

Finally Getting the Message: McLuhan's Media Practice

INTRODUCTION

So, ladies and gentleman, if you'd like to take a seat we're going to be starting shortly. First of all, [French] Bonjour et bienvenue à l'Ambassade du Canada ici à Berlin. [German] Herzlich Willkommen in der Kanadischen Botschaft in Berlin. Welcome to the Canadian Embassy; specifically in the Marshall McLuhan Salon here in our Embassy. We're really happy to have you here tonight.

I have the great pleasure of introducing or welcoming you all here to our Salon, which has the largest McLuhan archive in all of Europe - something we're very proud of. I'm not going to say a whole lot. I think I will pass the torch on to Stephen Kovats who is another great Canadian working and living here in Berlin and someone we have been working with very closely in the last couple of years. And he is the initiator and director of McLuhan in Europe.

Of course this is the centennial year, as you all know. And this is one of thirty events taking place throughout Europe about McLuhan. So we're very very happy to have Stephen and of course Graham with us here today. So I will see you all tomorrow and won't say any more. I will pass this on now to Stephen Kovats who will now say now a little bit about Mr Larkin Thank you.

STEPHEN KOVATS

OK. Thank you very much, Sarah, and also welcome to everybody who made it this afternoon. It's not quite evening yet, even though it's getting dark already. I just wanted to make a little brief, I guess, pre-intro because having Graham Larkin here, other than the fact that it's a great honour and pleasure to have you here, he's actually the last speaker of our Re-Touching McLuhan conference which took place at the end of May earlier this year [2011]. And so the pamphlets which are sitting out here, which are labelled 27th-29th of May, are actually [still valid for this evening]. They work also for today. Unfortunately, Graham Larkin wasn't able to make it at the last minute to the conference, then. And it's fantastic that we were able to get him today to give his lecture. And in doing so, he's got the opportunity now, which wasn't really possible in the context of the original conference, to do a much broader lecture about his work.

Graham Larkin is an art historian. He's a McLuhan scholar and researcher. We first met in the summer of last year when we were researching, preparing for McLuhan events here in Berlin and in Europe. Graham was doing some really amazing research into the physical archives of McLuhan's work. So what the McLuhan Salon here has is a fantastic selection of the audiovisual material from McLuhan: McLuhan broadcast material. But the actual documents, the physical stuff, the writings and particularly the collages and other sort of handmade

artifacts of McLuhan for the large part are sitting in the national archives of Canada and in other places. And this is primarily where Graham Larkin is doing his research.

And the conference that we ran back in May was curated by Dieter Daniels who is also here this evening. So, Dieter, great that you could make it! And Martina Leeker, who was also one of the speakers at the conference. It's nice to have you two as well here -- so that we have a little bit of the conference gang also together. [The conference] was dealing primarily with tactility and media and how this is seen in McLuhan's work, and how it relates to digital practice today. I'd also like to very briefly point out, welcome and introduce Baruch Gottlieb, back there in the red sweater and Steffi Winkler over here in the back. Because together with Steffi and Baruch we've been doing other McLuhan centennial events this year, primarily McLuminations, screenings. Some of you, I think, have been to those as well where they put together, with special guests -- the last one we did with Martina Leeker -- where material from the broadcast archives was taken out, presented, commented, deconstructed, reconstructed -- and we've had, I guess, our official last "McLuminations" of the year a couple of weeks ago. But I'm hoping they will be able to do some more of them even though if it's not the centennial year any more.

I'd also like to give a quick thank you to Andrea Boegner. Andrea works together with Sarah on programming here in the McLuhan Salon. She was also the main person helping to organize this event, together with Anja Meier who is behind the camera over there. Unfortunately, Andrea had an injury and so she can't be here this evening. Also a very big thank you, for all the other McLuhan events that we were doing this year, to Katharina Fischner over here, cultural attachée from the embassy because this is kind of our last real McLuhan event here this year. I just really wanted to give you guys also from the embassy a big thank you, and also to Stéphane Charbonneau who is the - not the attaché - but the Counsellor for Cultural Affairs. He was also primarily responsible in getting funding together so that we could invite Graham Larkin here.

So, Graham, again, it is a great pleasure to have you here and we are very much looking forward to seeing what you've been up to in the past few months. [Graham Larkin] Welcome! Microphone please [murmuring]

GRAHAM LARKIN

Let's see if this works. So... lovely to be here. Thank you so much. Deep thanks really need to go out to Stephen Kovats. You've named all the other names so I won't re-thank Andrea Boegner and everyone else who's been so helpful. But, really, hats off to you, Stephen, for your persistence and your kindness, and just your effectiveness in making all thirty of these events and not forgetting me in the mix. I'm really grateful for that. It's a Herculean amount of effort for you and such a pleasure for me. So thank you.

So, the McLuhan archive ... you said I was interested in the documents as opposed to the audiovisual stuff. Well, for me it's sort of

all one. And really one of the things, I'm trying to do with my limited time and limited powerpointing abilities is give you a sense of the real range of material evidence, much of it paper-based, much of it based in this gigantic archive of Library & Archives Canada, which has an estimated 800,000 ... sheets of paper relating to McLuhan. And many of them are photocopies or articles or whatever, but also a lot of original stuff and manuscripts and typescripts, and I'm going to try to give you a flavour of the variety and depth of that material.

