "throw-away" nature of American society, and severe inroads by other media on what had been family magazine territory.

The nature of the magazine formula and the limitations of the magazine format were largely responsible for this failure to meet role obligations. Even with greatly improved presses and the use of the "fast close," the time between composition and consumption of the magazine was too great in the face of the increased demands for speed. The necessarily general, bland nature of family magazine contents was not suitable for adaptation to the needs of the under-25 reader, who represented an increasingly rich consumer group. The tangibility and comparative permanence of the magazine was a handicap compared with the intangibility and flexibility of the contents of radio and television in meeting consumer needs. Because of this fact, radio was able to make a shift in basic roles that has allowed it to survive and prosper, while the family

with it the illusions of "immediacy and truth"; (4) TV had absorbed the magazines' role of presenting various kinds of short fiction; and (5) TV viewers brought with them far less critical attitudes than did the readers of family magazines. For all of these reasons, advertisers spent more and more on television commercials, less and less on magazine advertisements.

The third major area of failure for the family magazines was in their responsibility to themselves. Many writers have pointed out that the slow corporate pace of the family magazines might be symbolized by the electric-powered trucks used by Curtis that moved about Philadelphia at a stodgy ten miles per hour. Repeatedly, the family magazine publishing corporations expanded vertically, failing to seize the brass ring offered by the newer media. Poor economic planning forced the family magazines into the "numbers race" with other media and pushed them into unwise corporate decisions. The inevitable postal increases were ill-planned for; the magazines had set too high a point of diminishing returns in terms of subscriber lists. Payrolls were enormous, filled with the names of employees waiting for retirement, serving out their days at the leisurely pace of the magazines. Corporate infighting of almost epic proportions brought further chaos into management. POST, for example, went through at least three major changes in image within the last eight or nine years

of its life. All of these factors, coupled with rising costs, interest rates and inflation, added considerably to the pattern of failure presented in this study.

The paper also shows the unique value that the family magazines have for the cultural historian. In their pages we can find out practically anything we need to know about the American cultural situation at a given time. Technology, literary tastes, moral standards, fads and current interests all are there. Most important, however, the magazines show us the tempo of American society. They show us how we were in other, simpler days; nostalgia has a certain value, too. Ben Hibbs, the last truly successful editor of the SATURDAY EVENING POST, put it this way:

> Yet, after all, the world is not entirely composed of hydrogen bombs, juvenile delinquency, race riots, mental institutions, heart disease and cancer . . . I can remember the time when people thought it fun to read.
>
> Why shouldn't we provide our readers with a bit of "escape" to use a dirty word--from the cares of daily life through the vehicle of a buoyant human-interest article or an absorbing story. It is one of our functions, and a highly worthwhile function, I think. There is nothing incompatible in intellectuality and the love of entertainment--in a man or a magazine.[1]

In sum, this is a study of the popular arts, or the ways by which the popular arts get into the hands of the consumer. It analyses forces which drove one medium from the marketplace. It shows the tremendous influence of media trends on the popular arts, and shows the tremendous influence of business interests in the control

of the media. Those interests emerge as having been the decisive factors in the burial of the family magazines. America still has no one medium that fills Americans' needs as well as did the family magazines. Television now has taken over the role--but its success is due to a combination of technological and economic factors, not to a sudden shift in American mass values.

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[1]Joseph C. Goulden, The Curtis Caper (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1965), 90-91.

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INTRODUCTION

The deaths of the big family magazines POST, LOOK and COLLIER'S did not come as major surprises for most of their fans. For years we had watched the gradual decline of our magazines; many of us continued our subscriptions long after they had any but nostalgic uses for us. The magazines slipped away quietly, COLLIER'S in 1956, POST in 1969 and LOOK in 1971. The passing of LOOK, quiet as it was, is of special significance, for it marks the end of a genre; the family magazines are dead.

Certainly, this is not to say that magazine publishing is dead. Dozens of publications still appear regularly in the United States; they are serving the roles intended for them, and are being sold at a profit. Many of these magazines, it is true, are family oriented. But each of them is in some way specialized: GOOD HOUSEKEEPING and FAMILY CIRCLE, for example, deal primarily with mothers' problems such as how to prepare food, make clothing, decorate bedrooms; JACK AND JILL is for young children; LIFE is essentially a news magazine, etc. Family magazines are different.

They may be defined as magazines broad enough in scope and varied enough in content to appeal as popular

entertainment to most members of the average American family. This broad concept precludes specialization of the magazine in any one field such as news, literature, "how-to" articles, humor, etc. Yet all of these topics may appear in any given issue. The family magazine must be sufficiently in the center to appeal to the liberalism of some families without offending the conservatism of others. It must offer entertainment for both old and young family members; it must appeal to readers of differing educational levels. This is characteristic of most of the media of popular culture.[1]

> In popular periodicals like TIME, LIFE, LOOK, PICTURE POST, MATCH . . . ESQUIRE, and in distinguished daily newspapers like THE NEW YORK TIMES . . . there is an intermixture of superior, mediocre, and brutal culture which is historically unique. The same can be observed in television and, of course, in the film: a single network presents a wide variety of levels, and films of genuinely high artistic and intellectual merit may be produced in the same studio which produces numerous mediocre and brutal films.

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[1]Edward Shils, "Mass Society and Its Culture," in Norman Jacobs, ed., Culture for the Millions? (Toronto: D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc., 1959), 9.

The family magazines aimed at the middle ground, the average American. This aim was largely responsible for their popularity with both readers and advertisers.

> The modern magazine succeeded as a mass medium mainly because of its original role as an adjunct of the marketing system. Like the newspaper, it was able over the years to appeal to an expanding range of tastes and interests. But,

> unlike other media, most magazines were designed for homogeneous audiences or special-interest groups. And, in contrast to the newspaper, their circulation was nation-wide. Thus, although many were directed to specialized audiences, magazines in general developed as a mass medium in the sense that they appealed to large numbers in a national market which cut across social, economic, and educational class lines.[2]

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[2]Peterson, Jensen, Rivers, The Mass Media and Modern Society (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), 69.

Note the close relationship Peterson sees between magazines and marketing. This will be of major significance later in this study.

On the surface, it would appear that such a general role is practically impossible to project. Yet COLLIER'S, LOOK and POST did for many years. And they were successful at it; that much is obvious. Their role was, in fact, a difficult one, as is the case with virtually all purveyors of the popular arts.

> The mass media are cursed by four deadly requirements: a gargantuan amount of space (in magazines and newspapers) [sic] and time (in television and radio) [sic] has to be filled; talent--on every level, in every technique--is scarce; the public votes, i.e., is free to decide what it prefers (and it is the deplorable results of this voting that intellectuals might spend more time confronting) [sic]; and a magazine, paper, television or radio program is committed to periodic and unalterable publication. Content would be markedly improved if publications or programs appeared only when superior material was available. This applied to academic journals no less than to publications or programs with mass audiences.[3]

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[3]Leo Rosten, "The Intellectual and the Mass Media," in Jacobs, 73.

Naturally, the close relationship that the mass media have with the business community opens them up to all kinds of negative charges, particularly by students of elitist culture. A typical charge is this:

> Mass media for inherent reasons must conform to prevailing average canons of taste. They cannot foster art; indeed, they replace it.[4]

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[4]Ernest van den Haag, "A Dissent from the Consensual Society," in Jacobs, 50.

The point, it seems, is not that magazines are "great" art in the generally accepted sense, but that they are a different form of art, not to be condemned through comparison on the same scale as "great" art. The popular arts are on a different scale, one which can frequently equate "good" with "success," regardless of literary or artistic merit. Naturally, many of the stories in POST and COLLIER'S had considerable literary merit; many did not.[5]

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[5]For an extended discussion of the role of the popular artist, see Leo Bogart, The Age of Television: A Study of Viewing Habits and the Impact of Television on American Life (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1956), 20-24.

Our concern with them here is not with their success in an aesthetic sense, but with their success as commodity. The same is true of all of the elements that went into LOOK, COLLIER'S and POST.

The reasoning is this: if enough people liked those elements and paid to have them, the elements were

successful; the combined success of those elements constitutes magazine popularity. We can better understand our society by understanding those things which are popular within it and by ovserving trends in popularity. The popular arts do have a number of specific advantages over elitist arts in reaching the public that make them valuable for study. Oscar Handlin writes,

> In the first place, popular culture, although unstructured and chaotic (deals) directly with the concrete world intensely familiar to its audience.
>
> In the second place, and for similar reasons, popular (art has) a continuing relevance to the situation of the audience that (is) exposed to it. That relevance (is) maintained by a direct rapport between those who create and those who consume this culture.
>
> In the third place, popular culture is closely tied to the traditions of those who consume it.
>
> Finally, popular culture (has) the capacity for arousing in its audience such sentiments as wonder and awe, and for expressing the sense of irony of their own situation which lent it enormous power.[6]

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[6]Oscar Handlin, "Comments on Mass and Popular Culture," in Jacobs, 66-67.

We should note that these advantages are culturally, not aesthetically oriented. They have more to do with the people themselves than with the people's means of expressing themselves. They are not indigenous to any one kind of popular expression. Hence, the popular media are valuable for study as vehicles for the popular forms of expression. The family magazines were at the center of our popular

culture for many years; if for no other reason, they are worth consideration as cultural phenomena.

While the lives of POST, COLLIER'S AND LOOK are fascinating stories, they are similar to many American success stories and are relatively simple. Their deaths, on the other hand, provide a number of speculations about changing trends in popular media and are extremely complex. This study is, in many ways, broader than a study of the family magazines. Such a study would normally focus on magazine contents and on the popular artists represented there. However, while any study of a magazine must consider the magazine's contents, that is not the primary consideration here.

The fact that the entire family magazine genre died within a space of about fourteen years indicates that content is probably not the central issue. Indeed, other factors seem to have been much more important in their demise. In addition to an examination of content, then, this study will consider such other factors as the role of the magazine as a medium among other media; costs and inflation are extremely useful areas to examine, too, as the physical magazine is ultimately a commodity much as other commodities. As such, the medium is vulnerable to the same forces in our economy which decide the fate of any product.

The family magazines were the products of businessmen: production experts, financiers, advertising experts, etc., as well as editors. They were not tied to the genius of any artist or group of artists. In this sense, the magazines were larger than any one art form; in fact, they encompassed almost all of the silent art forms: nonfiction, fiction, poetry, photography, painting and illustration. They became a unique popular art form, an exceptional genre. The creative genius behind the family magazines was the genius of selection, arrangement and production. It was the skill required for financing, marketing and distributing a product for which there was great public demand. Accordingly, a study of the family magazines must be conducted in terms of that kind of ability.

This kind of study is also valid in the field of popular culture for, without business and production men, we would have no popular culture. The technological advances of the past twenty years, especially, have forced speed and skill on the production of the popular arts. Those advances are considered in this study, as well as the ways in which the magazines responded to the technological challenge. The most obvious of those challenges is television.

Because it has had such an impact on our society, television is the subject of the entire first section of this study. The specific areas in which it rivaled the

family magazines in the consumer market are detailed. We shall see that, in almost every instance, television had a marked advantage over them in reaching the American people. We shall also see, however, that from the consumer's point of view, television had relatively little to do with the death of the family magazines.

The real threat of television lay in the area of media financing. The second section of this paper shows the nature of that threat, detailing the specific damage that TV did to the family magazines--and the damage was great indeed. That alone, however, does not explain what happened to LOOK, COLLIER'S and POST. All three lived healthy lives for some years after television had gained broad acceptance. TV did, on the other hand, have much to do with the shaping of a new generation of Americans and their basic media orientation. They, in turn, influenced the media choices of advertisers.

The big publishers should have been in a position to anticipate this kind of shift, but were not. Instead, most of the magazine industry was controlled by editors, not businessmen. (Note that Time-Life, a company run chiefly by advertising experts, is still very much alive.) The publishers made a number of unfortunate decisions in the areas of expansion and circulation. These decisions occurred during times of rising costs and inflation,

compounding the errors. This is the subject of the third chapter.

Finally, many people have ascribed the deaths of the family magazines to changing times, explaining that these magazines simply outlived their utility for the consumer. The fourth chapter is devoted to an analysis of the unique relationship the family magazines had with the American people--and at least one publisher misread this relationship, with severe consequences. We shall see that, while our society and technology have changed greatly, our basic values have not. Other things being equal, despite such changes the family magazines would still be on solid ground with the American public if our basic values were the determining factor.

In sum, this is a study of the popular media, of the ways by which the popular arts get into the hands of the consumer. It analyses the forces which drove one medium from the marketplace, and it shows the tremendous influence of media trends on the popular arts. As the popular arts are understood to represent mass culture in America, an appreciation of this shift in media is particularly important for an understanding of the conditions under which those arts are produced and appreciated.

I

THE THREAT OF TELEVISION

"Whatever happened to the old family magazines? Where have they all gone?" The obvious, simplistic answer is, of course, "Television." The one who asked the question is apt to nod his head in agreement, a little sadly, perhaps, and chalk up the deaths of the family magazines as another instance of "progress in the modern age." And there the matter ends, or seems to, for most people are well aware that television has had some sort of major impact on their world. This chapter is an examination of the impact TV has had on our society, and its consequences for the family magazines. Advertising is discussed in a later section, as its importance for this study is more financial than theoretical.

Certainly, the rise of television in the United States has been spectacular; it is a success story in the best American tradition, and it has all happened in the past twenty years. Before 1950, the Bureau of the Census didn't even concern itself with the number of TV households. At first count, in 1950, they learned that only about 12% of American homes did have receivers. Five years later,

> . . . in homes with television sets--three quarters of all the families in the country--more total time was spent watching television than in any other single activity except sleep. That includes the business of making a living: A.C. Nielsen Co., marketing research organization, comes up with the startling figure of 2.6 billion person-hours spent every week watching the screen, 1.9 billion hours in all economic pursuits.[7]

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[7]William Y. Elliott, Television's Impact on American Culture (East Lansing, Mich.: Mich. State University Press, 1956), 341.

Fourteen years later, in 1969, the figures showed that:

> . . . 95 percent of all U.S. households have television sets, and three of every ten of these households have more than one set. The number of sets in these households is almost 80 million, or 30 percent more than the total number of households.
>
> In the last ten years multi-set households increased ten times as fast as television households. From May 1959 to January 1969 total households rose from 51.5 to 61.3 million (a 20 percent increase); television households from 44.5 to 58.3 million (a 30 percent increase); and multi-set households from 4.4 to 18.0 million (a 300 percent increase).[8]

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[8]Advertising Research Foundation, Inc., National Survey of Television Sets in U.S. Households--January, 1969 (New York: Advertising Research Foundation, Inc., 1969), 2.

Many of the reasons for this remarkable increase will have definite bearing on the story of the family magazines.

Television had a number of specific advantages over other media at the outset. The first of these, and one of the most important, was simple novelty. New experiences, regardless of category, have traditionally attracted the American people. Novelty does not, of course, account for

the continuing popularity of television as a communicative channel, but it does offer one explanation for the initial impetus for TV sales.

The makers of television sets were on firm ground with their first efforts, and they knew it. As early as 1944, TV industry people were enthusiastic:

> There isn't one person in the United States who won't be affected by television. It's going to change our living habits, what we do with our evenings, how we keep in touch with the rest of the world.[9]

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[9]Robert E. Lee, Television: The Revolution (New York: Essential Books, 1944), 6.

No doubt, one of the effects of World War II was to increase the global awareness of the average American. Under the aegis of the armed forces our men traveled to all parts of Europe, Asia and North Africa, as well as to the South Seas. Back home, anxious families followed their men via newspapers, radio and newsreels. Men returning to the U.S. in the mid-40s brought with them tales of the new things and places they had seen.

As part of this increasing global awareness among Americans, the need for visual experiences grew rapidly. Witness the phenomenal growth and development of the movie industry . . . as well as the rapid growth of related visual forms: the home movie and the slide projector. Early television sets were far from perfect--big, veneered boxes with tiny, yellow screens--but their magic was enough

to draw every child in the neighborhood, whenever parents would allow them to intrude on the neighbors' privacy. TV was better than the Saturday afternoon serials at the local theater! Youngsters watched Buffalo Bob do his routines with Howdy Doody with the same rapture they had formerly given the cliffhangers that followed the regular matinee features. And television was (or seemed to be) free! The same was true for adults:

> . . . maybe you don't have any connections with the new industry. Maybe you happen to be a schoolteacher, or a tool maker, or a business man. Or a housewife, or a Clark Gable fan. Life will never be the same after that Saturday afternoon when your radio serviceman pokes his head in the side-door and says: "The antenna's all rigged up now. Just snap on the switch and adjust that brightness control. This little receiver will bring 'em in like a Rembrandt painting!" That day the world will move into your living room. You're Mohammed. The mountain comes to you.[10]

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[10]Lee, 8.

To be sure, it mattered little what came across the air waves; it was enough to have this miracle in the home. The technically minded (and those especially taken with the miracle) even spent hours fiddling with the controls while the screen held no more than a test pattern. Some channels, in an effort to insure the consumer's conversion from radio, even broadcast music with their test patterns.

Moreover, television bore no resemblance, linear or otherwise, to the drudgery that most middle-class Americans and their children were forced to perform in their

occupations and schools during working hours. Until television, our basic environment was linear; it was

> . . . the environment imposed by the medium of print itself: one word after the other, one sentence after another, one paragraph after another, one page after another; one thing at a time in a logical, connected line. The effects of this linear thinking are deep and influence every facet of a literate society such as our own.[11]

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[11]Howard Luck Gossage, "You Can See Why the Mighty Would Be Curious," in Gerald Emanuel Stearn, MuLuhan: Hot & Cool (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1967), 22.

For many viewers, perhaps subconsciously, early television offered a dual form of escapism. Viewers were escaping the mundane, everyday world via the diversions presented on the screen. More importantly, they were escaping their linear world and its connotations by means of the screen itself. By later standards, many of the things presented on early television were shoddy, but people liked them as much for how they were presented as for what they were.

> . . . McLuhan does not think that the program content of television has anything to do with the real changes TV has produced; no more than whether a book is trashy or a classic has anything to do with the process of reading it. The basic message of television is television itself, the process, just as the basic message of a book is print. As McLuhan says, "The medium is the message."[12]

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[12]Gossage, 23.

What viewers saw was probably not as important as the fact that viewers were <u>able</u> to see it. This is still

true; the content of television programs depends very heavily on the audial, not the visual presentation.

> If one had to choose, during most of the hours in which television stations broadcast, and certainly during most of the daylight hours, between having the sound on one's set turned off and having the picture turned off, it would somehow make more sense, be more useful, more intelligible, to have the picture off, because what you have so much of the time on television is static (almost still) pictures of people sitting down and talking. Sometimes they are seated in front of a quiz-show contest board, sometimes around a table, interviewing each other, or telling amusing stories of their early careers in show business, or of why it's important to have a manned-bomber program, or of cold fronts coming in from Canada. Even the soap operas, which stretch on for hours, seem to consist mostly of people sitting down and talking to one another. "George, you're trying to tell me something? . . . Yes, Beth. It's about Harry and Jane . . . You mean, Ingrid knows? . . . Not everything. But when I saw Malcolm outside the planetarium, he said--Malcolm? I thought you were going to meet Fred." Et cetera.[13]

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[13]Michael J. Arlen, Living Room War (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 23-24.

Another big impetus for television's popularity came from the traditional American fascination with possessions, and the status that possessions bring with them. Thus, as soon as television became at all dependable, it was a "must" for every middle-class American household. This was true despite the typically high initial investment (somewhere over $300), the frequency of mechanical failure (both in the set and on the part of the broadcaster) and the difficulties and expenses entailed by repairs (TV servicemen, although frequently inept, were scarce). Just

as is generally the case with new-model automobiles, men debated the pros and cons of Motorola sets or Sylvania "halolight." The point of such debates, of course, was to let one's neighbors know that one was in possession of a new receiver.

There grew a whole psychology involved with the matter of having the children go next door to watch TV because they didn't have one at home. Certainly, no one ever went next door to read magazines! And, of course, the arrival of the set (for whatever reason), carried an obligation to use it. Definite family behavior patterns are a result of this obligation, at least in terms of the uses to which leisure time is put. Television has so firmly established itself over the past decade that it can now be considered a ritual experience.

> A most important characteristic of any ritual is that it be performed always in exactly the same way: variation is contrary to the whole idea of controlling processes or participating in rites by observing systematic regularities. TV, of course, labors under the delusion that it is supposed to offer some originality along with the familiar formulas, so that it is less than efficacious as pure ritual. But it has discovered that too much originality loses audience, directly contrary to what might be expected if the primary appeal of the programs was to our delight in what is different. And as a consequence, writers, producers, and actors are properly wary of straying too far afield. Far-out programs appeal only to the small fringe of the intelligentsia, the minute proportion of the public who watch the educational channels. Ritualized quiz shows, comedy hours, and the perennial encounter of the hero with the

> forces of evil are always "safer" . . . that is, they appeal more steadily to more people.[14]

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[14]Richard Carpenter, "Ritual, Aesthetics, and TV," Journal of Popular Culture (Fall, 1969), 253.

For all of these reasons television became firmly entrenched in the average, middle-class, American home.

What specific effect did the new arrival have on the magazine reading habits of the family? Many surveys have been conducted, with varying results. A look at some and at their conclusions does not yield what one might expect.

The first thing to consider is the television buyer and his characteristics. In all probability, he was a man comfortably well-off, for early TV receivers were far more expensive than they are today. He was probably above average in education, and a fairly heavy reader, since most of the surveys taken in the 1950s show that the early TV buyer also utilized other media. For example, a study made in Atlanta, Georgia in 1951,

> . . . showed the TV owners to be heavy readers. About half read three magazines or more; only a third of the non-television group read as many.[15]

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[15]Leo Bogart, The Age of Television: A Study of Viewing Habits and the Impact of Television on American Life (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1956), (Stewart Study), 133.

In fact, the TV buyer was probably a magazine subscriber. One survey, taken in 1950, showed that ". . . 69% of the

television owners were subscribing to four magazines or more, compared with 52% of the non-owners."[16]

[16]Bogart, 132.

Another source, sponsored by the National Broadcasting Company and conducted by Thomas Coffin in 1952, showed the "all or none" tendency in media decisions by consumers:

TABLE 1.--Heavy interest in television reflects heavy interest in all media.*

Number of Non-TV Media to Which There is Heavy Exposure	Per Cent of TV Owners in Each Group Who Are Heavy Viewers
None	35%
One	40
Two	43
Three	46

Source: NBC Metropolitan New York Survey, 1952.

*Bogart, 63.

Chances were also good that the new TV buyer was the head of a household, a family man, had a telephone, and had more appliances in his home than did those without TV.

This brief profile of the early TV buyer is necessary to put into perspective the following tables dealing with the effect of TV ownership on reading habits.

TABLE 2.--Magazine reading time (per issue) in TV and non-TV homes.*

Magazine	TV Owners	Non-Owners
Collier's	1 hr. 24 min.	1 hr. 34 min.
Life	1 hr. 8 min.	1 hr. 24 min.
Post	1 hr. 25 min.	1 hr. 58 min.
Look	1 hr. 4 min.	1 hr. 13 min.
Average	1 hr. 12 min.	1 hr. 29 min.

Source: W. R. Simmons National Survey, 1952.

*Bogart, 134.

TABLE 3.--Time spent reading magazines by owners and non-owners.*

	Minutes per Person per Day	
	TV Owners	Non-Owners
Age		
18-29	12	17
30-39	12	15
40-49	10	15
50+	8	13
Income		
$ 100-3,000	7	12
$3,001-4,000	10	12
$4,001-5,000	11	17
$5,001+	15	22
Education		
Grammar School	5	8
Some High School	8	13
Completed High School	12	17
College	18	24

Source: NBC Metropolitan New York Survey, 1952.

*Bogart, 135.

We should note several things about these statistics. The actual reading time difference between owners and non-owners is not very large; it averages seventeen minutes. Secondly, seventeen minutes is only slightly more than half the time it takes to watch a typical television program . . . and it is reasonable to assume that early TV owners watched more than one thirty-minute program a day. Coffin also learned that reading time among upper-income TV owners tended to increase after the novelty of set ownership had worn off.[17] This was not true with lower-income

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[17]Bogart, 135.

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owners, perhaps because they were not as accustomed to reading.[18] Notice, too, that the magazine that suffered

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[18]Bogart, 136.

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the most (33 minutes), THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, was the magazine that carried the highest percentage of fiction. This suggests that the reading of fiction was affected more by TV than the reading of other kinds of material.

According to Bogart,

> There are two noteworthy changes: (1) There is a striking decrease in the amount of fiction carried by all types of publications. This parallels the developments in the book field. . . . (2) Magazines with a special informational character or function, like farming publications, homemaking magazines, or POPULAR SCIENCE and its competitors, are becoming more specialized. They all appear to be devoting less space to extraneous matters and more to their central editorial subjects.

> Television, like radio or the movies, competes directly with magazines and books as a source of fantasy and of dramatic identification and excitement. It is no wonder that, since the war, magazines have steadily reduced the amount of fiction which they carry. This is only in part due to the strong diet of TV drama on which the magazine-reading public daily feeds. It also reflects the increased popularity of the inexpensive paper-bound book. To meet both these threats, magazines have become more and more specialized. Yet taken altogether the changes in content parallel the trends in circulation for magazines of different types and they are exactly the sort of changes which the competition might have influenced.[19]

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[19] Bogart, 140-141.

We can see, then, that television's intrusion on consumers' use of leisure time cut directly into the amount of time devoted to reading family magazines. But two of the magazines under consideration, POST and LOOK, survived more than a decade after television became wide-spread. Therefore, the time factor alone does not explain the deaths of the family magazine.

The family magazines were, however, the hardest hit of all the magazines, largely because of their lack of specialization.

> Since television is primarily an entertainment medium, with most of its programming time devoted to drama of one sort of another, it might be expected that those magazines which would suffer most from its inroads would be those which are primarily entertaining rather than informational in character. A breakdown of circulation figures for magazines of various types indicates that this is indeed so. The smallest gains were recorded by the great general weeklies and bi-weeklies and the general monthlies, whose fiction, picture stories, human interest

> articles and other features of broad appeal bear a generic resemblance to much television programming.
>
> The greatest gains in circulation were made by magazines which offer information more than entertainment, and particularly those with a definitely specialized character, which cater to tastes, interests and needs which television, because of its very massive character, cannot possibly provide.[20]

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[20]Bogart, 139.

It seems that TV capitalized on the experiences of the family magazines in this area. Many of the traditional POST favorites, for example, appeared in one form or another on the TV screen. Situation comedies, travelogues, family dramas, all in their stock form, still fill most of the "prime time" hours.

> Just as the mass magazines had supplanted the Novel of Manners as escapist fare, television began to supply an endless stream of situation comedies, horse operas, and detective stories to entertain the audience the POST claimed as its own. Indeed, even "Hazel" became a TV show.[21]

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[21]Michael Mooney, "The Death of the Saturday Evening Post," Atlantic (November, 1969), 73.

Even the most cursory examination of such TV shows as "Mayberry, R.F.D.," "Green Acres" or "Gunsmoke" would demonstrate the sameness in content from week to week. This repetition of basic format is essentially the same formula that worked so well for POST with such continuing stories as William Hazlitt Upson's "Alexander Botts" series or Norman Reilly Rains's "Tugboat Annie."

Long before television became popular, its producers knew what TV fare would be.

> The short-story packs the maximum wallop in the smallest space. It's the hand-grenade of literature. It's based on a straight-line plot, driving to a single dramatic kicker. Short-story structure no doubt will be the basis of the television play. Out of it may come a literature for electronics whose potency compares with the best of the world's best drama.[22]

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[22]Lee, 120-121.

