The Electric Information Age Book

MCLUHAN / AGEL / FIORE AND THE EXPERIMENTAL PAPERBACK

Jeffrey T. Schnapp
Adam Michaels

SUPPLEMENT 1

QUENTIN FIORE INTERVIEWS AND ESSAY

Introduction

Jeffrey T. Schnapp

Quentin Fiore was a man of the written letter, not the spoken word. "I'm not a good public speaker," he avows in the first of two unpublished interviews that follow, "I tend to hesitate and zigzag; that's my natural style."

Fiore felt no such hesitation when it came to lettering and type, domains where the self-taught designer cut his teeth working with the likes of Lester Beall. And when he moved from letters and type to book design, his range of interests was as broad as his approach to design was encompassing and eclectic. For the University of Michigan Press alone, he illustrated Sappho, *Poems and Fragments* (1965), designed covers for Angelica Balabanoff's *Impressions of Lenin* (1964) and *Trotsky: The New Course* (1965), and produced several books in a pop surrealist vein including the English edition of André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (1969). The circle widens further when one steps out into the full orbit of his publishing activities. He designed the austere publications of the Ford Foundation between 1962 and 1967, and shaped both György Kepes' visually taut *Vision + Value* series (1965–1966) and James Moffett's kaleidoscopic *Interaction: A Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading Program* for Houghton Mifflin (1973–1974). He treated George H. Forsyth and Kurt Weitzmann's lavish magum opus on the Byzantine Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai (1973) with classical restraint. During the 1980s, he designed and illustrated conventional limited editions for Franklin

Library that ranged from Homer to Ezra Pound. And then there were one-off collaborations, varied in character, with the likes of Harry Bertoia, James Dickey and George V. Higgins.[1]

The breadth and heterogeneity of Fiore's design portfolio is mirrored by an abiding interest in the history of writing, the sole published trace of which is a learned essay on manual methods of papermaking published by the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in 1958.[2] Other public statements were scattered here and there, especially in the wake of the success of his collaborations with Marshall McLuhan and Jerome Agel. Foremost among them is the collage essay "The Future of the Book," written "in an elliptical and cryptic style which stimulates the perceptual senses in a new way."[3] But, at core, Fiore's reticence was grounded in pragmatism. He prized variety and contradiction. He was reluctant to theorize. Projects were "accounts," however skillfully and thoughtfully carried out. Fiore all too modestly cast himself in the role of the guy who merely "got the job done and done well."

The two interviews that follow were carried out at a time when the generation of graphic artists and designers for whom works like *The Medium is the Massage*, *War and Peace in the Global Village*, *I Seem to be a Verb* and *Do It!* were formative influences, was beginning to craft distinctive narratives of its own regarding the recent history of graphic design. The first interview was conducted in 1988 by the noted designer and prolific design writer Steven Heller, when he was assembling materials that would eventually find their way into works such as the influential *Design Literacy: Understanding Graphic Design* (1997). Heller knew Agel as a neighbor with whom he swapped ideas about prospective books. He first happened upon Fiore's books during the period when he served as art director of *Rock* magazine and was so inspired by *Do It!*'s flip-book devices that he borrowed them for his design

of the Grove Press paperback companion book to *Last Tango in Paris*.[4] The Heller interview was carried out in person, recorded and transcribed. I have ironed out the hesitations and zigzags, shaped the conversation into thematic blocks, and added corrections, clarifications and notes.

The second interview was carried out by J. Abbot Miller, the award-winning graphic designer and writer who, along with Ellen Lupton, founded the multidisciplinary studio Design/Writing/Research and went on to become a senior partner at Pentagram's New York office in 1999. In late November of 1992, Miller was commissioned by the review *Eye* to contribute an article on Fiore to a special issue, guest edited by Heller, dedicated to American design.[5] The interview took place in mid-December 1992 and involved a combination of mailed questions, typewritten responses, and follow-up telephone conversations. In this case, editorially speaking, I have done little more than to smooth out rough edges and add some particulars in the form of notes.

The interviews are accompanied by a reprint of the original 1968 edition of "The Future of the Book." Published in the educational review *Media and Methods* (Dec. 1968) and subsequently reformatted for a book, the essay alternates between scattershot quotations (from Logan Pearsall Smith and Matthew Arnold to George Steiner and William Burroughs), spliced-in newspaper clippings and ads, and Fiore's personal ruminations on the cognitive effects of information overload. The essay's overarching theme is the need for publishers in the cybernetic age to play their cards with a speeded-up informational deck:

> We live in a computer world in which tomorrow is NOW and time is reckoned in *nanoseconds* (millimicro-seconds or billionths of a second of time). Information must be

instantaneous and printout from computers must involve billions upon billions of bits of information, all imploded at the print-out of a single nanosecond.[6]

The theme has a familiar McLuhanesque ring. But Fiore brings to it his direct experience shuttling back and forth between research institutions like Bell Labs and book publishing:

> Such a world alters the most commonplace things, like the publishing of books. Publishing companies are now being acquired by the major electronic giants such as Xerox and RCA. Publishing houses who once published books are now going to publish information, but it will be instantaneous information. Here mass media and TV becomes [sic] central. It is like saying that all the books ever written and ever to be written must become public information in *instantaneous time*.[7]

This altered world of commonplace things is, of course, our own, even if the names of the major electronic giants have changed.

Together with Fiore's essay, these two interviews paint as complete a portrait of Fiore as can be found outside his labors as a designer. Both center on the books of the late 1960s and early 1970s, but situate them within the broader setting of Fiore's era and career.

1988 Interview

**Steven Heller
with
Quentin Fiore**

**edited by
Jeffrey T. Schnapp**

lettering

SH   You were born in New York?

QF   I was: on February 12 , 1920.

SH   Your parents were first generation immigrants?

QF   They were.

SH   And you studied at the Art Students League and were in the same class as Paul Rand?

QF   Yes. As a matter of fact, Rand was sitting next to me one evening and he brought in some colored paper and chalks. George Grosz was abrasive with him; he said something to the effect that this was all too chi-chi and would he please leave. Rand wasn't serious enough for Grosz!

SH   Where did you study with Hans Hoffman?

QF   At the Hoffman School. At the time it was on 8th Street, next to the theatre on the south side. The nightclub in the basement was the Village Barn.[8] I started out wanting to study painting. Indeed, I did study painting, but there were pressing economic problems. I thought "I can't

do both." I started freelancing, doing lettering and type design for Lester Beall, among others.

SH So you were studying painting and faced economic problems. How did doing lettering come up? Was it something you had studied?

QF Not at all. Things were simple at that time: it was either eat or don't eat. I was looking around for something I could do to survive. And there was a lettering artist in my painting class; he encouraged me. Within three months, I was so ignorant that I became successful! I did things no one else dared do.

I built up a small office but had no previous training in the graphic arts, no business experience or anything like that. I did titles and headlines. Oddly enough, people found them fresh and exciting.

SH Aside from Beall, of the designers who were active when you entered the lettering business, were there any who influenced the way you thought or the way you saw?

QF I mostly felt European influences. Lester was alone, along with Rand. Alvin Lustig came along a bit later. You see, back in 1938, I had hitchhiked out to Chicago because I had a letter of recommendation from Georg Grosz to Moholy-Nagy, and I was excited about enrolling in the Bauhaus. My companion was the Minimalist sculptor Tony Smith. We were unknown kids at the time. But I disliked the Bauhaus and returned to New York.

SH How come?

QF I didn't want to design pots and pans!