But I think I'll begin just by saying why I'm doing what I'm doing with McLuhan. And it really has largely to do with my feeling that we tend to see McLuhan above all, I think as... We tend to put him in certain boxes. and we see him -- and rightly so. I mean, he really was an kind of initiator of discourses, to use Foucault's phrase that he said about Marx and Freud. But ... he really kind of invented, to an amazing extent, cultural studies with *The Mechanical Bride*, the 1951 book, along with a few others. But that was really a big deal, especially in the English-speaking world. I mean we didn't know in the English speaking world about [Siegfried] Kracauer or [Walter] Benjamin or any of the people who were sort of doing what could become cultural studies. Those translations didn't happen till later. But it was really -- in the English speaking world -- it was really people here and there. There was Robert Warshaw, or there was Gilbert Seldes, or whatever. But it was really McLuhan who kind of wrote a book on it and brought it together, with this book published in 1951.

So, as with cultural studies, he also, of course is a hugely foundational figure for communication studies, as well. And in a way, probably to the greatest extent, he has been studied as a theorist in communication studies and that's a discipline that's -- I guess it's a discipline -- that's alive and well. An interdisciplinary thing that's branching off into media ecology and all kinds of things. And my feeling is that this McLuhan that I'm saying has been taken care of, and really attended to, by scholars is the theorist. And I think that it's ironic how little has been done on the material aspects of his practice. given the fact that he felt: "the medium is the message." And given the fact that he said: "I have percepts, not concepts." and said, that his -- correctly, in a way -- that his probes and explorations didn't really add up to anything as rigorous as a theory. And so what I'm trying to do is sort of get with the program a little bit, after a hundred years and apply some of his own methods to his own work. That is: to look at the media environment that he was embedded in and all of the traces of his own - what I call his media practice. And by that I mean not only his productions but also his receptions, and you'll see what I mean by that.

But basically every... We're lucky that the archive is so rich; it looks like he just threw nothing away So we basically have every piece of paper that passed through his hands and then some. And a lot of traces of his encounters with other media. Radio, film, TV and so on. So, that's really what I'm going to be unpacking for you. But as a way in ... what I'm going to do is just start a slideshow here and maybe try to navigate this space in a way that allows you to look at the images and at me. And give you a little bit of the story of how I came to McLuhan.

Because in my day job, up until very recently, I was a curator of painting, sculpture and decorative arts. So, basically European & American sculpture with art at the National Gallery of Canada. I was trained as an art historian. And really actually a historian in print. And I'm going to go back now to a conference that I co-hosted in 1998 at Harvard University when I was a student there. doing my doctoral studies, called *Printing Matters: The Materiality of Print in Early Modern Europe*. And this was [an] opportunity to bring together historians of the printed word - really literary historians who were sort of leaning that way, towards a kind of materialistic take on things, and seeing how meaning is embedded in particular modes of production -- and historians of the printed image, which I happen to be, and Lisa Pon the other organizer. And we published that in 2001 in the journal *Word & Image* and I did mention [skip that] the name of McLuhan as someone who was really a precursor to you know, important in this whole field. So, that's available. There is a postscript by Roger Chartier who was kind enough to write that, that's in this journal *Word & Image* if you want to go there. And I'm not even going to try to summarize the other publications by other people that have happened in the meantime. At the time when we did that, the 90's, it was a very exciting time for book history. Books like ... there's also Adrian Johns *Nature of the Book...*, there was DF McKenzie who was a great book historian. We were all at the time at the instability of print. So that was this particular moment.

But now I think we're in a moment where we're seeing a lot of attention to things.. And I take almost as a, just as a sort of a, fun and fairly indicative example, a sort of light and delightful book called *Taking Things Seriously*. which is just a book published by Princeton [Architectural] Press that just shows little things from people's personal collections that are [presentationally] opposed to ... You know, on the left hand page there is a little text by the person saying what this thing means to them. So there's a bit of this going around. Obviously that's just an example. And then, after the conference I ended up writing a doctoral dissertation on the, in this case, largely based on these 18th century print albums that became the basis for the first catalogue raisonné. And it was a catalogue of the oeuvre of Jacques Callot, the great 17th century printmaker. And it was very ... you can see I've got my hand in a lot of these photographs. So, I have my hand in 2003 on the, even then, on the book, not just as a gimmick, but really to give you a sense of scale of this thing and of the function of the thing. And, perhaps, some indication that I'm not afraid to touch it. You know, I think that too often when we look at media such as a printed book or a printed image things kind of get posterized. And you lose a sense of ... the texture and, you know, the full tactility. And sort of intersensory fullness of these objects. And so you'll see a lot of my hand in the images to follow.

McLuhan doesn't appear in the bibliography. he would have been right in here in my dissertation. But I think he's in there, in some other place. There's an example of these print albums that people were compiling at that time, and McLuhan himself wrote a doctoral dissertation on a 16th century compiler, named [Thomas] Nashe. So I come, in a way, from where he, pretty close to where he comes from. And I'm even into having quotations as he is as well. He uses a lot of those. And I'm not afraid, to use Steph[er]n's word, to have a kind of

collage of text, as well as images. So, as I say, I was living in Ottawa. And pretty much, down the street from where I worked at the National Gallery was Library & Archives Canada. And I was very excited about the possibility of doing something for the centenary of McLuhan. What I really wanted to do was to have an exhibition somewhere ideally at LAC [Library & Archives Canada] That would bring together ... Well, I had this idea, that I'd bring together a hundred objects and call it 'McLuhan Century' There would be, a kind of a, very thick description, a reading of each of these objects that shows how it exemplifies his engagements with various kinds of media.

