"goals"?) One wishes to feel uplifted by a sermon, but not too threatened by the possibility of actually having to change oneself.

The problem of getting an objective precise enough to assess carefully and still significant enough to be worth teaching is very difficult The tighter the objective the less likely it is to be related to *reading* and the more likely it is to be related to some *reading skill.* The Guszak book is on reading skills, but the objectives tend to be loose enough that one might actually use them to teach reading.

There are now many examples of behavioral objectives for the teaching of reading skills. The theory of using such objectives is excellent, but the application of such lists appears often to be truly abusive to the child as a learner and human being. One example is the attempt to restrict a child's opportunity to learn through the over-eager application of standards to arbitrarily sequenced skills as seen in the Duffy and Sherman book.

The collections of lists of behavioral objectives for reading skills will probably grow as concern is expressed for accountability and for the use of criterion referenced tests. Besides authenticating a teacher's right to be pedantic and picky-picky, such lists tend to decrease reading instruction as they increase time spent on reading skills instruction. It is clear that the tinier the skill being objectivized, the more precise the objective can be written. So, to a large extent, the "better" the objective the more finicky the skill. Some of us think that one of the fairer current criticisms of schools is that they spend so much time teaching children how to read that they never get around to teaching children to read. The wide use of massive matrices of behavioral objectives of reading skills can only increase this gap.

F. P. Greene
McGill University

Edmund Carpenter.
OH, WHAT A BLOW THAT PHANTOM GAVE ME!
Toronto:
Holt, Rinehart & Winston,
1973. 192 pp. $6.95.

Margaret Gillett.
EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY: TOWARD DEMYSTIFICATION.
Toronto:
Prentice-Hall, 1973. 144 pp.
$3.00 paper, $4.95 cloth.

Like the First Commandment, "Thou shalt understand the laws of the media" is an extraordinarily difficult behest to obey. For the tyro who is left groping in these matters and who looks for enlightenment, here are two wholly dissimilar studies.

Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me! (the title is appropriately quixotic) attempts to out-Mcluhan Mcluhan The news-flash-film-clip prose, the joke chapter headings, the mosaic build-up, they are all here (though not, alas, the wry puns which are a constant source of delight in *Understanding Media*). In the first half of the book, the author elaborates a number of themes which are, to say the least, less than original; e.g., we are moving into an era in which non-verbal communication will become increasingly important, our modes of thought remain print-dominated, etc. In making these points, Carpenter resorts to overstatement with the result that occasionally he relapses into patent absurdity.

"Translated into gears and levers, the book became machine," he declares. "Translated into people, it became army, chain of command, assembly line.... Language in turn, was structured by the book." (pp. 40-41) Come off it, Carpenter!

The second half of the book, much the more interesting, is concerned — very deeply concerned — with the shattering impact of electronic technologies on preliterate cultures. In his dual role as anthropologist cum film-maker, the author is also, it seems, a missionary manqué, never happier than when approaching a strange village. What happens when he and his film crew get there distresses him; like the *Bible*-punching missionaries of an earlier generation he is left at the end of the day with the sorry conviction that more damage has been done than good. If this is what the media have done to primitive ways of life, how immeasurably greater must be their insidious effects on the human condition in advanced industrial societies, he seems to be saying. Worse still, "knowledge of media alone is not sufficient protection from them." (p. 162) Such a conclusion is even more pessimistic than Jacques Ellul's, too reminiscent of the things-are-in-the-saddle plaint to be very convincing. But, then, it is not the author's intention to convince, only to alert the reader and, maybe, to leave him inwardly disturbed. In this he succeeds. A voice crying in the wilderness, "Repent, repent!"

By contrast, Margaret Gillett's introduction to educational technology is relatively plain sailing. Students who are apt to be deterred by cybernetic jargon and high falutin' talk of systems theory will find no trace of mumbo-jumbo in these lucid pages. Better so, for the truth is that the general level of discourse in this proliferating field is abysmally low. Careful to define her terms, the author reviews the pre-history and leading figures in a movement which many think is destined to yield the humane discipline of the future. In a thoughtful chapter entitled "The Ecology of Media," Professor Gillett shows how the school environment is visibly changing under the influence of technological innovation. "Just as printing the *Bible* made possible 'religion without walls,' so modern technology makes 'education without walls' a reality." (p. 56) Just how this affects the teacher, particularly the reluctant teacher who prefers to stick to chalk-and-talk, is explained patiently and the pros and cons examined. Practical examples of work in progress and ongoing experimental projects in different parts of Canada are given, together with useful suggestions for further reading. Specifications for media resources centers are provided in the appendixes.

Recognizing as Carpenter does, and McLuhan before him, that "we are all technological idiots in terms of the new situation," the author concludes on a note of caution. As she says, the first order consequence of the widespread use of detergents is cleaner, whiter clothes; the second order consequence is increased amounts of phosphates deposited in lakes and streams . . . the fifth order consequence, that water is polluted; the sixth that swimming is prohibited. In adopting any new technology of learning or teaching we are largely ignorant of the covert, long-term affects which are likely to accrue. Take programmed learning (computer-assisted instruction, if you prefer), for instance. The first order consequence, hopefully, is increased information and individualized learning. The second order consequence, presumably, is greater pupil independence. What happens thereafter, it seems, is anybody's guess.

W. Kenneth Richmond
University of Glasgow