SH So your office's work was in advertising?

QF Initially advertising, but I also worked for a big agency. I handled some publications and magazines as well for Condé-Nast, *McCall's* and others.

general design

SH In those days, rather than set metal type, they would call in a letterer?

QF This is what we did. Then the business grew: it grew so much that I became tired of it and moved on to general design.

SH How do you define general design?

QF The design of publications, layout work, and the like.

SH For whom were you doing interiors and layouts?

QF Mostly, the Ford Foundation. I had a long relationship with them as consultant-designer and did all their publications.

SH Your designs for Ford have a distinctly modern sensibility. Very economical. The croppings of the photographs are in a contemporary vein. Did you draw any lessons from the work you were doing for Ford when you put together *The Medium is the Massage*?

QF No. The Ford Foundation wasn't the only work I was doing at the time. I'm not conscious of any big jump. What was needed was a kind of parsimony, a tautness. So that's the look I sought.

I was also a consultant-designer to *Life Magazine* as well as to Bell Labs and NBC/RCA, and was involved

in the development of the early picture-phone, called the Homefax.[9] It was a technology whereby images would be displayed on the screen, and transmitted via circuitry, and then xerographically printed.

SH   In the case of the Homefax was the technology all set to go?

QF   It was set to go. But, as is often the case, the credit system stood in the way. Large corporations are generally incapable of moving. How do you pay your debt and go on with production while investing in research and design without some sort of external force like a war pushing you along? Most of these technologies were developed many years ago but are still struggling to reach the market.

SH   In your work for NBC/RCA and Bell Laboratories, why did you stay rooted in print and not branch out into other media like television?

QF   I did branch out. I directed a film for Bell Labs as well as some model television commercials for Gulf & Western. But I didn't like it. I'm not entirely at ease with the technology and prefer to work alone. Too much time was spent on preparations and I didn't much like the atmosphere or the people. People in book publishing are more pleasant.

SH   And you have more control over the product.

QF   It's also less competitive, in the negative sense of the word. The films for Bell Labs were difficult. They were educational films that had to fit into four modules. This marked the beginnings of the grid system and they needed to develop training programs.
      At Gulf & Western, the films were for the bicentennial. They were never used, because they were judged

too "creative." The word "creative" meant "this interview is over, thank you."

SH   Did it imply too much of a point of view?

QF   It implied too much sophistication. When Gulf & Western first moved to New York City in 1970, they asked me what they could do to enhance their public image. Their building at 15 Columbus Circle had just been completed. I suggested that three floors of the building be set aside as a kind of city for single mothers working for the company. These floors could consist of a clinic, a supermarket, a playground and a school. This didn't go over well. End of story.

aesthetic ideals and practicalities

SH   What were some formative readings leading up to the *Massage* period?

QF   One book that was important to me was Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato*.[10] The title makes it sound a bit heavy, but it proved surprisingly apropos. Another was by a writer who isn't well known in the United States, but I consider him very important: Jacques Ellul. In particular, his book on propaganda.[11]

SH   What about your design point of view, your aesthetic stance: did it develop along modernist or eclectic lines?

QF   It was empirical. That is, I felt like a vaudevillian. My experiences were varied and rich because I'd work on one project and, then, within a day, on another. They would contradict one another's fundamental design principles.

SH So there was no ideology that you jumped into?

QF No. I just went in there and did what I was asked to do. You know the joke about the comedian Harry Langdon?[12] A professor was working on a study of humor and wanted to interview Langdon. This proved difficult because, by that time, Langdon was broke and working in a fast-food joint in Southern California. The professor came in at a busy time; people were shouting hamburger orders. When asked about how he prepared for his act, Langdon said: "No idea— I just went out there and did my act." That sums up my view.

You see, the need for an aesthetics of design is a rather recent development: a good one, I might add. But at that time, it was catch-as-catch-can.

SH So you got into lettering in the late 30s/early 40s and then into general design work in the later 40s?

QF Yes. Lettering was dying out and photo-lettering taking over.

SH Did you find yourself intrigued with or involved in new technologies as they arose?

QF Not particularly, because I was too damn busy. Independent of my work, of course, yes. I was pretty alert. But I became so busy that I was always exhausted. I had to take time off. In the 50s I drifted increasingly into classical book design.

SH How were your designs for the university presses distinct from what you did with your later books with Marshall McLuhan and Jerome Agel?

QF I found this work really interesting. The word contradiction comes to mind. Designing is like show business.

You have to convey a message. It isn't a matter of expressing yourself. I don't know, maybe I am particularly attuned to swings in style or emotions or whatever you want to call them. A designer like Rand did very distinguished work. Each of his projects has a strong Paul Rand stamp. Mine less so.

On which topic, the person who really made it possible for me to do lettering was Beall. I did all of his lettering in the early postwar.

SH I'm surprised because much of the work that I've seen of Beall's looks like it was typography done from out of the type case.

QF The problem was to import foreign types where you had very extended or condensed faces. They were only available in the United States from jobbers who had wood type. Right after the war's end a firm started up called Amsterdam Continental who were importers. I could do it faster and cheaper, however.

SH So you would take on a sans serif face and render it like a Futura or a Metro?

QF Exactly. That was mostly what I did for Beall. If you find an extended, condensed, or open face in his layouts from the period, that's me.

SH That's amazing.

medium to massage

SH I'd now like to talk about your collaborations with Marshall McLuhan and, later, Jerry Rubin and Buckminster Fuller.

QF By that time, I had been designing a lot of university press books. It was comfortable and steady work: less hectic and demanding than the lettering work, both emotionally and in terms of time.

SH And these university press books came at what point?

QF In the early 60s. I also read a great deal at the time. I was commuting very long distances; the only way to keep one's sanity was to read. Then the McLuhan project came about that became *The Medium is the Massage*. I began to think in terms of forms other than the accepted ones. Playing around with visual axes and sequential presentation. I wanted to experiment and this was a great opportunity to do so.

SH Had you been aware of McLuhan's ideas before?

QF Yes. McLuhan was on my radar; *Understanding Media* had come out.

SH How did you get this project?

QF There was a neighboring publicist, "packager" and editor; the publisher of a newspaper entitled *Books*. His name was Jerry Agel. I recall a conversation asking whether he would do the agentry for me. I'm trying to think back. We felt that it was time for some kind of big change, for new forms of expression. It was in the air. I was fortunate to be there.

SH Did you generate the idea for the book and for the collaboration?

QF I generated it to the extent that I talked with Agel and suggested that maybe McLuhan and I could work

together. I had some ideas. Agel worked hard to make this all come about. Most people were indifferent. I mean, they knew the name McLuhan, but they thought he was a flash in the pan. They also thought *Massage* wasn't really a book. I mean, publishing is an industry and publishers don't want to disturbed.

SH How did you formulate these ideas?

QF It was a response to the text. I felt that Marshall was writing against books with sequential pages. My thought was: why don't we make a book that organically reflects McLuhan's arguments?

SH Given this radical notion, you had to develop some radical forms as well. You didn't have any immediate models?

QF I was unaware of any. There were phrases or paragraphs that were honed-down and reduced. But how to express these in terms of pictures?
A good example of these sorts of challenges derives from another of my book designs, *I Seem to Be a Verb*. In a conversation with Jerry Rubin, who was describing an important event in his life, he talked about someone sitting across from him in a subway. He was standing, staring across the aisle, when he read a headline that was disturbing. I realized that, when you look down at it from above, a headline appears upside-down. So I began experimenting with headlines printed upside-down. (The editors and typesetters wanted to know whether I really intended this.)
It's actually an old idea. There are many examples of scrolls in which the illustrations are upside-down, so to speak. So that the elder in the community would read the text, and the communicants, seated in a semi-circle, could

see the moving pictures and thereby participate in the act of reading.