Intentional or not, this was a genuine usurpation of one of the roles held by the family magazines. The same thing happened, in time, to much other material of general interest that formerly reached the public through the family magazines. Of course, TV management's predictions were not always right:

> The idea that the public can ever become "saturated" with the talents of a genuinely popular entertainer is an exploded fallacy. On the contrary, the more the people get of a good article, the more they want. The saturation bug-a-boo vanishes. Studios and stars need not be afraid to display their talents before the iconoscope. For if those talents are great, they will be even more in demand after the broadcast is over.[23]

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[23]Lee, 200.

Eventually, even the charms of Sid Caesar's "Show of Shows" and Milton Berle paled, as did Jackie Gleason's "The Honeymooners" and "The Ed Sullivan Show."

The problem was not so much that television was a new medium, but that it was a new competitor in the field of family entertainment. According to Waples and Tyler,

> The more easily available a medium is, the more people will expose themselves to it. We know, for example that people are more likely to read the books within easy reach than they are to spend any time or effort searching for books in which they might be more interested.[24]

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[24]D. Waples and R. W. Tyler, What People Want to Read About: A Study of Group Interests and a Survey of Problems in Adult Reading (Chicago: American Library Association and the University of Chicago Press, 1931), as quoted in Lazarsfeld and Kendall, Radio Listening in America (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), 13.

This can be applied to the situation of the family magazines and the other media. Television is always readily available, once a set is purchased and maintained in operating condition. On the contrary, a magazine must be obtained either through the mails or through newsstand purchase. A weekly magazine, once read, is usually of no real value to the subscriber; he is forced to wait for the next issue before he can read more in that medium. This reinforces the TV habit.

Moreover, television is more accessible to more people at a time than a magazine. TV solves the problem of entertaining a whole family at once. Magazines did little to solve the age-old family problem of what to do with evenings and weekends. They did not answer the

questions, "Where shall we go?" and "What shall we do?" Television did.

> . . . the family who lived across the alley behind us acquired their Aladdin's treasure-trove, a Philco with a ten-inch screen. For weeks we resisted their invitations. But finally the lure of Milton Berle overcame us. We had to see for ourselves if what we had heard about that maniac was true.
>
> Just before Milton Berle entered their home, Pete, Jessie and Harlow performed their evening rituals. Pete put on a fresh shirt, Jessie put on a fresh pot of coffee and Harlow put his homework out of sight under the sofa. They were excellent hosts. They gave us the most comfortable seats, they turned off any lamp which dared to be reflected by their magic screen and midway through the show they served vanilla ice cream topped with Pete's favorite plum preserves.[25]

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[25]Tedd Thomey, The Glorious Decade (New York: Ace Books, 1971), 9.

Not only was television family entertainment, it was a special occasion! Now, twenty years later, it is hard to imagine anyone putting on a clean shirt to watch television.

Perhaps one of the things that eased the shock for the family magazines was the relatively limited programming in the early days of TV. At first, there were large blocks of time in the middle of the day when nothing was broadcast except an occasional test pattern. And, for about three years at the end of the 40s, the government placed a ban on new station licenses. Many experts, in fact, were convinced that TV could share in the market without hurting other media. Alfred Sanford, Director of the Bureau of

Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, had this to say:

> If radio was considered a "dead" medium with the arrival of television, so were newspapers when radio bloomed on the horizon. After fifteen years of falling revenues, the newspaper medium was suddenly rediscovered, just as this survey (Politz) may contribute to the rediscovery of radio. What appears to be true is a rather fundamental law that should not have to be proved again in our business lives. Rather than one medium being displaced or eclipsed by another, a medium that enjoys a special and exclusive usefulness can never die.[26]

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[26]Alfred Sanford, as quoted in Max Wylie, Clear Channels (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1955), 83.

Some observers of the media remained convinced that there was no real reason to regard television as a threat.

> Perhaps the best proof that the effect of broadcasting on other media has mostly been indirect is that newsmen in the different media feel very little competition between each other. True there is the occasional "row" over the granting of facilities to television or radio or newspapers that the others are, for that moment, denied. But on the whole there is the awareness that the "customers" look to their newspapers or their television for different kinds of service. The realisation that people will continue to buy newspapers even if they have seen the first film of the occasion the previous evening on television is no more than the realisation that the two media are different, each with their own advantages and disadvantages in information transfer. Indeed there are now many small, daily signs that television and radio and the newspapers are reaching a state of symbiosis, each increasing the interest of their audience in the other media.[27]

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[27]David Wilson, The Communicators and Society (Oxford: Pergamon Press, Ltd., 1968), 69-70.

This argument, however, applied only to news coverage, and said nothing about entertainment. The same attitude, however, was prevalent among the family magazines. The following COLLIER'S editorial, written in the very early days of television, is indicative:

Entertainment
Is Here to Stay

SOMETIMES WE SUSPECT that we may be a little bit old-fashioned. For instance, when people ask us, "What do you think of television?" we have to answer that we think about television a good deal the way we did ten years ago.

On March 18, 1939, Collier's published an article which foretold what television entertainment would be like and forecast television's troubles with remarkable accuracy. By changing future tenses to present we could use most of it today.

The forecast of troubles didn't keep us from predicting a bright future for video. We called it "a brand-new form of entertainment . . . that will take its place among the lively arts." That's where it seems to have arrived today.

A year after this article Collier's asked in an editorial, "Who Is Public Enemy No. 1?" On the evidence then at hand we nominated the Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC at that time was sticking a long nose into television and piously warning the public not to buy any sets just yet. Wait until they're better, said the FCC, the present ones may become obsolete.

The editorial speculated on what might have happened to the automobile and radio industries if some federal busybody had touted the public off their early products. It hazarded a guess that maybe 1,000,000 instead of 30,000,000 Americans would have owned cars in 1940, while a corporal's guard would be picking up bad programs on primitive radio sets.

We hope that this editorial in Collier's may have contributed something toward as healthy and unhampered a growth of television as the war permitted.

> Since 1940 we have published several more articles on the various aspects of television. But nothing, including the advent of Howdy Doody, has altered our basic opinion of this still-new medium, from what it was ten years ago.
>
> We still think that television has its own place among the lively arts, and we don't hold with the dire warnings of what it is going to do to the rest of them. We recall other such gloomy prophecies. But we notice that people are still listening to live music and phonographs and radios. They're still going to plays and movies and baseball games. They're still reading books and magazines and newspapers. Even with television to look at, we believe they will keep on doing all these things.
>
> America's capacity to absorb varied entertainment seems to be limitless. And the people who are doing a good job in their own branch of entertainment always seem to be too busy to complain that some new competitor is going to destroy them.[28]

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[28]COLLIER'S editorial, July 2, 1949, 74.

Unfortunately for the family magazines, it suddenly appeared that they no longer enjoyed "a special and exclusive usefulness." A generalization becomes clear: <u>when two media compete for the same market, the one that is most attractive and most accessible will win</u>.

Television competed with the family magazines in still another way. TV entered the market as a major consumer of short stories, plays and general-interest scripts.

> Maintaining an "average" (level of program content) is something of a trick in itself, when a major station must program almost 5,000 hours a year. (In New York, with seven stations, that means some 30,000 hours of different programming.) [<u>sic</u>]
>
> Contrast that with radio, which has a similar time problem but a vast library of recorded music to fall back on, and a pattern of year-in-year-out

> formulas. Or better, with movies or the stage, which must come up with products similar to TV's. Hollywood needs to create only 600 hours of finished film a year; the stage only 150 hours.
>
> TV chews up material at an incredible rate. The story department of one network goes through each year over 15,000 books, plays, magazine stories, scripts and outlines. In search for material, TV is branching out directly into many of the arts it encompasses--video programers see it becoming "unquestionably the greatest patron of the arts in history."[29]

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[29]Elliott, 343.

At least one of the family magazines, the SATURDAY EVENING POST, considered capitalizing on the new medium in these terms.

> Stuart Rose, longtime fiction editor of the SEP [sic], had extensive talks with the William Morris Agency, and worked up tentative plans for a 26-week television series dramatizing POST short stories. The format called for the author to appear first and explain how he came to write the story, and what he meant. Morris liked the idea because it would bring name writers to television, both in person and through their works. The POST fiction vaults held enough material to keep all three networks running indefinitely. Rose saw the idea as a triple-header: a way to make money for Curtis, and Curtis sorely needed money at the time; a means of promoting the magazine's fiction content, traditionally its strongest selling point; and (not least) [sic], a definite way of improving television programming, which was an infant wasteland rapidly growing to vastness.
>
> "Morris, a top agency, agreed to produce the pilot film at no cost to us," Rose said. "Of course, they wanted a share of the profits, but it was still a hell of a good idea.
>
> "I took the idea to the president (MacNeal). He said, in effect, 'Why split with Morris? They are OUR stories. Let's take all the money.' So management handed the project to some obscure Washington producer and spent a million bucks for something we could have had for free, from a top agency. What

> happened? The whole thing flopped, and Curtis received nothing. It died. Not a dime."[30]

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[30]Joseph C. Goulden, The Curtis Caper (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1965), 79.

Curtis also examined the possibility of joining television in news coverage.

> I (Culligan) made up a complete dummy of the projected CBS NEWS-POST, even using the CBS eye in the logo, and wrote scores of pages on operations, including marketing and financial information, to support the logic of the deal.
>
> . . . Paley (of CBS) listened carefully, even intently, when the CBS NEWS-POST was shown. I thought he was hooked. Not so. When I concluded my presentation, he took some time to talk quietly with Stanton; then he announced that he was not in favor of the idea because--and these are his exact words--"The magazine business is too hard." [sic] He went on to say that the same time and money invested in broadcasting, Broadway shows, or "even sports" would return far greater dividends.[31]

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[31]Matthew J. Culligan, The Curtis-Culligan Story (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1970), 124.

While there appears to be no evidence that this competition from other media seriously hampered magazines in their search for material to print, it seems reasonable to assume that the addition of a wealthy competitor to the market would tend to drive up prices. At least two of the magazines under consideration in this study (the only two that regularly printed fiction), POST and COLLIER'S, for years had the reputation of paying modest fees to writers; the prestige of the magazines had been reckoned as part of

the writer's compensation. Now this was no longer necessarily true.

Far more important than this kind of competition is the competition provided by the inherent nature of the media themselves. According to Marshall McLuhan, the media are parts of our environment, of our socio-economic-political climate. They are parts of the world to which we are forced to respond, often subconsciously, in living our daily lives, and we respond most quickly to those stimuli which our systems ingest most readily. In McLuhan's view our environment has changed subtly but steadily in the last few decades; the spatial world has insinuated itself, unnoticed, into the world we once perceived as linear. McLuhan's is not a profound prediction for the world of communication; rather it is a statement of what is already true but unrecognized. We live already in a spatial environment which cultural lag deludes us into thinking of as linear. Thus McLuhan's "medium is the message," that is, the means by which a message is transmitted is more important than the message itself. His statement goes a long way in explaining the demise of the family magazines.

> Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments. All media are extensions of some human faculty--psychic or physical.[32]

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[32]Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is the Message (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), 26.

And again, "The book is an extension of the eye."[33]

[33]McLuhan and Fiore, 34-37.

If McLuhan is right, the influence of TV on the popular arts is far more subtle than anyone had formerly supposed.

> In television there occurs an extension of the sense of active, exploratory touch which involves all the senses simultaneously, rather than that of sight alone. You have to be "with" it. But in all electric phenomena, the visual is only one component in a complex interplay. Since, in the age of information, most transactions are managed electrically, the electric technology has meant for Western man a considerable drop in the visual component, in his experience, and a corresponding increase in the activity of his other senses.
>
> Television demands participation and involvement in depth of the whole being. It will not work as background. It engages you. Perhaps this is why so many people feel that their identity has been threatened. This charge of the light brigade has heightened our general awareness of the shape and meaning of lives and events to a level of extreme sensitivity.
>
> It was the funeral of President Kennedy that most strongly proved the power of television to invest an occasion with the character of corporate participation. It involves an entire population in a ritual process. (By comparison, press, movies, and radio are mere packaging devices for consumers.) [sic] In television, images are projected at you. You are the screen. The images wrap around you. You are the vanishing point. This creates a sort of inwardness, a sort of reverse perspective which has much in common with Oriental art.[34]

[34]McLuhan and Fiore, 125.

Of course, as we become increasingly accustomed to the TV environment, our engagement with it becomes less demanding. For example, in many homes today it is customary for the mother to use TV as a kind of babysitter while she works

around the house, sleeps, etc. TV, then, becomes a major part of her children's environment at a much earlier age than it did for someone who grew up in the 1940s. TV is in the child's frame of reference; he does not have to think about how to handle it. By the time he is old enough for such thinking, TV will be an accomplished fact, a part of his perception of the world. His response to TV is instinctive.

> Well, what has happened? McLuhan's theory is that this is the first generation of the electronic age. He says they are different because the medium that controls their environment is not print--one thing at a time, one thing after another--as it has been for five hundred years. It is television, which is everything happening at once, instantaneously, and enveloping.[35]

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[35]Gossage, 22.

In content, television is inherently broader than the broadest in scope of the magazines. It has to be.

> The broadcast media in the United States reach and speak to vast numbers of the population. Because they cut across all lines of geography and social class, they must deal in universal and symbols rather than with those which are peculiar to any region (as newspapers do) or to any social group (as magazines do) [sic].[36]

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[36]Bogart, 24.

This breadth of scope causes television to take on an "official" character.

> Precisely because television and radio are universal in their symbolism and penetration, they

> have a sacrosanct and "official" aura, to an even greater extent than other mass media like magazines and newspapers.[37]

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[37]Bogart, 25.

If the linear media were the official spokesmen for earlier generations, spatial media are the official spokesmen for those born after about 1950. And the period following World War II, we should remember, was the largest "baby boom" in history. The effect this shift had on the family magazine was subtle and intangible. What it really affected was the choice-making mechanism of the prospective consumer. Because of TV's "environmentalization," the natural choice, the first choice for someone of the new generation is a spatial medium (TV) over a linear medium (magazines). By his very makeup, he is prone to favoring TV; the choice he makes is largely subconscious. With each additional generation, then, the magazine format becomes less attractive.

A second, less important inducement for the consumer to opt for TV is its attendant glamour.

> Because the personalities of the broadcast media are universally known, they are thought of as famous, important, and powerful. This gives the entire industry a special aura of glamour in the eyes of the audience.[38]

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[38]Bogart, 26.

This means that the cathartic experience via vicarious identification is made more accessible for a viewer than for a reader. McLuhan goes so far as to suggest that this leads to identity crises for some viewers (Cf. pp. 31-32 above). At any rate, with TV our association with famous people becomes more complete, more commonplace, as it cannot with print.

Another clear advantage that TV has over magazines is its illusion of realism.

> The broadcast media carry a special illusion of reality. The viewer of a television program or the listener to a radio broadcast is hearing and seeing something which is actually taking place. At a dramatic spectacle, at the movies, or in reading, the audience is in some measure aware of the conventions of the craft. It knows that the film was made at some time in the past and that it was spliced and put together under careful direction. It knows that the writer's words have been edited and set in print.[39]

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[39]Bogart, 27.

This, of course, is true to varying degrees. Some television programs carry with them a great sense of immediacy and truth, such as sports events; others, however, demand great suspension of disbelief, such as situation comedies. And, of course, some things simply do not broadcast well.

> I don't for a moment suggest that the networks should stop showing film of men in combat--although I can't say I completely agree with people who think that when battle scenes are brought into the living room the hazards of war are necessarily made "real" to the civilian audience. It seems to me that by the same

> process they are also made less "real"--diminished, in part, by the physical size of the television screen, which, for all the industry's advances, still shows one a picture of men three inches tall shooting at other men three inches tall, and trivialized, or at least tamed, by the enveloping cozy alarums of the household.[40]

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[40]Arlen, 8.

With very few exceptions, films taken of actual war have remained distant and largely impersonal. No doubt, this is the result of the networks' attempts to keep certain minimum standards of taste.[41]

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[41]When Walter Cronkite of CBS News showed film footage of dead North Vietnamese being carried off in a landing net by a helicopter, many viewers were enraged by the "bad taste" of Cronkite's move. But, of course, war is full of "bad taste," and this was one of the very few instances of genuine viewer participation in war films.

There remains between the TV producer and the viewer a certain amount of insulation. A major reason for this distance is the neutral character of broadcast media in general.

> Compared with newspapers, magazines and books, broadcasting tends to be noncontroversial. There is less room for the expression of extreme or deviant opinion. Of course conflicting viewpoints on political and other subjects are aired on discussion and interview programs. But the over-all character of the medium encourages the adoption of conventional, conservative, or popular views.[42]

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[42]Bogart, 36.

This too is a natural advantage most magazines hold over television. But it is not the case of the family magazine; because of its need for broad appeal, the family magazine was almost as limited in its choice of material as television.

Television was better equipped, as a spatial medium, to overcome this handicap than were the family magazines. The reason for this is that television can create an illusion of intimacy.

> Because the audience projects itself and its wishes into what it hears and sees, the broadcast media can create the illusion that their performers or announcers communicate directly to the people on the receiving end.[43]

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[43]Bogart, 29.

TV has been able to accomplish this illusion even though most viewers know that the things they see are generally video-taped. Perhaps because of the "live" nature of most early programs, perhaps because TV is seen in the home rather than in a theater, TV maintains an immediacy that movies do not enjoy. Movies and plays are for most Americans more conscious art forms than television appears to be; that is, we are more aware of being entertained by movies and plays.

A final, and very important advantage that television enjoys in reaching the average American derives from the attitude that the typical viewer brings to the set with

him. While TV viewing is far more engaging than reading (see above, pp. 31-32), it is essentially a passive activity.

> Listening and viewing are passive. To consider radio listening or television viewing a pastime is to imply that it requires little effort on the part of the audience, compared with reading. Its meanings are manifest and easily absorbed.
>
> This is reflected in the receptiveness with which the audience takes in the broadcast message. Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport note that "the listener seems as a rule to be friendly, uncritical and well-disposed toward what he hears. . . ." The plethora of platitudes reaching our ears during the day would be unbearable if we encountered them in print.[44]

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[44]Bogart, 34.

Comparatively, magazine readers bring with them to their medium far more critical attitudes than do TV viewers. This is due, in part, to the increased effort involved in magazine reading, and is partially due, no doubt, to the way we have been conditioned to behave toward linear media. As shown earlier, this conditioning is especially true for those reared under the aegis of television.

Why, one might ask, didn't radio go the same way as the family magazines? After all, radio is subject to many of the magazines' limitations. Radio is more engaging than magazines, but definitely less engaging than television is. There are at least two explanations for radio's continuing success. First, radio is an audial medium,

not a visual one. One can listen to radio and read magazines simultaneously.[45]

[45]For a more complete discussion, see Wylie, 82.

Moreover, radio is a portable medium--much more so than television; we can listen as we drive our cars, sun ourselves at the beach, clean the house, etc.

> It is inconceivable that television should be permitted to be put in front of the driver in automobiles; the car radio is probably permanently established. It accounted for at least half of the sets sold in 1955.[46]

[46]Elliott, 4.

Some people did, in fact install television sets in their cars, although the market for auto-sets was never really large. Law required that the sets be installed in the back seat, away from the driver's line of vision; space limitations in the back seats of most cars make such installation impractical. And television, broadcasting on the shorter, flatter FM waves, offered none of the entertainment value for long-distance travelers that the longer AM waves could offer.

Secondly, and most importantly, <u>radio changed its role to adapt to the new competition</u>.

> The great popularity of television has been largely at the expense of radio. Radio listening has dropped off sharply since the television set became a fixture in American living rooms. In 1949 the typical American family had its radio on for an

> average of about four and a half hours a day; now it is approximately two hours a day. In that same period--when the TV set was becoming a fixture--the family's television viewing jumped from almost nothing to more than four hours a day, a figure which has increased to about six hours.
>
> Since television came along, the circumstances under which people listen to radio and their purpose in listening to it seem to have changed. Out-of-home radio listening apparently has increased, to judge from the greater sale of automobile and portable sets. Unlike television, which requires fairly close attention, radio can be heard with the so-called third ear. There is some evidence that people now use radio as a personal companion while driving to work or doing the housework or reading, whereas they watch television as a member of a family group. Having lost to television its preeminence as an entertainment medium, radio appears to have become somewhat more selective in seeking its audience. It now beams its programs at little publics within the population, as with its disc-jockey shows aimed at teen-agers.
>
> Despite its many losses to television, radio is still far from dead. Although listening has fallen off, manufacturers turned out more than one and a half times as many radio sets in 1957 as they did in 1949. By 1964, Americans owned more than 185 million radio sets. For most families, radio is a necessity, not the luxury that television is sometimes considered. And even in the homes of avid television fans, radio continues to perform a useful role. When television fails to carry an event of great interest, people still rely on radio, as when 12,225,000 families tune in on a championship boxing match.[47]

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[47]Peterson, et al., 127.

The producers of radio shows were quick to perceive that the market was ended for programs which demanded close attention. Programs such as "The Shadow," "One Man's Family," "The Fat Man" and "Gangbusters" all required alert listeners. Many of their plots were fairly complex, with reversals of the action and a kind of "audial

montage"--a shifting back and forth between scenes happening simultaneously in different places. Radio also leaned heavily on the audience's willing suspension of disbelief; it could in no way compete with the easy realism of TV, even in such simple matters as footfalls, a starting engine or a closing door.

Producers saw radio's new function as a kind of "filler" for the times during or between listeners' other activities. Note that even the afternoon "soaps," the last close-attention programs to die (somewhere in the early 1960s), have been replaced by rock music, capsulated news, and other brief communications. Some religious groups and organizations such as The Salvation Army still sponsor the old kind of plot-derived radio show. Most of these shows are heard in "Bible-belt" areas, but northern stations occasionally carry them at odd times.[48]

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[48]For example, a Lansing, Michigan station carries a spiritually based show as a "public service." The show is aired on Sunday mornings at 5:30 a.m.! Obviously, there is little demand for these shows.

What radio did, then, was to shift its role. The transition period was sticky . . . and radio even carried advertisements for radio. Stan Freeburg did a series of comedy routines pointing out that radio, through sound effects, could do things that TV could not. Sarah Vaughn sang the question and answer: "Who listens to radio? Just a hundred and fifty million people, that's all." The

family magazines, as linear media with relatively fixed patronage, simply were not in the position to make such a role shift.

This chapter has been an examination of the threat TV brought the family magazines in competition for the mass audience. Most consumers were no doubt aware of the tremendous appeal of the new medium; most were probably cognizant of the rapid rise in TV sales. Some members of the mass audience may even have noticed that television offered direct competition to the family magazines for the attention of the average consumer, although those who noticed were apparently few. Most of the people who turned their attention to the new medium never thought about the subtleties of the appeal of television. McLuhan's statement, "The medium is the message," is basic in understanding the shift of popular culture media from linear to spatial. As a popular medium the family magazine was made obsolete by television, particularly in terms of the youth market.

It is clear, however, that magazine readership remained high; subscription lists were not suddenly decimated; and that the "all or none" media theory remained valid even during the days when TV held the advantage of novelty. Other things being equal, the entry of a new competitor in the field of mass communication would not

necessarily have resulted in the failure of the family magazines. Other things were not equal, however. We must remember that, from the producers' and advertisers' points of view, the popular arts are commodities, and as the following chapters show, the real threat of television to the other media was in terms of its value as commodity. In order to understand that value, we need next to examine from an economic point of view the market for which the mass media were competing.

II

MEDIA FINANCING: ADVERTISING

The American brand of capitalism has traditionally been relatively free of restraints and subsidies, particularly in the domestic market. Our domestic economy has been a more or less open supply and demand situation. To be successful, the producer of consumer goods must not only have on hand a supply of his goods (or the promise of supply); he must create the demand for them as well. Advertising is a chief tool in the creation of that demand. For many Americans, we have arrived at a point where success equals possessions.

> We sometimes see in LIFE or LOOK a double-page photograph of some family standing on the lawn among its possessions: station wagon, swimming pool, power cruiser, sports car, tape recorder, television sets, radios, cameras, power lawn mower, garden tractor, lathe, barbecue set, sporting equipment, domestic appliances--all the gleaming, grotesquely imaginative paraphernalia of its existence. It was hard to get them on two pages, soon they will need four. It is like a dream, a child's dream before Christmas; yet if the members of the family doubt that they are awake, they have only to reach out and pinch something. The family seems pale and small, a negligible appendage, besides its possessions; only a human being would need to ask, "Which owns which?" We are fond of saying that

> something-or-other is not just something-or-other but a "way of life"; this too is a way of life--our way, the way.[49]

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[49]Randall Jarrell, "A Sad Heart at the Supermarket," in Jacobs, 101.

Over the years Americans have invented various means by which to stimulate the sale of commodities--sandwich boards, billboards, space in newspapers and magazines, time on radio and television. And, over the years, the more successful of these means have become commodities in themselves. This chapter is an examination of both of these facets: the relative success of magazines, radio and television in promoting goods, and the media as producers' commodities. In other words, these media have two kinds of usefulness: usefulness to the consumer, and usefulness to the producer of consumer goods. To determine the advertising success or failure of a medium, both kinds of utility must be considered.

According to Roland Wolseley,

> Advertising is a sales tool intended to create immediate sales and a climate favorable to future sales. Before the advent of radio and television it was sufficient to speak of printed selling, a definition still satisfactory for magazine advertising, which differs from other forms in that it appears in a regularly issued bound pamphlet, generally in more than one issue, and is representational rather than functional. Readers are expected

> only to examine the advertisement and possibly to clip a part of it, with a view to future purchase.[50]

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[50]Roland E. Wolseley, The Magazine World: An Introduction to Magazine Journalism (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951), 150.

With the exception of the words, "printed selling," the definition applies to advertising in all three of the major media under consideration. A look at the development of these media shows that each was once a leader in the advertising field; i.e., magazines dominated before radio; radio was first in the field before television; television eclipsed radio. Each still retains a large share of the money spent by advertisers.

Newspapers first occupied the central role in advertising, followed by magazines.

> The change from a class audience to a popular audience came to magazines about a half century later than it did to newspapers. The modern magazine of low price, popular appeal and large, national circulation emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century. By then such fruits of democracy as popular education had resulted in a potentially large reading audience which magazines could serve. Machines had freed man from many irksome tasks and had given him the leisure time in which to read. The technological revolution had brought about the high-speed presses and other equipment which publishers needed to reach large audiences; a network of railroads had begun to permit distribution over a vast territory. But more than that, large-scale advertising was emerging as manufacturers sought to sell their mass-produced products across the entire land, and the magazine became a national medium for reaching the

> growing body of consumers with whom the producers wished to get in touch.[51]

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[51]Peterson, et al., Mass Media, 45.

As we know, magazine growth was steady in all areas, including advertising. This was true for the family magazines as well, reaching a peak in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1951, Wolseley noted,

> Except during wars and depressions, the magazine has not faltered financially in the past half century. Even in difficult times, this industry has suffered less than many others, for magazine reading becomes habitual and magazines can compete with more expensive activities as pastimes. Thus in the mid-twentieth century we find the magazine at its peak in number of publications and persons employed, circulation, distribution, and advertising revenue.[52]

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[52]Wolseley, 123.

At the same time that magazine advertising was increasing in quantity, it was increasing in quality. The old, black and white advertisements on coarse stock were replaced first by single-color, then by multi-color spreads on heavier and glossier stock. Use of photography increased, as well as the increased use of artists' reproductions of photographic quality. This progress followed technological developments, for example:

> A most dramatic piece of equipment for magazine printing is the giant Double X press used by the Curtis Publishing Company. It can produce five hundred thousand pages an hour in four or five

> colors. Each hour it prints, dries, cuts, and folds twelve thousand five hundred forty-page sections.[53]

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[53]Wolseley, 69.

The family magazines, in particular, sought advertisements for high cost products, mostly durable goods such as major appliances, automobiles, clothing and farm equipment. They also wooed the producers of such perishables as soft-drinks and razor blades (after about 1930, these perishables included liquor and tobacco). And they carried ads for services, too, such as insurance and the trucking industry. These were the advertisements of nationwide concerns; national magazines carried little local advertising.