And here, we have a detail of the webpage. You can go onto the LAC webpage; you can get many hundreds of pages of a finding aid to the collection. You can see here summarized just what's in it: 43.6 metres of textual records, 800,000 papers. That's shelf metres, as you know, and various other stuff including audio cassettes and audio discs and reels and films And some of these things are just stuff. It's just the stuff he had. So it might not be directly him, right: so it's not necessarily all of him. Just as all the papers aren't necessarily things written by him. But, it's all stuff that was from him and acquired and catalogued in the mid 80s. Once it was acquired.

And there wasn't a lot of interest from Library & Archives Canada. Well there really wasn't interest from them. So, I kept coming back to them and I came with my buddy Dominique Scheffel-Dunand who is in Toronto, and who did a wonderful McLuhan festival that was really, along with Berlin, just the biggest McLuhan celebration this year, for the centenary. And we tried to get something going with them, and the Science & Tech Museum, again, about McLuhan's ... that would be an exhibition of McLuhan's engagements with media. I bumped into Robert Bean, a photographer, and told him about the archive, and he really ran with it and has done a number of exhibitions. Now, we're actually looking, we're getting into the library now. For the moment here, the photographs taken by Robert Bean, when he went there with me over a year ago. I think it was around May of 2010 [...]

So now we're in the reserve room. So we're getting closer to the material. And there we are. There I am. And there are the boxes from the McLuhan Archive which some of you may ...

Can we have a show of hands? Has anyone actually been in the McLuhan Archive? Yeah, that's what I figured. I mean, in Canada, it's a rarity, even among -- you know, there's many McLuhan scholars who haven't been in there. So, that's good. I mean this will be fresh for you.

And here, you can see I'm looking at a scrapbook that was assembled in the 60s by McLuhan and, I suspect, Corinne, his wife, who did a lot of -- all the typing for him. And there I am, just, sort of like I say, not afraid to touch these things. Now, there's an exhibition hall. I went to LAC ... if you go past Glenn Gould's piano, which is a bit sad because it's unused and under this funny quilted thing ... then you get to this area here which is this exhibition room. And there was an exhibition on there. I remember when I went with Dominique. on Gabriel Rov. this

Canadian author and we said: "Well, can we have it for 2011, and do a McLuhan thing?" And they said: "No, no, no, we're done." "We're not having any more exhibitions." "We're going digital now." So ... That's what it looks like now. There's nothing going on, anymore. And they've actually had to -- they've cut 40 positions in the last three years. Just as we have at the National Gallery, including my own. And so it's a pretty rough time. And it's a major library ... The most ... of the list I can find on the web had it as the fourth biggest in the world. That's the library not the -- this list -- but I'm sure as archive as well, it's substantial. And yet it's a bit sepulchral in there these days. It's a bit of a tomb. So, that's the background.

And what I was able to do in lieu of an exhibition is the talk you're about to see, the study you're about to see, which is really the first time I'm coming out in public with my exposition on McLuhan's engagements with media. And the way I've set it up is thematically, and these themes are also pretty much chronological as well. That is: they reflect whatever stage of McLuhan's practice that he's at.

And like all of us [...] yeah we're talking before we watch TV. I think. So we'll start with orality. Now, orality is, you know, is something that was of great interest to McLuhan. He really -- you know, he looked at speech as technology. He looked at writing as a technology. He always had this big picture. And in the studies in orality, of which there were many amazing ones in the 20th century his favourite and still my favourite, I think is Eric Havelock's 1963 Preface to Plato which is an incredible book that talks about the rise of literacy and what it meant for Greek culture. And what it meant for oral culture. And how it was a real game changer.

I'm also showing you a book by McLuhan's disciple/pupil -- who turns 100 next year by the way -- and there's going to be some celebrations in St. Louis -- named Walter Ong. And he wrote a book, sadly published 2 years after McLuhan's death, so this is published in 1982, called Orality and Literacy, which is really the best introduction to that subject. It's a beautiful synopsis that coins the term "secondary orality" to talk about what happens when you're literate but you're still experiencing various aural situations, and so it's a kind of overlay. And so it's very good. It's a reminder that it's not that one thing just transplants another or fully succeeds another. Things get hybrid, as McLuhan would say.

And now, we're going to go back to the first object I'm going to show you from the archive. And what it is, is evidence of McLuhan's pre-literate phase. And it's a letter from his grandma, that's just on this scrap of paper. There's one side. And there's the other side. And it says: "Dear Marshall ..." So, we're now -- he was born in 1911. So, we're maybe 1916. Something like that. And we can pin-point it a little bit, as you'll see. "Dear Marshall, so far away ..." I would like ..." -- sorry, it's harder to read off here -- "I would like to see you so much but you are so far away. I hope to see you all some time in warm weather. We're having very cold, much colder weather here than last winter. And I'm glad, you're trying to study. Keep at it and you can soon learn to read and

write. Then I know, you will write me a letter with your own dear hand."

