

THE 1960S AND 1970S

From the time he began at Sotheby's in 1955, Carter was occupied with devising ways to bring American auction business to London, a task he was ideally suited for and very successful at accomplishing; and after 1960, when Sotheby's decided to open a full-time New York office with Peregrine Pollen as head, he was also helping to get that office established. His efforts to publicize Sotheby's were coincidentally assisted by the three American lecture tours he was asked to make for the English Speaking Union in 1961-63. Another instance of his supporting the sale of art during this period (though without any mention of Sotheby's) was a letter he wrote to *The Times* from New York (published 21 March 1962), which serves as a good illustration of his epistolary style:

Everyone's Business

Sir,—To an Englishman at this distance the attitudes of Parliament, press, and public towards the Royal Academy seem (with the honourable exception of *The Times*) oddly governessy.

The Academy, surely, is a society of gentlemen accountable, like any other club, to its membership and to the law of the land: but how to anyone else? It owns certain property; it has certain liabilities. Like many other clubs, it is a victim of the economic arithmetic of the 1960s. Some clubs raise the subscription: others charge more for whisky: others again let in cads. The Academy decides to sell a picture.

Would even a member of Parliament, let alone any busybody who can spell Leonardo, presume to interfere publicly in the private affairs of the Athenaeum or White's, of the Beefsteak or the Garrick? And if they did, would you, Sir, print their letters? I take leave to doubt it, while remaining

Your obedient servant,
John Carter

Below his name, he gave his New York address as the Grolier Club, characteristically linking his location with the content of the letter (a practice that goes back to a 1930 letter in *Bookmart* about defining "first edition," where he used the First Edition Club as his address).

But all the travel and negotiations of these years (which he called "hectic" in a 1971 recollection) did not prevent his devoting a great deal of time and energy (in the early and middle 1960s) to the project that led to *Printing and the Mind of Man* (a title for which he was responsible). Carter played a major role, first as an active member of the Supervisory Committee for a historical display (of which Stanley Morison was the "inspirer and foster-father," as Carter put it) to be held in conjunction with the July 1963 International Printing Machinery and Allied Trades Exhibition, and then as co-editor (with Percy Muir) of an expanded catalogue of books that were selected to show the impact of printing on intellectual history.