In similar fashion radio and television advertising grew as the media themselves grew. The growth of television advertising was so rapid that federally-set time limits were imposed in an effort to prevent saturation of broadcast time. There seems to be a correlation between the popularity of a medium and the amount of advertising it carries. Advertisers naturally want to reach the consumers of popular culture, for they are typically a group with money to spend. The popular media offer a natural avenue. Temporarily setting aside the variations in advertising effectiveness of the various media, we note that the most popular medium would seem to be the best place for an advertiser to sell successfully. No doubt, this is true

in reverse: as a medium loses popularity, it loses advertising as well. (We shall see the results of this kind of thinking later.)

This approach is simplistic, however. Many items merit consideration in evaluating the utility of the respective media to advertisers and consumers. Some are quite obvious, some more subtle; each of them plays some role in determining the success of a medium in carrying the advertising message. The following paragraphs will deal with these considerations, offering comments on the position of the family magazine.

A major consideration for the advertiser is the national distribution of an advertisement. All of the media are capable of such distribution, although the individual differences among them are worth noting. Magazines, especially general magazines, are necessarily national in nature; that is, the same version of an issue reaches all parts of the country. It is possible to handle regional advertising by substituting pages, relevant to the area where the magazine is to be shipped, but this is an expensive practice and still provides only broad coverage. A clothier, for example, who wants to boost retail outlets in the midwest will have to list stores in Detroit, Cleveland, Toledo, Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, etc.

> Magazines cannot easily serve local advertisers, who gain little advantage from multi-million circulations. National magazines seek to offset

> this disadvantage by printing names of local shops selling advertised merchandise and sometimes distributing tie-in display racks or posters. But these are expensive palliatives.[54]

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[54]Wolseley, 154.

Television, on the other hand, is capable of providing advertising for either local or national consumption. This is due to the broad identity a channel derives from its network affiliation while, at the same time, it retains its local identity through independent programming. Certainly, networks provide broad coverage.

> As television stations began to take form after World War II, their owners scrambled to affiliate with the four national networks which dominated the industry. By the summer of 1955, there were 432 television stations, including 13 non-commercial educational stations. More than half of them were served by only three networks--ABC, CBS, and NBC, And, in September of that year, control was further concentrated as the fourth major network, Du Mont, ceased operations. . . . The three major networks in 1963 counted more than 600 TV stations among their affiliates.[55]

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[55]Peterson, et al., Mass Media, 74.

And, within that broad coverage, the advertiser can aim at specific regions if he chooses.

Similarly, radio is both local and national in coverage. As part of its role shift after the rise of TV, however, radio became increasingly local in nature. Anyone who listens to much radio can observe that, with the exception of network news and special events, the bulk of radio

programming is done by individual stations. The major portion of radio advertising is made up of small spots for local businesses of all kinds--pizzerias, auto-parts shops, dry cleaners, gas stations, etc. We can see, then, that magazines (especially of the general, family type) are at a disadvantage in all but national advertising.

According to W. H. Mullen, director of the Magazine Advertising Bureau,

> (magazines) generate confidence and believability . . . in the minds of their readers. Magazines were the first medium to guarantee certain products advertised in their pages.[56]

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[56]Wolseley, 152.

In the past fifteen years, when many magazines, especially family magazines were failing or already gone from the scene, there was no real reason for the reader to believe that, because a product appeared in a magazine's pages, it was necessarily good. Originally, a part of the advantage of advertising a product in a magazine was that the magazine's good name and apparent solidarity served as an implicit recommendation of the product itself. Secondly, very seldom do we see the words "As advertised in LIFE" or similar slogans any more. Nor do those words guarantee the product itself; they merely guarantee that the product will be the way the magazine represented it. The guarantee is on the part of the manufacturer of the product, not on the part of the magazine; the magazine does not assume

liability for broken toasters, bent egg-beaters or powerless vacuum cleaners. In some cases, a magazine issues a "Seal of Approval," but this does not constitute a guarantee either; it means that the people from the magazine who looked at the product and tested it found it to be satisfactory. Therefore, the magazine's "good name" is not an advantage to advertisers. Neither radio nor television offers any guarantees for the products it advertises.

According to Wolseley,

> Magazines can provide a selective audience. An advertiser using newspaper, radio or television reaches a general audience. Through magazines he can reach the special group most likely to purchase his product or service.[57]

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[57]Wolseley, 152.

The family magazines, of course, were aimed at the general audience just as most evening television is. But the question here is one of selectivity: is the magazine better suited to reach specialized audiences than, say, TV? In most cases, the answer must be yes, as most modern magazines are fairly specialized. Magazines such as HOT ROD or SPORTS CARS ILLUSTRATED appeal not to the general, car-buying public, but to auto hobbiests with specialized knowledge and needs. It would hardly be economical to advertise racing carburetors or milled cam-shafts over television; the percentage of actual potential buyers in the audience would be extremely low at any time of day

(with the exception of sponsoring special, auto-oriented events, such as the Watkins Glen Grand Prix). Television does achieve some degree of selectivity through careful choice of time slots and program content. For example, producers of detergents have long known that their biggest customers are housewives--and that housewives favor afternoon serialized melodrama. Those shows, such as "Brighter Day" or "The Edge of Night," have become so closely identified with their sponsors that the entire genre is known widely as the "Soap Opera," or merely, "The Soaps."

Another argument in favor of magazine advertising is that

> Magazine advertising has greater permanence than any other form of advertising. Because the magazine is read at leisure, the reader accords longer attention to its message than that of advertising in the newspaper, which has a tone of urgency, change, and perishability. Radio and television rarely repeat their programs. Surveys made by magazine groups, such as MAB, show that magazines are still being read many weeks after publication.[58]

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[58]Wolseley, 152.

Much of this is still true. There is reason to believe that the reader of a magazine advertisement gives it longer attention than he does a TV commercial; he can look at it for as long as he wishes, while the TV commercial has an end. While that shows greater durability for magazine advertisements, it does not necessarily indicate greater "permanence." Although TV shows are not usually repeated

with their original sponsors, the sponsors often use individual commercials many times on a variety of shows. The "Man from Glad" (sandwich bags) may appear in identical form on such diverse shows as "Gunsmoke," "I Dream of Jeannie," "As the World Turns" and "The F.B.I." Therefore, magazine advertisements have no advantage on the basis of "permanence."

In radio advertising, the same trend is evident. As radio has moved away from close-attention programs, the identification of a particular product with a particular program has similarly waned. Radio no longer features "Paul LaValle and the Cities Service Band" or "Your Lucky Strike Hit Parade." Gone is the specific identification of a particular star with one product; for years Gene Autry was sponsored by Wrigley's Gum; "Captain Midnight" was brought to us by Ovaltine, Jack Benny by Jell-O. Radio advertisements are now used much as TV's are; the same, taped commercial is heard many times on a variety of shows.

Another advantage originally enjoyed by magazines over the other media was high quality.

> Advertising can be presented with greater craftsmanship by magazines than by other media, for they use better paper, color printing, and elaborate art work; and, having more time, they can achieve a greater degree of accuracy of presentation. About half the advertising in consumer magazines is in color.[59]

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[59]Wolseley, 153.

These comparisons of magazines with other linear media are still valid. But they do not compare magazines with TV. Competition in the field of TV advertising has been fierce, and its technology has improved rapidly. Many of the best filming techniques are now used in TV commercials, such as montage and moving cameras.[60]

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[60]Awards are given annually for the best advertisement technically, the most original idea, etc. For example, Mary Wells's agency won an award for the Alka Seltzer "No matter what shape (your stomach's in)" series.

Radio advertising, on the other hand, has not been presented with the same kind of professionalism in presentation. Most advertising is left in the hands of the station announcer or the disc-jockey, who is told to "be enthusiastic." Only a comparatively few advertisers on radio go to the trouble of standardizing their advertisements. (One such is the Wrigley Co., with its oft-repeated "Refresh yourself, chew Wrigley's Spearmint Gum" jingle, a fairly inexpensive recording.)

We need also to consider the situation of the small advertiser, the producer of small, low-cost items. Chances are that he does not need particularly elaborate advertisements, although he needs the benefits of advertising as much as the producer of larger goods. For him, television is not a viable option; the cost of a TV spot is prohibitive, nor would current standards of taste allow airing of commercials for many small items which are highly personal

in nature. Radio, too, is unsuitable--for his purposes for the same reason--it is hard to imagine a disc-jockey praising a particular brand of contraceptive, for example. For years these advertisers turned to magazines. As late as 1960 POST still carried advertisements for "Futuro" abdominal supports, "Gets-It" liquid corn remover and "Thum," a product to "discourage thumb sucking and nail biting. In 1964 and 1965 LOOK still featured a number of small advertisements for products such as Lanacane, to "Break 'itch cycle' . . . stop skin itch, even membrane itch," "Listo" marking pencils, "Mosco" corn remover and "Preparation H" hemorrhoid treatment. The relative number of these tiny advertisements in LOOK did not change greatly between that time and the magazine's death, remaining at about one quarter of one page per issue.[61]

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[61]The only one of those advertisers to stay in that part of the magazine for those six years was "Preparation H."

Competition for the advertising dollar among the media became increasingly fierce in the 1960s.

> The answer of the big magazines to the threat of TV was to get as many readers as TV could show in its Nielsen ratings: to fight numbers with numbers. As the numbers went up, so did the cost of paper and printing. Only very rich advertisers could afford to buy a page at $40,000. Smaller advertisers were closed out. The effects of the "numbers game" were synergistic and final.[62]

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[62]Mooney, 8.

Production costs also continued to rise; this, too, affected the advertisers of small items. According to Wolseley,

> The most effective magazine advertising is too costly for advertisers who do not need elaborate presentation, as in multi-color. This particular drawback is intensified as production costs mount.[63]

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[63]Wolseley, 153.

Today, most of the small advertisers seem to have moved into newspapers (many of them were there all along) and into the kind of magazines offered by newspapers as Sunday supplements. Newspapers are far better able to handle many small advertisers at prices they can afford.

A good advertisement must be able to attract attention. Radio and especially TV have a marked advantage over magazines in this instance, as they are dynamic in nature, while magazines are static. Radio and TV advertisements unfold before the consumer; magazine advertisements do not. At Wolseley indicates, this is partially offset by magazines' advantage in tangibility:

> Magazine advertising is static, as any printed material must be. It does not have the ear appeal of radio or the eye appeal of video. As noted, radio and television are impermanent, but their advertising presentation is dramatic and alive.[64]

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[64]Wolseley, 153.

This basic difference in the media also gives radio and television another bonus in terms of the number of demands made on the consumer's attention at any one time. A television or radio commercial stands alone; that is, during the commercial nothing else is being transmitted. A magazine advertisement, on the other hand, must compete for attention with all other items on the page, and with items on the opposite page. A small advertisement is apt to be buried by larger ads, a photograph, and perhaps a cartoon. The reader's eye takes in all of these things at once, and is drawn to the most attractive part of the page or the most colorful.

> Because of page size and wide use, the volume of advertising has become so great that it is difficult to make any particular advertisement stand out. Attention value in thick magazines is lessened. This handicap does not exist so much for specialized as for general periodicals, because readers of the former are more intensely interested in the advertising displayed, which can be called newsvertising.[65]

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[65]Wolseley, 154.

The producer of a "hot" new item probably will advertise it in the broadcast media, not in magazines, because he knows that he can get his product before the public much faster over radio or television.

> Advertising copy and plates for magazines must be submitted so long in advance of publication that they sometimes lose accuracy or timeliness.

> Magazine advertising cannot always be adjusted quickly to changing conditions.[66]

[66]Wolseley, 154.

Moreover, the magazine takes time for printing, assembling and delivering. If the advertiser wants to use a printed medium, he is apt to choose a newspaper, as newspapers are the fastest printed medium to reach the public. Modern newspaper publishing techniques allow at least limited use of color; some newspapers, such as THE DETROIT FREE PRESS, even have large, sophisticated presses that permit glossy, multi-color pages of magazine quality while maintaining newspaper speed. The "fast close" in family magazine publishing was used only for changes in content items; advertisers could not take advantage of it.

An example of the ways the media treat a "hot" item can be seen every September or October, the opening of the new model year for automobiles. Certainly, there is always great demand for news of Detroit's latest offerings, as cars are among Americans' most prized possessions. For years before its death, LOOK offered its readers an annual feature on automobiles. The last of these appeared just a month before the magazine died; it was entitled, "U.S. Cars, 1972: LOOK's 16th Annual Automotive Preview." It must have been expensive to produce--fourteen pages of photographs, many in full color, and an accompanying text tracing automotive trends. But by the time that issue was

on the newsstands on September 21, most Americans had already seen the new cars in color newspaper advertisements and on television. Ford Motor Company, for example, uses its prime time Sunday night show, "The F.B.I.," to introduce its cars every year, long before they reach local dealers. And, although that LOOK issue would have seemed to be a "natural" for automotive advertising, it carried only two ads (for a total of three pages, one of which was in black and white) for new cars. The largest auto-makers, GM and Ford, were conspicuously absent.

The differences in appeal of the three media were discussed earlier in this study. It should be remembered here, however, that spatial media have considerably more appeal for today's audience (especially the youth market) than do linear media. The implication in a consideration of advertising advantages and disadvantages is obvious: the advantages spatial media enjoy over linear media apply to the field of advertising as well. A TV commercial is superior in appeal to a magazine advertisement, simply because it is on television. Early TV advertising, for example, was carried over into newspaper and store advertising with the words, "as seen on TV."

In a similar vein, radio and television enjoy still another advantage over magazines. Because their commercial messages develop in terms of time, the advertiser is able to control, step by step, the response he wants from the

consumer. A radio commercial, for example, can only be heard one word at a time, perhaps with background music. And most television dramatizations have some plot, however slight.[67]

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[67]Some are quite involved, such as the Phillips Milk of Magnesia commercial in which we see (1) Grandfather unhappy about the grandchildren coming for the weekend, (2) Grandmother using various techniques to find out why Grandfather is unhappy, (3) Grandfather finally admitting to being "irregular," (4) Grandmother recommending Phillips . . . jump an hour or so in time . . . (5) Grandchildren arriving and being greeted by happy (regular) Grandfather.

Some are very simple, such as the commercial featuring a cleaning contest between Mr. America, using an old fashioned cleaner, and Average Housewife, using Lestoil. The point here is that the television adman can control our emotions in sequence from vicarious identification to motivation to buy.

Magazines cannot offer the advertiser such control, at least not to the same degree. A reader approaches a page of printed advertising in many ways, depending on his mood, interest or reading ability. In an automotive ad, for example, a reader may be drawn first to the pretty girl, to the car itself, or to the technical diagrams of body and frame. Granted, a skillful layout man can direct the reader's eye to some extent, but the reader is still faced with the entire advertisement at once. And, the bigger the page is, the more things there are apt to be

for the reader to sort out. The magazine reader's greater leisure does help, however, in this matter.

> The pretty girl does not have the place in a TV spot she has in the magazine ad. The magazine reader can leisurely transfer his attention to the copy--but the TV viewer may never get his mind off the pretty girl.[68]

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[68]Harry Wayne McMahan, The Television Commercial (New York: Hastings House, 1957), 35.

This was probably a lesson learned the hard way. Early TV commercials featured many beautiful women; today's feature many average housewives. And, although TV may attract advertising money away from magazines, those who still read magazines give advertisements about the same amount of time and attention as formerly.

> . . . regardless of television's effects on advertising appropriations for rival media, or on audiences for those media, there is not evidence that it has reduced the attention paid to other forms of advertising. An analysis of magazine ad observation figures, prepared by the Magazine Advertising Bureau, shows no perceptible trend during a five-year period of great TV growth. Both in 1947 and in 1951 full page ads in nine magazines measured by Daniel Sarch and Staff were noted by 28% of the men readers and by 33% of the women.[69]

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[69]Bogart, 177-178.

The advertiser wants to be sure that his message reaches the right audience, both by interest and by income group. Of the three media, he is most apt to be sure with magazines. As indicated above, many magazines cater to

special interest groups, and it is fairly simple for the advertiser to choose the magazine that he thinks is right. Magazines can be ranked, too, according to their subscribers' incomes. THE NEW YORKER, for example, appeals to a wealthier clientele than does FAMILY CIRCLE. Politically, EARTH is far more liberal than OUTDOOR LIFE. This kind of specialization in interest, income group and social thought placed the family magazine at a disadvantage. Because they were so broad in scope, aimed at the middle-middle class and maintained a balanced point of view socially, the family magazines were unsuitable for many advertisers. The products best suited for advertising in the family magazines were those that appealed to a very broad class of consumers. Certainly, there are dozens of such products, but there are perhaps even more products that are specialized in some way. General advertisers soon learned that the new medium, television, served their needs more effectively than did the family magazines. So, without the general advertisers' demand of pre-TV days, and without the specialized advertisers, the family magazines' advertising province became ever smaller.[70]

[70]For a chart comparing the various groups reached by the family magazines, see Table 22, p. 189.

As Marshall McLuhan and others have pointed out, one of the biggest effects TV has had on American culture is the increasing awareness of the global community and

developments within it. This, of course, is true of advertising as well.

> Television is making the consumer wiser far faster than radio ever did. In the last 50 years, the spread of general knowledge to our mass population has accelerated through better newspapers, magazines, the movies and radio, in turn.
> Television throws it into overdrive.[71]

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[71]McMahan, 37.

What this probably means for advertisers is that consumers are becoming increasingly canny in their choice of goods. The old maxim, "Caveat emptor," "let the buyer beware," is a reality; it might now be changed to read, "the buyer is aware." Moreover, the buyer is aware of advertising quality. Oddly enough, the medium that one would expect to insult the consumer's intelligence least frequently insults it most. Although TV has made considerable progress in this area, our credulity is constantly tested by women in evening gowns swabbing floors, librarians becoming new people after purchasing Mustangs, the new next-door-neighbor becoming friendly after taking the recommended laxative, ad nauseum. Radio is almost as guilty. Americans have been jingled and sloganed past the point where they know that Coke is "the real thing," or that Doublemint Chewing Gum "doubles your pleasure, doubles your fun." But magazines in general have not fallen into the same sins. It is, to be sure, common to see the same advertisement in a number of magazines issued at about the

same time; but it is seldom that an advertiser runs the same advertisement for weeks at a time in the same magazines. A fairly simple generalization can be made: Americans will tolerate repetition of a broadcast advertisement but will read an advertisement once. In addition, because magazines are linear--hence an active, not a passive experience for the consumer--they must carry a more intelligent brand of advertising. The family magazines, for example, were aimed at middle-middle class consumers; television advertisements are beamed at "the lowest common denominator," the least-educated consumer who could reasonably be expected to buy the product in question. There is a big difference between the two.

The advertiser wants his message to be a memorable one. Small advertisers, such as the makers of soap products and chewing gum, have jingles and slogans that stick in the consumer's mind, so that when he is faced with a whole rack of products to choose from he will turn almost instinctively to the cleanser that "floats the dirt right down the drain." Larger advertisers' problems are somewhat different; not only do they want the consumer to remember the names of their products, they want to steer him to the particular place where their products are sold. To do this they frequently try to make the consumer identify their product with a particular image. Ford was very successful with its use of the Mustang commercials featuring Plain

Jane who, Cinderella-like, became Queen of the Hop after buying a Mustang. The campaign was so successful, in fact, that perhaps half of the buyers of new Mustangs were single women in their twenties. Lincoln commercials boosted the car as "the final step up," attempting to make consumers identify Lincolns with success. This kind of identification is particularly important in encouraging recognition of brand names. Partly because of the control television gives the advertiser and partly because of the advantage TV has as a medium, its success in reducing brand name ignorance has been remarkable.

> We found that television cuts the brand ignorance area by more than half. Where 12.1% of the non-viewers said they had "never heard of" the average brand studied, only 5.7% of the owners who watched the program advertising the brand gave that answer.[72]

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[72]NBC Television, Television Today (National Broadcasting Co. Inc., 1951), 42.

This has had an effect on buying habits. In 1951 NBC Television promoters issued the following:

> For the average durable make advertised on television there were 19.3 buyers per thousand TV owners who watched the program on which the product was advertised; there were 15.6 buyers per thousand who did not watch the program. For 32 different makes of durable goods, television lifts sales, on the average, by 23.7%.[73]

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[73]NBC, 46.

One of the main reasons why television advertising is more memorable than advertising in the other media is

the face-to-face nature of television selling. A current Chrysler Corporation advertisement, for example, features Arthur Godfrey riding down the assembly line in a partially welded chassis. As he goes he tells us about the various things happening to the chassis, with an explanation of why these processes are superior to the processes of other manufacturers. We have the feeling that Arthur Godfrey is talking to each of us, personally; this is far more powerful selling than a static picture of the same man with a printed caption. Changes are that we will remember that Chrysler cars are welded, not bolted together the next time we think about a new car.

Magazines differ from the broadcast media in still another way important to advertisers. In order for the commercial message to be of any value, the consumer must have the physical advertisement before him. That is, the advertiser in LOOK magazine, for example, is dependent on the consumer's decision to buy that particular issue of LOOK; no other magazine will do. But the radio or television advertiser is dependent only on the consumer's having a receiver in operating condition, regardless of make. In addition, the radio or television receiver is always current, while magazines are dated. What this means is that magazines must build their own circulation, while radio and television circulation is made in advance by sales of receiving units.

In one sense, this gives magazines an advantage over the other media. The advertiser can make the correlation between his ad and increased sales fairly easily. He knows what his sales were before the ad, how many magazines were distributed and what sales were after the ad. It is far more difficult to make the correlation with radio and television. Granted, there have been many surveys (such as Nielsen's) to show who is listening to/watching what/when. But the advertiser does not get the guaranteed circulation that he does with magazines. Ordinarily, for example, "Bonanza" may be at the top of the Sunday night ratings, but one week an opposing network may run a "Spectacular" or an especially good movie and attract many regular "Bonanza" viewers. And that may be the one week our advertiser decided to use television for his message. Radio correlation is even harder. Many schemes have been tried, such as the promise of a free gift for mentioning the name of the station over which the ad was carried, or selling the product advertised on radio only by mail. Now that the day of the close-attention radio program is over, many listeners (especially those in their cars, with preset tuning buttons) are prone to changing stations often, perhaps whenever a commercial begins, which means that the advertiser cannot count on the reputation of a particular radio program to draw a guaranteed audience, as with TV programming or magazine subscription lists.

By judicious choice of magazines, then, the advertiser can control to some degree the circulation his ad will receive. The wealthiest TV advertisers can get some measure of this control by identifying themselves with particular programs, as radio advertisers once did. Most sponsors, however, prefer to have brief messages sprinkled throughout the advertising day, in hopes of eventually catching prospective buyers. But if an advertiser buys, say, ten spots a day, he has no real way of knowing which of those spots proved most effective, or if sheer repetition is the key to their effectiveness.

A word should be said here, too, about the amount of control the advertiser has over programming and editorial content in the magazines and in television. This matter of editorial and program control is probably much like an iceberg . . . we see only a very small part of it in any medium. Periodically some scandal or other comes to the surface and brings with it doubts about the entire medium; witness the fate of many quiz shows after the manipulation of the '$64,000 Question" became public. There are more subtle kinds of influence: for example, all of the cars on Ford's program, "The F.B.I." are Ford products. Some, such as Leo Rosten, feel the influence of the sponsor is great:

> Advertisers seem to me to exercise their most pernicious influence in television. For in television, advertisers are permitted to decide what

> shall or shall not appear in the programs they sponsor. This seems to be insupportable. An advertiser in a newspaper or magazine buys a piece of space in which to advertise his product. He does not buy a voice on the news desk or at the editorial table. But the television advertiser buys time both for his commercials and for the time between commercials; he becomes a producer and publisher himself. I am convinced that this is bad for the public, bad for television, and (ultimately) [sic] bad for the sponsors.[74]

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[74]Leo Rosten, "The Intellectual and the Mass Media," in Jacobs, 81.

The networks, of course, deny this. According to Frank Stanton, President of CBS,

> In the first place, I categorically assert that no news or public affairs program at CBS, however expensive to the sponsor, has ever been subject to his control, influence, or approval. There is a total and absolute independence in this respect.
>
> An advertiser in magazines does have the power to associate his advertising with editorial content by his choice of a magazine. If he makes a household detergent, he can choose a magazine whose appeal is to housewives. In television, he can achieve this association only by seeking out kinds of programs, or, more properly, the kinds of audience to which specific programs appeal. This is of course why a razor blade company wants to sponsor sports programs. But this does not mean that the company is going to referee the game or coach the team.[75]

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[75]Frank Stanton, "Parallel Paths," in Jacobs, 90.

The exact amount of influence wielded by an advertiser probably can never be accurately determined. Nor is it likely that either the advertiser or the media representatives will ever be completely candid on the subject.

It does, however, seem likely that the possibilities for influencing medium content are greater with television than they are with magazines, partly because of the nature of the medium and partly because of the attitude the consumer brings with him to the medium (discussed earlier in this study).

We can see by now that the media are big business, with incredibly large numbers of advertising dollars involved in their inception and operation. Peterson and others, in their 1966 study, The Mass Media and Modern Society, noted the following costs for magazines and television.

> In the large-circulation field, costliness is as characteristic of magazine publishing as it is of newspaper publishing, broadcasting, and motion-picture production. Harlan Logan, writing in MAGAZINE INDUSTRY in 1949, estimated that a new publisher of a mass-circulation magazine needed between $7,500,000 and $15,000,000 to finance a general weekly, with the odds three to one against success. A new general monthly, he calculated, would take from $4 million to $7 million, and the odds would be 10 to 1 against success. By the 1960s, costs were perhaps 50 percent greater than when Logan made his estimates, and the odds against success appreciably higher.
>
> As the conquest by air of the nation's mass markets brought television programs into most American homes, the costs of broadcasting became enormous. To get even the smallest television station on the air, one needs to invest more than $250,000 in building and equipment. A medium-size station might represent an investment of approximately $1 million. The costs of programming are also impressive. Each of the hour-long Ed Sullivan programs in the early sixties was estimated to cost $232,800 for time, talent, and production. The Ford Motor Company once

> provided a CBS executive with $12 million for programming, $250,000 a year as salary, and residual interest in the thirty-nine shows he was to produce.[76]

---

[76]Peterson, et al., Mass Media, 70, 74.

Of course, a television station is not so apt to fail as a magazine is. For one thing, the number of competitors is apt to be small in any given area, with the possible exceptions of the largest cities. Secondly, network affiliation offers considerable programming insurance. This situation may change with the rise of Cable TV as it will be possible in some areas to have, for example, two channels in the same network competing with each other. At this writing, federal control of cable TV companies is nonexistent for two reasons: FCC authority extends only to those broadcasting, not to those in the business of receiving; the majority of cable hook-ups do not cross state lines. The prospect of heavy competition brought about by CATV is intriguing. No doubt, serious studies will be made of this subject.

Just as TV's costs are high in operation and programming, so advertising costs and revenue are huge.

> Although television required development of new and costly advertising techniques, the growth of the TV advertising dollar has been spectacular from the outset. In 1946, no advertising was carried by the six television stations then existing. But despite the temporary FCC freeze on the processing of license applications in 1948, by January 1950 the number of stations had reached 98;

> there were more than 4 million receiving sets in American homes; and the volume of advertising exceeded $170 million. The following year, TV's advertising volume nearly doubled. By 1954 it topped $800 million, or 10 percent of the money spent in all media combined, and in 1955 it passed the $1 billion mark. In 1962 it was about $1.6 billion.
>
> Like the typical mass-circulation magazine and, to a lesser degree, the omnibus newspaper, radio and television are almost entirely dependent on the patronage of advertisers for survival.[77]

---

[77] Peterson, et al., Mass Media, 75.

We can readily appreciate the cost differential between radio and TV from the following figures.