After my realization, I jotted down a paragraph on how all the techniques of individual expression and presentation to date have been dependent on the artist's response to the demands of the two-dimensional picture plane. This includes linear perspective, how we express information in terms of charts and diagrams, and the isometric projections that are found in medieval art and in Asian art. The two-dimensional picture plane has always been there and how you responded to it was your "style." This changes with computer technology whose agility and speed enables projections onto spheres and a wide variety of other surfaces.

SH You alluded briefly to the opposition you encountered when working on *The Medium is the Massage*. Could you talk about that?

QF I don't want to sound ungrateful to the publishers, but the book was so unusual that people were suspicious. From the publisher's point of view, Marshall was the main attraction. They were unused to this amount of artwork in a so-called serious book. They probably thought something like "Oh, well, let's just get this one out," which is understandable. They didn't bend over backwards to ply me with scads of money to pay for the needed retouchings.[13]

SH Given the constraints of technology at that time, how difficult was it for you to do this? Was this a letterpress or offset book?

QF It was offset.

SH What were your constraints?

QF I didn't have photo-lettering, for instance, or the new computer lettering. There were instances where I wanted to kern the type but ran into objections. There were still feelings about the "proper" presentation of type.

SH Canons of legibility?

QF Yes and rules regarding paragraph indentations, point size and all the rest. The photos were stock photos. I had a budget but, by the standards of modern book-making, it was extraordinarily modest, even chintzy. Ditto for the artwork. We had to do major arm-twisting.

SH Were there things that you had conceived that you just couldn't accomplish?

QF If I were to do the book today, I would do it quite differently. However, it would not have the same raw vitality.

SH So as you said before, you just went out on stage and did it.

QF Quickly so: in two to three weeks.

SH Two to three weeks?

QF Well, I knew my script!

SH As concerns McLuhan, you basically laid out the book and then showed it to him?

QF Yes. We had conversations generally describing the book. But, at that time, Marshall was nearing the peak of his popularity. There were big demands on his time. He was not available for discussions or interviews. In New York, I was running a design business, and he was flying

all over the place, to Chicago, etc. I did go to Toronto, but only when we were preparing the *War and Peace* book. Otherwise, no. It was shown to him before press time and he had the final say.

SH Did he feel that your interpretation of his thinking was as it should be? Or did he feel that you had brought something to it that he was unaware of, given that he was a wordsmith?

QF McLuhan was a very sophisticated person. Some of his earlier Canadian publications, like *Explorations*, had used photo-lettering.[14] I remember one headline set in a parabolic form. In the case of *Massage*, he scrutinized every spread and agreed to everything. I don't recall that anything was rejected.

SH For you what was the most important achievement that came from designing *The Medium is the Massage*?

QF Well, aside from a lot of personal satisfaction, the possibility of travelling. It was the first time that I got off my butt and really traveled.[15] I do recall a lot of resentment. People suspected that that book was a put on.

SH That it was a sham philosophy?

QF Exactly. I gave some talks and I'm not a good public speaker. I tend to hesitate and zigzag; that's my natural style. I sometimes got rough treatment. I recall a talk at the Boston Society of Printers.

SH The Boston Society of Printers was objecting to the rules you had broken?

QF The Society wasn't objecting per se; it was they who had invited me. Just individuals in the audience. I had never talked to large groups and, believe me, they were suddenly large. I discovered that there is a floating population of people who resent everything, who go to lectures just to heckle.

SH But was the resentment geared towards your interruption of the flow of pure text? Was it against the typography?

QF They thought it was flippant and superficial: everything that a book shouldn't be. This was deliberate, of course. I wanted "to let them think" and considered humor fundamental. But, frankly, the book also received a lot of support.

SH Where did the support come from?

QF Mostly from the university world—especially, professors of Comparative Literature. The design people came later.

SH Where did the title come from?

QF From McLuhan. What McLuhan intended by "massage" is that technology takes over us completely. To some people this seemed demeaning: to think that a piece of junk like a television or computer can change their lives. I mean, they couldn't understand how man fashioned the shovel, and then the shovel proceeded to fashion man. Many people can't stomach this.

SH Except McLuhan felt that these things would bring man back together in a kind of tribal unity that hadn't existed for ages.

QF   As for myself, I didn't consider it particularly benev-olent. Norbert Weiner, the cybernetic philosopher/math-ematician, actually came out with a title that preceded *The Medium Is the Massage*: namely, "Organization as the Message." I think the phrase is found in *Cybernetics*.[16] But Marshall was extraordinarily articulate. He had a great command of the English language. At one point, he gave a lecture at Columbia University. At the end of the lec-ture there was some professor who got up and listed 24 contradictions. Marshall reminded him that contradiction presupposes two or more ideas. So that meant 12 ideas in one hour, which was not bad.

war and peace

SH   Sounds like some pretty fast thinking! After *Massage* came *War and Peace In the Global Village*.

QF   That's correct.

SH   How did this project come about?

QF   It was a continuance of our relationship. It was a milder book and I didn't play as great a role.

SH   It's a fascinating book, nonetheless. I borrowed from it in my own design work in later years. Maybe it didn't have quite the breadth of *Massage*?

QF   *Massage* is more like an icon, if you will. It reduces complex ideas to simple signs, glyphs, patches of text and so on. And this is what I intended it to be.

SH   *War and Peace* seems to offer a more documentary approach to the visuals.

QF   I was intrigued with this idea from the point of view of craft, of how to change standard conventions. This was difficult because there were questions of professional sta-tus in the mix: the sorts of issues that every author and performer faces. I don't care who he is, anybody who has anything to say *has* to take the reactions of his audience into consideration.

SH   So who did you think your audience was? Didn't you ever think "this is a book for people who are of age 35 or younger"?

QF   We wanted the broadest possible audience. I don't know that much about publishing markets and I don't want to! You have to remember the times. The Vietnam War was going on. There were new forms of expression and protest. There was the Free Speech Movement.

SH   Did the Free Speech Movement have any connection to what you were doing with the manipulation of words?

QF   Not particularly. Tradition and censorship were still big factors. For example, you simply couldn't use a four-letter word. It's also worth remembering that, even as I was doing these experimental books, I was developing a growing reputation, ironically, as a designer of classical books. So I could see all sides of the argument.

SH   Around this same time, you published "The Future of the Book," which first appeared in *Media and Methods* and was later reprinted with an introduction in *The Future of Time*. In your introduction, you state that you "write in an elliptical and cryptic style." I actually found the piece pretty linear. Maybe it's just the way my brain works.

QF   If so, as the saying goes, I'm not responsible!

doing it and other verbiage

SH   You're off the hook. After *War and Peace* and "The Future of the Book" came *Do It!*?

QF   Correct.

SH   How did that project come about?

QF   Jerry Rubin approached me at the time of the Chicago Seven trial and wanted to publish a book.[17] There was a lot of controversy about the in-court behavior of the seven defendants and the judge. I decided to do it. The title is mine in this case. I worked closely with Jerry.

SH   Did you like Rubin?

QF   I did. He was very pleasant and well spoken.

SH   Did you subscribe to the same ideas at the time?