So, Marshall doesn't know how to write yet -- read or write yet. This is a scribbling -- almost certainly by the young Marshall -- on the back of a mimeograph that is dated from 1915. which is of great -- special interest -- to me because McLuhan became a real power user of mimeographs. By ca. 1950/51 he was really into self-publishing and in fact things that were -- in fact -- kind of proto-blogs. In 1951 the mimeograph was the way to do that.

So now, we'll get to his literacy. And I want to emphasise the reception as much as the production of this media environment. So, here's a valentine to Marshall from a secret admirer that he doubtless received at a very young age. And here is Marshall practicing his cursive. So you can see "Marshall" at the top and then various writing exercises. And this is the sort of checkmark for the teacher to show that it's been properly surveyed by the teacher. And then just as a kind of example -- because I don't need to convince you that he knew how to read and write -- but I just want to give you a taste of the archive, by showing you this collection of cigar bands that were in a little book that Marshall owned. And I like it on many levels. But not least because it really shows text and image together: my thing, I guess, in some way. It kind of shows the inseparability of these things. It shows that print is often image, as well as text, or image mixed in with text. It's complicated. ... Something went wrong with this slide -- it's supposed to say 'Listening and Watching'

And so here we get to radio. And if I can go up here what I'm going to do is play you an audio clip which is from 1980. And it's [...] Marshall's younger brother Maurice McLuhan talking about the very young Marshall and his crystal radio. So, let's see if this works. Here we go. [Maurice's voice] "My recollection as we grew up as boys together was that Marshall had a keen interest in everything that was going on. It was radio that was breaking at that time ... and then he was the one who built a little crystal set. And we would go to sleep as kids in the same bed -- we didn't have separate rooms at that time -- and we would divide the receivers. And we'd find a very good point in the crystal for a program. And we would fall asleep [chuckles] with the receiver on the pillow and our ear against it." [end of clip] So, that's Maurice sounding very much like Marshall -- a spitting image of Marshall's voice -- describing how -- I guess they would split up the headphones and each take an ear on this very primitive build-it-yourself radio that they had, maybe ca. 1920.

And now I'm just going to give you a quotation that is in his letters. Where he says -- and now he's writing to his mother in 1935 -- and this is a random quotation -- it's just the kind of thing he says to his mother about what he's doing. And he says: "I have Bowen's radio ..." -- and that was his main pal he was hanging out with in 1935, when he was starting his graduate studies at Cambridge. He says, "I have Bowen's

radio and hear many good things. Philip Snowden on Keir Hardie on Friday, Desmond McCarthy on Samuel Butler, Thursday" etc. And we know who these people are. We know that Philip Snowden was a great orator himself. And he was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer, basically the finance minister in England. James Keir Hardy was a great labour activist who had already been dead for 20 years by that point ... who he was talking about. We know who Samuel Butler is. This writer of utopian novels and this other fellow, Desmond McCarthy, was an editor of that. But it's interesting, I mean, it's interesting that we know exactly what he was listening to with great accuracy at the times when he was recording it, in journals and in diaries especially.

And another piece of evidence from the archive of the very detailed particulars of McLuhan's media practice are these lists of expenses. And I certainly encourage you, to go up as some people are starting to do and go take a look at the nearest screen. And this one starts -- the first thing it says is: Flick. And that means he went to a movie, and it cost one -- it's all in, I guess, shillings and pence here. So, flick. And we don't know what that was, because he doesn't say, but then he says: To see George Arliss as The Last Gentleman. And we know what that was. And that was this movie from 1935. And then he says: To see Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch down here. And we know what that was; that was this W.C. Fields movie from the same year.

And then, he also has various books he's ... Dream of John Ball is a book by William Morris. And so on. So, we really know exactly what he's doing. Here's another reference. It just says: "Mickey Mouse bill at the Cosmopolitan." That's the movie theatre, and we know what he paid for it. We don't know what that was. At least not from this source alone. Flick (movie): La Maternelle. We know what that was, because that came out that year. So, one can actually go and reconstruct with great exactitude exactly which movies Marshall was looking at and which radio he was listening to, and so on, at a given time.

And I think it's terribly important for the following reason: I'm kind of a McLuhan sceptic in many ways and one of the things I felt about his theories was that they weren't necessarily as well researched as they should be. You know ... they're a little bit ... a book like Understanding Media is almost biting off more than he can chew. I mean, how can you possibly know really about all this media. Come on! I mean, I knew it was a very important synthesis -- a brilliantly useful book. But I also thought: well, how well researched can this be? But when you think about it, we all have deep experience with all kinds of media throughout our lives. And I think it was his life experience that really gave McLuhan that kind of expertise, in combination with the fact that he was paying attention. He was, as he used to say, the fish that was paying attention to the water. So in looking at these details, I've come to think: well, sure, of course he knew what a movie was.

Another example: [...] Viva Villa, this movie about the Mexican revolution, "was a stirring picture excellently produced" and so on. I mean, there's tons of this evidence. And then, of course, I show this view of his office just because it has a TV in it. And I don't need to remind you of the fact that he commented a lot on TV and how it supplanted film. There's something funny about all these headers -- I think we're just seeing very partial views. Maybe it's just the font that's

going funny.