> In March, 1951, the average cost for putting 60 seconds of nighttime radio "commercial" into 1,000 American homes was $2.11. For the same amount of commercial into the same number of homes for nighttime TV, 2.65. It will be seen that the differential in these nighttime figures, while appreciable, is not staggering. Look now at the average for daytime commercials: 60¢ for radio; $2.40 for TV! Not only that, but by network findings the average time-and-talent cost of a half-hour nighttime TV show on CBS or NBC was $38,884; the average time-and-talent cost of a half-hour nighttime radio show was $19,423.[78]

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[78] Max Wylie, Clear Channels (New York: Funk & Wagnells Co., 1955), 71.

The following table, taken from an NBC study, gives an indication of the relative advertising costs of three media. (Note: "cost per M persons" means cost per 1000 persons.)

TABLE 4.--Advertising costs of three media.

	Persons Reached	Total Cost	Cost Per M Persons
Average NBC-TV Half-hour evening program, 1951	8,031,000	$19,650	$2.45
Page, B & W, largest magazine	5,508,500	18,425	3.34
Largest newspapers in all 63 TV markets, 500 line ad	3,474,400	17,819	5.13

NBC boasts that in 1950 it was,

> delivering, at competitive dollar costs, greater audiences than either the biggest magazine, or the combination of the largest newspapers in all 63 TV markets.[79]

[79] NBC, 63-64.

In 1957, Harry McMahan noted that, "The average family tunes in more than 360 commercials a week."[80]

[80] McMahan, 23.

These facts show the tremendous impact of television on all magazines; we can probably multiply the effects on the family magazines, due to the various factors discussed in this chapter.

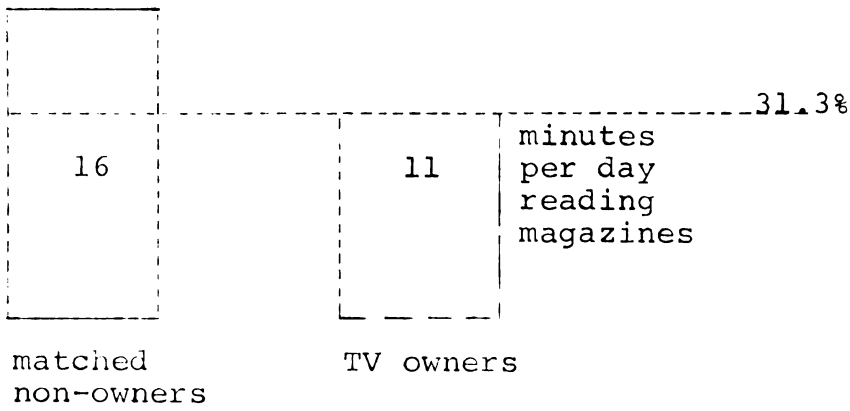

Figure 1.--Television cuts magazine reading 31.3%.*

*Source: NBC, 14.

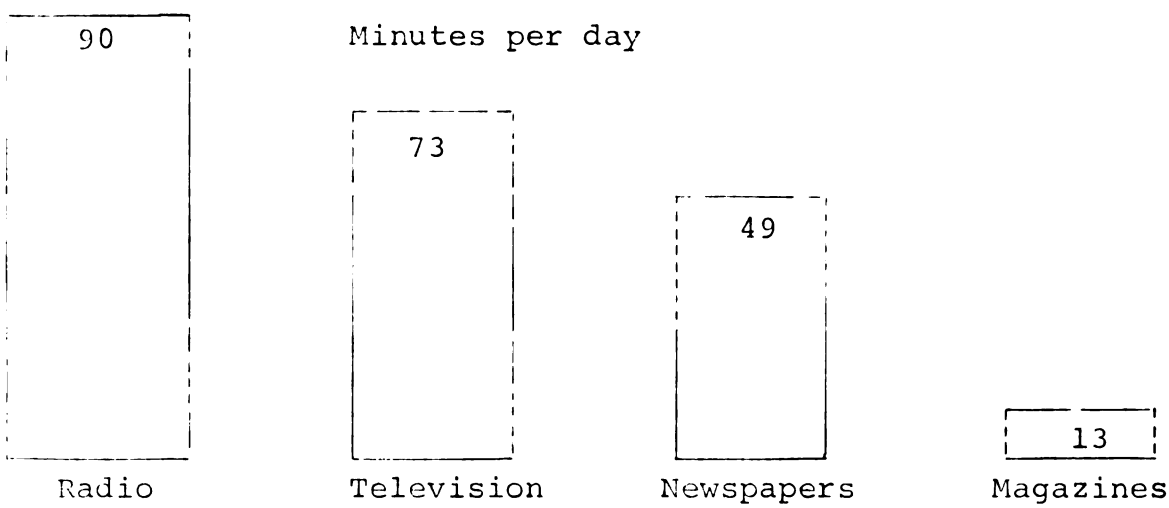

Figure 2.--Time spent with four media.*

*Source: NBC, 15.

TABLE 5.--Changes in advertising costs.*

	Rate Changes, 1945-1955	Cost of Reaching 1000 Households
Network Television (1950-55)	+196%	-31%
Network Radio	- 28	+10
Newspapers	+ 70	+28
Magazines	+ 96	+39

Source: McCann-Erickson, Inc.

*Bogart, 186.

We see here that as television's costs for reaching 1000 households dropped rapidly, magazines' increased equally rapidly. In five years the gap widened by 70%! And we must remember that these figures are for the entire magazine industry. Coupled with the figures included in the appendices to this study, these facts show family magazines' advertising advantages slipping away at a fast pace.[81]

[81]Although the family magazines were probably the hardest hit by television, the new medium poses a threat to other magazines as well. Note the following advertisement placed by THE READER'S DIGEST, the largest-circulation publication of its kind (following page).

By now, we can see that the family magazines were commodities in the advertising world. They happened to be remarkably successful commodities during most of their

The Ad Couple

Tv has sold a lot for you, so don't knock it. (We use it ourselves, on occasion.)

But the fact is, tv doesn't reach everybody with the same clout.

For instance, 16,000,000 of our readers.

They're light tv viewers. So the chances that they'll see your tv messages are pretty slim. And you'll be sorry you missed them. Because people who go light on the tube tend to be affluent and well educated. And heavy buyers.

To sew up the obvious holes in your tv reach, put part of your tv budget into a schedule in The Digest—that part you're now putting against more and more spots that reach fewer and fewer new people. (And while you're reaching all those fresh faces, you'll also reinforce your message with 26,000,000 Digest readers who do watch tv—an audience much bigger than that of the biggest regularly scheduled tv show.)

So move in with The Ad Couple. RD/tv. And sell happily ever after.

LIGHT VIEWERS REACHED	
Reader's Digest	16,201,000
Life	11,597,000
TV Guide	10,144,000

Reader's Digest
WORLD'S BEST SELLER

RD/tv: They go together.

Light viewers: less than 4 hours of prime time tv viewing weekly. (Simmons)

Figure 3.--Cooperative media advertisement.*

*Source: Newsweek, October 18, 1971, p. 15.

lives, and so long as they remained a popular form of entertainment for Americans, they remained a popular showcase for American advertisers. But as is the case with any of the popular media, the family magazines were largely dependent on the whims of Madison Avenue.

Perhaps the most obvious problem, in the eyes of the advertising agencies, was the family magazines' failure to maintain their circulation position in relation to American population. In the years 1960-1968, for example, the POST not only failed to increase its subscription lists substantially, but its per capita advantage declined. The same is true for LOOK, whose subscription lists were comparable in size to POST's. This would seem a typical symptom of any dying commodity, not a cause of death. But, as is the case with many illnesses, the symptoms themselves can become causes for further symptoms. Between 1960-1968 POST increased only .027 as much as U.S. population (584,343 compared to 41,080,000); the number of potential readers for each issue moved from 1:28.2 to 1:29.5.

These factors combined to make the family magazines less attractive to advertising agencies. With fewer advertisers, the magazines had less advertising revenue. Less advertising revenue meant less operating capital, which pointed the way to smaller production, particularly in a period of rising costs.

> As advertising pages slipped away, the POST became thinner--noticeable first only to the professionals, the media men in the advertising agencies. Then the drop began to snowball. Why? "We're a bunch of sheep," David Ogilvy, of Ogilvy, Benson and Mather, said candidly. "One agency leaves a magazine, we all wonder why and follow. The magazine thins again, and more of us leave. Suddenly there's nothing left. No one wants his copy in a thin book.
>
> "It's what is called the 'New York reflexive action,' found in people who go to Manhattan and think what people do and say there is indicative of the entire nation. Because they're from Denver or Dallas they have to be even more 'Manhattan' than the natives. They're like a flock of turkeys, running across the field after a bright attractive grasshopper, gobbling at the top of their voices and not thinking about whether what they're chasing is even good to eat. Everyone else is running and gobbling, so they must run and gobble, too, to prove they're real 'Manhattan.' The avant-garde on the cocktail party circuit says the JOURNAL and the POST are dated and unpopular, and Madison Avenue picks up the chant. The pressure is applied to the ad salesmen, the people who have the face-to-face contacts at the agencies. 'Why don't you brighten up your magazines and run more pictures, or more arty covers?' It's demoralizing to the salesmen, and they bring the stories back home. Because they are demoralized, they don't work as hard; they have a scapegoat--after all, they're trying to sell an 'outdated' magazine."[82]

---

[82]Joseph C. Goulden, The Curtis Caper (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1965), 95-96.

Smaller production means, ultimately, a smaller readership. Smaller readership makes any magazine less attractive to advertisers. The result is a downward spiral, demonstrating the interlocking of these economic factors. At the same time, operating costs soared. Not every magazine was hit as hard as the family magazines, however. NEWSWEEK

almost doubled in circulation, improving its ratio to potential readers from 1:138.1 to 1:94.5. The odds seemed to be stacked against the losers. And advertisers, naturally, were more interested in the lower cost-per-page rates of the smaller, more specialized magazines.

Business trends also hampered the family magazines' struggles to stay alive. Big business in America moved increasingly toward conglomerate structures. The effect of this move was to cut down the number of potential advertisers without diminishing greatly the number of products to be advertised.

> As a matter of fact, what was good for General Motors would soon leave the Post on the beach. Many of those forty advertisers that had backed Lorimer in 1914 were now divisions of General Motors. By the fifties, competition by producers in the mass market had noticeably ebbed, and as the tide of the distributive society went out, so did potential advertisers.[83]

---

[83]Mooney, 20.

In an attempt to change to a more profitable format, Martin Ackerman (last president of Curtis while POST lived) ordered mockups of what he called "A" issues--alternatives to those already slated for production. The "A" issues were an express attempt to re-attract the big advertisers, notably the auto makers. Issue number 12A, for example, carried 36 full-page ads as compared to 25 in the regular number 12. But these "A" issues remained in the pilot stage and failed to achieve the desired effect on

advertisers. At about the same time, the courtship of the auto makers by the family magazines was an extremely tenuous thing; it could not be counted on as a source of regular revenue.

American advertisers responded to these developments in the lives of the family magazines in the same way the economic man would respond to similar changes in the economic situation of any commodity. Costs were up; quantity and quality were down; effectiveness was inferior to other media. In their last years the family magazines were, frankly, not a very good buy for advertisers. It is an obvious fact of American economic life that something that is not a good buy does not last long in an open market.

The aim of this chapter has been to show the real impact that television had on the family magazines. In almost every aspect of advertising TV is superior, especially in relative costs and effectiveness. What this points to is the fact that popular media, as commodities, are controlled by the men who control the money in our society--not by the average consumer, as one would like to suppose. Certainly, the popular audience, taken as a whole, wields great influence in editorial policy. But the day-to-day decisions that ultimately shape the future of a popular medium are inextricably bound to the medium's

role as commodity. This chapter has examined this aspect of the family magazines as they were influenced by the chief outsiders, the advertisers. The next chapter will show the effects of business policies made by chief insiders, the magazine management and editorial boards.

III

CORPORATE DECISIONS

A major fact of life under the American capitalistic system is that the value of the dollar in actual purchasing power grows smaller every year. The 1971 Economic Report of the President shows the following figures in the table, "Implicit price deflators for gross national product, 1929-1970,": the differential between 1958 and 1970 in durable goods is nine points; the differential for the same years for non-durable goods is 27.3 points; for services it is 40.3 points. At the same time, the gross national product more than doubled in undeflated dollars.[84]

[84]Economic Report of the President Transmitted to the Congress February, 1971 Together with the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisors (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 200, 197.

The implication for the average consumer is fairly obvious: he is forced to spend more dollars in order to receive fewer goods and services.

This is especially true for the producers of goods and services. The costs of magazine production climbed rapidly during the same period, compounded by increased

corporate taxes, higher postal rates and growing demands of labor unions. In 1956, Wood noted that,

> Second-class postal rates, accorded newspapers and magazines by the Postal Act of 1879, have been increased by Congressional legislation; rates are now almost one-third higher than in 1951; and there is pressure, fought by the magazine publishers, for further increases. Subscription and single-copy prices of magazines and the rates charged for magazine advertising space have not increased in proportion to magazine publishing expenses or in ratio with the price advance of most other commodities. Magazine net profit, profit after taxes as a percentage of sales, stood at about 6.7 percent in the middle 1930s. This figure climbed during the war years, profitable years for magazines, to 8.3 percent in 1946. It has gradually declined since that time. Although a few publishers are earning more, magazine net profits averaged 2.8 percent in 1954.[85]

[85] James Playsted Wood, Magazines in the United States (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1956), 326.

Curtis figures, for example, followed this trend closely.

TABLE 6.--Curtis revenue: 1950-1960.*

Year	Revenue (millions)	Profits (millions)
1950	149.5	5.3
1951	153.8	4.8
1952	163.0	4.4
1953	174.7	4.8
1954	173.3	4.5
1955	179.8	4.0
1956	186.5	6.2
1957	202.6	6.2
1958	197.1	2.7
1959	243.0	3.9
1960	248.6	1.0

*Goulden, 98.

Moreover, the Postal Reorganization Act (Public Law 91-375), approved August 12, 1970 to take effect a year later, has increased rates still further. The only one of the family magazines included in this study to be affected by the latest increase is LOOK. Gardner Cowles, Editor in Chief, indicated a $6 million increase in mailing costs.

$10 MILLION IN LOSSES

Look Magazine Folds

Editor-in-chief Gardner Cowles put much of the blame on television.

NEW YORK — (UPI) — Look Magazine will cease publication Oct. 19 as a result of more than $10 million in losses in less than three years, it was announced Thursday.

The demise of the 34-year-old magazine **was** announced by Gardner Cowles, who founded Look with his brother John. Gardner Cowles is editor-in-chief and chairman of Cowles Communications Inc., publisher of Look.

Cowles placed much of the blame for Look's trouble on television's lure for advertising, which, he said, "cut deeply into our advertising volume." He also said Look faced a $8 million increase in mailing costs if a proposed 142 percent increase in postal rates is approved.

Referring to Look's chief rival, Cowles said the future of Life Magazine is "very, very good." He said, however, that the country "can only support one quality photo-journalism magazine"—leaving no room for **Look** as well as Life. Look subscribers will be offered Life, Time, Sports Illustrated, Fortune, Time-Life Books, American Home and Ladies Home Journal as substitutes for the unexpired portion of their subscriptions.

Look reached a peak circulation of 7.75 million in 1969 and voluntarily reduced this to 6.5 million last year to concentrate on 60 major metropolitan markets.

Figure 4.--Announcement of LOOK's death.*

*Source: Front page, Detroit Free Press, September 17, 1971.

Objectivity demands that we see the other side of the coin as well. First of all, we should note that there were no postal rate increases at all from 1934 through 1951, the years when the family magazines were rolling up great profits. This is despite the fact that the dollar became increasingly inflated during those years; that is to say, the magazines' mailing costs became lower each year in direct proportion to the amount of inflation. In fact the government, through failure to increase rates, was subsidizing the magazines. What this meant for the magazines was that they could afford to increase subscription lists in a proportion to advertising revenues far more than they could have had the rates increased as they should have.

At least as POST and COLLIER'S viewed it, large subscription lists were needed to compete effectively for advertisers. And more advertising, in turn, pointed the way to still greater numbers of subscribers. In other words, the constancy of postal rates allowed the magazines to set a far higher point of diminishing returns than they otherwise could have. This does not appear to have been a very intelligent business decision, as the increase in postal rates was inevitable, and the magazines knew it. All of the major publishers had lobbyists in Washington to combat the increase. Large subscription lists thus became liabilities instead of assets overnight, when the right decision on the point of diminishing returns some

years earlier could have prevented it. The magazines were spending money they should have saved in anticipation of the postal increases. The government's reasoning is explained in the following letter from Jerry L. Reynolds, Executive Assistant to the Postmaster General and Congressional Liaison Officer. It is included in the following pages in its entirety, as his letter makes the government's position especially clear . . . and the necessity of an authoritative statement here is obvious.

A major complaint of the remaining magazines is that the Federal government is, they say, subsidizing television through the granting of territorial franchises. An editorial in the October 2, 1971 issue of SATURDAY REVIEW, written on the occasion of LOOK's death, points this out. The editorial does a good job of explaining the problem faced by magazines that rely on subscriptions rather that newsstand sales. We should note, however, that the author is protesting the nature of the medium itself, not the rate increases. On his terms, magazine postage would have to be virtually free, to guarantee a competitive position for them. The point, it seems, is that postage is an attendant cost of magazine publishing, just as is paper; it is one of the things taken into consideration at the magazine's conception, and it ought not to be forgotten (see p. 95).

PHILIP A. HART
MICHIGAN

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE
JUDICIARY

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

November 12, 1971

Mr. Stephen C. Holder
317 North Clemens Ave.
Lansing, Michigan 48192

Dear Mr. Holder:

Enclosed is the reply to my inquiry in your behalf, which I have just received and which I hope will be of assistance to you.

If you have any questions, or if there is further inquiry I can make, be sure to let me know.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Philip A. Hart

Philip A. Hart

Enclosure

Figure 5.--Letter from Senator Hart.

CHARLES E. CHAMBERLAIN
SIXTH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE
WAYS AND MEANS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 2, 1971

Mr. Stephen C. Holder
Department of English
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Mr. Holder:

The enclosed letter has been received from the U. S. Postal Service in response to my inquiry, and it is hoped that this will be of some help in your doctoral study.

I am also sending a copy of the Postal Reorganization Act, Public Law 91-375, and if you feel I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to let me know.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Charles E. Chamberlain

CEC:jam
Enclosures

Figure 6.--Letter from Representative Chamberlain.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
TO THE POSTMASTER GENERAL
Washington, DC 20260

November 1, 1971

Dear Congressman Chamberlain:

This is in response to your letter of October 28, 1971 in behalf of Mr. Stephen C. Holder concerning proposed second-class postage rates.

We realize that our proposal to the Postal Rate Commission calls for a very substantial increase in postage rates for second-class matter. Basically, this is due to the fact that Congress, in enacting the Postal Reorganization Act, required that second-class mail be put on a rate basis comparable to that for other classes of mail, thus discontinuing a preferred and, in effect, subsidized treatment for second class which has existed for many years.

However, Congress also provided for a phasing of the increase in rates over a five-year period for regular second-class publications with over 5,000 copies mailed outside the county of publication, and over a ten-year period for publications with circulation less than 5,000 out of county -- the preference pertains to the minimum rate -- and for those mailed within the county. This means that publications will not be faced with a "sudden" increase to the full rates, but rather will have periods of five and ten years in which to adjust.

Our cost analysis results in a determination of the costs which are attributable to particular classes of mail and services. By definition, "attributable costs" are those costs which vary with volume in a particular class, or which are fixed but specifically related to a single class or subclass. The Postal Reorganization Act requires that each class or subclass of mail pay (as a minimum) those costs attributable to such subclass and that in addition all except mailings by nonprofit organizations, in-county mailings, and certain other categories should be assigned a reasonable portion of the institutional costs of the system. We estimate that, in fiscal 1972, revenues from existing rates would cover only 57 percent of the

Figure 7.--Letter from Executive Assistant to the Postmaster.

costs attributable to regular-rate second-class mail and 36 percent for mailings within the county of publication. It followed, therefore, that substantial increases were necessary to cover the mandatory minimum prescribed in the law.

In addition to the substantial increase required to meet the minimum, we were obliged to increase rates further in order to make a "reasonable assignment of institutional costs." We met this requirement by prescribing rates which would cover 138 percent of attributable costs for second-class mail. In consideration of the large impact which we recognized would be felt by second-class users, this coverage is substantially smaller than that for other classes of mail. For example, we are proposing rates which would produce coverages of attributable costs as follows: first class, 199 percent; bulk-rate third class, 208 percent; and zone-rated fourth class, 163 percent. However, the revenues from the proposed rates for second-class within-county publications will not exceed the costs attributable to this service, as provided by statute. Thus, the cost coverage for these publications will not exceed 100 percent.

We are well aware of the impact that our proposal will have on publications but believe nevertheless that it is appropriate and necessary. From the beginning of consideration of postal reform, we consistently told Congress and the public that subsidies to mail users were a matter of public policy. We said we would accept any decisions Congress wished to make with respect to subsidies if Congress appropriated money to reimburse us for the revenue foregone as a result of such subsidies. Congress determined to maintain subsidies for certain classes of mail users (notably nonprofit and in-county users) and declined to include others, particularly regular second-class publications mailed outside the county. We still have no objection if Congress wishes to prescribe a subsidy for publications, but under the existing Postal Reorganization Act, we have no choice but to prescribe normal postage rates. In doing so, we have, in our opinion, reduced to a minimum the impact which must be absorbed by the publications.

The Postal Rate Commission has concluded hearings on our rate proposal. Users of our second-class service were represented by many publishing firms and associations of publishers.

Enclosed is the postage increases for second-class mail for the past twenty years. The selected indexes show an increase of 205 % over the base year of 1951. Mr. Holder may be interested to note that there were no increases between 1934 and 1952.

We trust this information will be helpful in replying to your constituent. If there is any further information you desire, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards.

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Reynolds
Congressional Liaison Officer

Honorable Charles E. Chamberlain
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

TABLE 7.--Second-class mail--regular-rate publications,[a] postal rate history.

Effective Date		Non-Advertising Portion	Advertising Portion							Minimum Rates		
			Zones							Regular	Less than 5,000 Copies per Issue	5% or less Advertising
			1 & 2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
		cents per pound										
Rates effective in 1926		1.5	2	3	6	6	6	9	8	---	---	---
July 1, 1928		1.5	1.5	2	3	4	5	6	7	[b]	---	---
July 1, 1932		1.5	2	3	5	6	7	9	10	[b]	---	---
July 1, 1934[c]		1.5	1.5	2	3	4	5	6	7	[b]	---	---
April 1, 1952[d]		1.65	1.65	2.2	3.3	4.4	5.5	6.6	7.7	0.125¢ per copy	---	---
April 1, 1953[d]	[e]	1.8	1.8	2.4	3.6	4.8	6.0	7.2	8.4	0.125¢ per copy	---	---
April 1, 1954[d]		1.95	1.95	2.6	3.9	5.2	6.5	7.8	9.1	0.125¢ per copy	---	---
January 1, 1959[d]		2.1	2.2	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.7	9.2	11.0	0.25¢ per copy	---	---
January 1, 1960[d]	[e]	2.3	2.6	3.5	5.2	7.0	8.7	11.0	12.5	0.375¢ per copy	---	---
January 1, 1961[d]		2.5	3.0	4.0	6.0	8.0	10.0	12.0	14.0	0.5¢ per copy	---	---
January 7, 1963[f]		2.6	3.4	4.4	6.4	8.4	10.4	12.0	14.0	0.6¢ per piece	0.5¢ per piece	0.55¢ per piece
January 1, 1964[f]	[e]	2.7	3.8	4.8	6.8	8.8	10.8	12.0	14.0	0.8¢ per piece	0.5¢ per piece	0.65¢ per piece
January 1, 1965[f]		2.8	4.2	5.2	7.2	9.2	11.2	12.0	14.0	1.0¢ per piece	0.5¢ per piece	0.75¢ per piece
January 7, 1968[f]		3.0	4.6[g]	5.7	7.8	9.9	12.0	12.8	15.0	1.1¢ per piece	0.6¢ per piece	---
January 1, 1969[f]	[e]	3.2	4.9[g]	6.0	8.3	10.5	12.8	13.7	16.0	1.2¢ per piece	0.7¢ per piece	---
January 1, 1970[f]		3.4	5.2[g]	6.4	8.8	11.1	13.6	14.5	17.0	1.3¢ per piece	0.8% per piece	---

[a] All publications except preferred-rate publications mailed for delivery outside county of publication. See footnotes d and f for rates applicable to classroom publications.

[b] Additional postage at the pound rate for each 16 individually addressed copies or fraction thereof in excess of 32 copies to the pound.

[c] Authority granted by Act of June 16, 1932.

[d] Publications for use in classrooms retained the July 1, 1934 rates with a minimum of 0.125 cents per copy.

[e] Rate increases phased over the period indicated.

[f] Classroom publications pay 60 percent of the applicable pound or minimum per piece rate.

[g] The postage rate retained at 4.2¢ per pound on publications devoted to promoting the science of agriculture.

TABLE 8.--Second-class mail, regular rate outside county, selected indexes.

Fiscal Year	Rate Index[1] 1951 = 100	Rate Index[2] 1951 = 100	Rate Index[2] 1951 = 100	Rate Index[2] 1951 = 100
1951	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
52	102.8	106.8	107.1	102.4
53	113.6	119.1	106.1	104.3
54	123.4	127.8	103.5	105.0
1955	130.8	138.7	106.6	107.6
56	130.8	144.7	105.8	111.7
57	130.8	145.8	106.5	112.4
58	130.8	141.1	111.2	110.5
59	139.9	148.2	110.7	110.8
1960	160.8	179.8	116.1	119.5
61	184.1	199.7	122.5	118.5
62	195.9	209.0	124.2	118.5
63	203.7	212.8	125.1	116.8
64	221.3	235.1	128.4	120.8
1965	239.1	258.6	126.7	125.2
66	247.3	275.2	126.3	127.2
67	247.3	283.9	128.8	131.1
68	257.9	298.1	134.1	133.2
69	277.5	332.4	137.9	137.1
1970	295.9	350.1	139.3	137.0
Full effect PL 90-206	305.2			
Proposed	742.7			

[1]Based on Fiscal Year 1970 volume distribution.

[2]Based on POD reported data.

Even television failed to cut into magazine readership; indeed, magazine circulation continued to expand during the period of TV's most explosive growth. What hurt magazines was the mammoth competitive advantage enjoyed by television in using the air as a free delivery system. Magazines had to process and transmit their message via print, paper, and the mails. Consequently, television could charge advertisers substantially less than magazines to reach prospective customers.

The most valuable part of any television station is the franchise itself, represented by the allocation of a channel. The value of buildings and fixed equipment is minor alongside the value of the franchise. The theory under which the government allocates channels is that the air belongs to the American people and that its use should be regulated. The allocation of a channel is virtually cost free. Once having received a channel, however, the recipient is able to sell that same asset later for many millions of dollars. The channel does not revert in ownership to the American people, despite the fact that the original allocation is made in their name. . . .

A TV station can increase its audience, say, from three million to six million without increasing the cost of reaching each additional viewer. When a magazine increases its audience, however, it has to meet additional costs in printing, paper, and postage. Of all these costs, postage now represents perhaps the strongest single negative factor.

First, some history. The framers of the U.S. government believed that an open society required the fullest possible circulation of ideas and information. They set up a special category of mail service to encourage the dissemination of such ideas and information. Without such encouragement, it is doubtful whether many journals would have been started or, once started, could have maintained themselves. In recent years, however, the original philosophy has been eroding. Increases in postal costs have not only been rising but are multiplying. Prodigious hikes in postal rates were the strongest single reason cited by the owners of LOOK magazine for their decision to discontinue publication.