QF   Not all of them, but I did to the Chicago Seven's objections to the war.[18]

SH   Regarding the aesthetic of the Rubin book, it seems more cinematic than any of the others you had done. Would that be a correct assessment?

QF   You mean that it was more like a flip book?

QF   Yes, it had more movement.

QF   That would have been a wonderful solution, but no one wants to do flip books because they're identified with kids. I once had a similar idea for a book by a microbiologist. He thought the notion was silly and that was the end of that.

SH   In the case of the Rubin book, the point I wanted to make is that the underground press aesthetic was pure anarchy on paper. Nobody knew what the hell they were doing; they were just getting it down and out. Your ideas solidified things. They provided the underground press with a less anarchic, more structured format.

QF   I was working within a structured environment and context. I had great respect for the underground press because, in many ways, they were far more imaginative than I could ever be. They were also freer. The *Massage* book was backed by major publishers. They worried about advertising, audience reactions, copyright and potential lawsuits. The underground press didn't work under any of these constraints. It couldn't be sued because, in order to litigate something, you had to have money to begin with; otherwise why sue? My activities were always being monitored.

SH   How did your friendly relationship with Rubin contribute to the design work stream?

QF   My agreement with many of the views that Jerry expressed at the time smoothed the way. Second, it was a happy working relationship. I wasn't pulling teeth, as was often the case with commercial jobs. Things went quickly. We were done within a month. I've worked on jobs that took much longer and were in no way as exciting. But again, these were the times. One had to trust in one's response to immediate data.

SH   How did this compare with the design process for *I Seem To Be A Verb*?

QF   Well, it was much like that for the *Massage* book. A lot of physical labor was involved. By that time, I had to farm

out a lot of the work and the preparation of mechanicals. I never found Fuller all that congenial. Let me rephrase this: the relationship was not as admiring on my part nor nearly as exciting. Perhaps this was because Fuller had a dry turn of mind.

SH A more precisionist, regimented turn of mind?

QF I was about to say "arid," but I prefer your less judgmental labels: yes, precisionist, regimented. There was a missing component that is important to all artistic works: the element of contradiction, of ambiguity.

SH Since you are so adept at creating letter forms, did you create any of your own forms for books like *Massage*, *War And Peace*, *Do It!* and *Verb*? Or were these set on a Typositor?

QF I don't think anything is from the Typositor and I don't recall doing any lettering. It's odd that people single these books out. I always considered them little more than jobs. They got done and done well and that's it.

SH I think the special interest in those books is attributable to the fact that some of the things one produces in the course of one's career become icons, others are sadly forgotten and others still are mercifully forgotten. Constituencies play a key role. For me personally, those books are significant because of the time in which I grew up and what they meant during that era.

QF Doubtless, generations from now they will look very different.

interactions

SH Let's talk briefly about a few of the projects you worked on later. I have sitting in front of me various materials related to your subsequent design work on *Interaction: A Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading Program*.[19]

QF That was an innovative reading program developed by James Moffett who was a leading authority on the teaching of reading and writing.

SH Aimed at what kind of audience?

QF Children from preschool through high school.

QF There were nearly 200 books involved, all of which had to be dealt with in a single year. Each grade had about five books, all relating to the state curriculum. However, each had to be designed very differently so that a child could approach the desk and pick whatever he or she found most attractive. I had to do them ultrafast. I did them alone with only one secretary and no assistants.

SH What year was this?

QF The early 70s. Except for the first meeting, I never went to Boston. I just started to work, sending layouts at the end of every day. They consisted in preliminary sketches, then comps, then type specs: the whole works! Their art staff and production staff would carry them out. There were also some learning toys for the pre-school age group as well as some rather sophisticated third and fourth year essays in anthology form. There was even some experimentation involving interaction with computers (which is something I hammered away on).

SH   Some of these materials seem sophisticated for schoolchildren.

QF   That was very much the point: I didn't want to talk down. We were competing with television. We were competing with toy manufacturers.

SH   So how did children respond to these things?

QF   I think the response was mixed. It was too early for the computer component. I worked very hard for a year, producing close to 200 books. All of the typography in each book was illustrated. I had to suggest illustrators to the art editors and tell them what I wanted. Each paperback consisted of up to 92 pages. Some were set in metal type.

SH   But it was printed offset?

QF   Of course.

SH   And what about the books in György Kepes' *Vision + Value* series.[20] Did you design them?

QF   In part. I worked for George Brazillier whose art staff carried out the bulk of the work. There were six volumes. I received a foot-and-a-half-tall stack of photographs, all told. I fully designed the jackets.

SH   Those books were very interesting, not to mention influential. Was Kepes' point of view as an editor something that you agreed with?

QF   It wasn't my job to agree or disagree. My job was to come up with the best possible, most appropriate design. This is what I did.

SH   Let me ask you this, though. You had knowledge of the technology that was available. You also had a vision of what you wanted to accomplish in the realm of design. Given the technology available today and given the fact that you are now retired, is there any longing on your part to get involved once again in experimentation?

QF   Not particularly. I am tending my garden, so to speak. As a matter of fact, it's the happiest time of my life. I don't look back. The pressures were enormous. There were things I would have done differently, of course, but everybody shares this thought. My main passion these days has nothing to do with book design: I spend my time thinking about ethics and art.

1992 Interview

J. Abbott Miller
with
Quentin Fiore

edited by
Jeffrey T. Schnapp

AM What is your general background in design?

QF I felt instinctively drawn to letter forms very early, and began my career in the graphic arts field as a free-lance lettering artist. I am self-taught. My sole training consisted in the hours spent at the public library. It was during reading sessions there that I came across Edward Johnston's seminal work *Writing & Illuminating & Lettering*, then known only to a small group of lettering/calligraphy enthusiasts in the U.S.A.[21] During this time I was also introduced to both the critical and historical writings of Stanley Morison, Daniel Berkeley Updike, Eric Gill, Alfred Fairbank and to Jan Tshichold's revolutionary early work *Typographische Gestaltung* in which the author set forth his (then) theory of asymmetric typography.

My exposure to new concepts in painting greatly influenced my graphic arts work, along with European graphic arts publications like *Gebrauchsgrafik* and *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, which were becoming available in the U.S.A. before the war.

Very cooperative compositors, engravers (letterpress), and pressmen rounded out my training period.[22]

AM How did you and McLuhan first come to collaborate?

QF In a discussion of *Understanding Media*, I recalled having read an article on communications before the war

which appeared in *View*, an American surrealist review. This conversation prompted me to ask Jerome Agel, a publicist, "packager" and publisher of *Books*, a monthly newspaper dealing with publishing matters—Agel had previously done some public relations work for me—to ask Marshall McLuhan if he would be interested in working together on a picture/textbook based on some of his thoughts.

It seems incredible now, but interesting publishers in such a project proved to be a lengthy and discouraging process. After months of bickering, Bantam finally agreed to publish *Massage*, along with Random House (for the hardbound edition).

AM   You are given equal billing with McLuhan in *The Medium is the Massage*. What was your role? Were you both writer and designer? What about *Do It!*?

QF   There was no special, original, manuscript for the book. The idea was to select McLuhan's views from previous publications, heavily editing them and presenting them in isolated "patches"—i.e. individual pages or double-spreads with appropriate art work—all with a view towards producing a more appealing presentation that would be accessible to a wide public.

In the case of *Do It!*, Jerry Rubin asked me to help in putting together his book. We would meet at my office on weekends when he was free to fly in from Chicago, where he was on trial in federal court.