This next section is called: Being a Character. As I say, these are kind of thematic and kind of chronological. And what I'm interested in in this little section is really talking about McLuhan's interest in rhetoric. And, not least, in the performative aspects of the rhetor. Of which his mother was one. And as you may know Elsie McLuhan was a -- what was called -- an elocutionist or, as we see here, a "reader and impersonator" which, in the pre-cinema age was, a way you got your kicks -- was going out and seeing these kind of vaudeville-type shows, of various types that would sometimes consist of people getting up on a stage and giving recitations. Original or else straight adaptations or recitations of -- anything, really. High and low. And that's what his mother -- the very mother to whom he was writing with such alacrity about whatever latest movie he'd seen -- that's what she did for a living back in Canada. And there's her picture, in a detail of that same photo that had the TV in it. And she's very, very important to Marshall. Much more so than his father.

And now I'm going to show you a document from 1933 which is the brochure that is the commemoration of the graduation, Marshall's graduation in 1933 from his MA at University of Manitoba. And, what's interesting is that -- of course they've got valedictory addresses, and so on -- but what's interesting is how McLuhan makes these notes. So, I guess, this is Professor H.N. Fieldhouse "who talked about cheese". And this other, -- I'm not sure which one of these, whether it was John Thomson or Thelma Wright -- "who showed the advantages of Miss Mitchell's training". Maybe this is someone who was training kids in rhetoric. And then on the back -- he doesn't stop, he then goes, on the back -- the whole thing is covered -- and he just goes on and on, in great detail in this sort of assessment of these performances, often rather catty. You know: "Black spoke in puerile polysyllables of the Osbornean variety sans the Osbornean imperiosity." (or something) Etc., etc., so he really goes into great detail in these analyses of people's rhetorical skills. And here he is again! Next year.

Now, we're in Cambridge. In the fall term of '34. when he started at the University of Cambridge, in England. And sure enough, he's going to debates and annotating heavily So, Mr Alport was "business-like, monotone, patting Britain on the back". Mr I.M.C. Braby was "frightfully confident". "Sing-song enunciation, marked by levity." Mr A. Duff Cooper was "fiery" -- and you know, etc. So - he was very -- quite deep into this aspect of orality, the performative aspect of public speaking.

And now what I'm showing you is a book called A Character Anthology. [It's] one of the unpublished books, one of the, quite a few, unpublished big studies that he assembled in the 1940's. So this is before he ... eventually started to work on The Mechanical Bride in the late '40s. But there's all these books that are unpublished. There's one called Preface to Prufrock. which is on T.S. Eliot, which I believe his son

Eric is now interested in getting published. There is this other one called A Character Anthology or the Character Anthology. [Mic check] The Character Anthology ... well it's complicated. There was a 17th century ... in the early 17th century, throughout much of Europe it was common to have these books of characters that were based on this ancient writer, in the tradition of this ancient writer named Theophrastus - anyway,

so, here it is. He's doing this kind of a retro thing, 17th century thing in the 1930s. And he thought, wouldn't it be instructive and amusing to have -- in this case as far as I can tell -- the characters are actually these writers and really what he's trying to do I think is give a sense of particular writing styles through making it into these characters. But that's what -- you'll remember -- his mother did. That's what she did: she was a character. I can't remember how they phrased it but she did characters. Ok, again -- with apologies for the words that are spilling off the page. They're not supposed to do that in any of these. Oh brother. Now I have to guess what I'm saying.

"Research and Publishing" is next. So now we get to the real publications including a book that eventually became The Mechanical Bride. But first, there's this thing called The New American Vortex which was really on contemporary modernist American writers. And then this thing ... these are little note cards for a book called The Guide to Chaos, in preparation for a book that he called The Guide to Chaos, and I'll tell you what that is in a second. But I want to show you there are also these scrapbook pages or, sort of portions of scrapbook pages that are really the raw materials for this Guide. And what it is is the book that after one other name change became The Mechanical Bride. And so, as we get into the later notes it's "MB" or "Mech Bride" and there's reams of them. I mean just -- it goes on and on.

Then we have manuscripts -- in this case for the introduction to The Mechanical Bride. We have typescripts. And then, among all these files we sometimes have even the original files that he had. If there was something with some writing on it like this one called "Beautiful Bodies" which was one of his "exhibits" -- as he called them. One of his specimens for analysis. Basically of the -- usually it's just a single advertisement. This one was in what became the book in the end. And this one is called 'Beautiful Bodies' I think it made it into the book. It's hard to keep track after seeing all these ... because there's hundreds, I think, and many didn't even make it into the fifty that actually became The Mechanical Bride. This 'Beautiful Bodies' was about a kind of pin-up advertisement for a funeral home, which greatly amused him. And so he thought: I gotta write /about this. -- [Why is that not going forward] --

Here's another one; this one is originally called "Hygiene" and then had the snappier title "How Not to Offend". And that's all about various hygiene products like deodorants or tooth paste or mouth wash. And here, too, what we have, is all of the clippings for the eventual book that is The Mechanical Bride. All we have is one image. And his son Eric tells me that the images in that book were actually made from slides and that The Mechanical Bride in the 1940s started out as a kind of travelling slide lecture which is very interesting. So they're actually quite faded and beat up by the time they became these rather grungy illustrations for The Mechanical Bride. We have a lot of the original material from which the slide was taken and much, much more. Here you can see multiple

copies of L'il Abner which is one that did make it into the final book. One of the so-called "Exhibits" in The Mechanical Bride. This idea of the Exhibit which we will also see pop up later on in his work came from a book -- came chiefly from a book -- by his hero and sometime pen-pal Wyndham Lewis who wrote a book, called The Doom of Youth, and which, in the back, had a bunch of -- had this section, an appendix that consisted of transcriptions of newspaper clippings. And that was all textual. But McLuhan sort of did it in a different way and was looking at text and image together in The Mechanical Bride. "Brick Bradford." Starting with that exact comic and here is some other stuff in the same file. Flash Gordon. Brick Bradford was a kind of Flash Gordon, spaceman type.