> What makes the postal increases all the more difficult to comprehend or justify is the fact that President Nixon has been decrying the irresponsibility of those who have been pressing for higher wages and prices. Yet, the federal government itself has decreed a 150 per cent increase in magazine postal costs over the next four years. For the national economy as a whole, the average annual rate of inflation has been between 5 and 6 per cent in recent years.
>
> How will magazines neet this quadrupling of postal costs during the next four years? We have no way of knowing. Magazines like PLAYBOY, with their predominantly newsstand circulation, will have little difficulty in surviving. But most magazines reach only a small fraction of their readers through newsstands. . . .
>
> For the big magazines--big both in circulation and physical format--the proportionate cost of postage is higher than for periodicals in the category of SR. The reason for this is that the U.S. Postal Service charges according to weight. If the projected schedule of postal increases of 150 percent over the next four years is carried out, it is more than likely that magazine casualties will mount. The large magazines, seriously disadvantaged as they are competitively by the advertising pricing of television, will be under greater pressure than the most specialized journals. But even the smaller magazines, most of which have only negligible newsstand circulation, may not be able to live with the steep postal increases.[86]

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[86]SATURDAY REVIEW, October 2, 1971, 26-28.

Other kinds of business decisions brought about the deaths of the family magazines. Curtis, for example, made disastrous decisions about what to do with earnings. The company elected to expand vertically, rather than horizontally. Over the years, the company acquired gigantic printing presses, thousands of acres of timberland, a paper making plant, a circulation company, etc. At the

time, each of these acquisitions seemed a good thing; Curtis was to learn differently. In the words of one of the last presidents of Curtis, Matthew "Joe" Culligan, it became a case of "the tail wagging the dog." Everything depended on large readership lists for the magazines (POST, LADIES HOME JOURNAL, HOLIDAY, JACK AND JILL), even when it would have been expedient and sensible to cut back on the size of the lists. Cutting back would have meant layoffs in each of the divisions, as less paper, printing, etc. were required. It became uneconomical to produce the magazines, but even more uneconomical not to produce them. The nature of the corporate structure was against any kind of ready solution.

Many of the mistakes seem to have been made under Robert MacNeal, president of Curtis from 1950 to 1962. He was a man who had worked his way up through the various divisions in Horatio Alger fashion, a gentle man, well-loved throughout the company. But he was not able to make the kinds of decisions needed, a fact that should have become evident when he was part of the decision-making process in the years before he became president.

> The National Broadcasting Company operated both a Red and a Blue Network until 1941 when by a ruling of the Federal Communications Commission it was forced to divest itself of part of its operation. It offered the Blue Network to The Curtis Publishing Company.
>
> Curtis refused the NBC offer, and the Blue Network was sold to Edward J. Noble in 1943 for $8,000,000 and became the American Broadcasting

> Company, Inc. Later Curtis could have purchased the Columbia Broadcasting System for about $10,000,000. It resisted the temptation without difficulty.[87]

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[87]James Playsted Wood, The Curtis Magazines (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1971), 164.

> At the end of the Second World War, when paper shortages lessened and the POST and JOURNAL started their great surges in circulation and advertising under Ben Hibbs and Bruce and Beatrice Gould, Curtis had to divert its surplus into plant expansion, into banks of presses capable of grinding out millions of copies of the magazines weekly. These were paid for out of profits--profits that under another philosophy of management could have been used for expansion into different fields.[88]

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[88]Goulden, 77.

> Bremier then made a still more confidential report to the Curtis board of directors, presenting the startling highlights of the survey and, in view of the evidence, urging that Curtis get into the new and promising field (TV) quickly. Though he had agreed to conduct of the survey, Walter Fuller just sat and listened. He made no comment, offered no suggestions, and provided no support for the recommendation. Some of the other board members asked polite questions.
>
> Then the Curtis board shook its communal head and repeated its standard declaration. "We're in the publication business."[89]

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[89]Wood, The Curtis Magazines, 206.

Another example of the Curtis entrapment can be seen in the following report prepared for Culligan by a special "Study Group" in August-September, 1962. Although it is fairly lengthy, the insights it offers about corporate structure are especially valuable.

Paper is to magazines what earth is to farming, what film is to photography. Paper is the basic ingredient on which a magazine is created, the vehicle on which printed words and pictures ride.

It is also the most expensive single cost in the making of a publication. Even in the ad-lean year of 1961, Curtis Publishing spent $43 million for the paper that went into POST, JOURNAL, AMERICAN HOME, HOLIDAY, and JACK AND JILL. In 1962, despite a continued thinness of books, Curtis will consume almost 190,000 tons of paper. Each copy of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST costs 17 cents to make and deliver. Out of every 17 cents the cost for paper alone is 9 cents, more than one-half the total. In the decade between 1950 and 1960 costs of magazine paper rose about 25 percent.

The reverse was true just after World War II. Boom was the byword in magazines, as in everything else. Publishers had been stockpiling ideas and ad revenues for expansion. But there was a shortage of the basic ingredient--paper. Many an ad never got printed only because the publisher did not have the material to put it on; the paper industry could not meet demand, and because paper, machinery, and capacity, like presses, have to be planned for years in advance, there was no immediate remedy for the ad-rich, paper-poor publishing business. This time of shortage, in part, explains the over-capacity of today. In 1950 Curtis, the integrated giant, became even bigger with the full acquisition of its own paper company.

The biggest reason for calling Curtis "captive" is that we have to buy the magazine paper New York and Penn would make, and what New York and Penn can make is: (1)more paper than we can consume and (2)a quality of paper inferior to the product of other manufacturers.

Curtis has been unable, therefore, to take advantage of the buyer's market in paper. Even though we are one of the biggest paper users in the United States, we cannot lean on the lever of competitive bidding in order to get the best price for the paper we need. Our mill continues to turn out its rolls and we continue to run with them.

More important to the magazines, the paper we do buy is not the paper we would buy if outside sources were available to us. Since 1950, and the acquisition of New York and Penn, there has been a pronounced change in magazine papers from uncoated "free sheet" papers to coated "ground wood" stock.

Curtis cannot order ground wood because New York and Penn could not make it. The president of New York and Penn admits that cost of power, mill location, and impracticality of conversion makes ground wood manufacture impossible for his company. So New York and Penn continues to turn out free sheets.

There is one more area in which our subsidiary limps along with subpar quality. A valid and industry-wide measure of paper performance is the "web break" percentage. A web break is the tearing of a roll of paper as it passes through the printing press. Such breaks, of course, produce costly "down time" on the presses, increase paper consumption and delay in printing of the magazine. As a result, manufacturing costs rise.

In 1945, still hungry, Curtis bought into New York and Penn. A new machine was built at Lock Haven to make magazine papers for Curtis, and three other Lock Haven paper machines were "dressed," reengineered so that the rolls produced would best fit the Curtis presses.

It appeared logical that complete control would give us full access to the output of the mills (we then thought we could use as much paper as could be produced). The other owners, because of a market business that was diminishing in ratio to the increase of Curtis' magazine appetite, were happy enough to give us full ownership.

From a capital outlay standpoint, Curtis worked a fine deal. New York and Penn increased its bank loan from 6.3 million to 20 million, and, with a small amount of additional capital, bought up all the New York and Penn stock not then held by Curtis. Without acquiring any more shares than the number we held as 48 1/2 percent owners, Curtis became the sole shareholder and, hence, full owner of New York and Penn.

Further, the acquisition fit Curtis tradition perfectly. It seemed only right and proper for the world's largest integrated publisher to own its own paper mill, particularly since owning the mill also meant owning some timberlands from which the paper would eventually be made. And the mills were a ready repository for our paper waste--they could churn it back into pulp. From stump to bindery, a Curtis magazine is made of Curtis materials--only the ink on the pages is purchased from an outside source, and that ommission, admits past management is one that had often been considered for correction.

> Curtis failed to see the coming need for all-coated stock in the early 1950s; had the parent been more foresighted in time of prosperity, then all of New York and Penn's 680-line magazine papers could be coated today.
>
> A simple shutdown would appear to solve any overcapacity problems. One way to shut down would be to reduce the operation from a seven-day cycle to a five day cycle, have four weeks of holiday shutdown during the year. Indeed, if all the mills closed two days each week, the magazine papers produced would drop about 30 percent to 130,000 tons per year. But such a shutdown would raise the price of paper that was produced; New York and Penn, in fact, estimates that such a curtailment would raise the price by $23 per ton, making its product exorbitant when compared in price to outside papers. It is not economical or practical to shut off paper machines two days a week--maintenance costs soar, production speeds drop, quality suffers.
>
> As an alternative, we considered leaving one or two mills on a seven-day operation, closing the remaining mill (or mills) altogether.
>
> The mills are unionized. Under the present distress in the communities of Lock Haven and Johnsonburg, it is a sure bet that the shutdown of one mill, or a drastic reduction in head count because of a shortened work week, would lead us into new labor troubles.[90]

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[90]Culligan, 75-77. We should note here that Curtis was harder hit by the effects of this kind of expansion than were Crowell-Collier and Cowles . . . as they both entered horizontal agreements in radio, etc.

Many of the problems within corporate structure faced by Curtis and Crowell-Collier were very similar, however. The magazines were losing money; the logical thing to do would have been to cease publication. But ceasing publication of the magazines meant closing the other divisions as well. Another option was to sell one of the other divisions--but selling a division that was making

money for the entire corporation did not make sense. The battles of the board rooms are legendary. They are the subject of at least two novels: Theodore H. White's View from the Fortieth Floor, which deals primarily with COLLIER'S and its death; and Clay Blair, Jr.'s The Board Room, which tries to justify his attempted coup at Curtis. The novels are very similar in nature, in style, chapter titles and specific scenes.

The stories of the corporate battles and shifts in journalistic strategy are remarkably similar. There seems to be no real need to detail all of the struggles of all of the magazines; the important thing is to note the consequences of corporate chaos and lack of direction. The following pages offer a brief account of the last days of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST as an example.

POST did well in the 1950s, as did almost every company in America. The reasonably settled years after the Second World War, the demand for consumer goods that were unavailable in the 1940s, and the rapidly expanding economy all contributed to make the 50's a boom period. Auto makers and television set producers, as well as almost all producers of durable goods, set record after record in both production and sales. The American public was spending money and advertising was much in demand. 1959 was a banner year for POST:

> In 1959 the POST reported its highest ad revenue in history: $97,614,442. Curtis owned the land on which the trees grew, owned the mills to make the pump, owned the largest single printing plant in the world, owned the trucks and leased the trains to run across the country, and owned the circulation company which distributed 110 magazines, including LOOK and the ATLANTIC, besides the POST. The assets of Curtis floated like an iceberg beneath its magnificent public properties: THE POST, LADIES HOME JOURNAL, HOLIDAY and AMERICAN HOME. Insiders would later say that Curtis had $50 million in cash and $100 million in securities of other corporations.[91]

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[91]Mooney, 74.

POST seemed to be sailing into a clear horizon.

But the tide turned suddenly:

> From 1960 to 1963 cash was pouring out of a stricken company. Finally alarmed enough to stop the payments of preferred dividends, the Curtis board of directors dawdled into action. None of them were magazine men. None were editors, or publishers, or advertising specialists. They did realize belatedly that in the fifties the young talent in journalism had been sucked up by Time, Inc., the ad agencies and the networks, and that now perhaps they needed to recruit.[92]

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[92]Mooney, 74.

Quite naturally, the preferred shareholders became alarmed. For years they had been receiving regular dividends from what they were confident was a healthy company. In their alarm, they hired legal representation to handle top level personnel alterations.

> Milton Gould, an Iago of a lawyer who specializes in boardroom troubles, joined the board to represent preferred shareholders squawking for their dues. In turn, Gould invited two men to meet him

> one day in a room at Brown Brothers, Harriman in Philadelphia. When they arrived to keep their appointment, Gould was not there, he "had been delayed." So Clay Blair, Jr. and Matthew J. ("Call me Joe") Culligan introduced themselves.
>
> It turned out that both men believed they were to be president of Curtis. It is a clue to Gould's genius that he thought by leaving them alone in a Philadelphia boardroom, they might work it out.
>
> They never did. Culligan was tapped as president and Blair as editor in chief, and Blair immediately went to work to depose his rival.[93]

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[93]Mooney, 74.

And the plot thickened.

Blair was, of course, operating with the feeling that he had been cheated. This was especially true, as he felt he had a genuine mission at Curtis. During the following weeks he prepared with seventeen others (editors and publishing executives) a book of charges against Culligan. Blair felt that most of the members of the board of directors were corrupt, venal and senile. He felt that "only by displacing Culligan as president could a conspiracy of the commercial interests that were bleeding Curtis to death be replaced. 'Why?' answered Blair: 'Because God wants me to save THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.'"[94]

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[94]Mooney, 74.

Unfortunately for Blair, his plan backfired. When news of his book of charges leaked out, both he and Culligan were forced to leave Curtis.

In retrospect, Culligan saw the things that he should have done to insure his role at Curtis.

> I reached my peak at Curtis in December 1963, but I lacked the experience and wisdom to capitalize on it. At that point in time, with the backing of Serge Semenenko, I was in virtual control of Curtis. I should have forced the Curtis-Bok family to sell its stock to a syndicate organized by me, or to give me voting control of that stock, but I didn't.
>
> I should have asked Linton, Franklin, and Fuller to resign from the Curtis Board to open opportunities for me to attract younger, trusted, talented new directors, like Harry C. Mills, whom I brought in as a director, but I didn't. I should have retired Clifford because of his troublemaking with the editors and his intransigence, but I didn't. I should have dissolved the position of editor-in-chief of all Curtis magazines and restricted Blair to editing the POST, but I didn't. I should have realized that to Cary Bok and the Philadelphia directors I was an outsider, but I didn't.[95]

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[95]Culligan, 113.

With both Blair and Culligan out of the picture, John Clifford, a former NBC vice president, was named president of Curtis. Immediately, he began to "clean house," especially in the editorial departments where his power had hitherto been restricted by Culligan.

> His first move was to fire some subeditors of the POST on the grounds they were "Blair" men. He had the NBC trained cnarm to give them five minutes to get off the floor. As the first men called good-bye to their fellow editors, the staff drifted up the hall to the offices of Emerson. They found that Emerson, now acting editor, had resigned after insisting that only the editor of the POST could hire or fire editors or writers.

But when Clifford threw away this staff he had no immediate replacements in mind. And, especially, he had no one to replace Emerson. After a fevered search, he was forced to turn back to Emerson, making him the final editor of the POST in November, 1964.[96]

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[96]For a discussion of Clifford's personnel policies, see Culligan, 108.

Clifford also attempted to streamline the conglomerate structure of Curtis by ridding it of operations that seemed extraneous.

> President Clifford bought a company plane and zoomed here and there with his good friend Miss Gloria Swett, who was appointed the company's secretary, personnel director, public relations chief, and was the operating head of the law department. Clifford sold the Timmins copper for cash, then a paper mill, and at the very end was trying to sell anything . . . but he didn't know how.[97]

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[97]Mooney, 75.

During the years he spent at Curtis, Clifford seems to have done much more harm than good. His high-powered approach did not stop the magazine's decline during what were probably the last days for doing so.

> By March of 1968, Curtis couldn't pay $10 million to the First National Bank of Boston, and two extraordinary suitors arrived to bid for the remains. The editors themselves had raised $50 million, $10 million of it in cash. Milton Gould, director for the preferred had a friend in one

> Martin S. Ackerman, called in the trade "Marty the Mortician."[98]

---

[98]Mooney, 76.

Ackerman was president of a photo-processing company called Perfect Film and Chemical, and he brought with him $5 million on condition that he could be president of Curtis. He also brought with him a plan for the salvation of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST:

> "Okay, here's the deal. We get out of the numbers game with LIFE and LOOK . . . we're not getting anywhere that way, and it's losing us money . . . and we cut back the POST from six point eight million to three million, and we make it a high class magazine for a class audience. Not a radical change, but EVOLUTIONARY. Concentrate on the audience we want to reach . . . maybe ninety percent in Nielsen A and B counties.[99]

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[99]Otto Friedrich, Decline and Fall (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), 354.

In effect, he wanted to create an elitist magazine, much like the NEW YORKER or the SATURDAY REVIEW, with glossy covers, sophisticated cartoons, full-page advertisements for major luxury appliances. Ackerman envisioned entire issues of POST devoted to single subjects related to current issues. That kind of magazine would have been the direct antithesis of all the POST had come to mean over the years. About all it would have retained of traditional POST features would have been Ben Franklin's picture on

on the masthead . . . and that probably because Ackerman had gone to Ben Franklin High School.

Ackerman also had a plan for modernizing the Curtis corporate structure. He intended to divide Curtis in three parts: circulation, publishing, and printing plant and paper mill. Preferred shareholders were to be given only the last of these three. Then, as each of the three became profitable, it would be merged into Ackerman's own company, Perfect Film and Chemical.[100]

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[100]Friedrich, 97.

Much after the style of George Horace Lorimer, Ackerman intended to run Curtis himself. He took all important editorial decisions upon his own shoulders, although he had little background in journalism. He fired much of the editorial staff and advertising staff. His policies alienated many of those who remained with the company.

Ackerman's changes, however, did not seem to be working.

> All in all, the company was still losing millions of dollars. And so Ackerman in his town house began to revert to what he had been before he ever came to Curtis, a financier, a maneuverer of stocks and corporations, an expert at mergers and acquisitions, a banker and millionaire.
>
> The Ackerman empire at this point was a curious collection of companies, still largely unintegrated and, to use a clumsy word, unrationalized. At the center, of course, stood the Perfect Film and Chemical Corporation. Its basic business was processing film, but with the help of its various subsidiaries, it also sold vitamins, pens, camera

> flashbulbs and dress patterns. Then with its apparently limitless supply of Perfect Film stocks and bonds (the stocks that Ackerman had bought at $4 rose to a peak of $88 that June), it had bought a magazine circulation company, two film studios, and a number of publishing enterprises. As a publisher, the empire controlled Curtis, with its four remaining magazines; Popular Library, a paperback publishing firm; and Magazine Management, Inc., a collection of two-dozen pulp magazines and comics. The first and biggest of these three had not really been acquired yet, however. Perfect Film had invested virtually nothing in the Curtis shares that Ackerman repeatedly called "worthless" . . . preferring instead to take over Curtis's bank loans, at a profit to itself and Curtis's management. Obviously, the rationalization and reorganization of this conglomerate depended on what could be done with Curtis. But Ackerman did not want to limit himself to magazines, any more than he wanted to limit himself to film-processing. He wanted to move forward into books and movies, and for that, he needed a well-organized company from which to operate.[101]

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[101]Friedrich, 114.

His goals were widespread indeed. And, if his holdings seemed "unrationalized," his plans were something even stranger.

> In October, he said he wanted to start a joint venture with some bok publisher to develop POST articles into a series of SATURDAY EVENING POST books. I myself (Friedrich) spent a considerable amount of time in developing this plan. In November, he talked of buying Ed Downe's newspaper supplement, FAMILY WEEKLY, or, if he couldn't get that, some other Sunday supplement. He also wanted to buy a group of movie theaters in New Orleans. That same month, he said he wanted to buy a southern newspaper chain, which he said would cost "A couple of million" but was making a profit. "Maybe we ought to go into newspapers," he said. "Who've we got who knows about newspapers?" And in December, he said,

> "What I'd like to buy is Harcourt, Brace. I think they're the Tiffany's of book publishing."
>
> I suspected that there was no coherent plan behind these periodic confidences.[102]

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[102]Friedrich, 455.

What we have seen here is an example of what chaotic management conditions can do to a magazine. Again, business considerations are of crucial significance for the popular media.

We need also to place the family magazines in terms of what Alvin Toffler calls the "economics of impermanence." In contrast with the other media, magazines are durable goods. Certainly, they are far more tangible than the newspaper format, both in physical characteristics and in terms of contents. Moreover, magazines grew up when the American society was still "permanence-oriented." According to Toffler,

> In the past, permanence was the ideal. Whether engaged in handcrafting a pair of boots or in constructing a cathedral, all man's creative and productive energies went toward maximizing the durability of the product. Man built to last. He had to. As long as the society around him was relatively unchanging each object had clearly defined functions, and economic logic dictated the policy of permanence.[103]

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[103]Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), 57.

While the durability of magazines is of great utility for the historian, as mentioned earlier, we should remember

that every issue of a magazine makes obsolete the issue that went before. This applies to all aspects of the magazine except, perhaps, fiction. But the decline of the percentage of magazine fiction is a matter of fact. The other aspects: articles, humor, advertising, etc. are all dated by the cover of the magazine. In short, magazines have become throw-away commodities in American society.

The impact of television is obvious.

> The ocean of man-made physical objects that surrounds us is set within a larger ocean of natural objects. But increasingly, it is the technologically produced environment that matters for the individual. (The) number is expanding with explosive force, both absolutely and relative to the natural environment. This will be even more true in super industrial society than it is today.[104]

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[104]Toffler, 51-52.

Why, then, didn't LIFE magazine go the same way as the other family oriented magazines? The answer lies in the inherent difference between LIFE and the others. LIFE is meant to be read quickly, to be thrown away.

> MAG (Magazine Audience Group) checked to see just where magazines went, and who read them. LIFE immediately was happy because, as a quickly read picture magazine, it had a high "pass-on factor," claiming up to twelve or thirteen readers per copy. A man in a barbershop could go through an entire issue of LIFE in the same time it took him to read a POST short story. The text magazines--POST and COLLIER'S--were retained longer, and

> hence circulated less, because they took longer to digest.[105]

[105] Goulden, 87.

This "pass-on factor" appealed greatly to advertisers, who were aware that magazines quickly become obsolete. This is the real heart of the Luce threat to the other magazines. We should remember here, as noted earlier, that Luce executives were business and advertising men . . . not the editorial people staffing the other magazines. The following figures show what a difference that helped make.

TABLE 9.--Curtis and Time-Life gross advertising revenues, 1936-1942.*

Year	Curtis Gross ad revenues	Time-Life Gross ad revenues
1936	36,316,597	9,301,508
1937	36,394,532	14,927,492
1938	30,869,705	14,480,497
1939	33,485,338	20,093,012
1940	36,659,454	27,660,546
1941	39,335,594	35,235,449
1942	35,438,845	39,624,927

*Goulden, 84.

> Once in the lead, Time-Life stepped away vigorously. In 1947 it had a $10 million lead in revenue, $103 million to $93 million, In 1951, Curtis lagged even farther, $126 million to $102 million. By 1955, Time-Life's margin was $51 million--$168 million to $117 million.

> LOOK magazine (born 1937) started more slowly than LIFE: initially printed by rotogravure on cheap paper, it had trouble finding a reason for existence for several years. But as LOOK matured, the content grew more meaningful, with in-depth treatment of important subjects (mental health, redevelopment of urban areas) as well as entertainment. In 1944 LOOK had $5.6 million in advertising revenue; the SATURDAY EVENING POST, $31.6 million. In 1964, LOOK had $75 million, the POST, $58 million.
>
> What enabled the newcomers to surpass the leader? For one thing, the Gray Lady of Independence Square kept tangling her feet in her petticoats, from the advertising man's standpoint. A former Curtis advertising executive says, "Our management came up through the production side. The people at Time-Life had advertising backgrounds. Our men were quite capable in their fields, but they thought in terms of printing magazines cheaply, and how to save a dime here and a dime there. LIFE, meanwhile, was spearheading this concept of total audience reach. When LIFE sold Madison Avenue on it, the script was finished, it was just a matter of the string eventually running out on the POST."[107]

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[107] Goulden, 84-85.

According to one of the last Curtis presidents, the problem may have begun as early as the days of George Horace Lorimer.

> Lorimer seems to have made a major mistake, one of ommission. Either he was disdainful of the pictorial approach espoused by LIFE, or he simply did not care to research the changing pattern of reading in the United States. He appears not to have anticipated the effect of television as well, as did all Curtis management. He certainly did not anticipate its effect on reading [sic]. LIFE apparently did, and produced a magazine that could be looked at quickly and pleasurably.[108]

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[108] Culligan, 53-54.

What this means is that the family magazine format became obsolete in terms of meeting the needs of readers and advertisers because of its durable nature.

Curtis Publishing Company recognized this fact too late. The following recommendations, presented by a special "Study Group" in September, 1962, all point toward either greater durability or lesser durability.

(1) That we begin publishing hardback trade books (Not paperbacks) [sic]
(2) That any books growing out of Curtis material return earnings to Curtis, not to individual editors.
(3) That we actively solicit joint ventures for direct mail merchandising.
(4) That we revise Curtis literary contracts so that we buy all rights to material, including foreign and television rights.
(5) That a HOLIDAY travel club be established with Fugazy, if we sufficient profit potential in the venture.
(6) That Curtis try to buy VHF television stations.
(7) That Curtis investigate the potential of UHF television, and if it seems profitable, buy in.
(8) That Curtis seek out--through Special Projects--profitable specialty magazines, which can be absorbed into the Curtis Publishing Company, to be operated by the editorial director.
(9) That we try to develop a staple item such as an encyclopedia (too expensive), or Bible, or dictionary.
(10) That we explore the possibility of publishing other children's magazines--especially a "news" weekly.
(11) That we explore the possibility of acquiring a textbook publishing company--if any are available.[109]

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[109] Culligan, 89.

Characteristically, the board of trustees at Curtis, always slow moving, did not implement any of these recommendations.

The implication of all of this is one of the reasons for the failure of the family magazines is that they lacked the speed required by the new society. This lack of speed is evident throughout this chapter: corporate structures were major factors of retardation; unwieldy and aged management acted too slowly, failing to grasp the brass ring; economic naivete (e.g. postal rates) and dated economic policies ground the magazines to a half. As is mentioned in many places, including the books by Goulden, Culligan and Wood, the family magazines might be symbolized by the electric-powered Curtis trucks that moved about Philadelphia at a sedate ten miles per hour. Just as the technological revolution gave birth to the great family magazines, it was a major factor in burying them.

IV

THE FAMILY MAGAZINE AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The preceding sections have shown the factors which shaped the family magazines as a producers' commodity. The family magazines had value as consumers' commodity as well, although in a quite different sense. That is to say, the magazines performed certain functions for the mass audience. This is the unique position occupied by the family magazines in our cultural history: the peculiar relationship they maintained with readers. Popular taste can be a demanding mistress; it vascillates wildly and rapidly in some areas at the same time it remains relatively constant in others. That the family magazines wooed popular taste successfully for many years is obvious. This chapter shows how they came to have a happy relationship with popular taste and how the magazines may be utilized as reflections of that taste. It also suggests ways that readers' faith in their magazines was violated.

A major problem faced by any magazine is establishing the public role it is to occupy, both for itself and for its readers. To be successful, a magazine must have an accurate sense of its identity and must communicate that

identity to the public in such a way that the public can readily recognize future issues. Implicit in this search for identity is the need to arrive at the "formula" by which the magazine will be produced. All magazines have some sort of formula.

> A magazine formula is the organized concept of the magazine held by those in charge and translated into type, advertising ideas and facts, reading matter ideas and facts.
>
> Every magazine, consciously or unconsciously, had a formula. The better organized the magazine the more likely it is to have an articulated formula, for such a concept is part of careful business operation. It may be good or bad, depend-upon the objective selected or upon its effectiveness in achieving this objective.
>
> Before a magazine staff can do an intelligent job of buying copy, planning the periodical's typographical dress, and obtaining buyers of its space and its issues, the owners must decide upon the formula they will follow.
>
> The more original and yet popular the formula the more certain the magazine is to succeed financially. An original formula may not be popular and therefore may not succeed because the public is not ready for it or because of some other handicap. Or the printer may not be able to translate the formula into type, for physical reasons or because of costs.[110]

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[110]Wolseley, 137.

The success, then, of the magazine is heavily dependent on the success of the formula the editors have chosen.

In deciding on a formula, the editors need to consider many factors:

> . . . purpose of the publication, market for the publication, standard of living, educational level, competitors, tested formulas, climate of opinion, financial horizon.[111]

[111] Wolseley, 139-140.

A comparison of almost any issue of any of the big family magazines with almost any issue of another will show that the formulas of the family magazines were nearly identical.

One reason for this similarity is homogeneity of readership. In a 1948 study, the Magazine Advertising Bureau examined nationwide readership for all magazines. Some of their findings are:

(1) 42.6% of the magazine readers were men.