AM   Were there any precedents in design or publishing for what you and McLuhan were doing?

QF   The early work of Jan Tschichold, Marinetti, Wyndham Lewis (in *Blast*), Raoul Hausmann, John Heartfield, Guillaume Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, concrete poetry,

much of Dadaist typography and, of course, Alice's "tail" page.[23]

I recall seeing an 18th century edition of *Meister Eckhart* in which there were a number illustrations showing layers of die-cut segments of a human figure, each displaying an astrological sign that could be peeled away, very much as a surgeon cuts through layers of flesh, fat and muscle as (s)he operates. Thomas Malton's *A Compleat Treatise on Perspective* (1776) in which there are die-cut copperplate sections of geometrical solids which could be raised from the supporting page and tied together to form a solid so that the reader could use them for the study of perspective shadows is another of many examples, as is the rebus. In the 7th and 8th centuries, the famous *Book of Kells* and *Lindisfarne Gospels*, with their elaborate historiated initials—see especially the *chirho* page in the *Book of Kells*—are further examples. This exuberant spirit was lost with the introduction of standardized mass production methods during the 19th century, when blandness in the appearance of a printed page became the norm.

Anamorphic perspective pictures were also an inspiration.[24] The lampoons of 18th century draughtsmen (Hogarth, Rowlandson, Cruickshank) were yet another influence.

In designing *The Medium is the Massage*, I wanted to avoid the lineality of the standard book and create *iconic* double-spreads, each expressing a particular point McLuhan was dealing with in his books. In fact, I wanted to push the pages much further in the direction of the books I mention above, but was restrained from doing so by production and, especially, cost considerations.

AM   There is a great emphasis on popularization in your work with McLuhan—the use of humor, cartoons and an almost cinematic approach to books—can you describe your intentions?

QF In view of the great changes that were taking place, I felt that utilizing humor would be the most effective way to reach our audience.[25] The book was intended to be *A Guide for the Perplexed*.[26] It had to convey the spirit, the "populist" outcry of the era in an appropriate form. The lineality of the text in an average book wouldn't do. After all, the medium was the message! (In *Cybernetics*, Norbert Wiener's observation was that the *organization* was the message.) The reaction of some in the design community—those with a highly developed moralistic sense—was that the book was "manipulative." But, after all, isn't this what all design is? No one sets out to design unconvincingly.

The cartoons, photos, cinema-like presentations—the so-called illustrations—worked on a number of levels.[27] A central problem of much graphic design is, of course, the relation of word to image. But this can be accomplished in many ways: provoking, disconcerting, etc. are some of those ways. Illustrations that shed light on the text need not be simple redundancies; that is, they needn't merely say visually what is already said in the text.

AM The 1967 issue of *Aspen* magazine that you did with McLuhan included a section devoted to social outsiders, subcultures—bikers, for instance. Could you describe how you and McLuhan viewed subcultures and the reaction to this incorporation of the "other"?[28]

QF Muriel Johnson was the editor/publisher of *Aspen*. She commissioned me to contribute a piece to her review. Marshall played no role in this project. I decided to design a poster because the review consisted of disparate printed items from various contributors: this was the avowed "format" of *Aspen*.

The "other" is invariably the catalyst for change, or at least a barometer indicating a *need* for change. The

"other"—the anti-hero—has been the leitmotif of much art and literature in the past two centuries.

AM Are you familiar with the McLuhan Center in Toronto?

QF All I remember was a very pleasant talk and walk with Marshall. I never worked or studied there. It is now closed—*kaputt*. "No money."

AM The increasingly segmented nature of American society and the rise of various nationalisms throughout the world signal something very different than the infamous global village. What aspects of the current cultural and media environment were *not* anticipated by you and McLuhan?

QF Many families, communities and nations have always been dysfunctional. Now it's the *world's* turn. I think the book was amazingly prescient.

The Future of the Book

Quentin Fiore

The original version of the collage essay published in *Media and Methods* (Dec. 1968): 20–26 is reproduced in the following pages, not the subsequent reformatted version found in Henry Yaker, Humphry Osmond and Frances Cheek, *The Future of Time*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 128–47.

—JTS

Quentin Fiore

the future of the book

near future

foreseeable future

distant future

alternative futures

in the future

000,000 years from now

high-probability future

low-probability future

*People say
that life is the thing,
but I prefer reading.*

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH
"Afterthoughts"

But **so many** books thou readest,
But **so many** schemes thou breedest,
But **so many** wishes feedest,
    That thy poor head almost turns.

     —MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-88)
     The Second Best

Our appetite for information has become so voracious that even our present, high speed printing techniques are incapable of satisfying the need. In a decade, information will have become so abundant that it will have to be transmitted by methods other than print, or remain in a state of perpetual suspension. The priority given to timely books alone (assassinations, presidential commission reports, political biographies, etc.) is already playing havoc with the production schedules of a number of publishing houses. One can imagine the staggering amount of information that will be available in ten years, much of which will become obsolete even before it reaches the composing room! The National Library of Medicine in Bethesda indexed almost a quarter of a million technical articles, books and monographs last year; the nation's space program yearly adds more than a million pages of technical data to the pile. Scientists and engineers turn out more than a million reports, articles and publications annually. These huge amounts of published material are expected to double in only five years—discounting rebuttals!

Various responses to this lust for more and more information are now, or will soon be, available.

Some of these methods, developed to transmit words and pictures faster and more economically, have already begun to wipe out the present clutter of operations and apparatus between copy and printed page. Some communications technologies that will be available in the foreseeable "high-probability" future:

12345678 123456

—Computer-driven cathode ray tube printers capable of composing text of graphic arts quality at speeds up to 6000 characters a second.

—Microprinter—a xerographic device that previews microfilm images on a screen and enlarges them onto ordinary paper.

—Advanced typesetting methods that can set composition for an entire encyclopaedia in only a couple of days—and with as many different type faces, weights, etc., as are needed.

ALL HAIL THE WITCH DOCTORS

DAR-ES-SALAAM, Tanzania, Feb. 22, 1968 (AP).—Seven witch doctors who became angry with villagers refusing to pay their annual fee for controlling the weather have been arrested for creating hailstorms which destroyed crops.

The incident occurred in the Kibondo district of Western Tanzania. Soon after the villagers refused to pay their usual fees, a heavy hailstorm swept over the region.

The shocked villagers appealed to the regional administration for help, and the witch doctors admitted they were responsible.

Area Commissioner M. A. Msengkazila ordered their immediate arrest. It is intended to prosecute them but the exact charge has not yet been worked out.

. . . such are the hazards of prediction.

It's comforting to think of the future in the singular, and as some sort of reward. No term exists to express "plural possibilities" — many futures living side by side, contradicting and often canceling each other out. We assume that the business of living is a relatively static and orderly affair, and to get some notion of the future, we need only make simple straight-line projections of present trends. The future of THE BOOK?—simple: ". . . it will always be, come hell, high water or McLuhan." (*Good Housekeeping ad*, N.Y. Times, Sept. 17, 1968.)

The FUTURE to most of us means new *things*—"inventions." We rarely think of the new *people* new technologies will shape—people with totally new responses and attitudes.
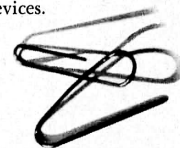
Even the most common realities admit of wholly new perceptions in today's atmosphere of innovation—and often the untrained *naive* eyes see clearest. *What is new is new not because it has never been there before, but because it has changed in quality.*

A witty observer once remarked that life could only be understood backward, but must be lived forward.

