ANGLICAN DEACONESS MINISTRIES
School of Theology, Culture & Public Engagement

SCOTT STEPHENS
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BREAKING NEWS

The Media and Its Threat to the Moral Life

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Required Viewing:

- *Page One: Inside the New York Times* (directed by Andrew Rossi; 2011).
- *Network* (screenplay by Paddy Chayefsky; directed by Sidney Lumet; 1976).
- *All the President's Men* (screenplay by William Goldman; directed by Alan J. Pakula; 1976).
- *Goodnight, and Good Luck* (screenplay by George Clooney and Grant Heslov; directed by George Clooney; 2005).
- *The Post* (screenplay by Liz Hannah and Josh Singer; directed by Steven Spielberg; 2017).
- *Spotlight* (Tom McCarthy and Josh Singer; directed by Tom McCarthy; 2015).
- *Hannah Arendt* (screenplay by Margarethe von Trotta and Pam Katz; directed by Margarethe von Trotta; 2012).
- *The Eichmann Show* (screenplay by Simon Block; directed by Paul Andrew Williams; 2015).

1.1. THE INVENTION OF MASS MEDIA

1.1.1. Newspapers and Democratic Associations – Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

"When the bonds among men cease to be solid and permanent, it is impossible to get large numbers of them to act in common without persuading each person whose cooperation is required that self-interest obliges him to join his efforts voluntarily to those of all the others. The only way to do this regularly and conveniently is through a newspaper. Only a newspaper can deposit the same thought in a thousand minds at once.

"A newspaper is an advisor that does not have to be sought out, an advisor that comes every day unbidden to talk to you briefly about public affairs without disrupting your private pursuits.

"Hence the more equal men are, and the more individualism is to be feared, the more necessary newspapers become. To believe that their only purpose is to guarantee liberty would be to diminish their importance; they maintain civilization. I will not deny that newspapers often induce the citizens of democratic countries to engage in some very rash joint enterprises, but without the newspapers there would be almost no joint action at all. The ill they cause is therefore far less than the ill they heal.

"Newspapers can not only suggest the same plan to large numbers of people but also enable people jointly to carry out plans they may have conceived on their own.

"The leading citizens of an aristocratic country can see one another afar and if they wish to join forces can make straight for one another, sweeping up multitudes in their train. In democratic countries, by contrast, large numbers of men who feel the desire and need to associate may often find themselves unable to do so, because all are insignificant and none stands out from the crowd, so that they cannot identify one another and have no idea how to meet. But let a newspaper come and give visibility to the feeling or idea that has occurred spontaneously but separately to each of them, and all will immediately rush toward this light. Wandering spirits that had long sought one another in darkness will meet at last and join forces.

"The newspapers brings them together, and they continue to need the newspaper in order to stay together."

(Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. A. Goldhammer [Washington, D.C.: Library of America, 2004], pp. 600-1.)

"In the ancient world, though there might be, and often was, great individual independence, there could be nothing like a regulated popular government, beyond the bounds of a single city-community; because there did not exist the physical conditions for the formation and propagation of a public opinion, except among those who could be brought together to discuss public matters in the same agora. This obstacle is generally thought to have ceased by the adoption of the representative system. But to surmount it completely, required the press, and even the newspaper press, the real equivalent, though not in all respects an adequate one, of the Pnyx and the Forum."

(John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], p. 8.)

"If we now consider the progress made by those same masses in the capacity and habit of co-operation, we find it equally surprising. At what period were the operations of productive industry carried on upon anything like their present scale? Were so many hands ever before employed at the same time upon the same work, as now in all the principal departments of manufactures and commerce? To how enormous an extent is business now carried on by joint-stock companies—in other words, by many small capitals thrown together to form one great one. The country is covered with associations. There are societies for political, societies for religious, societies for philanthropic purposes. But the greatest novelty of all is the spirit of combination which has grown up among the working classes. The present age has seen the commencement of benefit societies, and they now, as well as the more questionable Trades Unions, overspread the whole country. A more powerful, though not so ostensible, instrument of combination than any of these, has but lately become universally accessible—the newspaper. The newspaper carries home the voice of the many to every individual among them; by the newspaper each learns that others are feeling as he feels, and that if he is ready, he will find them also prepared to act upon what they feel. The newspaper is the telegraph which carries the signal throughout the country, and the flag round which it rallies. Hundreds of newspapers speaking in the same voice at once, and the rapidity of communication afforded by improved means of locomotion, were what enabled the whole country to combine in that simultaneous energetic demonstration of determined will which carried the Reform Act. Both these facilities are on the increase, every one may see how rapidly; and they will enable the people on all decisive occasions to form a collective will, and render that collective will irresistible."