This isn't the very image that appeared as "Front Page" but he certainly did have -- you know -- he would collect things like the front page of the New York Times and look at it, as he would say, "like a work of art". And here, we have the manuscript and the typescript for that opening section of The Mechanical Bride which -- I think there's a copy being passed around, a very recent re-edition of that. I invite you to look at that. And now this is very important. It doesn't look like much, I know. But it's very, very important. Because what we have now at the top of the page and the bottom of the page are different versions of the little call-outs, the little, kind of, captions that appear in The Mechanical Bride. And the way it works, is: you have the image; you have the actual little essay proper; and then you have these kind of punchy questions. And in the original -- [let's see if we can get closer] -- in the original, which I can barely make out on 'Front Page', it started out with these very dry and academically phrased questions, such as: "What is the effect on the mind of the presentation of a large number of unrelated news stories?"; "Is unconnectedness necessary to objective reporting?"; "Is it possible to achieve at once a local and international panorama by any other means?"; ... and so on.

And then, at the bottom, what you have in manuscript is what ended up in the book and what he does -- and now he says: "What's the score here?"; "Why is a page of news a problem in orchestration?"; "How does the jazzy, ragtime discontinuity of press items link up with other modern art forms?". And you can see what he's done is, in jazzing up his language, what he's started to do is emulate the very language of the ad-men that he is studying. So, it becomes very meta as a piece of writing. And much more entertaining.

And now, what I'm showing you actually the -- you'll see, "12" "14" "bold" -- these are actually some pages that are the instructions to the makers of the books. So these are actually the publishers I guess, and Ernst Reichl, who was the designer, and this is published by Vanguard Press in 1951. And there it is. And something to know about The Mechanical Bride - in case you don't already know -- is that McLuhan hated it. It just took him five or six years to really find a publisher and get it through publication. You can see him complaining, especially to Ezra Pound and to Wyndham Lewis, in letters, saying, after it's come out - you'd think that would be a kind of relief, but he said: "Argh ... awful thing, he says. "It's so compromised. It's so normalized." And he really wanted to have something that was much more hybrid, much more polymorphous, much more fun. Much more, probably, spontaneous. And

so he really wasn't happy with the whole process of the production of this book. There's the Front Page. That's what I'm talking about, the Front Page, and here are these columns: "What's the score here?" (Etcetera: Here's another example.)

Now a publication that did make him happy was Counterblast. And Counterblast was a book that came out in 1954. The story behind this, is that his buddy Ted Carpenter, the anthropologist, brought to his attention something that is generally called the Massey Report which was a federal document that was basically summing up the state of Canadian culture and saying what we need to do about it. And Marshall McLuhan thought it was just the most hilarious thing he had ever read. And he immediately set to work in writing a kind of parodic commentary on the Massey Report which is this thing called Counterblast, which is in this style, very much, of Blast by Wyndham Lewis which you may be familiar with. It's pink, instead of blue so he's been, kind of playing there. And as you can see there's a lot of sort of futuristic typographic play à la Marinetti. Parole in libertà. Another publication project of the 50s was really, very dear to Marshall and he had more control over, and that was, I suppose, typically satisfying because it was collaborative which is something that we'll see more and more of too as we survey his literacy

... was this series called Explorations And these are the five copies, different ones that I happen to own. There's some on my dining room table. And that'll give you a sense really of the ambition of these books that were made in the wake of this Ford Foundation Grant that he had in 1953. So a grant from the American government [sic] for this outfit in Toronto him and various -- a clever interdisciplinary team with Ted Carpenter, and Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and Tom Easterbrook and others to reflect on communications and culture. And this was their, sort of, house organ. Oh look: Here's one that's riffing on the New York Times. This was from 1958 or something, but it's a fake headline [purporting to be] from 1963 talking about how Life magazine is no more -- because it's been killed by TV. It also had these very scientific sections. In this case a very famous graph, showing the -- this is from an experiment from the late 50s that this team did. I think it might have been after '59 when he got some money from again, from the American government to study media. And what they ... he's in Canada right at this point -- and this is showing a comparative -- it's really a study in attention, comprehension based on various students, at Ryerson University, who were reading or hearing or somehow taking in the same information by different media and their comprehension levels were very different depending on what they saw on TV or had recited to them, or read, and so on. But it's also just sort of luscious. Here's a section with funny little half pages that are printed in silver coloured ink. There's a dummy book for the 1960 anthology Explorations in Communication.