    —THAT WAS ONCE UPON A TIME.

We can't understand backward anymore. Few of the guide lines of the past relate to our time. Looking for an O.K. from the past just won't do. Indeed, one of the first victims of the vast changes new communication media have brought about was the change in our "sense of history."

—Computer light-pen techniques that can be "printed" on paper.

—"Data Tablets" (Sylvania) : Draw a picture, and this device will take it from there. As your ball-point stylus writes on the tablet, it creates an electrical field that the tablet converts into the language of numbers computers understand.

—Picturephones: Eyeball-to-eyeball conversations

—Nation-wide facsimile transmission services, capable of transmitting or receiving any printed or written material (photographs and drawings too) . Stations to be located in airports, train and bus stations, hotels, banks, libraries, etc.

—Computers that chatter away directly to warehouses, distributors, customers

—2,400-pound communications satellites, synchronously orbiting over the U.S., serving as relay stations for cross-country TV broadcasting, phone service, data transmission, or any other kind of wireless signals.

—Inexpensive home/office xerox machines.

—"Telepapers" which can broadcast the equivalent of a page of printed material into the home every 10 seconds.

—Talking typewriters: The computer will talk back to you, offering new facts, etc., and print out the words you spoke into it.

—Systems for the dissemination of technical information from a national data center, with accesses by companies and libraries via electronic input-output devices. This device is expected also to be available to individuals by means of home/office consoles.

—Low-cost, 3-D color communications services, reducing need for business travel. No longer "take her a-long!"

—Coherent-light telephone communications sevices.

Selective inattention has always been a popular strategy to avoid thinking about the future.

A nineteenth century German optician once made spectacles to "correct" El Greco's elongated figures, thereby adjusting the master's "astigmatism."

"History," says Norman O. Brown, "is a nightmare from which we have awakened." That nightmare has been replaced by our waking nightmare of accelerated change and information overload. In an environment of rapid information flow, ideas and institutions swiftly become obsolete. As we fix a situation in order to think about it, it changes. No wonder so many of our new attitudes lack a sense of wholeness and grace.

"INSIDE I WAS CRYING, UNTIL I LOST 105 POUNDS."

A. N. Whitehead: *"The rate of progress is such that an individual human being of ordinary length of life, will be called upon to face novel situations which find no parallel in his past. The fixed person for fixed duties, who in older societies was such a godsend, in the future will be a public danger."*

The prospect of change brought about by the swift flow of information has now become so great that we cannot find a point to rest—we're not given a still picture to contemplate at leisure.

THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH!
Spy Output Too Much For Chief.

WASHINGTON, July 9 (UPI)—. . . A House subcommittee reported today that spies for the United States were collecting information so fast that their chiefs did not have time to read it. The backlog, the panel said, may have contributed to recent intelligence failures such as the capture of the intelligence ship Pueblo off North Korea.

* * *

The Defense Appropriations subcommittee said unprocessed reports on Southeast Asia alone recently filled 517 linear feet of file drawer space at the headquarters of the Defense Intelligence Agency . . .

"It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."
LEWIS CARROLL,
Through the Looking Glass

Computer technologists are reported to be very unhappy about present computer speeds. They claim that 16,000,000 moves a second is simply not fast enough to do the jobs that need to be done, and are pressing their search for faster machines. Evidence suggests that the only way to prod these slow-pokes is to reduce their size; then, of course, it takes less time for the electrical signal to travel within the computer. The current logic circuits using miniaturized components receive, process and send electric signals to the next circuit in four to five billionths of a second. This "delay time," hope the physicists, will someday be reduced to five-hundred trillionths of a second, or ten times faster than current circuits.
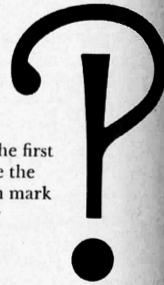
*To-day, To-morrow, Yesterday
With thee are one, and instant aye.*
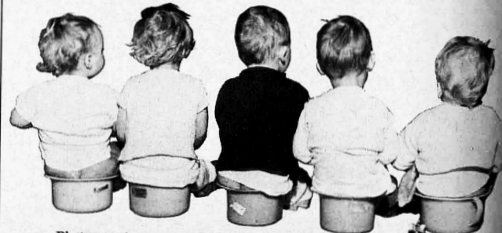—ROBERT HERRICK

Milliseconds

Nanoseconds

Picoseconds

?

Disbelief? Astonishment! The first new punctuation mark since the introduction of the question mark in 1671. An epigram for our times ????? !!!!!

"Find a classic that wasn't first regarded as light entertainment."

—Marshall McLuhan

Photoreporters

Making sense of this overload is becoming our major industry. The New Publisher will have a major role to play—but he will have to learn to play a new game with a new deck. ". . . But this is nothing we've had any experience with." He said, "The rules aren't very detailed or formal. It all has to be very theoretical."

Practical men who claim they're only interested in "facts"—here-and-now facts—really mean they're interested in the future. They're *obsessed* with the future. As self-admitted realists, they gather "facts" —data (varied and often contradictory), and must somehow predict a future that will directly concern them—a future whose benefits and consequences they must know in advance if they are to act with a minimum of risk.

"Millions of Ducks To Migrate Soon, F.A.A. Tells Pilots."

Predictive techniques of amazing accuracy — correlation, sampling, simulation — are now available. These highly sophisticated probes into the future permit us to learn from projected experience without having to suffer the possible bitter consequences of these experiences. Item: *"New Training Devices Help Spacemen to Adapt to Weightlessness. Piston called "Pogo" simulates "hopping" on lunar surface . . ."*

It was only 75 years ago that the Royal Patent Office in Britain seriously considered a proposal to shut its doors, because it felt that everything of importance had already been invented!

"I shudder to contemplate this invasion of the creative writer's and publisher's world as it exists today and I firmly believe that the real essence of the creative work and its formulation, whether it be a novel, a work of history or ideas, will never be supplanted by electronic machinery, sophisticated as it may become."
—Musings of a major publisher.

Even a firm so dedicated to TRADITION as Rolls-Royce has acceded to the spirit of innovation. We learn from a recent press dispatch that the statuette, *The Spirit of Ecstasy*—the lady gayly perched upon the hood of a Rolls, is being reinstated after a year's absence. But this time with a change—she will be mounted on a spring (for safety's sake).
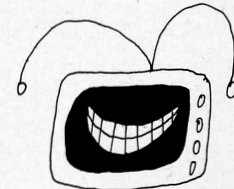

Western Electric

The miracle of microelectronics—18 diodes, 4 transistors and 8 resistors packed into an integrated unit—here shown balanced on the eye of a 2½" sewing needle. The techniques of microelectronics indicate the possibility of someday reducing an entire computer to the size of a postage stamp.

". . . The delicious melodies of Purcell or Cimarosa might be disjointed stammerings to a hearer whose partition of time should be a thousand times subtler than ours, (just as) the edge of a razor would become a saw to a finer visual sense."
—COLERIDGE

And now back to the commericals . . .

"Taut, tense drama filmed on location in Munich. East versus West. Worth watching. Presented by Pepto-Bismol Tablets."

Sophisticated practioners of this totally new art form are in rebellion against the purely visual and "meaningful." Often delightful, often irritating, these short self-sufficient ideograms are truly creative responses to television's challenge.