(John Stuart Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical, and Historical*, second ed. [London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867], Vol. I, pp. 169-71.)

1.1.2. The Atlantic Cable, Internationalism and the Cult of Speed – Walt Whitman (1819-1892) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

> "At last the great problem is solved. The Old World and the New are united. The great Atlantic Telegraph enterprise, notwithstanding the doubts of the croakers and the sneers of the unbelieving, has gloriously succeeded, and all doubts are forever set at rest as to the practicability of spanning the world with telegraphic wire – of joining Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia together by electric current ... The simple fact itself, that time and space are annihilated by man's inventive power and that the whole world may 'reason together' without the aid of palpable agencies is so sublime, that all commentary seems impertinent. It is useless for us to speculate as to the ultimate effects of this grand achievement. The two peoples, hereafter to be forever one, will work out the problems for themselves."
>
> (Walt Whitman, "The Two Worlds United," *Brooklyn Daily Times* [17 August 1858].)

> "We think that after all, it is not the mere utilitarian gain to come out of the new enterprise that has produced [such enthusiasm]. Probably to an immense majority, the Telegraphic Cable will not bring one iota of personal benefit, and it can be neither scientific nor the utilitarian relations of this grand experiment that can account for the exultation with which it has been greeted and the unbounded enthusiasm with which it has everywhere been received. Most probably the moral effect in this matter has more to do with the feelings of joy and gratulation that prevail everywhere, than any material considerations. It is the sentiment of *union* that makes the popular heart beat and quiver ... The popular instinct, now-a-days, says that England and the United States are no longer to keep each other at arms-length ... They feel that henceforth it is not in the power of time-serving, capital-making politicians to create bitterness between them. They feel that England and America alone stand faithful and true to the great cause of freedom. They both feel that this Telegraph Cable is not alone a material bind for the transmission of news of the rise and fall of stocks, and of news-gossip generally, but that it will also subserve a higher purpose – that it will link together nations that in heart and feelings are hereafter to be one."
>
> (Walt Whitman, "The Moral Effect of the Atlantic Cable," *Brooklyn Daily Times* [20 August 1858].)

> "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at; as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and

> Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. Either is in such a predicament as the man who was earnest to be introduced to a distinguished deaf woman, but when he was presented, and one end of her ear trumpet was put into his hand, had nothing to say. As if the main object were to talk fast and not to talk sensibly. We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the old world some weeks nearer to the new; but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough. After all, the man whose horse trots a mile in a minute does not carry the most important messages; he is not an evangelist, nor does he come around eating locusts and wild honey."
>
> (Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* [1854], p. 55.)

Consider the effect of the inventions of the telegraph and the double-cylinder presses which could transmit news of distant events faster and produce twice the number of papers over the same time. The immediate effect was not efficiency *per se*, but rather the profitability of the newspapers and the interests on the part of editors to keep particularly profitable stories going. Take, for example, the reporting on the violence that had erupted between Mexico and the United States in 1846:

> "With such extraordinary new technology at their disposal, it is not difficult to understand why, when the fighting in Mexico ceased, Whig newspapers proved disinclined to rejoice, and Democratic ones seemed unwilling to call for unity. There was more profit to be made by continuing to stir up the public. The new technologies only encouraged the frequency and volume of their provocative salvos. By the end of the war, most of the larger presses had replaced their double-cylinder presses with even faster revolving presses capable of printing a breathtaking twelve thousand copies an hour. Such technological advances made the bitter debate over Mexico more ubiquitous than ever, just as the growing conflict over slavery expansion was making it more acrimonious."
>
> (Harold Holzer, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, pp. 74-5.)

