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TRADE

Winds

WHEN ALDOUS HUXLEY'S "Brave New World" first was published (in 1932) critics rated it considerably below his "Antic Hay" and "Point Counter Point," and the general sale, while far above average, was attributed more to Huxley's reputation than his contribution in this one book. The years have changed all that. Huxley's later output—he has followed some strange leads indeed since he settled in California—has won him few fresh laurels, but "Brave New World," in both regular and paperback editions, racks up a bigger and bigger sale as time goes by.

The reason? "Brave New World" is in the mold of science-fiction that has surged upward so amazingly on best-seller lists of late—and it is so much better than most of the sleazy current output that each new discoverer of its fascinating conceits shouts about it from the housetops. Furthermore, Mr. Huxley has proved himself an amazing prophet. Some of the notions that seemed almost outlandish in 1932 are already accepted as commonplace in the everyday life of 1953.

Take his conception of movies, for instance, that appealed to all five senses at one time. "Feelies" he called them, and the thought of what they might do to the libido of a spectator when he saw a Grable or a Monroe undulate across the screen intoxicated everybody—including Mr. Huxley. And yet, just think how near to reality that seemingly fantastic conception is today! Via 3-D and new processes now in the making the actors in a screenplay seem almost to be sitting in the audience's lap. And now General Electric has gone one step further. In a process immediately dubbed "Smell-o-rama" by Schenectady wits it has added odor to the general effect. Selected groups



have been treated to secret screenings of a rose garden, in the course of which the lovely scent of rose perfume filled the theatre. True, this is just an extension of an old idea introduced by Irving Berlin in one of his Music Box Revues, where, while John

Steele was warbling "In an Orange Grove in California," ushers sprayed the house with attar of orange blossoms. And in Washington this summer the page on which an ad for a popular brand of dill pickles appeared had been sprayed with some substance that made every reader feel he was smack in the middle of Reuben's delicatessen.

The General Electric experiment was so successful that one man came out of the theatre predicting it would up nation-wide receipts by 20 per cent at least. "Think of all the delicious aromas with which we can assail the nostrils of our customers," he enthused—but suddenly he paled. "Good heavens," he whispered. "Don't look now—but isn't that fellow behind us a director of the Hoggen-spieler Packing Plant? What can he have in mind. . . ?"

CURRENTLY DECLINING PROFITS of paperback publishers, incidentally, and mounting of inventories in the hands



of wholesalers are no surprise to circulation companies who have observed similar gyrations in the history of comic-book entrepreneurs. From a hundred such outfits—all successful enough to invite less experienced newcomers to fish in the same stream—the number grew to four hundred in less than two years. The inevitable reaction then set in. The public became choosier. Dealers couldn't find room for such an output in the limited space they had available for display. Result: almost two hundred comics disappeared completely in a matter of months—and the publishers' bankrolls went with them. With the inferior and marginal producers eliminated, the survivors once more found publishing comics an extremely profitable occupation. With an estimated sixty million paperbacks not even unwrapped in wholesalers' warehouses, a similar purge in that once foolproof market is considered inevitable.

IN LEVYING OVERDUE FINES can a library charge a borrower more than the retail price of the book? E. V.

exposition press

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Durling says yes, and cites the case of an unfortunate seeker of culture in Bayonne, N. J., who kept a copy of "Anthony Adverse" for 860 days, and was nicked for a fine of exactly forty-three dollars. The borrower, furthermore, took the case to court, where he lost, thereby adding court costs to his bill for \$43. That's one of the saddest stories I've heard since Milton Berle told how he'd lost a



bundle betting on William and Mary College in a football game. "How was I to know," he wailed later, "that they were going to let Mary play?"

AN AUTHOR IN KANKAKEE found himself in something of a predicament last week. A magazine accepted a short poem and sent him a check for thirty-five dollars. The only man who could identify him at the bank, however, was his liquor dealer—whom he owed a hundred! . . . Agatha Christie, back in London after another trip to Bagdad with her husband, who is a renowned archeologist, was asked how a woman with great creative talent felt about being married to a student whose eyes were turned always to antiquities. "An archeologist is the best husband any woman can get," replied Miss Christie warmly. "Just consider: the older she gets the more he is interested in her!" . . . Times being what they are in Wall Street, broker Jay Kennedy, whose "Prince Bart" was promoted to a fare-thee-well last season, is hastening completion of a second novel called "Short Term." This one's about the world of frenzied finance. . . . A quick-witted applicant for a post as junior editor in a publishing house was asked to submit his school and college affiliations recently. He answered, "Korea, clash of 1953," and—as I believe all anecdotes of this sort are supposed to wind up—he got the job.

EXHILARATING COPY IN A DISPLAY AD for Lippincott—brainchild, according to scuttlebutt, of SR's bright graduate George Stevens:

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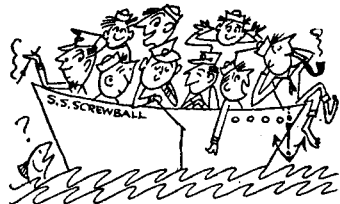
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Hear, hear!