". . . Their entire stake of security and status is in a single form of acquired knowledge, so that innovation for them is not novelty but annihilation."
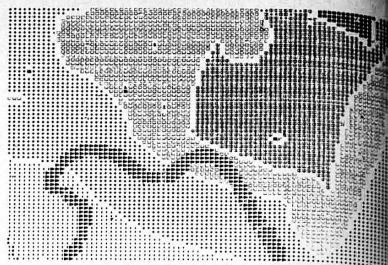—Marshall McLuhan

But, almost in spite of itself, publishing (whose history George Haven Putnam called one of erroneous conclusions), is doomed to succeed.
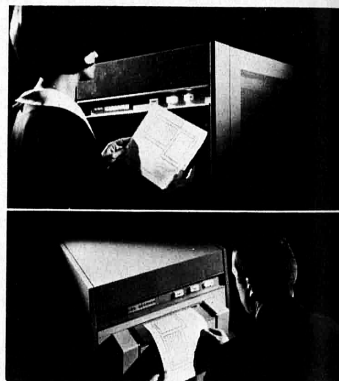
Those who regard publishing as the last bastion of traditional values do it a mammoth disservice. It is historically the one institution that thrives on change. Whereas in the past, the book was adequate to the task of making available information public, in today's mass society it cannot hope to compete with mass media—film, TV, or other means of moving information, "now known or hereafter invented." A mass-ive commitment is now required, and the first dramatic steps are being taken.

In the past decade corporate research in "information technology" has been so intensive that both institutional and individual investors have been almost promiscuous in their eagerness to forego immediate returns on their investments in favor of "growth potential." *Glamor* afforded sufficient lead-time in the investor's quest for megabucks. But this lead time has shrunk drastically. Only a few years ago, new companies with breakthrough products could enter uninhabited markets and could enjoy several years of very high growth in earnings. But today, companies are finding that there is less and less time to exploit their discoveries. INFORMATION theory and expertise has now become a commodity—an article of commerce. Aggressive sales and service

"Speak that I may see you . . ."

A specially trained computer can now speak a designer's highly subjective language with dizzying speed and precision. It can evaluate and manipulate in a matter of seconds complex free form designs which used to be laboriously plotted over days and weeks. The designer can also control every step and every aspect of his sketch as it evolves, "erasing" as the need arises—all without first having to translate his ideas into a highly complex computer language.

LDX (Long Distance Xerography): This new, high quality, high speed device (Xerox) enables you to transmit any printed, written, or drawn document to anyone, anywhere in the country—all in a matter of seconds. A young lady in New York (above) feeds a document into an LDX Printer—the document is then transmitted over long-distance telephone wires, and is received by her boss in Los Angeles (below), on an LDX Scanner. Broadband transmission links join the two units.

Laboratory for Computer Graphics
Harvard University

This tiny two-inch square of plastic contains all 1,245 pages of the Bible—a 48,000 to 1 reduction.

It's now possible to publish a shelf of books, say the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* on 24 two-inch square plastic cards. Costing less than a dollar a set, the subscriber can gaily toss out his old microset as he periodically receives updated "volumes." Every home may someday have microlibraries that contain the entire written record of humanity.

Some thoughts about a magazine's tremendous audience of one.

In the year 2051, when the travel-weary passenger on the moon-shuttle has had his fill of: dinner on the anti-gravity magnetic tray, three-dimensional TV, inter-galactic weather reports and conversational banter with the stewardess, as she floats by—he'll then settle back in his contour couch, and return to that important, private activity each of us does alone. *Reading.* (It will be, we trust, a magazine.)

The act of reading is essentially a process of thinking. It has scan and scope beyond any camera—as you have just demonstrated on the cosmic screen of your own mind. It is a concentratively individual act. An involvement. The reader makes the printed communication happen... releases the magic that causes words on a page to leap into living thoughts, ideas, emotions.

And no matter how many millions may be on the receiving end of the message, it is addressed to, and received by *individuals,* one at a time—each in the splendid solitude of his or her own mind. There, the silent language of print can whisper, rage, implore, accuse, burst into song, explode into revelation, stab the conscience. Or work a healing faith. And so it will always be, come hell, high water or McLuhan.

Aeschylus knew this when he called written words "physicians". And so did Hitler when he burned them. Because mobs roar, but individuals think. They think. They read. And they ask questions that alter the course of the world.
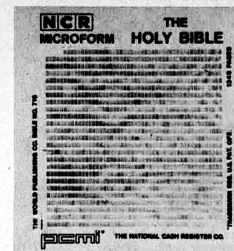
What prompts these reflections is a special occasion taking place today. It is sponsored by an industry devoted to the annual output of billions—no, trillions of words and pictures. It provides: information, instruction, inspiration, religion, science, psychology, philosophy, art, poetry, eugenics, cookery, fashion—along with whimsy and diversion. The occasion is Magazine Day in New York. It celebrates more than the excellence, the vivid beauty and the impact of modern graphics. It pays tribute to the American audience, seemingly boundless in its mental appetite for the best that magazines can offer.

But we would carry the thought and the tribute to that ultimate audience of one. And for good reason.

Never before in our history has the identity of the individual been so obscured by so many collective labels and tags. Take political communications. They're addressed far less to voters than to blocs: southern and northern, urban and farm, blue collar and white collar, left and right, hawk and dove. Almost

forgotten is the idea that on a given Tuesday in November the green curtain of Democracy envelops one individual citizen at a time.

On a larger scale, the headlines that chronicle a day on our planet, betray the same collective reflex. "USSR rejects..." and "U.S. replies..." and even "U.N. declines..."

All of which suggests to us, as magazine publishers, the need for a redoubled consciousness and responsibility toward our citizens as individuals. And a heightened awareness that in our field of communications, the basic relationship is between the magazine and an individual reader.

Our particular reader, considered one at a time, is most usually a wife and mother—the central radiating influence over an American family. To her, the words and pictures we communicate are an idea-bridge; and her response is a communication about herself, back to us. This need for communication—magazine to reader and reader to magazine—is dramatized to us in the voluminous amount of mail and telephone calls received by our editors and by the Good Housekeeping Institute, day after day, month after month.

We think of our magazine as a time-bridge, too. Our faded, tattered copy of the first issue tells us much about that reader of Good Housekeeping 83 years ago. And perhaps 83 years from now, circa 2051, our successors may learn much about our readers and our times from the content, the advertisements, the varied human perspectives to be found in Good Housekeeping and the other definitive magazines of today.

Perhaps those moon-travellers will look back smugly from an era in which cancer is as antiquated as the bubonic plague, and war, as an instrument of international policy, is equally obsolete. We hope so.

On that far-distant day, however, whatever new conditions harass and plague mankind, we have no doubt that the individual will still find within the fortress of self, great comfort and guidance in the civilized, thinking act of reading. There, in the infinite treasury of print the reader will discover not only all that humankind is and does, but what it can hope to be.

Good Housekeeping

We must countenance the possibility that the study of the transmission of literature may be of only marginal significance, a passionate luxury like the preservation of the antique.

GEORGE STEINER

This butterfly is visible to my fingers. To me it is a symbol of immortal things—Faith! Beauty! Friendship!
Helen Keller
1931

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and of having nothing to do; once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "And what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

Alison Knowles' "Bean Rolls Collection"   Published by Fluxus-Something Else Press, Inc., 1962

programs, sudden and strange mergers have replaced R&D. Just as the early utilities could not monopolize the utilities field, which mushroomed because of the demand for new appliances, so the giant telecommunications companies will in turn create any number of smaller independent manufacturers of appliances—a trickle-down process. The larger the animal, the wider the interstices between its toes.