And that brings us to the 60s and to the 1962 book The Gutenberg Galaxy which is beautifully produced by University of Toronto Press. There's a re-edition out this year but, you know, they kind of got it right the first time, really as a work of typography. If you look closely at this you'll really see how very radical a book it is. Ok. We've got the big callouts. We remember those from the last publication. But what's really amazing about this is that all this slightly smaller font here are quotations. These are just big chunks of quotation. Here's someone who's happy to just kind of have this mashup of other people's writings

and call it a book. That's not an adequate description of what it is but it is a description of what goes on in a lot of this book. And it's certainly not -- you know -- in line with academic norms either then or now. And here are the typographer's instructions for these same callouts and I'm not going to belabour those. But I'm just going to show you, very glancingly, that there's lots of this evidence for this very beautiful book. And look at that logo that they got made for this as well. A really great, great design for 1962.

The next book which is Understanding Media began life as a very important offshoot of this money he got in 1959 to do the Project on Understanding New Media. And these are some bits of this. What we have here -- this is actually a student survey to which I was referring. Here it is tabulated. There it is in the original archival form of the graph that got reprinted in Explorations. Someone read mimeographs. Someone read, I'm guessing, some other kind of print. Television. Lecture. The comprehension levels are different. There's lots of evidence for this study -- it's a very important study -- in 1959 that -- basically -- no one's really looked at archivally. And here is the uncorrected proof of the Report on Understanding New Media. So, this is the book, the kind of initial version of Understanding Media which had a fairly different form. And so, there we go -- there's his bound copy. And as you can see, it does what Understanding Media does.

does, the 1960 book that takes each medium and discusses it separately. In this case, in kind of drier prose. The same thing that happened in The Mechanical Bride: he eventually jazzes it up for the final version. It has Exhibits. You know about those. These are appendices. Here's one of the appendices. Exhibit Two! And what it is, is a transcript of a 1960 television program that Marshall helped put together for CBC. And [which] of course started Marshall McLuhan being Marshall McLuhan And already, I mean very much being Marshall McLuhan, already in 1960. That's a cover of my copy of Understanding Media the '64 book. But there's the jazzier [title page of] the paperback version.

1967 was the year of the great book The Medium is the Massage. And I don't need to go into the history of that or of the other book produced by Jerome Agel and Quentin Fiore along with McLuhan because, this week, it's coming out, a brand new book on the subject by Jeffrey Schnapp which is incredible. I think it's one of the best things published on McLuhan in recent years. It's very interesting. It's really about this impresario, this new kind of publisher, Jerome Agel is how I now know he pronounced his name: A-G-E-L. And he put together Marshall McLuhan and the designer Quentin Fiore to make The Medium is the Massage but also many, many other books some of which were bombs, some of which were successes, and the masterpiece is actually the book on Buckminster Fuller called I seem to be a Verb. And it's incredible. It's an amazing book. and still, very much, you know [around]-- you can buy it used. And I would recommend it. And also Carl Sagan and others.

So that -- Medium is a Massage -- was really part of a series featuring various kind of intellectuals. It also came out, as many of you may know, in LP form. Also, as you may or may not know, it came out as

'Aspen 4' which is 'The Magazine in a Box'. And issue 4 of Aspen was designed -- was The Medium is a Massage And it was designed by Quentin Fiore and was -- [but] really, all the text and, no doubt, many of the ideas for the design as well came from Marshall McLuhan. And it's this kind of grab-bag. Here's a poster. Here's various little booklets and things that it consists of. Beautifully, lavishly produced.

Sorry I don't have time to dwell on any of this. But what I'm really trying to do is saturate you with a sense of the totality of this and the kind of feeling, and the texture of it. [By]'69 McLuhan had the means to produce a much fancier version of Counterblast. So that's the book Counterblast the one that up until this year was the only really fully published version, as opposed to these mimeographs that he sent out. And now for something really unknown, I think, and really quite special which are these publications -- a series of publications called The DEW Line Reports. And you know about McLuhan and the DEW Line: the idea of the Distant Early Warning system and how Canadian culture is a kind of DEW line because we can, kind of, see American culture coming just like we can see American, you know, the missiles coming from Russia ... -- anyway -- and this is another one of these fellows like Mr Agel. There was a fellow named Schwartz. Gene Schwartz, who was a New York ad-man, one of these Madison Avenue Mad Men who was -- who really kind of -- looked up [to] McLuhan. He was very big in advertising circles of the 60s. There was also Howard Gossage in San Francisco. There were a lot of these impresarios -- forward-thinking people in the very forward-thinking, hip business of advertising. This guy Eugene Schwartz said: "Why don't we do this series of little publications called The DEW-Line Reports?" And they take many forms.

So, here in 1968 is the first one I don't really want -- again, I don't have time to belabour the content. I just want to flash through. And here the hand is helpful, right? Because you can see that that one's very small. I just want to flash through a bunch of these to show you the variety of forms that they took.

Here's a poster popping up. It's almost like a poor man's version of Aspen 4. It's very hard to see here. But there's actually, you can -- this is kind of translucent/semi-translucent paper that shows the title. Here's one ... DEW-Line Report ... now we're into 1969 ... that looks like a newspaper. And it has an ad for the DEW-Line Report in it. And we're going to see a lot of this stuff coming up: this kind of folding-in and self-referencing and it gets very messy, in productive ways, in the late '60s.

Here's another one with a sort of Lichtenstein-esque "BANG". This detail here is a little metaphor of McLuhan's about the satellite being a proscenium arch around the globe. Here's sort of explanations -- visual, verbal -- expositions on information overload and pattern recognition which were of course, very dear to McLuhan in navigating the media maelstrom.