(2) 61.8% of the readers were urban individuals.

(3) 18.5% read one magazine, 16.6% read two, etc., declining to six, but 22.7 read more than six.

(4) Average number of magazines read: 3.1.

(5) Projecting certain findings to the total population it was found that among readers of magazines the largest number are in the 23-34 age group (7,850,000), with 35-44 next (5,600,000) and 45-54 third (3,250,000). Smallest was 65 years and over (2,950,000).

(6) Economic status: 3.1% in prosperous group, 17.3% in upper middle, 58.9% middle, 20.7% lower.

(7) Occupations: Of the readers, 3.8% were professionals or semi-professionals. Housewives were the largest group, 40.6%; others were all less than 10%.

(8) Education: 29.6% of readers had eighth grade or less; 21.6% had 1-3 years of high school;

> 25.7% had four years of high school; 8% had 1-3 years of college; 6% had four or more years of college; 8.6% were still in school.[112]

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[112] Nationwide Magazine Audience Survey, Report No. 3--Families (New York: MAB, 1948), ii.

Naturally, some of these figures have since changed. It is reasonable to assume that educational levels were higher in the 1960s than they were in the 1940s. The educational boom was just getting underway at the time of this survey and many of the returning servicemen who took advantage of the G.I. Bill were still in college in 1948. But although some of the figures have changed since the survey, the survey of that year is particularly useful. It shows readership patterns before the rise of television, hence before the global influence of the spatial media became great. Also, it shows the kind of readership patterns there were in the U.S. before the big educational boom; this is of particular value, as it was then that the basic formulas of the family magazines were established. To be sure, some aspects of the formulas of the family magazines were later altered--those changes will be examined later in this section, however. Too, if these figures are true for magazine readership in toto, they are probably especially true for family magazine readership, which was especially general in nature. One other comment should be made here about these figures: we should not assume from #7 that most magazine readers were housewives. The high percentage

merely reflects the fact that men were typically the breadwinners.

Those who read magazines were generally better educated than those utilizing the other available media. In the same year, 1948, Lazarsfeld and Kendall conducted a study, "Radio Listening in America." Their results showed that over 80% of college-educated people read magazines, as opposed to some 40% of those with only grade school education. Their tables for books, radio and magazines are included here for purposes of comparison.

TABLE 10.--Media use by age and education.*

Education	Age		
	21-29	30-49	50 and over
Proportion Who Read Books According To Age and Education			
College	57%	52%	45%
High School	31	27	28
Grade School	1	10	10
Proportion Who Read Magazines According to Age and Education			
College	81	89	80
High School	64	69	65
Grade School	44	44	34
Proportion of Heavy Listeners According to Age and Education			
College	18	20	17
High School	36	28	28
Grade School	33	29	31

*Lazarsfeld and Kendall, Radio Listening in America (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), Appendix C. Note: "heavy listeners are those who listen to the radio three or more hours on an average weekday evening."

From such studies, magazine publishers are able to determine the nature of the market to be reached. Studies have also broken down readership by income grouping.[113]

[113]See Table 22.

Having decided on the group he wants to reach, the publisher must decide what he wants to reach them with. The family magazines were extremely inclusive in deciding this function. Basically, they attempted to reflect all aspects of the American experience, current concerns and general concerns. More specifically, this broad goal breaks down into some six realizable goals: (1) information, (2) entertainment, (3) escape, (4) assistance in forming opinions, (5) reinforcement of moral values, and (6) provision of a "consumer's showcase." The following paragraphs offer an examination of each of these, both as roles of all media and as specific roles of the family magazines.

The family magazines shared their informational function with the other media. Of course, they were never able to compete effectively in providing up-to-the-minute news, but their informational articles could be current. Moreover, the greater leisure of magazine readers allowed magazines to be broader in scope, more complete in explanations and, frequently, better at putting current events into perspective than the other media. There was a large

area in which the family magazines did not duplicate the news coverage of the other media--items of generally current interest, but not especially newsworthy. For example, the July 2, 1949 issue of COLLIER'S carried a story about "The Actor who Won't Stay Dead." The accompanying blurb read,

> Fans from California to London mob the theaters that show Rudolph Valentino's pictures again, and pilgrims pay homage to him each year at his tomb in Hollywood. Louella Parsons gives him frequent mention in her column. And yet Rudy died twenty-three years ago.

This is a field that television has since developed with "Specials" and "Spectaculars," but it was a major source of magazine material for years.

Most of the non-fictional material in the family magazines concerned some aspect of the American experience. There was a great deal of information; generally speaking, at least half of the tables of contents of the family magazines was devoted to this fare. And the range of the articles themselves was tremendous; frequently the juxtaposition of articles touching opposite ends of the social and economic spectrum was striking. The July 2, 1949 COLLIER'S carried informational articles on "A One-Shot Cure for Syphilis," "Charlie Brannan and his Wonderful World," and "Who Said PROMISED LAND?" The September 21, 1971 issue of LOOK, the penultimate issue, carried "Julius Rudel: Washington's Music Man," and an article on the poverty area "Where Vida Blue Grew." The June 11, 1960

POST carried "Adventures of the Mind, '54: The U.S. Presidency," and "The Face of America: The Grandeur that Was." Similar examples are found in almost every issue of every one of the family magazines. These articles were generally high in quality and accuracy. They took full advantage of the magazine format; that is, they used the comparative leisure the magazine gave the reader to be complete and offer background information, and they were often generously illustrated.

Author Tom Wolfe, speaking recently at the Midway campus of the University of Chicago, indicated that writers for magazines in the 1950s and 1960s were generally regarded as second class by the rest of the literary world. But he could not have been speaking of the family magazines, for they went out of their way to print articles by well known authorities. LOOK's last issues, for example, featured articles by Walt W. Rostow, Christopher S. Wren and Allen Drury. POST's contents for April 1, 1961 show articles by Bill O'Hallaran, Stephen Spender and Dean Acheson. COLLIER'S contents for November 27, 1948 contain articles by Virginia Leigh, Francis Cardinal Spellman and J. D. Ratcliff. These, of course, are just a few of hundreds of examples.

In terms of their historic interest, collections of old family magazines are well worth preservation. The articles in them offer a far more textured picture of

American life than we are apt to find in any history text. Factually the articles are accurate, at least as the world was able to understand the facts when they were printed; the family magazines were too big and too prestigious to risk their reputations with the half-truths seen occasionally in "pulp" magazines. The articles offer more than facts; they represent the way Americans saw and understood those facts in any given moment of history. That is, the family magazines put the facts into social context by the juxtaposition of articles about all sorts of things going on at the same time which drew the interest of the American public. No other popular medium does this so well. Granted, there are huge libraries of video-tapes made of old TV shows and mountains of tapes of old radio shows . . . but they are inaccessible to the general public. The inherent impermanence of the broadcast media makes them of limited value for the historian.[114]

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[114]Comparatively few books have been written so far about television as popular cultural history. Many have been written about TV technologically, sociologically or psychologically, but the books that catch the flavor of the early days of TV are few. One of the best is Tedd Thomey's The Glorious Decade, which does manage to portray some of the glamour and excitement of early TV. The book is, however, dependent upon the reader's remembering from actual experience "how it was." The coming of another generation or two will render the book mere history.

Side by side with the articles was the fiction printed by each of the big magazines. Again speaking in terms of historical interest, the fiction carried by the

family magazines represents at least as much about the American people at any given time as the articles do. As is pointed out in greater detail later in this chapter, the family magazines were generally conforming, rather than transforming in their treatment of the American experience. In his book, Mass Entertainment, Harold Mendelsohn notes,

> By its very preoccupation with the middle class . . . mass entertainment reinforces the values and life-ways of the middle class and as a by-product no doubt helps to maintain the middle class status quo of American society. This latter function in turn must serve as still another source of reassurance for the middle classes.[115]

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[115]Harold Mendelsohn, Mass Entertainment (New Haven: College and University Press Services, Inc., 1966), 68.

In addition to the political and technological tenor of a given time, then, the family magazine fiction offers new dimensions: the prevailing moral standards and popular literary taste. This can be seen in the fiction of both POST and COLLIER'S; LOOK, of course, carried almost no fiction. Of the two magazines, POST's fiction was generally of superior literary quality. For this reason, and because the general moral values of the fiction in POST and COLLIER'S were essentially the same, it seems unnecessary to offer an exhaustive examination of both. Instead, there follows a short analysis of POST fiction. Moreover, COLLIER'S died before the real impact of the recent moral revolution was felt across America.

> The editors of the SATURDAY EVENING POST, the LADIES HOME JOURNAL, COUNTRY GENTLEMAN, and even little JACK AND JILL had all been born and bred in the Middle West. They retained their freshness, honesty, and innocence, their belief in the simple virtues, and their distrust of Yankee shrewdness, big business, big labor, big government, and the big world that menaced the United States. This was correct, for they were editing for the great American middle class to which they belonged. They had an unconscious rapport with their readers which was stronger than their deliberate attempts to give them what they thought they wished.[116]

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[116]Wood, The Curtis Magazines, 204.

POST's fiction was essentially a reinforcement of traditional American values. All of the things held dear for generations appeared on POST's pages . . . from Apple Pie to the Girl Next Door. The purpose of the present study is not to examine this fiction in detail. While such an examination would no doubt prove interesting, it would yield little to the reasons for the death of the family magazines. It is important to note, however, that the quality and quantity of POST fiction did change, fairly drastically, in the declining years. And the change itself parallels closely the overall decline of the magazine.

For many years, POST's fiction changed little. Although the kinds of fiction being written changed rapidly during the first sixty years of the twentieth century, those changes did not often find their way into the pages of POST. As editor until 1935, Lorimer was shrewd enough

to understand the reasons for not following literary trends.

> The POST's moral standards were about the same in 1935 as they had been in 1900. If they had been any different, there is little doubt that the POST would have ceased to exist. The application of the American novel's standards to a mass-produced magazine would have been fatal, and Lorimer knew it.
>
> It was inevitable, however that the Post should thereby lay itself open to the charge of creating an unreal world where romance and morality clasped hands on an equally high plane, where the happy ending and the good clean American life were the prerequisites. It was charged, further, that, having established these artificial standards, the POST compelled young writers to write exactly what it wanted, and at the same time drove up prices on the open market.[117]

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[117] John Tebbel, George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948), 49.

All of this is true. Of course, we must take into account the fact that during most of this period, POST did not have great competition from other media; many subscribers bought the magazine for its fiction. That POST fiction was read is evident in the tremendous volume of letters expressing reader satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each offering. And many readers wrote directly to the authors themselves, by way of the POST editorial offices.

However, this regular readership for POST stories is evidently one of the things that changed about the magazine. When, during his reign at Curtis, Ackerman asked, "'Should there be more fiction?' 'No," Emerson

(William, last editor of POST) and I (Otto Friedrich) said almost in unison. 'Every survey shows,' Emerson added, 'that fiction has the lowest readership of anything we publish.'"[118]

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[118]Friedrich, 113.

Why did this readership diminish? Perhaps one reason is simply that Americans were tired of seeing the same old morality over and over again; at least that seems to have been what some of the editors thought. For years,

> Liberal as it might be in depicting "things as they are" where cigarettes and highballs were concerned, the POST hid its head in the sands of convention wherever sex was involved. It conformed absolutely to the standards of middle-class American morality at a time when a tide of naturalism was rising in American letters and completely engulfing the literary morality which had prevailed up to the turn of the century.[119]

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[119]Tebbel, 49.

We remember the almost boundless optimism and good cheer of William Hazlett Upson's "I'm a Natural Born Salesman," the first of the Alexander Botts stories, for example.

> The Farmers' Friend Tractor Company
> Earthworm City, Ill.
>
> Gentlemen: I have decided that you are the best tractor company in the country, and consequently I am giving you first chance to hire me as your

> salesman to sell tractors in this region. I'm a natural born salesman, have a very quick mind. . . . When do I start work?[120]

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[120]William Hazlett Upson, Alexander Botts: Earthworm Tractors (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1946), 1.

What a long distance POST traveled between Alexander Botts and the following example, a story featured in one of the last issues (the only story in that issue) by Thomas Williams! The story climaxed this way:

> "Ah," Perkins said, "Did you have a roll in the hay miss?"
>
> David did not want to witness this.
>
> Myrna said, with astounding vindictiveness, "Did you give it away?" Her smile seemed at one moment to express pleasure and good will, at the next the most vicious hatred.
>
> "Give what away?" Tucker said.
>
> "Why, your little maidenhead, dear," Myrna said. "Don't you even know the name of the merchandise?"
>
> "We didn't go all the way, if that's what you mean," Tucker said. Her father took one step and slapped her so hard she fell down. Hoarse bleats came from her mouth.[121]

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[121]Thomas Williams, "Dark Hill Farm," THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, January 25, 1969, 52.

There is a world of difference between the two. They differ in attitude, subject matter, audience appeal, etc. Note the jaded sophistication implicit in Williams's story. At any rate, the changes made in POST fiction appear to have been made after the fact of POST's impending death had been recognized. They did not help support the already crippled magazine.

This is not to say, of course, that Lorimer and his immediate successors did not print things that were current. POST carried, over the years, stories by such people as Thomas Beer, Stephen Vincent Benet, Willa Cather, Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Galsworthy, O. Henry, Ring Lardner, Sinclair Lewis and Edith Wharton. But Lorimer knew what kind of editorial balance to strike between the new and the traditional.

> He understood that the magazine had to be edited for a broad middle class of readership, but he wanted to reach the upper level, too, and consequently he deliberately published stories he knew would appeal only to about 10% of the audience. They had to be stories, however; he was scornful of intellectuality for its own sake. The formless products of the little magazines were not for him.[122]

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[122]Tebbel, 42.

And Lorimer knew how to handle tabooed subjects with finesse. Note that he did not dodge issues:

> Time and again he was right and the experts were wrong. It was said that no popular magazine could print a story about miscegenation, least of all the POST. Lorimer printed one by Charles Brackett . . . a story carefully hedged in several ways, it is true, but nonetheless unmistakably concerned with a subject tabooed.[123]

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[123]Tebbel, 42.

These matters of controversy became moot points, however, as the POST grew farther and farther from active concern for readers' wishes and as interest in POST fiction

declined. Ironically, Lee Crawford (Clay Blair's alter ego in Blair's novel, The Board Room) said,

> "Nobody reads it (fiction) but a lot of gum-chewing secretaries. That's my opinion. According to the readership surveys . . . almost nobody was reading the fiction."
>
> "Art," Lee said, over his shoulder, "I forgot about that. They edited this magazine by a readership survey, like they were marketing detergents."
>
> "Soap opera," Christine said.
>
> "Call whoever it is tomorrow and cancel the surveys, Lee told Gold. "If we don't know what the people want, by instinct, then we ought not to be here. They surveyed this magazine right into the grave."[124]

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[124]Clay Blair, Jr., The Board Room (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1969), 64.

> What about the assertion that POST fiction was vapid and meaningless? "It is a pretty grim world we live in these days," says Hibbs, "and those publications which deal with the current scene must, inescapably, mirror some of that grimness. Yet, after all, the world is not entirely composed of hydrogen bombs, juvenile delinquency, race riots, mental institutions, heart disease and cancer . . . I can remember the time when people thought it fun to read.
>
> "Why shouldn't we provide our readers with a bit of 'escape'--to use a dirty word--from the cares of daily life through the vehicle of a buoyant human-interest article or an absorbing story? It is one of our functions, and a highly worthwhile function, I think. There is nothing incompatible in intellectuality and the love of entertainment--in a man or a magazine."[125]

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[125]Goulden, 90-91.

Hibbs's statement pretty well sums up the family magazines' rationale for their brand of fiction; it is not a hard position to understand.

Many of the same characteristics accrue to humor, another regular feature of the family magazines. In addition to humorous stories, there were generous assortments of cartoons. Many favorite cartoonists appeared regularly: POST carried Ted Key's "Hazel," LOOK included Chon Day's "Brother Sebastian," COLLIER'S regularly featured Virgil Partch drawings on a variety of subjects. The November 27, 1948 issue of COLLIER'S, for example, carried an entire color page of Partch cartoons dealing with football.

The cartoons probably appealed to all readers of the family magazines, not only to the less educated, as we might expect. A 1960 study by Edward J. Robinson and David Manning White of the readers of newspaper comics showed that,

> (1) Previous studies have indicated that comic strip readership is exceedingly widespread. This study, focusing on the highly educated individual, reveals that he is no exception to this generalization.
> (2) With this select group, that would normally be expected to be the most critical and/or hostile toward comic strips, we find that (a) they are extremely favorable to the medium per se; (b) they endorse comic strip reading on the part of children; (c) they envision comics as a pleasurable pastime, and (d) they strongly disagree with those who are essentially negative toward comics.[126]

[126] Edward J. Robinson and David Manning White, An Exploratory Study of the Attitudes of More Highly Educated People Toward the Comic Strips (Communications Research Center, Report No. 1, September, 1960), 94.

It seems entirely reasonable to make the extension of these conclusions to cover magazine comic reading as well. There

is, moreover, a certain ambivalence in readers' attitudes toward newspaper comics:

> . . . this higher educated respondent reflects the . . . stereotype in . . . interesting ways. This latent ambivalence towards comics reading has the following dimensions: (1) they feel ashamed or guilty about reading comics (2) they feel they will be thought childish or immature, and (3) they feel that their intellectual ability will be questioned.
>
> In respect to the non-reader (of comics), he is in essential agreement on the first two factors, but he is even more concerned about his intellectual ability being questioned.[127]

[127]Robinson and White, 95.

Generally speaking, the cartoons were sprinkled throughout family magazines; even the non-reader of newspaper comics was apt to have read magazine cartoons--he would have had a hard time avoiding them. And the study indicates that non-readers of comics are apt to be non-readers because they fear peer group criticism, a situation unlikely with magazine cartoons.

We should note some other things about family magazine humor. As did the rest of the magazine, cartoons reflected American family life. Typical subjects might include the neighborhood "gossip" mimeographing her news, the little boy caught in the cookie jar, etc. To appreciate a joke, we must be able to understand it from our own experience in some way.[128]

[128]This is the same idea expressed in Henri Bergson's classic study, Laughter, in which he discusses the inherent "complicity of laughers."

General cartoons in family magazines treated experiences so broad that there could be almost no way of misunderstanding them. By way of contrast, the family magazine cartoons were not "racy" humor of the type featured in PLAYBOY, ROGUE, etc. Sex was not treated humorously, nor were family magazine cartoons the "hard" cartoons of THE NEW YORKER variety, which depended on literary or philosophical allusion. Rather, family magazine humor tended to be of the "heartwarming" variety.

A regular humorous feature of POST was the "Post Scripts" page. In addition to one or two cartoons, the page carried very short items of poetry and prose intended to reflect the funny side of American life. A very typical example is the following poem by Richard Armour, which appeared in the March 4, 1961 issue:

Fellow Traveler

On every train or plane or bus
There is a child who makes a fuss,
A restless kid who writhes and stands
And eats, and gropes with sticky hands,
Is in and out and out and in
And always going where he's been.
If I'm disturbed, and somewhat vexed, too,
The reason is, it's he I'm next to.
And yet I really cannot whine
Because my luck is bad. He's mine.

Note the gentle quality of the humor here; it is not sarcastic or bitter. The underlying tone is the author's contentment with his lot despite small annoyances. With a certain pride in his voice he asks, "That's my kid,

isn't he 'awful'?" COLLIER'S poetry was similar in nature; in fact poets such as Richard Armour wrote for both. A typical COLLIER'S poem is this, by Margaret Fishback (November 27, 1948):

> Lines on Turning
> Over an Old Leaf
>
> The last chrysanthemums are gone.
> No longer need I mow the lawn
> Or fight the everlasting weed
> At last, I, too, can go to seed
> And rest my back, complete with ache.
> But what confronts me now? A rake!
> And soon thereafter, as you know,
> We'll be involved with ice and snow
> To hack and shovel. While I wait,
> Quite true to type, I'll contemplate
> The catalogues, against my will,
> To woo next April's daffodil.

According to Mendelsohn,

> For the middle and upper middle classes, mass entertainment that is dominated by middle-class symbolism can be seen as serving a legitimizing function in the sense that it acts to reinforce the general merits of middle-class life and to reassure members of the middle classes of the worth of the lives they are now leading.[129]

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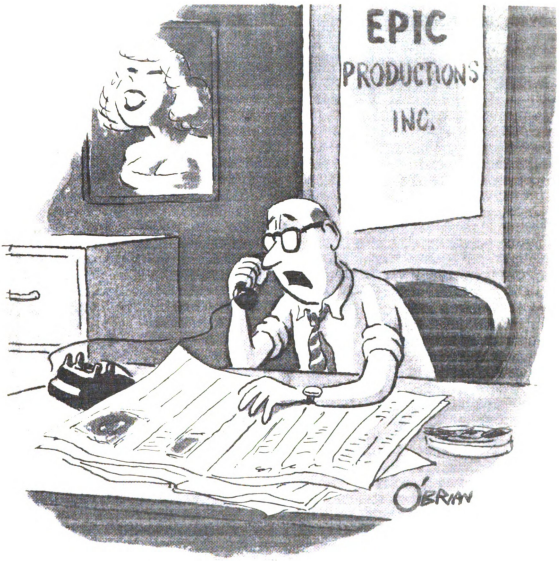
[129]Mendelsohn, 68.

It is easy to see how the family magazine brand of humor fits this description.

Readers demanded this reinforcement of their moral values. When something in the magazine didn't agree with their morality they were quick to let the magazines know. One man, disenchanted with POST fiction, wrote the following, which appeared in POST January 25, 1969.



"We're dead! The reviews call it 'wholesome family entertainment.'"

Figure 8.--Sample POST cartoon.*

*Source: Post, November 11, 1961.

> Where are the stories that give men good thoughts, that leave man with a pleasant inner glow and relieve him for a moment of the worldly tensions? To help people emulate the good, instead of the permissive bad, is a goal that is worth more than a man's life. This I believe. This I would write, to help my fellow man, I hope.
>
> Guy W. Korman, Jr.

Not all of the letters, however, were as pleasant as Mr. Korman's. One lady wrote:

> I discarded your November 30 cover showing the "Laugh-In" girls for the simple reason that our teenage son is being exposed to too many such pictures. No, he isn't overly protected, but it seems that more and more magazines are definitely <u>not</u> geared to the family!
>
> Mrs. C. B. Vanderburg
> Texarkana, Texas
> January 25, 1969

To put these letters into perspective, we should remember that most of the mail received by the family magazines was devoted to readers' reactions to specific articles or stories and their contents, not to their moral failings.

When the family magazines did treat subjects that could be considered risque by the more staid readers, they were careful to balance the "immoral" aspects of the story with "moral" fare. Moreover, the article was apt to be written from a "decent" point of view. The November 11, 1961 POST, for instance, carried an article by editor Peter Syden entitled "How Wicked is Vegas?" Note the perspective:

> There were eighty of us "package" tourists--vacationing couples, groups of working girls and delegates to the annual convention of Optimist International, which opened in Las Vegas the same day. Also with us was Miss South Bend, Indiana, who had won the trip and eligibility for the Miss America contest by enacting the role of Goldilocks in a production number from Goldilocks and the Three Bears. We were sheep in the annual flock of more than 9,000,000 visitors to Las Vegas.[130]

[130]POST, November 11, 1961, 17.

The article makes the point that, even if Las Vegas is a little "wicked," it is all right because it's legal--and a place like Vegas is a nice novelty for the average citizen, who wouldn't last long there anyhow.

The editors of COLLIER'S were careful to assume a similar perspective in articles of potentially controversial nature. One issue, for instance, carried an article entitled "What Americans Need to Learn about Sex," by Dr. Gelolo McHugh with J. Robert Mosking. The following passage comes from the very beginning of the article.

> . . . the results of this study show that our American youth--and many, many long-married couples--urgently need help if they are to avoid sex experience outside of marriage, escape divorce and increase their potential for marital happiness. It is our hope that, by putting our findings into the hands of the public and those devoted to helping us attain marital happiness, many personal disasters can be avoided.[131]

[131]COLLIER'S, November 9, 1956, 37.

The family magazines reflected the American experience editorially as well. Many of the editorials were

fairly bland, and of conforming nature. As W. H. Auden put it in his well-known poem, "The Unknown Citizen,"

> Our researchers in Public Opinion are content
> That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
> When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.

Of the three magazines under consideration, POST was the most outspoken. But POST editorials were more frequently of general appeal. The April 16, 1960 issue, for example carried three editorials in this order: "One Item Omitted from Tests for Drivers--Character!" "Can Red China's Crimping Bureaucrats Hold On Forever?" and "An Educated Man Should Have the Dictionary Habit." COLLIER'S was equally bland, with such editorials as "Entertainment is Here to Stay," in the July 2, 1949 issue. (Note: that editorial, dealing with the magazine's attitude toward television, is included earlier in this study.) LOOK carried no editorials.

Another function filled by the family magazines was escape for the reader from the problems of his everyday life. Mendelsohn indicates the need for this cathartic experience:

> Varied and numerous forces in society lead to dissatisfaction--often by raising our expectations and then dashing such hopes and expectations against the hard experience of failure; frequently, by forcing us to make choices between contradictory though equally powerful stimuli, in order to sustain socially required consistency; in many instances, by demanding that we be free and

> unfettered and at the same time restricting and inhibiting our impulses.
>
> Man repairs the deficiencies in his life and experiences by creating and enjoying art, music, drama, poetry, and fiction--and contemporaneously--mass entertainment.[132]

[132]Mendelsohn, 90-91.

As noted by Patricke Johns-Heine and Hans H. Gerth, the trend has been away from titans and superstars as heroes of magazine fiction. In their place are the small businessman, the farmer, the industrial worker.[133]

[133]Patricke Johns-Heine and Hans H. Gerth, "Values in Mass Periodical Fiction, 1921-1940," in Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America, ed. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: MacMillan), 230-231.

This is due to the magazines' recognition of the need for heroes with whom the reader can readily identify vicariously.

> . . . it is an attempt to perpetuate certain roots of American life, or the myth of them; and it is done by bringing the scope of fantasy in mass fiction into greater harmony with readers made constantly aware of the "closing of the frontiers." Hence it may be regarded as an attempt to give a compensating sense of independence and individual significance when power and prestige seem to have become firmly entrenched. The little man is, then, the familiar standard-bearer of democratic values. It is, perhaps, not accidental that this transformation began in the depression years, even if it did not end there. In those years traditional values were invoked with weary optimism; the "good heart" was supposed to replace the "big money."[134]

[134]Rosenberg, 231.

This is not to say, of course, that magazine fiction was made "cheap" literarily; rather, it was made more accessible to the reader. The adjustment was in the direction of reality, perhaps in the same sense that Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman can be regarded as legitimate tragedy. To be sure, the "happy ending" remained a feature of much magazine fiction--and readers wanted it in their magazines. But the plot resolution was much less apt to be in the form of success via achievement, marriage or luck;[135] it was likely to be the solving of some human problem.

[135]Rosenberg, 230.

> The most striking qualities of the stories--euphemism, wish-thinking, a sentient nature, a hovering grace--reveal the quality of the religion that the magazine preaches: it is a religion that must, above all, operate, and operate quickly, a religion in which God must work in totally unmysterious ways. Like the adoptee hero, this religion is featureless--or rather dogmaless--and permits each reader to substitute the faith of his choice; but the constant insistence on the religious call is no less clear. From this we may assume not so much a radical new change in the tendencies of our popular culture as an attempt to to return to older forms, more specifically to the comforting religiosity of the 19th century, a significant indication of the direction in which the fantasies of at least some Americans are tending.[136]

[136]Robert S. Brustein, "The New Faith of the SATURDAY EVENING POST," Commentary, 16 (1953), 367-369.

The following "Credo for a Magazine," by Norman Cousins of the SATURDAY REVIEW reflects one editor's appreciation of what magazine readers want.