Publishing, that industry of "erroneous conclusions," has leaped into today's world of megabusiness. Recent mergers or joint ventures between electronic giants and long-established publishers —such as the RCA-Random House merger—are more than straws in the wind.

THE LITANY OF CHANGE

From *Forbes*—Impending changes lie behind some of the strange moves made by major American companies in the past year. They help explain why CBS paid a staggering $280 million to buy Holt, Rinehart and Winston, with earnings of only $6.6 million. They help explain ABC's eagerness to merge with ITT. They are a major reason why RCA is working on new methods of printing and typesetting.

Xerox spent $120 million acquiring Ginn & Co. because it felt that this take-over would provide an entry in the "basal" market of coursebooks. They stated, *"We are just beginning to define what we want to do."* In 1966 RCA spent $37.7 million to acquire Random House. IBM purchased Science Research Associates in 1964 for $62 million. General Learning Corporation (1967 sales of $28 million) is owned jointly by Time, Inc. and General Electric.

"We're calming down now. We have a better idea of where we're going."

—Francis Keppel, head of *General Learning*

The secret of being a bore is to tell everything.
Voltaire

William Burroughs: ". . . I've recently done a lot of experiments with scrapbooks. I'll read in the newspaper something that reminds me of, or has relation to, something I've written. I'll cut out the picture or the article and paste it in a scrapbook beside the words from my book . . ."

". . . I've been interested in precisely how word and image get around on very, very complex association lines."

"Writers at Work"
The Paris Review Interviews
3rd series. Viking, 1967

Notes

1. Harry Bertoia, *Fifty Drawings*, (n.p.): Estate of Harry Bertoia, 1980), designed by Quentin Fiore; James Dickey, *Summons* [12 × 15" broadside], (Columbia, SC: Bruccoli Clark Layman, 1988), designed and illustrated by Quentin Fiore; George V. Higgins with Quentin Fiore, *Old Earl Died Pulling Traps*, (Lunenburg, VT: The Stinehour Press, 1984), designed and illustrated by Fiore. Higgins was a noted lawyer who represented both Eldridge Cleaver and G. Gordon Liddy, but is mostly remembered as an author of nearly thirty bestselling crime novels.

2. *Paper: the manufacture of paper by hand,* Tamarind Lithography Workshop, (NY: Whitney Publications), 1958. The only other self-authored piece by Fiore I have come across is a published example of his lettering work: "Letter Form Design, a Genre of Drawing: Working Drawings for Type Designs," *Drawing* 1.3 (Sept./Oct. 1979) 49.

3. The quote is from the introduction that accompanied the republication of "The Future of the Book" in Henry Yaker, Humphry Osmond and Frances Cheek, *The Future of Time*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 128–47. (There is no way to determine the extent to which the author is Fiore or the volume editors.) "The Future of the Book" was initially published in *Media and Methods* (Dec. 1968): 20–26.

4. *Last Tango in Paris: Closeup*, ed. Kent E. Caroll, (NY: Grove Press, 1973).

5. J. Abbott Miller, "Massaging the Message," *Eye* 2.8 (1993): 46–55.

6. From the introduction to "The Future of the Book" in Yaker, Osmond and Cheek, *The Future of Time*, 128.

7. *The Future of Time*, 128.

8. Inaugurated in 1930, the Village Barn nightclub was located in the basement of 52 West 8th Street.

9. This technology is featured on page 12 of Fiore's "The Future of the Book" with reference to Xerox's Long Distance Xerography (LDX) products, which were brought onto the market during the 1960s.

10. Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1963). This, like Ellul's book on propaganda, was also a favorite of McLuhan's.

11. Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, (NY: Knopf, 1965).

12. Langdon (1884–1944) was an American comedic actor who began his career by performing in medicine shows, transitioned to vaudeville, and became a comic star of the silent cinema on a par with Chaplin during the 1920s.

13. In addition to the complexities of the design and the recourse, new to Bantam, to printing the book by duotone sheetfeed offset, there was the matter of how to produce the larger format hardcover with one-plate duotone offset printing. Fiore had to retouch many of the

negatives after they were enlarged as well as reset the text for Random House. On this subject, see "Graphics Convey Message In MEDIUM IS THE MASSAGE," *Publishers Weekly* 191 (April 3, 1967): 64.

14. The reference is to *Explorations* 8 (Oct. 1957), a special issue entitled *Verbi-Voco-Visual Explorations* designed by Harley Parker. The volume was reissued in 1967 by Something Else Press.

15. Among the travels was a keynote delivered to an international congress of advertising professionals in Venice and a week of activities hosted by the contemporary review *BIT Arte Oggi in Italia* in Milan. The visit is described in M. L. Straniero, "Incontro con Quentin Fiore – il medium di passaggio," *Ponte* 25 (1969): 1515-18.

16. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1948; 2nd revised ed. 1961).

17. The Chicago Seven were Rennie Davis, David Dellinger, John Froines, Abbie Hoffman, Tom Hayden, Jerry Rubin, and Lee Weiner, and were accused of inciting to riot, conspiracy and other charges related to protests that took place at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The circus-like trial unfolded in 1969.

18. According to the *Directory of Civilian Public Service* published in 1947 by the National Service Board for Religious Objectors, Fiore (as well as his two brothers, Pasquale and Mario) were conscientious objectors to World War II and went on to serve in four different Civilian Public Service

camps. So Fiore's pacifism predates the Vietnam War era.

19. *Interaction*, published by Houghton Mifflin in 1973–-1974 was a large assemblage of integrated pedagogical materials consisting in: 800 activity cards, 80 hours of recordings, dozens of games, and 175 paperback books of reading materials prepared for the K–12 classroom. The noted educator, James Moffett, was the senior editor of the series.

20. The Vision + Value series included: *The Education of Vision*; *Structure in Art and Science*; *The Nature and Art of Motion*; *Module, Symmetry, Proportion, Rhythm*; *Sign, Image, Symbol*; and *The Man-Made Object*. All were published in New York by George Braziller between 1965 and 1966.

21. The first edition of Edward Johnston's *Writing, Illuminating & Lettering* was published in London by John Hogg in 1906. The work went through at least 17 editions by the late 1930s.

22. It is perhaps worth noting that, at some point in his early career, Fiore also studied book binding with Gerhard Gerlach.

23. The reference is to Lewis Carroll's insertion of a *tale* that has been typographically shaped as a *tail* into a chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* entitled "A Long Tale." The Mouse prefaces his concrete poem with the phrase: "Mine is a long and sad tale!"

24. Fiore added a note here referencing Jurgis Baltrušaitis,

Anamorphic Art, trans. W. J. Strachan, (NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1977).

25. In "Graphics Convey Message In MEDIUM IS THE MASSAGE," Fiore declares the book "light but not trivial, and [it] can be understood on more than one level, depending on the reader" (64).

26. The allusion is to the noted 12th century philosophical treatise by Moses Maimonides (Mosheh ben Maimon), entitled *The Guide for the Perplexed* (Moreh Nevukhim).

27. "The basic element of design idea was the use of motion picture techniques to express the ideas [of McLuhan]," from "Graphics Convey Message In MEDIUM IS THE MASSAGE," 62. Later in the article, Fiore adds that he "saw the future of type was film and switched to design of general printed matter" (64).

28. *Aspen* 1.4 (spring 1967) contained a 6 pp. pamphlet, designed by Fiore, in which the outlaw motorcyclist subculture was associated with the roles played by poets and artists as "sharpeners of perception."