1.1.3. The *New York Sun* – Benjamin Day (1810-1889)

> "The *Sun*'s broad appeal did not rest simply on its low price and easy availability. It was also the result of its down-to-earth coverage, with an emphasis on anecdotes, morality tales, crime reports, quirky news items, and human-interest stories designed to appeal to ordinary people. This was a marked change from the usual newspaper fare of political stories and speeches, business items, and shipping news. Accounts of tiger hunting in India jostled in the *Sun*'s columns with reports of local fires and riots

and a roundup of theories about the origin of the world. In 1835 the paper ran a series of sensational reports on the discovery of winged creatures on the moon, which had supposedly been spotted by John Herschel, a famous astronomer who had built a large telescope in Cape Town, South Africa. Herschel and his telescope were real, but the inhabitants of the moon were entirely fictional. The hoax was eventually exposed, but not before it had helped increase the *Sun*'s readership."

(Tom Standage, *Writing on the Wall: Social Media – The First 2,000 Years*, p. 174.)

1.1.4. The *New York Herald* – James Gordon Bennett (1795-1872)

"Partisan papers attracted readers by attacking their political foes. Bennett attracted readers by attacking *all* politicians, typically labelling them, regardless of party, as 'tricksters', 'loafers', 'parasites', and 'vagabonds', among other epithets. His paper appealed to readers who cared more for news than for party affiliation ... In print, as in life, Bennett staunchly opposed abolition and ridiculed the notion of equality for African Americans. Otherwise his targets had little in common except that they had somehow aroused his enmity ... He feuded with theatrical impresarios, ward heelers, newspaper competitors, and perceived idlers. His pen was both prolific and toxic. Bennett labelled the rival *Sun* as a 'dirty, sneaking, drivelling contemporary nigger paper' and endorsed slavery as the 'natural position of the Southern colored races'. Jews he declared to be 'without a single redeeming feature, except the beauty, excellence, black eyes, small feat, and fine forms of their women' ... Bennett reveled in the chaos he created ... He seemed to relish being ornery and unpredictable, basked in his reputation for contentiousness, enjoyed being feared, and cherished his growing reputation for putting 'a penny-worth of scandal on every man's breakfast table'.

"The dynamic editor made no pretense to lofty idealism, nor did he overestimate his audience. He confidently believed New Yorkers 'we more ready to see six columns of the detail of a brutal murder, or of testimony in a divorce case, or the trial of a divine for improprieties of conduct, than the same amount of words poured forth by the genius of the noblest author of the times'. His own 'picture of the world', he conceded, took him 'wherever human nature and real life best display their freaks and vagaries'. Unashamedly, he admitted that 'there was more journalistic money to be made in recording gossip that interested bar-rooms, work-shops, race courses and tenement houses, than in consulting the tastes of drawing rooms and libraries'."

(Harold Holzer, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, pp. 26-28.)

"Is the [*Democratic*] *Review sure* that 'no such characters exist in the world, or in nature', as Dickens' villains? Would to heaven that it could reasonably be sure! Why almost within the reach of our voice, there is a palpable counterpart to the worst embodiment of evil that the brain of Dickens ever transcribed onto paper! And the being to whom we allude is *worse* than the wickedest character ... A reptile marking his path with slime wherever he goes, and breathing mildew at every thing fresh and fragrant; a midnight ghoul, preying on rottenness and repulsive filth; a creature, hated by his nearest intimates, and bearing the consciousness thereof upon his distorted features, and upon his despicable soul; one whom good men avoid as a blot to his nature – whom all despise, and whom no one blesses – *all this* is James Gordon Bennett."

(Walt Whitman, "Dickens and Democracy," in *Walt Whitman's Selected Journalism*, ed. D.S. Noverr and J. Stacy [Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014], pp. 62-63.)