> Fundamentally, to publish a magazine that people will read and respect;
>
> To believe, not as rote or strained slogan, but as rigid fact, that a magazine is by natural right the property of its readers;
>
> That, because of this, editors are but temporary custodians, their tenure related to and dependent upon their confidence in the judgement and intelligence of the reader;
>
> That such confidence is best established by avoiding both the condescension of talking down and the presumption of talking up;
>
> That a magazine, like a person, requires, in order to be effective, certain qualities--readily identifiable and beyond obliteration;
>
> That high among these qualities is a response to values, the capacity to create values, and the passion to defend values;
>
> That other essential qualities include clarity, curiosity, insight, incisiveness, integrity, good taste, good will, conviction, responsibility;
>
> That what is written is believed by the writer and written to be believed by the reader;
>
> That the magazine should reflect a sense of adventure and excitement about life in general and about books and ideas in particular;
>
> That honest sentiments, honest passions, and honest indignations are among the highest expressions of conscience, that there is no need to feel shy or awkward or embarrassed in their presence, and that they are not to be waved aside by mock austerics;
>
> That cynicism at best is a waste of time; at worst, a dangerous and potentially fatal disease for individuals and civilizations both;
>
> That ideals are the main business of writers, and that people will respond to ideals far beyond the anticipations of their nominal leaders;
>
> That believing all this need neither limit nor inhibit a sense of fun and the enjoyment of laughter;
>
> That editing, finally, is not paring but creating.[137]

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[137]Wolseley, 113.

Curtis took a similar position in the following "Curtis Commitment," published as part of an advertisement taken in the New York Times in November of 1962.

> The Curtis Publishing Company is committed to the goal of becoming the voice and conscience of the competitive free enterprise system, which is the foundation of a progressive economy and a democratic way of life. The editorial weight of the Curtis magazines will be applied to this undertaking and through text and photographic treatment we will present the voice and opinions of leaders of this country, this hemisphere and the entire Western World in speaking out on this subject.
>
> It is our conviction that the competitive-enterprise system represents one of man's greatest achievements, and that it provides the framework not only for our economic well-being but also for the preservation of individual rights and the protection of minorities.
>
> The pages of our magazines will provide a forum for all of the voices of the marketplace, including those of labor, business, politics, government and education, as well as those which speak for social forces and for the family group.[138]

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[138]Goulden, 140.

Not only did the editors of the family magazines conform to generally held convictions and moral values, they were careful to let the public know that they were conforming. They told us how good they were at reflecting the broad American scene. For instance, LOOK ran the following text opposite a picture of their office building in a two page spread on March 23, 1965.

> LOOK HEADQUARTERS. On its walls hang the scores of editorial awards and trophies that set LOOK apart as America's most honored magazine.

> Last year alone, LOOK received major awards from Sigma Delta Chi, National Education Association, National Conference of Christians and Jews, American Bar Association, Overseas Press Club, and New York Art Directors Club. Significantly, these awards cover the entire editorial spectrum--from reporting to art direction, from photography to feature writing. They are a tribute not to a single phase of publishing but to the basic LOOK approach . . . the LOOK concept of personal journalism.
>
> Over 7,500,000 American families buy LOOK--more than any other magazine in its field. They respond to the LOOK concept of journalism. You can join them in enjoying a year-round program of rewarding reading for you and for every member of your family.

This, of course, is only good business.

The matter of editing raises still another problem for the family magazines. According to Phillips Wyman,

> Editorial content is a factor in circulation because it influences reader interest. If the staff is to arouse the interest of potential readers it must know their reading habits and attempt to gratify them. The narrower the reader's interests, the less the appeal of the general magazine. The narrower the content of the magazine, the less the appeal to the general reader. Through research departments or research firms hired to do the job, magazine publishers or editors constantly seek to understand reader psychology, so as not to offend it or fail to satisfy it.[139]

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[139]Wolseley, 165-166.

This results in a certain homogeneity of contents in the family magazines; not only were they limited in

choice of materials, they were limited in point of view.[140]

[140]For a discussion of this limitation and an evaluation of magazines' progress in the face of it, see Wood, Magazines in the U.S., 368-369.

In much the same way, the family magazine formula included the overall appearance of the magazine. The reader desires that,

> . . . his magazine appear on the newsstand or in the mailbox dependably, with the usual recognizable appearance plus freshness and newness that are appealing.
>
> Whether a magazine continues or ceases publication may depend on the success of its editors in resolving this paradox. For, Wyman declares, "The relation of reader and magazine is essentially emotional," a fundamental statement the truth of which is not realized by many professionals in circulation work. Many periodicals are read by habit, which is upset by issues that look unfriendly, odd, too much like some other magazine, or in some way unusual. Wyman also points out that in preparing sales letters or other copy for new-subscriber promotion material, a list of features generally is ineffective. A reader occasionally may buy a magazine because he sees an article listed in a leaflet or on the table of contents page, for the piece may be by his favorite author or on a subject of deep interest; but unless the magazine runs such material regularly he will not buy the book regularly. The effectiveness of this . . . factor is most clear when the magazine succeeds in building loyalty to itself. Once the reader becomes habituated to a certain magazine, which he does when he is confident almost every issue will contain material suitable, valuable, or pleasing to him, he will procure it regularly.[141]

[141]Wolseley, 165-166.

This problem of ready reader identification applies to all areas of the magazine, even to the physical size of the issue.[142]

[142]Due to the recent postal rate increases for magazines, at least two (HOLIDAY, ESQUIRE) magazines have cut their page size substantially. It will be interesting to see what effect this decision has ultimately on readership for it is extremely risky to bring out an old magazine in all new form.

One of the devices used successfully by POST to insure continuity and regularity was the inclusion and repetition of special small features. One of these was "The Perfect Squelch," a short anecdote that generally ended with the "windbag" of the piece being deflated by one of his listeners. Another short feature was "You Be The Judge," a short civil suit drawn from everyday life. "What's Happening Here?" drew on great moments in history, asking readers to identify them from a picture. The result was that, even if the reader didn't particularly like that issue's contents, at least three of his regular favorites would appear. In the same way, cartoons added regularity.[143]

[143]THE NEW YORKER regularly collects "best" cartoons into bound volumes, which sell well. In fact, many readers of that magazine regularly read all the cartoons in a new issue before reading anything else--which shows the success of humor in providing continuity. POST cartoons were collected too, and POST stories.

Like POST, COLLIER'S recognized the need for regularity from one issue to the next. The magazine regularly included such features as "Why Don't They?" which featured reader participation. In fact, the reader whose idea was included in the feature was awarded $5 for his contribution. Many of the ideas were of this type: "Why don't they 'indent telephone receivers so that women don't have to remove earrings to talk on the phone?" (Sharon Lee Swartwood, Cheektowaga, N.Y., 9/28/56, p. 20). Another regular feature was "Now they've done it!" which told readers about new products and gimmicks. A third COLLIER'S favorite was "It's the Law!" which listed humorous archaic laws such as "Roosters are not allowed inside the city limits of Mobile, Alabama." (1/4/57, p. 42). COLLIER'S editors were aware of reader appreciation of these features. When another of their publications, THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE, went under in August, 1956, the last issue carried the following page.

Most of the family magazines were well aware of the need for maintaining a continuity of appearance from one issue to the next. One of the interesting differences in the circumstances of the deaths of LOOK and POST is that POST changed its overall appearance considerably but LOOK did not. Perhaps POST's change was an attempt to compete more effectively with the visual media. A comparison of any POST issue from 1960 with any issue from 1969, for

Announcement

Publication of The American Magazine as a separate magazine ceases with this issue.

Best features of The American will be continued in the exciting, growing Collier's and Woman's Home Companion.

Collier's will publish these popular features:

The Complete Mystery Novel
It's The Law!
Why Don't They?
Now They've Done It!

Companion will publish:

America's Interesting People
The Open Door
Help for Your House
Funny Side of the Street

Readers of The American's novels of romance and short-short stories will find many of their favorite authors included in the expanded fiction content of Companion.

For the best features of The American Magazine read

Collier's

and

COMPANION

The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company
640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N.Y.

Figure 9.--Death of THE AMERICAN.

example, reveals a number of obvious visual changes. Cover illustrations by artists such as Norman Rockwell depicting traditional American experiences were replaced by cover photographs of more sensational nature. The issue of January 25, 1969, the penultimate issue, boasted on its cover that it would tell us "How Barney Rosset Publishes 'Dirty Books' for Fun and Profit." Inside we note that the traditional "The Cover," a paragraph explaining the nuances of the cover experience, disappeared. The editorial occupies its place. The quality of paper, too, changed in favor of glossier stock. Photographs became larger and brighter, while illustrations became smaller and fewer. Type styles changed in favor of darker, bolder characters. The change was in favor of high visibility, at the expense of traditional appearance. By changing image and format, POST lost much of its value as ritual experience.

> . . . magazine publishing deals basically in intangibles. The product is a new one each week or month. Its effectiveness for advertising is a function of its reader acceptance and trust. Its character and reputation are as important as solvency to a bank. None of the dire consequences implicit in the rumor (death) have materialized, nor are any included in our plans for the future.
>
> The second major factor contributing to reduced advertising linage has been the natural hesitation of advertising agencies and advertisers to place firm schedules in the face of dramatic and far reaching changes in THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.[144]

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[144] Robert A. MacNeal, quoted in Wood, The Curtis Magazines, 250.

During the 1960s subscription numbers for POST and LOOK did not change greatly. It seems likely that a large percentage of subscribers were of the ritual variety. George Horace Lorimer, the man responsible for POST's initial success, knew that subscriber loyalty was also dependent on the magazine's maintaining a friendly relationship with them. Clay Blair, Jr., one of the last editors, saw it differently.

> With six libel suits in the courts (two of which resulted in six-figure verdicts and settlement) Blair said, "We are hitting them where it hurts, with solid, meaningful journalism." The SEP, which Ben Hibbs once edited for the entire family, trumpeted exposes of vice and crime and sickening photographic layouts on Thalidomide babies (nine pages and the cover of a 96 page issue in 1962).[145]

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[145]Goulden, 173.

In the years that Lorimer reigned in the offices of Curtis Publishing Company, POST had a definite policy regarding its readers. That policy was a very simple one: readers are important. And the readers knew that they were important. Thousands of letters from concerned people all across the country arrived at the POST offices yearly. People responded to POST in much the same way that they respond to many other popular elements of American culture. They felt that they had personal stakes in POST management. Their letters were invariably answered, many by Lorimer himself. Lorimer's morning routines were rigid. After looking at some manuscripts,

> . . . he attacked the mail. There were three formidable piles of it. The right-hand pile was personal mail, the usual potpurri of requests for everything from speeches to articles to money, and a batch of fan letters. These he read first and set aside to dictate the answers after lunch. The middle pile was addressed to the POST and he read those with care, because they helped him to keep his finger on the public pulse. All varieties of communication were in this section.
>
> The third pile of letters were those written to staff members which they thought might interest him. He also glanced through the forwarding mail to discover which authors were getting letters from readers.[146]

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[146]Tebbel, 207.

All this mail enabled Lorimer to make intelligent decisions about what to include in POST and what to leave out. His criterion for accepting or rejecting any article was simple: "Will the POST audience like it?"

Just how great the readers' sense of participation was, and its importance, were not recognized by the regime that made the decision to cut subscriber lists in the last year of POST's life. People all over, not just in the unwanted Nielsen C and D districts, felt that the relationship with the magazine had changed.

> . . . perhaps because no such announcement had ever been made before, Ackerman's decision was greeted with a considerable amount of indignation. It was not just that the subscribers had a legal and moral right to their magazines but they seemed to believe they had a personal relationship with the POST. They thought that when they subscribed, the editor rejoiced, and when they canceled, he grieved. Now

> they were learning that they were nothing but names on a computer tape.[147]

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[147]Otto Friedrich, "I am Marty Ackerman," Harper's, December, 1969, 112.

One fact seems to stand out about many forms of popular culture: constituent loyalty is a prerequisite to success.

Readers' reaction to their cancellations was astounding. POST offices were swamped with letters. The office staff designated for correspondence was unable to handle the added volume of mail; many letters received absolutely no attention. Ackerman's attitude toward readers appears to have been more than callous:

> "So on about the first of August, we're going to send a form letter to one million A and B (Nielsen counties) saying, 'We can't send you POST any more, and unless you notify us within 30 days, you're going to get LIFE from now on.'"
>
> "What if they don't want LIFE?" somebody asked.
>
> Ackerman shrugged. "We're counting on the fact that a lot of people don't answer their mail."
>
> As for the C and D readers, who were unworthy of the POST and unwanted by LIFE, Ackerman laughed and said, "We haven't worked that level out yet. We'll give them some kind of magazines but we don't know which ones. If anybody has any ideas on what the letter should say, please speak up."[148]

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[148]Friedrich, 112.

POST's subscription cancellations were greeted with widespread, although not very funny humor. Even Art Buchwald wrote a column on the subject. He created an

account of the troubles of a man named Feneker, of Hopscotch, Nebraska.

> No one came right out and said they knew the SATURDAY EVENING POST had canceled his subscription, but the atmosphere in the town changed. The bank refused him a loan for a new wing on his house. He had trouble cashing checks in the grocery store.

Ackerman's reaction was, "Stories like that are practically ads. They tell everybody that the POST is a class magazine, and that not everybody can get it. That's great."[149]

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[149]Friedrich, 113.

Even for a "class magazine" POST was not overly selective, often due to computer troubles, as to whom subscriptions were given. Two of those dropped from the list, ironically, were Arkansas Governor Winthrop Rockefeller and Martin S. Ackerman.

For perhaps the first time POST subscribers came to the stark realization that they were factors in a basic supply and demand situation. They were a commodity like other commodities; they were up for grabs by the highest bidder. And they resented it.

The family magazines served still another function for the reader and, by extension, still serve the same function for the historian. Through magazine advertising readers became educated consumers. Without leaving the comfort of his living room, the reader could find out all

about the newest appliances, automobiles, insurance plans, etc. More important for the consumer in a material society, he could judge his own standard of living in terms of new items on the market. He could see, for example, that his bathroom fixtures were sadly dated. One advertisement in 1960 demonstrated with color pictures the off-the-floor toilet, the off-center design bathtub and the single-lever faucet. (POST, April 16, 1960, pp. 20-21) In the same issue he could learn about no-defrost refrigerators, nylon tires, wide-track automobiles, polyester fiber, permanent auto radiator fill, new designs in telephones, "detergent-action" shoe polish, poison ivy pills, and a vaccuum cleaner that "dances out deep down dirt" . . . plus a lot more. The family magazines had an important function as "consumers' showcases."

The real interest for the cultural historian and sociologist in family magazine advertising lies in what it reveals about changing trends in American taste. We can learn a great deal about American manufacturing history and American consumer tastes from back issues of family magazines. One can take almost any ad for a large durable good, put it in the context offered by the rest of the magazine (including other advertisements) and understand the forces operating on the consumer at that moment. For example, POST carried a double-page spread in full color for the 1960 Chrysler (April 16, 1960, pp. 78-79) with the

car set in a family fishing scene. The car featured a pushbutton transmission, a trend for at least three auto makers (Chrysler, American Motors, Ford), but a gadget that never caught on. Influenced by the recent space-craze, the car carried enormous tail-fins, ostensibly to promote high-speed stability (there was never any real evidence for this).[150]

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[150]The car had huge expanses of glass fore and aft, another trend of the sixties that has since died. Engineers now know that it is prohibitively expensive to produce wrap-around windows relatively free of distortion; and the large areas of glass had considerable effect on interior heating-cooling problems. Besides, the advent of impact-resistant glass demanded fewer curves.

Large slabs of chrome covered rocker panels, light and window moldings. Now, of course, the cost of stainless steel is proportionately more reasonable; coupled with its superior durability, etc. it is the choice of auto makers. Family magazines are ideally suited for this kind of study because of their very broad range.

Naturally, it is possible to see the role of the advertiser negatively. For instance,

> The critics of the mass media are in error when they condemn its products out of hand. These media can tolerate good as well as bad contents, high as well as low art. Euripides and Shakespeare can perfectly well follow the Western or quiz show on TV, and the slick magazine can easily sandwich in cathedrals and madonnas among the pictures of athletes and movie queens.
>
> What is significant, however, is that it does not matter. The mass media find space for politics and sports, for science and fiction, for art and

> music, all presented on an identical plateau of irrelevance. And the audience which receives this complex variety of wares accepts them passively as an undifferentiated but recognizable series of good things among which it has little capacity for choice, and with which it cannot establish any meaningful, direct relationship.
>
> The way in which the contents of the mass media are communicated deprives the audience of any degree of selectivity, for those contents are marketed as any other commodities are. In our society it seems possible through the use of the proper marketing device to sell anybody anything, so that what is sold has very little relevance to the character of either the buyers or of the article sold. This is as true of culture as of refrigerators or fur coats. The contents of the magazine or the TV schedule or the newspaper have as little to do with their sales potential as the engine specifications with the marketability of an automobile. The popularity of quiz shows no more reflects the desires of the audience than the increase in circulation of AMERICAN HERITAGE or GOURMET reflects a growing knowledge of American history of the development of gastronomic taste, or, for that matter, than the efflorescence of tail fins in 1957 reflected a yearning for them on the part of automobile buyers. All these were rather examples of excellent selling jobs.

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[151]Oscar Handlin in Jacobs, 69.

We should remember, however, that the advertisements are just as much a part of the magazines as the articles or fiction. They become increasingly useful as history. Even if, as Mr. Handlin suggests, the commodities sold are not worth study (although it seems highly unlikely), the selling job itself is worth a close look.

According to Peterson, the development of formulas for magazines was ultimately a product of the magazines' advertising function. Once again, we are struck by the

fact that the real manipulators of the popular media are those with financial interests.

> When magazines fervently embraced advertising in the late nineteenth century, they became inextricably joined to the marketing system. Content was the bait with which the publisher coaxed an audience to his magazine--an audience of consumers valuable to the advertiser for its sheer size, its homogeneity, or both. After a publisher had struck upon a happy balance of content which attracted the desired readers, he was reluctant to change it. Hence every issue of a given magazine tended to be similar to every other.
>
> Such standardization of content was a natural outgrowth of the quest for a popular market and the mass production necessary if a magazine was to compete successfully for that market. Well into the nineteenth century, when magazines were still edited for just the elite few, an editor could remain an aloof arbiter who chose what he liked from among the contributions of aspiring writers. However, the editor of a mass-produced magazine tailored to the interests of a specific popular audience could not count on filling it with stories and articles selected from chance contributions. The types of material he used and the distinctive handling his writers gave it determined the editorial personality of the magazine, and it was that personality which caused readers to buy. Thus an increasingly large proportion of magazine content came to be planned by the staff. Walter Hines Page of the FORUM demonstrated the feasibility of such planning during his tenure as editor from 1887 to 1895. He astounded his colleagues by jotting down a table of contents months in advance of publication and then scouting out writers qualified to produce the articles he wanted. Today the major magazines have adopted Page's basic idea of editorial planning. On many publications the staff originates ideas for a high percentage of the features the magazine carries. Some of the ideas are assigned to established free-lance writers who research and write the articles. Others are developed by staff writers. In either instance, the net effect is standardization.[152]

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[152]Peterson, 61-62.

The same study indicates that the same influences were operating in all of the popular media.

> A current issue of a given magazine is very much like the last issue; the editor has struck upon an editorial formula, a balance of content, which he repeats issue after issue. So it is with radio and television, in which the programming of one station is much like that of every other.[153]

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[153]Peterson, 60.

The point is that the formulas worked for producers, advertisers and consumers. And, in the case of the consumer in an increasingly visual society, the habit factor was most important in keeping the family magazines alive.

> Role, habit, and custom . . . influence media choices . . . for it is easier to continue behavior patterns than to change them. Eliot Freidson has suggested that one selects media content from habit or under pressure from one's social groups. Communications behavior, in fact, becomes a part of social behavior, and some selection of media fare is really just a habitual social act. For example, only about one person in five in a movie audience may have made any conscious effort to choose that particular movie. A young man may take his date to the movies on Saturday night simply because going to a movie is what the young people in their group do on Saturday night. A midwestern couple may read the Sunday edition of THE NEW YORK TIMES because others in their social group do. A family may subscribe to a magazine out of habit long after keen interest in it has died.[154]

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[154]Peterson, 137.

We have seen the magazines' obligations to consumers under the formulas they adopted to meet their roles. The formulas themselves were highly similar due to the

similarity of the consumers the magazines reached. One role has dominated all of the others: the reinforcement of moral values is an integral part of information, entertainment and escape in family magazine fiction. It is also readily apparent in the bland editorial sections of COLLIER'S and POST and is implicit in the magazines' function as "consumers' showcases."

The fulfillment of all of these roles led to an increasingly ritual-oriented audience for the family magazines. We noted earlier that subscription lists remained relatively constant for all the family magazines, probably representing a large percentage of ritual readers. Moreover, these readers felt a close relationship with the magazines and did not hestiate to voice approval or disapproval. Had nothing else changed, these ritual readers might still be sitting down weekly or bi-weekly with their favorite magazines. Of course, many things did change, as shown in earlier chapters.

This chapter showed the consequences of at least one magazine's alienation of its ritual readers. Despite all of the bad feelings surrounding the POST's death, however, the magazine has reappeared in quarterly form. From all indications it is once again prospering. The best explanation for this successful renascence is in terms of the ritual reader who, after a two year moratorium,

can once again have "his" magazine . . . even if less frequently.

It was on the basis of the six goals discussed in this section that the family magazine's peculiar relationship with the American people was built. None of these areas, by itself, could produce a love affair of such huge proportions--and a love affair it was. The coldness of the newsmagazine does not invite the closeness Americans had with COLLIER'S, LOOK and POST. Our needs for short fiction of the family magazine type are now being met by television. The American people would hardly accept a magazine with nothing in it but editorials and advertisements for new products, much less for a magazine of morals. Escape, by itself, does not really offer sufficient base for a magazine, except of the very sensational variety. Yet all of these items in correct proportion, covered with a protective moral shield, offered the American people an irresistible package for many years. The recent success of the POST is evidence that the package is still a sound one, if uneconomical on a weekly or bi-weekly scale. America still has no one popular medium that fills our multiple needs as well as the family magazine did. Television has now taken over the role--but its success is due to a combination of technological and economic factors, not to a sudden shift in American mass values.

V

CONCLUSIONS

This study has offered examinations of the major problems that beset the family magazines, and the problems were many and overlapping. As suggested throughout the paper, the problems were organic; that is, they accrued to the family magazine genre as a whole and to the obligations of the family magazines. None of the problems is alone sufficient explanation for the death of the genre; rather, the problems indicated were synergistic. Basically, the problems of the family magazines fall into the three broad spheres of the magazines' obligation: (1) obligation to readers, (2) obligation to advertisers, and (3) obligation to themselves.

The failure of the family magazines to meet reader needs was a result of failure to fulfill the six basic obligations upon which the magazines' formulas were based. Those obligations are: (1) information, (2) entertainment, (3) escape, (4) assistance in opinion formation, (5) reinforcement of moral values, and (6) provision of a "consumers' showcase." In order to be successful, the family magazines needed to fill those roles in some way that the other media could not. Originally, family magazines

enjoyed a special place based on these roles; that is, they were virtually without competition from other media in their relationship with the American people. But the family magazine formula was unable to adapt to a number of things: the rapid acceleration of an increasingly technological society, the rise of the great youth market, the increasingly "throw-away" nature of American society, and severe inroads by other media on what had been family magazine territory.

The nature of the magazine formula and the limitations of the magazine format were largely responsible for this failure to meet role obligations. Even with greatly improved presses and the use of the "fast close," the time between composition and consumption of the magazine was too great in the face of the increased demands for speed. The necessarily general, bland nature of family magazine contents was not suitable for adaptation to the needs of the under-25 reader, who represented an increasingly rich consumer group. The tangibility and comparative permanence of the magazine was a handicap compared with the intangibility and flexibility of the contents of radio and television in meeting consumer needs. Because of this fact, radio was able to make a shift in basic roles that has allowed it to survive and prosper, while the family magazines were left behind. Attempts to shift the magazines' image, such as Curtis's ill-fated "sophisticated

muckraking" program, succeeded only in alienating the ritual readers who demanded that their magazines appear regularly with recognizable form and content.

Secondly, the family magazines failed increasingly to meet the needs of advertisers. This failure shows the real impact that television has had. As Marshall McLuhan has pointed out, television brought us out of the linear age and into the spatial age of communications. Television has become the most natural form of mass communication in America; when two media compete for the same market, the one that is most attractive and most accessible will win. TV became the first choice of advertisers for several reasons: (1) it had the inherent advantage of a spatial medium; (2) it had tremendous flexibility in reaching specialized audiences, both geographically and by interest groups; (3) it gave the advertiser almost complete control over the response of the consumer audience; and (4) it became increasingly inexpensive to use compared with magazines. Moreover, advertisers knew that television had attracted the family audience away from magazines. This was true because: (1) TV offered "whole-family" entertainment, solving the problems of "Where shall we go?" and "What shall we do?"; (2) TV offered greater "accessibility" for consumers than did magazines; (3) TV brought with it the illusions of "immediacy and truth"; (4) TV had absorbed the magazines' role of presenting various

kinds of short fiction; and (5) TV viewers brought with them far less critical attitudes than did the readers of family magazines. For all of these reasons, advertisers spent more and more on television commercials, less and less on magazine advertisements.

The third major area of failure for the family magazines was in their responsibility to themselves. Many writers have pointed out that the slow corporate pace of the family magazines might be symbolized by the electric-powered trucks used by Curtis that moved about Philadelphia at a stodgy ten miles per hour. Repeatedly, the family magazine publishing corporations expanded vertically, failing to seize the brass ring offered by the newer media. Poor economic planning forced the family magazines into the "numbers race" with other media and pushed them into unwise corporate decisions. The inevitable postal increases were ill-planned for; the magazines had set too high a point of diminishing returns in terms of subscriber lists. Payrolls were enormous, filled with the names of employees waiting for retirement, serving out their days at the leisurely pace of the magazines. Corporate infighting of almost epic proportions brought further chaos into management. POST, for example, went through at least three major changes in image within the last eight or nine years of its life. All of these factors, coupled with rising

costs, interest rates and inflation, added considerably to the pattern of failure presented in this study.

The paper also shows the unique value that the family magazines have for the cultural historian. In their pages we can find out practically anything we need to know about the American cultural situation at a given time. Technology, literary tastes, moral standards, fads and current interests all are there. Most important, however, the magazines show us the tempo of American society. They show us how we were in other, simpler days; nostalgia has a certain value, too. Ben Hibbs, the last truly successful editor of the SATURDAY EVENING POST, put it this way:

> Yet, after all, the world is not entirely composed of hydrogen bombs, juvenile delinquency, race riots, mental institutions, heart disease and cancer . . . I can remember the time when people thought it fun to read.
>
> Why shouldn't we provide our readers with a bit of "escape" to use a dirty word--from the cares of daily life through the vehicle of a buoyant human-interest article or an absorbing story. It is one of our functions, and a highly worthwhile function, I think. There is nothing incompatible in intellectuality and the love of entertainment--in a man or a magazine.[155]

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[155]Goulden, 90-91.

In sum, this is a study of the popular media, or the ways by which the popular arts get into the hands of the consumer. It analyses forces which drove one medium from the marketplace. It shows the tremendous influence of media trends on the popular arts, and shows the

tremendous influence of business interests in the control of the media. Those interests emerge as having been the decisive factors in the burial of the family magazines. America still has no one medium that fills Americans' needs as well as did the family magazines. Television now has taken over the role--but its success is due to a combination of technological and economic factors, not to a sudden shift in American mass values.

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APPENDICES

TABLE 11.--Television in the United States, January, 1969.

	January 1969	June 1967	August 1966	August 1965
Per Cent with Color Sets				
All TV Households	32.0%	19.3%	13.0%	7.4%
One-set Households	22.2	12.9	8.7	4.8
Multi-set Households	54.0	37.2	26.4	17.0
Per Cent with UHF Sets*				
All TV Households	54.9	42.1	33.8	22.8
One-set Households	46.6	35.3	28.3	19.3
Multi-set Households	73.2	60.9	51.3	35.7

Source: Advertising Research Foundation.