WHEN HARRY KENDALL THAW, playboy heir to a forty-million-dollar Pittsburgh fortune, shot and killed 250-pound Architect Stanford White, on June 25, 1906, because of White's attentions to Thaw's wife, the former Evelyn Nesbit, he set in motion a trial that ranks with the most scandalous and sensational of the century. Charles Samuels has written the story to the hilt in a Gold Medal original called "The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing," but I am somewhat puzzled by this note on the copyright page: "All characters in this book are fictional and any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental." . . . Readers of James Jones's "From Here to Eternity," as well as people who have seen only the picture, are wondering on what possible grounds the U. S. Navy could have forbidden a showing of the film anywhere within its sacred precincts—especially since the Army cleared the picture without qualification. Insiders suspect that the Navy brass is establishing a precedent whereby they can give the forthcoming film version of "The Caine Mutiny" a similar cold shoulder. It may have been with this thought in mind that one reporter asked Admiral Fechteler, in Washington, what he thought of Mr. Wouk's persistent best seller. "It's a good yarn," re-



marked the Admiral wryly, "but I often wonder how one Naval Reserve officer could have collected in two years in one little ship all the screwballs I've known in my whole thirty years in the Navy!" —BENNETT CERF.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 1022)

FRANCIS BACON:
OF BOLDNESS

It is a sport to see when a bold fellow is out of countenance, for that puts his face into a most shrunken and wooden posture; for in bashfulness the spirits do a little go and come, but with bold men upon like occasion they stand at a stay.

BEACON BOOKS *"In the tradition of free inquiry"*

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by thought-police*

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By ROLAND BAINTON

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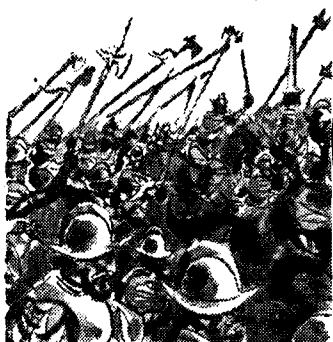
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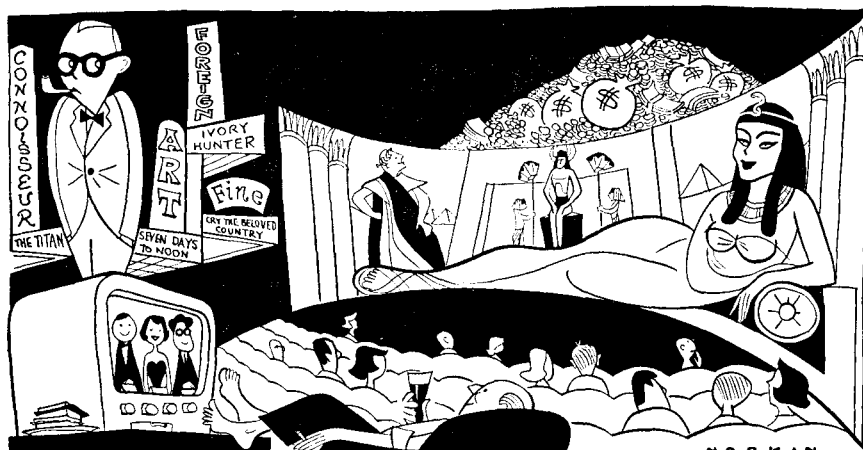
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Hollywood Verdict: Gilt but Not Guilty

The Movies in the Age of the Common Man

By ARTHUR MAYER



While Hollywood tumbles about in a maze of new techniques—three-dimensional pictures, wide-screen projection, stereophonic sound—an old question becomes more insistent than ever before. Are the movies moving backward or forward? Arthur Mayer, who gives his answer below, is a veteran movie executive and author of a recent book of reminiscences, "Merely Colossal." His article is the sixth in SR's Common Man Series assessing the level of taste in a mass-communication society.

I HAVE a profound respect for experts—in all fields except my own. When they assure us that there has been a substantial advance in the past decade in American appreciation of literature, drama, and music I unhesitatingly accept their happy findings. But when they assert, as they frequently do, that similar progress has taken place in movie taste I can only caution hold your horses—or at least your 3-D glasses.

There is considerable justification for the indictment so frequently presented against the movie moguls that

they themselves have, over the years, fashioned their own audience and are now saddled with it—an audience avid for escape, acquiescent to saccharine formulae, and allergic to what it disparagingly terms "message" pictures. On the other hand, I am unfortunately so venerable that I vividly recall the resentment of picturegoers when Goldwyn released "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," the first full-length film to challenge the reign of realism on the screen; I remember, too, the catastrophic failure of Von Stroheim's "Greed," probably the most cinemati-

cally imaginative American picture ever made, and the other similar mishaps too numerous to catalogue which overtook adventurous pioneers who in early movie days overestimated the intelligence of their public. Little, however, can be gained by seeking to establish the relative guilt of producers, exhibitors, and the public. They all share in the errors of the past and the perplexities of the present.

At least I am perplexed, although not my highbrow friends. Almost daily for the past thirty years they have assured me that the public is at last eager for more adult, thought-provoking pictures than it is receiving. Whether they have arrived at this cheerful conclusion through research, revelation, or merely wishful thinking I am not aware. It seems to me, after a lifetime largely devoted to the pursuit of patrons, that there are many publics, and that nobody knows with any degree of consistency what any of these publics wants—neither Spyros Skouras, the indefatigable president of Twentieth Century-Fox, nor his critics, nor the various publics themselves. Of the three, however, I