1.1.5. Fashionable Opinions – Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)

"You must leave [newspapers] about in your drawing room, taking care to cut the pages open beforehand. Marking certain passages in blue pencil is also impressive. In the morning, read in article in one of those grave and solid journals; in the evening, in company, bring the conversation around to the subject, and shine."

(Gustave Flaubert, *The Dictionary of Accepted Ideas*, trans. Jacques Barzun [New York: New Directions Books, 1968], p. 67.)

"A public is neither a nation nor a generation, nor a community, nor a society, nor these particular men, for all these are only what they are through the concrete; no single person who belongs to the public makes a real commitment for some hours of the day, perhaps, he belongs to the public – at moments when he is nothing else, since when he really is what he is, he does not form part of the public. Made up of such individuals at the moments when they are nothing, a public is a kind of gigantic something, an abstract and deserted void which is everything and nothing ...

"One may speak to the whole nation in the name of the public, and yet the public is less than one ever so insignificant actual human being. The category 'public' is reflection's mirage delusively making the individuals conceited, since everyone can arrogate to himself this mammoth, compared with which the concretions of actuality seem paltry. The public is the fairy-tale of an age of prudence, leading individuals to

> fancy themselves greater than kings, but again the public is the cruel abstraction by which individuals will be [catechised] - or be destroyed ...
>
> "In this state of indolent laxity, more and more individuals will aspire to be nobodies in order to become the public, that abstract aggregate ridiculously formed by the participant's becoming a third party. That sluggish crowd which understands nothing itself and is unwilling to do anything, that gallery-public, now seeks to be entertained and indulges in the notion that everything anyone does is done so that it may have something to gossip about ...
>
> "The great mass of people naturally have no opinion but - here it comes! - this deficiency is remedied by the journalists who make their living by renting out opinions ... Gradually, as more and more people are wrenched free of the condition of innocence in which they were by no means obliged to have an opinion and are forced into the 'condition of guilt' ... in which they must have an opinion, what can the unfortunate people do? An opinion becomes a necessary item for every member of the enormous public, so the journalist offers his assistance by renting out opinions ...
>
> "What is it *to chatter*? It is the annulment of the passionate distinction between being silent and speaking ... Chattering gets ahead of essential speaking, and giving utterance to reflection has a weakening effect on action by getting ahead of it."
>
> (Søren Kierkegaard, *Two Ages - The Age of Revolution and the Present Age: A Literary Review* [1846].)

1.1.6. The "Modern Mind" – Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) and W.H. Auden (1907-1973)

The *Modern Mind*, Belloc writes, is comprised of "three ingredients" and are combined "through the force of one principle": "Its ingredients are pride, ignorance, and sloth; their unifying principle is a blind acceptance of authority not based on reason":

> "As to the principle of blindly accepting authority not based on reason, it runs through the whole base affair and binds it into one: Fashion, Print, Iteration, are the commanders abjectly obeyed and trusted ... this 'Modern Mind', will refer to all transcendental belief in terms which imply the inferiority of the past to the present - that is, of other people's epochs to the vain man's own epoch. It will call such faith 'reactionary', or 'medieval', or 'exploded'; it will tell you that the Creed belongs to a 'uncritical age', and in saying so it will show its own ignorance of all that vast mass of intellectual work with which the past of Europe was filled, and of the almost equal

mass of high modern work in defence of supernatural experience. The colour in which the whole of the 'Modern Mind' is dyed is essentially stupidity: it will not *think* ...

"Its chief force as a sustainer of the 'Modern Mind' lies in its power to intensify any disease prevalent in the masses ... Thus the 'Modern Mind' dislikes thinking: the popular Press increases that sloth by providing sensational substitutes. Disliking thought, the 'Modern Mind' dislikes close attention, and indeed any sustained effort; the popular Press increases the debility by an orgy of pictures and headlines. The 'Modern Mind' ascribes a false authority to reiteration; the popular Press serves it with ceaseless iteration ... In all these ways and twenty others the popular Press as we have it today thrusts the 'Modern Mind' lower than it would otherwise have fallen, swells its imbecility and confirms it in its incapacity for civilization and therefore for Faith."