*More than half of all television households have sets capable of receiving UHF programs. Multi-set households continue to lead in UHF penetration.

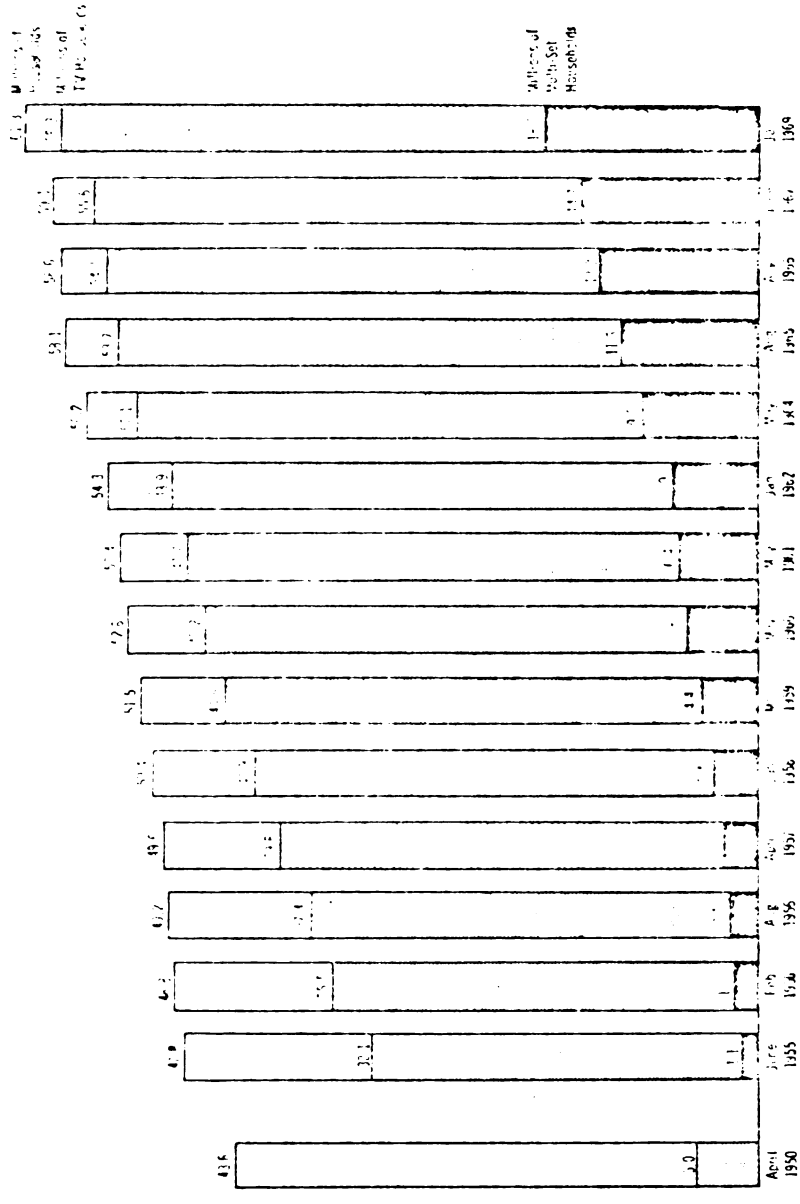

Figure 10.--Growth in television households, 1950-1969.

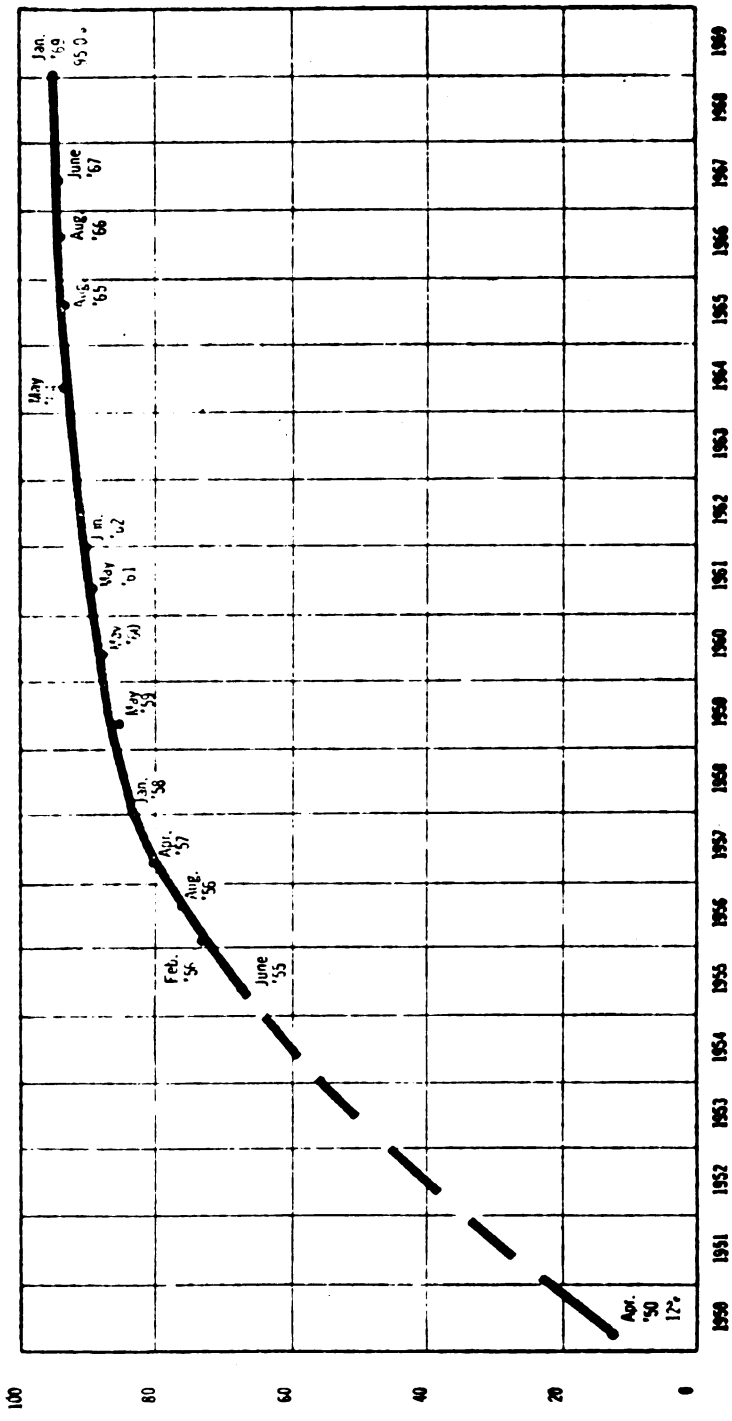

Figure 11.--Growth in television penetration, 1950-1969.

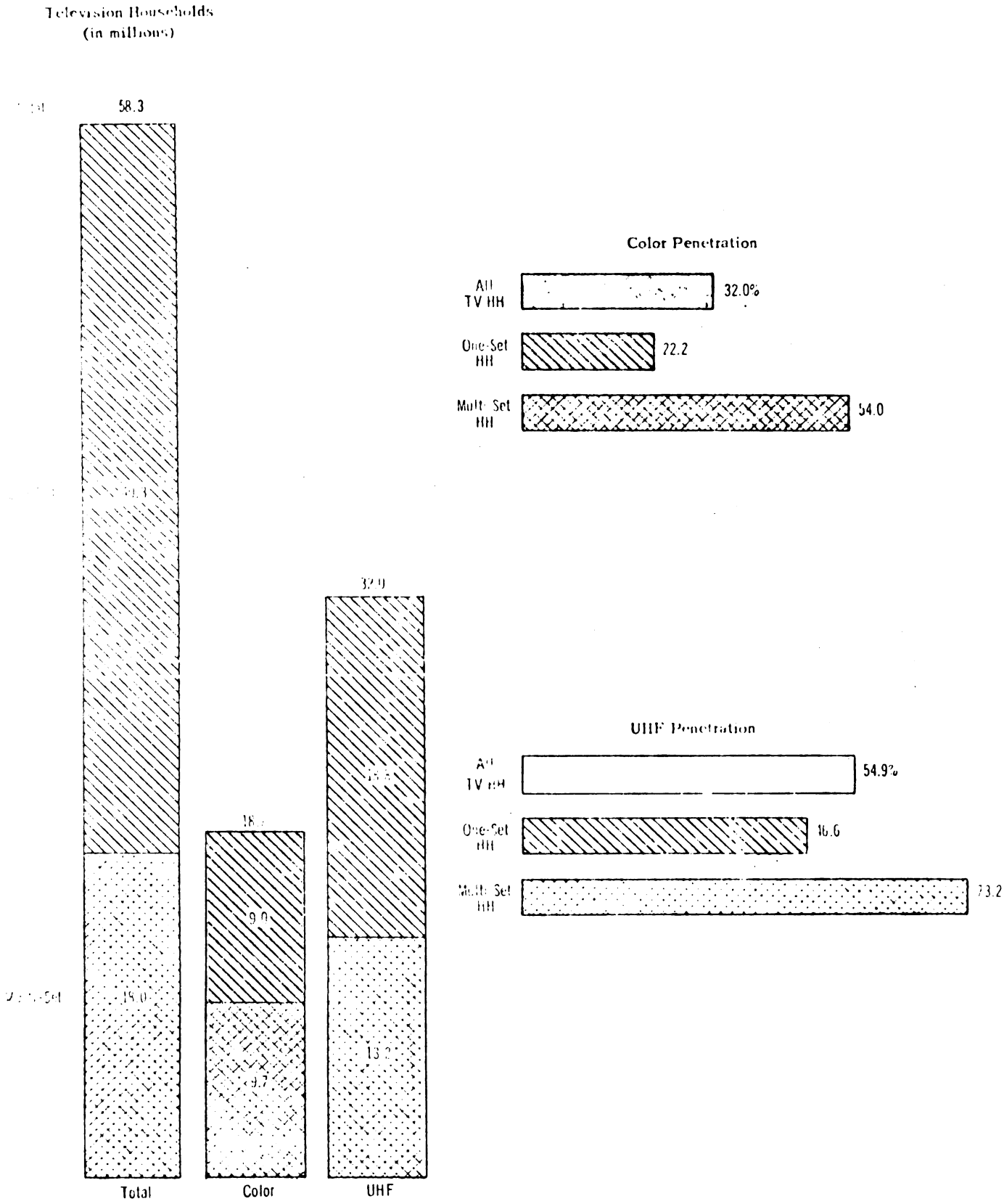

Figure 12.--Television in the United States, January 1969.*

*Source: Advertising Research Foundation.

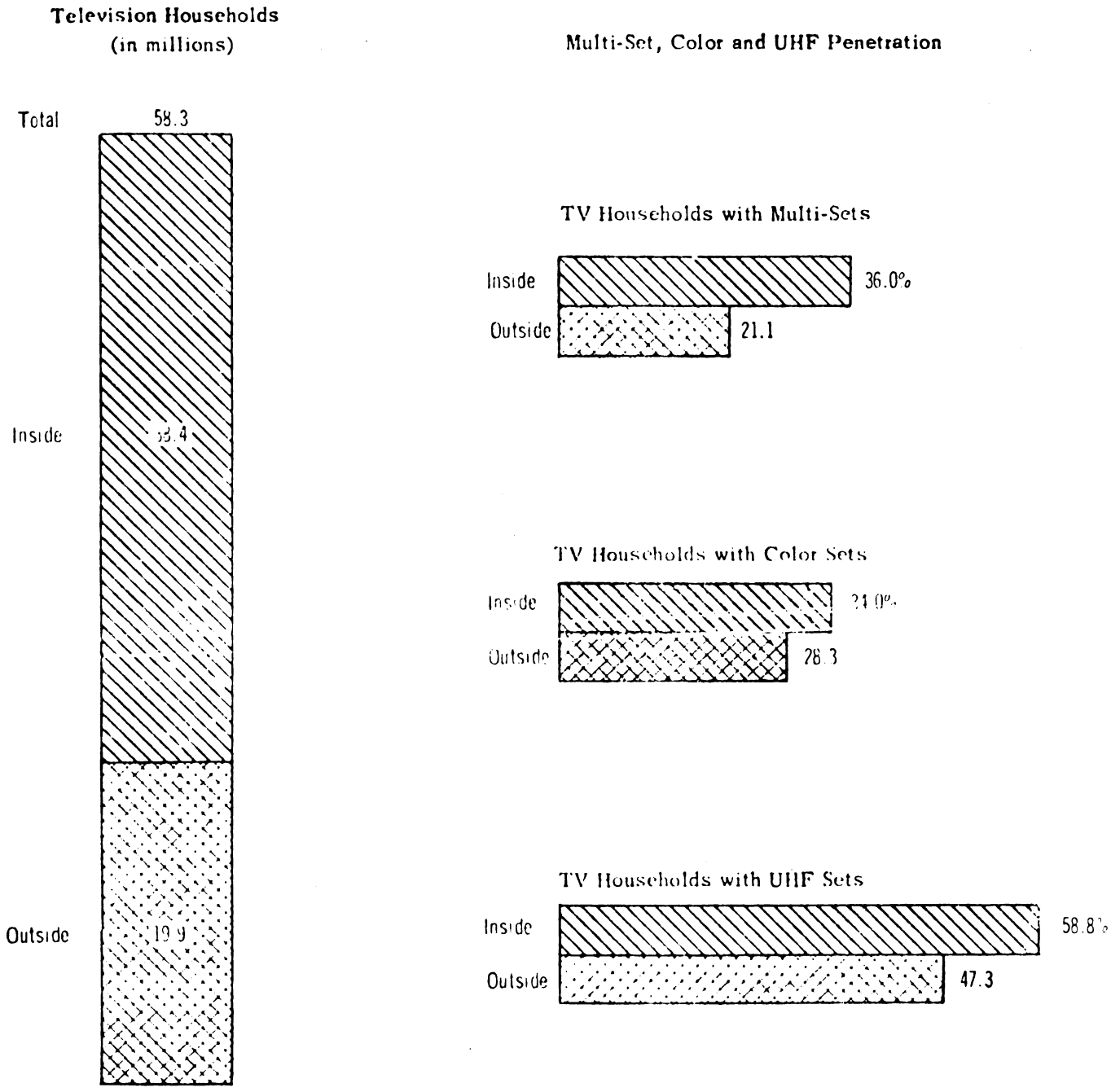

Figure 13.--Inside and outside standard metropolitan statistical areas, January, 1969.*

*Source: Advertising Research Foundation.

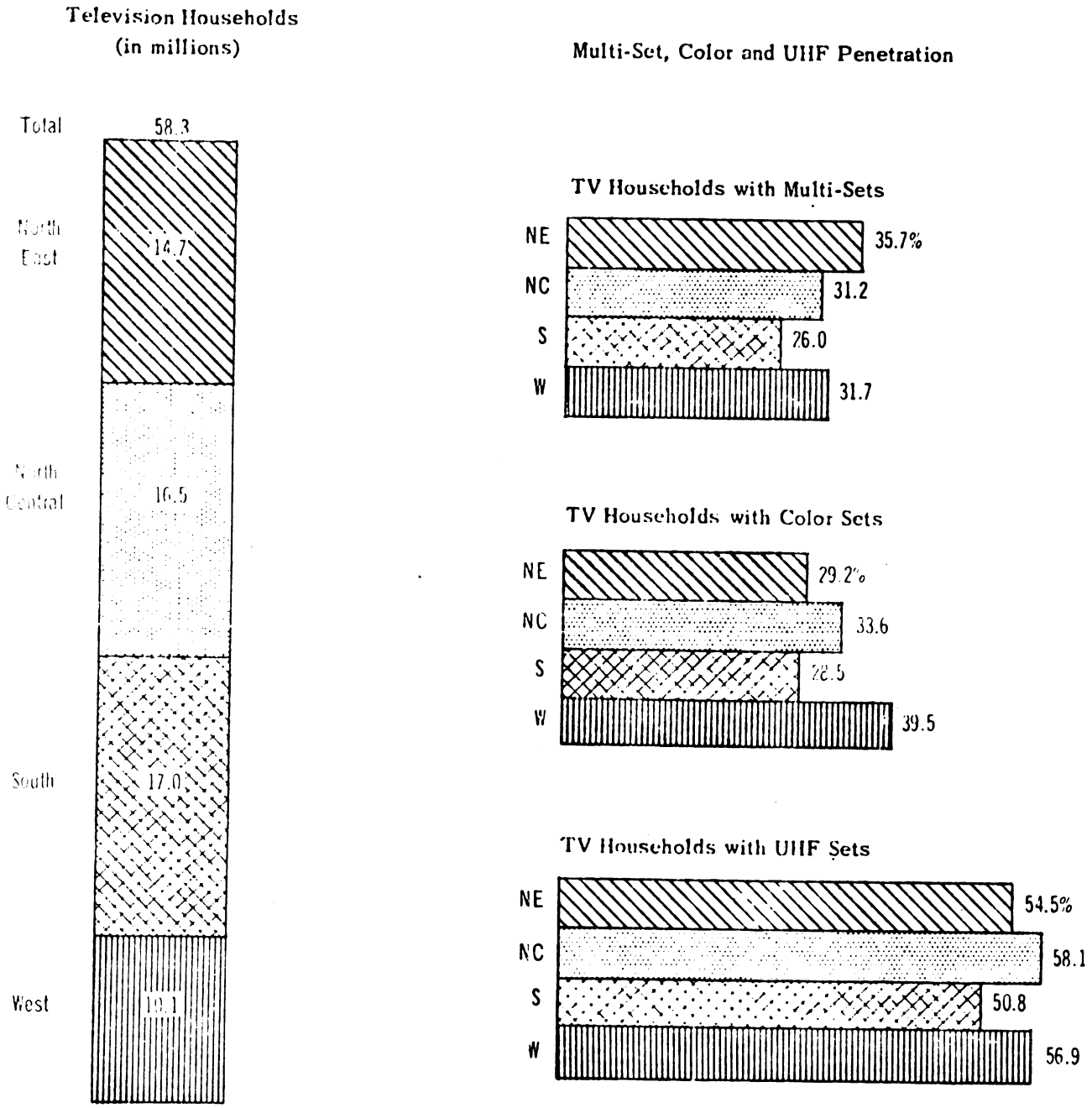

Figure 14.--Census geographic regions, January, 1969.*

*Source: Advertising Research Foundation.

TABLE 12.--Growth of homes owning radio and television (in millions).

	Total U.S. Homes	Radio Homes	TV Homes	Per Cent in TV Coverage Area	Per Cent Owning	
					Radio	TV
1925	27.4	2.7	-	-	10%	-
1930	30.0	13.8	-	-	46	-
1935	31.9	21.5	-	-	67	-
1940	34.8	28.5	-	-	82	-
1945	37.6	33.1	-	-	88	-
1950	42.9	40.8	3.1	56%	95	7%
1951	44.2	41.9	10.0	60	95	23
1952	44.7	43.3	16.0	62	97	37
1953	45.6	45.2	21.2	67	99	46
1954	47.6	46.6	27.7	95	98	58
1955	47.8	47.0	32.0	97	98	67
1956	48.0	47.0	35.1	97	98	73

Source: A. C. Nielsen Co., NBC, CBS.

TABLE 13.--Changes in the circulation of top 30 general magazines* 1946-1954.

Magazine Circulation	Single Issue Circulation (in millions)			Per Cent Increase		
	1946	1952	1954	1946-52	1952-54	1946-54
Cities over 100,000	17.75	19.16	20.48	8%	7%	18%
Other Places	30.67	37.75	40.96	23	9	33
TOTAL	48.42	59.91	61.44	18	9	28
U.S. Civilian Population**	138.34	153.32	160.44	11%	4%	19%

*This table is partly based on data supplied by the Magazine Advertising Bureau, and covers the following major magazines:

**The rate of population growth has been approximately the same in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

American Home
American Magazine
Better Homes & Gardens
Collier's
Cosmopolitan
Esquire
Fortune
Glamour
Good Housekeeping
Harper's Bazaar
House Beautiful
House & Garden
Household
Ladies' Home Journal
Life
Living for Young Homemakers
Look
Mademoiselle
McCall's Magazine
Newsweek
New Yorker
Outdoor Life
Popular Science Monthly
Redbook Magazine
Saturday Evening Post
Time
Town and Country
Town Journal
Vogue
Woman's Home Companion

TABLE 14.--Time spent reading magazines by length of TV ownership.

	Minutes per Person per Day		
	TV Owners with Incomes Under $4000	TV Owners with Incomes Over $4000	All TV Owners
Less than 1 year	8	11	10
1-2 years	8	14	11
More than 2 years	9	15	13

TABLE 15.--Changes in circulation of different magazine categories.*

	% Increase 1940-1946	% Increase 1940-1954	% Increase 1946-1954
General Weeklies (and Bi-Weeklies	+ 26%	+ 67%	+ 33%
News Weeklies	+ 99	+176	+ 39
Other Weeklies-- Small Town	- 23	+ 37	+ 77
Other Weeklies-- Big Town	+ 64	+132	+ 41
Women's Service	+ 19	+ 39	+ 17
Grocery Store Women's	+ 61	+278	+135
General Women's Monthlies	+ 46	+ 69	+ 16
Men's Monthlies	+136	+324	+ 80
General Monthlies	+ 18	+ 61	+ 36
Fraternal Monthlies	+ 60	+138	+ 49
Class Monthlies	+ 32	+153	+ 91
Literary-Political Reviews	+ 97	+392	+150
Home	+ 37	+116	+ 58
Fashion	+194	+320	+ 43
Business	+ 37	+106	+ 51
Youth	+ 82	+186	+ 57
Outdoor and Sports	+ 32	+133	+ 76
Mechanics and Science	+ 62	+141	+ 49
Farm	+ 1	+ 31	+ 29
Negro Magazines	-	-	+281
Romance	+ 66	+ 48	- 11
Screen-Radio-TV	+146	+249	+ 42
Picture Magazines	+170	+ 65	- 39
TOTAL	+40%	+101%	+ 44%

*Based on A.B.C. circulation data.

NOTE: Figures represent December 30th, ABC reports on all magazines published each year.

TABLE 16.--Average production costs of TV programs.

	Production Costs
90 Minute "Spectaculars"	$200,000
One Hour Variety Shows	66,000
One Hour Dramas	36,000
Half-hour Dramas	28,000
Situation Comedies (per ½ hour)	30,000
Quiz, Audience Participation (per ½ hour)	14,000
Daytime Quarter-hour	2,750

Source: Sponsor Magazine, June 27, 1955

TABLE 17.--How advertising expenditures are divided among five major media.

	1935	1940	1948	1952	1955
Television	-%	-%	-%	11%	18%
Radio	11	18	21	15	10
Newspapers	73	63	58	56	56
Magazines	13	15	17	14	13
Outdoor	3	4	4	4	4
TOTAL for Five Media	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: McCann-Erickson, Inc.

TABLE 18.--Trends in broadcast advertising expenditures, by medium and type.

Year	Radio					Television				
	National		Local	Total	Local as Per Cent of Total	National		Local	Total	Local as Per Cent of Total
	Network	Spot				Network	Spot			
1935	62.6	14.9	35.1	112.6	31%					
1940	113.3	42.1	60.2	215.6	28					
1946	199.6	98.2	156.6	454.4	34					
1948	210.6	121.1	229.9	561.6	40					
1950	196.3	135.8	273.3	605.4	45	85.0	30.8	55.0	170.8	32%
1952	161.5	141.5	321.1	624.1	51	256.4	93.8	103.7	453.9	23
1954	114.5	135.4	315.0	564.9	56	417.9	205.2	180.5	803.6	22
1955	90.0	135.0	320.0	545.0	59	520.0	265.0	220.0	1,005.0	22

TABLE 19.--National advertisers' expenditures as a proportion of total advertising (1955).

	National Advertising As a Per Cent of Total
Television	78%
Radio	41
Newspapers	25
Magazines	100
Outdoor	68
Five Media Total	48%
All Advertising*	59%

Source: McCann-Erickson, Inc.

*Including Direct Mail, Transportation, etc.

TABLE 20.--How different kinds of advertisers spend their money (1954).

	Industry				All National Advertisers	All Advertisers
	Food	Appliances	Gasoline and Oil	Automotive		
Television	32%	44%	10%	20%	27%	16%
Radio	12	6	10	6	11	12
Newspapers	29	17	38	44	28	54
Magazines	22	30	16	22	29	14
Outdoor	5	3	26	8	5	4
TOTAL for Five Media	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: McCann-Erickson, Inc.

TABLE 21.--Sources of network television revenues by major industry classifications.

	Per Cent Share of Total
Food and food products	19%
Toiletries and toilet goods	18
Automotive, automotive accessories and equipment	12
Soaps, cleansers and polishes	11
Smoking materials	10
Household equipment and supplies	8
Drugs and remedies	6
Industrial materials	2
Beer, wine and liquor	2
Confectionery and soft drinks	2
Radios, television sets, phonographs, musical instruments and accessories	2
Apparel, footwear and accessories	1
Office equipment, stationery and writing supplies	1
Jewelry, optical goods and cameras	1
Household furnishings	1
Gasoline, lubricants and other fuels	1
Miscellaneous	2
TOTAL	100%
TOTAL $	$406,899,059

Source: Based on Publishers' Information Bureau Data, 1955.

TABLE 22.--Distribution of each magazine's audience on the economic scale.

	Report No. 8 (%)	No. 7 (%)	No. 6 (%)	No. 5 (%)	No. 4 (%)	No. 3 (%)	No. 2 (%)	No. 1 (%)
Of Collier's Total Readers	17% are in the top 10% of the scale	16	15	15	15	17	15	14
	16% are in the next 10% of the scale	16	13	15	14	13	14	14
	33% are in the top 20% of the scale	32	28	30	29	30	29	28
	25% are in the upper middle 20%	25	25	27	26	26	25	25
	21% are in the middle 20%	21	20	20	21	21	21	21
	14% are in the lower middle 2%	16	17	14	15	15	16	16
	7% are in the bottom 20%	6	10	9	9	8	9	10
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Of Life's Total Readers	20% are in the top 10% of the scale	20	19	18	20	20	20	20
	15% are in the next 10% of the scale	15	14	15	14	15	16	17
	35% are in the top 20% of the scale	35	33	38	34	35	36	37
	25% are in the upper middle 20%	25	25	25	23	24	24	24
	19% are in the middle 20%	17	18	19	20	20	20	20
	14% are in the lower middle 20%	15	14	14	15	14	14	14
	7% are in the bottom 20%	8	10	9	8	7	6	5
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Of Post's Total Readers	19% are in the top 10% of the scale	22	19	19	20	20	21	22
	17% are in the next 10% of the scale	16	15	15	15	17	17	16
	36% are in the top 20% of the scale	38	34	34	35	37	38	38
	24% are in the upper middle 20%	23	24	26	23	23	24	24
	18% are in the middle 20%	19	19	18	19	18	19	19
	14% are in the lower middle 20%	13	14	13	14	14	12	12
	8% are in the bottom 20%	7	9	9	9	8	7	7
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Time-Life, Inc.

TABLE 23.--Audiences by economic level.

Group	Magazine	Percentage of the People Reached	Audience
A (top 4%)	Collier's	19.3	850,000
	Life	44.5	1,950,000
	Post	22.8	1,000,000
B (next 11%)	Collier's	15.7	1,900,000
	Life	38.5	4.600,000
	Post	21.9	2,600,000
C (next 33%)	Collier's	13.0	4,600,000
	Life	25.2	8,950,000
	Post	13.9	4,950,000
D (next 34%)	Collier's	7.9	2,900,000
	Life	15.7	5.750,000
	Post	9.0	3,300,000
E (bottom 18%)	Collier's	3.5	650,000
	Life	6.9	1,300,000
	Post	4.4	850,000

Source: Time-Life, Inc.