(Hilaire Belloc, *Survivals and New Arrivals*, pp. 106-7, 127-28.)

"The ancient world knew the phenomenon of the crowd in the sense that Shakespeare uses the word, a visible congregation of a large number of human individuals in a limited physical space, who can, on occasions, be transformed by demagogic oratory into a mob which behaves in a way of which none of its members would be capable by himself, and this phenomenon is known, of course, to us, too. But the public is something else. A student in a subway during the rush hour whose thoughts are concentrated on a mathematical problem or his girl friend is a member of a crowd but not a member of the public. To join the public, it is not necessary for a man to go to some particular spot; he can sit at home, open a newspaper or turn on his TV set.

"A man has a distinctive personal scent which his wife, his children and his dog can recognize. A crowd has a generalized stink. The public is odourless.

"A mob is active; it smashes, kills and sacrifices itself. The public is passive or, at most, curious. It neither murders nor sacrifices itself; it looks on, or looks away, while the mob beats up a Negro or the police round up Jews for the gas ovens ...

"In a crowd, a passion like rage or terror is highly contagious; each member of a crowd excites all the others, so that passion increases at a geometric rate. But among members of the Public, there is no contact. If two members of the public meet and speak to each other, the function of their words is not to convey meaning or arouse passion but to conceal by noise the silence and solitude of the void in which the Public exists ...

> "Before the phenomenon of the Public appeared in society, there existed naïve art and sophisticated art which were different from each other but only in the way that two brothers are different ... The appearance of the Public and the mass media which cater to it have destroyed naïve popular art. The sophisticated 'highbrow' artist survives and can still work as he did a thousand years ago, because his audience is too small to interest the mass media. But the audience of the popular artist is the majority and this the mass media must steal from him if they are not to go bankrupt. Consequently, aside from a few comedians, the only art today is 'highbrow'. What the mass media offer is not popular art, but entertainment which is intended to be consumed like food, forgotten, and replaced by a new dish. This is bad for everyone; the majority lose all genuine taste of their own, and the minority become cultural snobs."
>
> (W.H. Auden, "The Poet and the City," in *The Complete Works of W.H. Auden: Prose, Volume IV, 1956-62,* ed. E. Mendelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 512-13.)

1.1.7. Homogenous Culture – Dwight MacDonald (1906-1982) and W.H. Auden (1907-1973)

> "*Life* is a typical homogenized magazine ... Its contents are as thoroughly homogenized as its circulation. The same issue will present a serious exposition of atomic energy followed by a disquisition on Rita Hayworth's love life; photos of starving children picking garbage in Calcutta and of sleek models wearing adhesive brassières; an editorial hailing Bertrand Russell's eightieth birthday ... across from a full-page photo of a matron arguing with a baseball umpire ...; nine colour pages on Renior paintings followed by a picture of a roller-skating horse; a cover announcing in the same size type two features: A NEW FOREIGN POLICY, BY JOHN FOSTER DULLES and KERIMA: HER MARATHON KISS IN A MOVIE SENSATION. Somehow these scramblings together seem to work all one way, degrading the serious rather than elevating the frivolous."
>
> (Dwight MacDonald, "Masscult and Midcult," in *Against the American Grain,* pp. 12-13.)

Some, writes MacDonald, defend magazines like *Life* as a valiant attempt at "popular education" – "just think, nine pages of Renoirs!" But, "that roller-skating horse comes along, and the final impression is that both Renoir and the horse were talented."

1.2. "THE PREROGATIVE OF THE HARLOT"

1.2.1. Power and Money – Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) and John Reith (1889-1971)

"The newspapers attacking me are not newspapers in the ordinary sense. They are engines of propaganda for the constantly changing policies, desires, personal vices, personal likes and dislikes of the two men [namely, Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere]. What are their methods? Their methods are direct falsehoods, misrepresentation, half-truths, the alteration of the speaker's meaning by publishing a sentence apart from the context ...What the proprietorship of these papers is aiming at is power, and power without responsibility - the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages."

(British leader of the Conservative Party, Stanley Baldwin, in 1931.)

"[Corker, veteran correspondent of Universal News, to William Boot] Look at it this way. News is what a chap who doesn't care much about anything wants to read. And it's only news until he's read it. After that it's dead. We're paid to supply news. If someone else had sent a story before us, our story isn't news."

"William and Corker went to the Press Bureau. Dr Benito, the director, was away, but his clerk entered their names in his ledger and gave them cards of identity. They were small orange documents, originally printed for the registration of prostitutes. The space for the thumb print was now filled with a passport photograph, and at the head the word 'journalist' substituted in neat Ishmaelite characters."

"'Two thousand words from Boot', said Mr Salter. 'Any good?' asked the general editor. 'Look at it'. The general editor looked. He saw *'Russian plot ... coup d'etat ... overthrow constitutional government ... red dictatorship ... goat butts heads of police ... imprisoned blonde ... vital British interests jeopardized'.* It was enough; it was news. 'It's news', he said. 'Stop the machines at Manchester and Glasgow. Clear the line to Belfast and Paris. Scrap the whole front page. Kill the Ex-Beauty Queen's pauper funeral. Get in a photograph of Boot'.

"When the final edition had left the machines, carrying William's sensational message into two million apathetic home, Mr Salter left the office ... Mr Salter took off his boots and Mrs Salter poured out the Ovaltine. When he had drunk it, he felt calmer. "'You know', he said meditatively, 'it's a great experience top work for a man like Lord Copper. Again and again I've thought he was losing grip. But always it turns out he knew best. What made him spot Boot? It's sixth sense ... real genius.'"

(Evelyn Waugh, *Scoop* [1938])

"America showed us what pitfalls to avoid; we learnt from experience. The lack of control in America was resulting in chaotic confusion ... Britain, as I say, benefitted from America's example, and a centrally controlled system of broadcasting stations was the result."

(John Reith, first general manager of the BBC in 1922.)

"As we conceive it, our responsibility is to carry into the greatest possible number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour, and achievement, and to avoid the things which are, or may be, hurtful. It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need – and not what they want, but few know what they want, and very few what they need."

(John Reith, *Broadcast over Britain* [1924].)

1.2.2. "Men Without Chests" – C.S. Lewis (1903-1966)

"In order to understand fully what Man's power over Nature, and therefore the power of some men over other men, really means, we must picture the race extended in time from the date of its emergence to that of its extinction. Each generation exercises power over its successors; and each, in so far as it modifies the environment bequeathed to it and rebels against tradition, resists and limits the power of its predecessors ... There is therefore no question of a power vested in a race as a whole steadily growing as long as the race survives. The last men, far from being the heirs of power, will be of all men most subject to the dead hand of the great planners and conditioners and will themselves exercise least power upon the future."

"The very power of Gaius and Titius depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is 'doing' his 'English prep' and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are all at stake. It is not a theory they put into his mind, but an assumption, which ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all."

For every one pupil who needs to be guarded from a weak excess of sensibility there are three who need to be awakened from the slumber of cold vulgarity. The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defence against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments ... In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without

chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

(C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man; or, Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* [1943].)

[Mr Dimble] "If you dip into any college, or school, or parish, or family ... at a given point in its history, you always find that there was a time before that point when where was much more elbow room and contrasts weren't quite so sharp; and that there's going to be a time after that point when there is even less room for indecision and choices are even more momentous ... the possibilities of even apparent neutrality are always diminishing."

"It must be remembered that in Mark's mind hardly one rag of noble thought, either Christian or Pagan, had a secure lodging. His education had been neither scientific nor classical - merely 'Modern'. The severities both of abstraction and of high human tradition had passed him by: and he had neither peasant shrewdness or aristocratic honour to help him. He was a man of straw, a glob examinee in subjects that require no exact knowledge ... and the first hint of a real threat to his bodily life knocked him sprawling." [Mark Studdock's moral impairment makes him ideally suited to one task, and one task only: that of a *journalist*. As Ransom remarks to Merlin at one point, "They have an engine called the Press whereby the people are deceived."]

(C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* [1945].)