Here we have these Joycean quotations and really fancy graphics: a sort of Bridget Riley type thing going on there. Here's the back of it. So, you can see -- and then you get to something very dry you get to things that look very sort of scientific and serious and not so punchy. There's the same charts that we saw in another form earlier. And sometimes you get three, three for one, in your DEW-Line Report. And

sometimes you get three, three for one, in your DEW-Line report. And this is very typical. This sort of cutting the page, reversal of the narrative order from front to back or just plain mixed-up, or on loose sheets that you can reorganize yourself. And there's a lot of these kind of aleatory and very playful practices going on. Lots of little windows and things.

This looks -- I don't know what this looks like -- I mean, some kind of scientific thing, I guess. And here ... oh, we have another kind of book. And here's an advertisement for the upcoming edition which will have the DEW-Line Card Deck which we'll see momentarily. It's "a contemporary I Ching" that I'll explain in a minute.

And there is ... some posters ... This one looks like a tax form. You have to see the original because it's in this kind of newsprint. It feels like a US tax form. It's playing on John Milton and Spiro Agnew in the title. I can't go into it ... you can see there the layout of it. And this is the most unprepossessing one, at least on the title page. It's a horrible mimeograph which I guess, it's this sort of -- maybe that's it. I think this is actually the original. And it's deliberately looking sort of grungy and low-tech.

And what it is -- is a 1970 interview between Gary Kern and Marshall McLuhan. And now look what happens: Question/Answer. Question/Answer. Question. Answer. Question/Answer. And so on.

So, pretty fancy after all, isn't it? This looks to me like a kind of 50s thing. Now they're getting retro with their little depiction of skyscrapers in this. The page within the page, which is not unheard of in advertising, but here there are levels of self-consciousness and, kind of, self-referencing I think, that go beyond even what advertising was capable of.

And here are the instructions for the Distant Early Warning Card Deck. This is this thing they were calling "The I Ching for the modern manager." And it was just that. It had these rules but also a kind of randomness to it. And what you were supposed to do, is you had this deck of cards that got mailed out to you in that edition of the DEW-Line and you made decisions on the basis of these funny cards which were the precursor to Brian Eno's Oblique Strategies. The missing link between the I Ching and Oblique Strategies. And McLuhan --

I show you these notes just as one indication McLuhan was very seriously involved in the production of most if not all of the DEW-Line things. So this is a --- these are serious publications that he was really writing, he was really involved in, he was really making and -- you know -- it's hard to even -- I've never even seen an image of one until these photos I took.

And we even have a mock-up here for one of these. You'll recall which one, probably. So you can really get a kind of kind of fingertip feel for how things were published in the pre-digital age. Probably offset lithography ultimately. But before that these kind of paste-downs. OK.

So the next section I'm going to call -- [oh, and this actually worked. It didn't go off the page] in homage to Antonioni I'm going to call it Blow Up. And I'm going to take you again, even faster now through some of the images of McLuhan kind of "getting big" in the media. This is from 1955 and it's just -- he gave a lecture at [...] the Teacher's College of [...] Columbia University, in New York. And he appeared on a cover of that. And it's got a little mimeograph lecture from him. As I say he -- I don't have time to go on to the role of mimeographs in McLuhan's work. But it's important. The range of the kind of publication that -- different types of publication we have

Now we're in 1959 -- and the Varsity Review in 1962. So, I'm showing you the images at the top and I don't really have time to get into -- well, sometimes you can see exactly what the publication is. Saturday Night. 1963. He wins a top literary award. This is when he won the Governor General's Award. '64. And again, I'm not even going to comment much on these.

OK, here's a -- you know, McLuhan said that John Diefenbaker, the prime minister, should, you know, be more cool and more like the Beatles. So now you have an image of Diefenbaker in a Beatles wig ... mop-top. So, he already is this kind of -- already by '64. He's now becoming this kind of witty pundit who gets picked up everywhere. [The] New Yorker 1965 says, for instance: "He [McLuhan] has compared the bomb to the doctoral dissertation, discussed the 'depth-involving' qualities of sunglasses, textured stockings, discothèques and comic books; reported on the iconic properties of Andy Warhol's signed soup cans" -- which he saw at the great exhibition in Toronto in '64 -- "and predicted a happy day when everyone will have his own portable computer to cope with the dreary business of digesting information." Silly idea.

Now, he's on TV. This is in McLean's. "The High Priest of Pop Culture." "Prophet of the Age of Instant Knowledge." "Canada's Intellectual Comet" in Harper's Magazine in the States. And of course, the obligatory cute cartoons of which this is one of the more charming ones. Now, the French media -- the French Canadian media -- pick up "La comète intellectuelle du Canada". Here he's in Life magazine with his whole family. There he is looking very jaunty And they comment on this sort of, on how he sets his hat now. I think he's actually trying to look like John Steed in that one. If you get that reference. Looks a bit more Clockwork Orange in a later reworking of that photograph. But you can see he's kind of blowing up now.

So back to '66. Dick Higgins. So now we're with Fluxus. Madison Avenue magazine. Big feature on him. No surprise.

Here he is, with his whole family, in the women's section of the Toronto Telegram. He's "puzzling" people now. There's his former student, Hugh Kenner, in this conservative rag talking about McLuhan.

Here are notes from KQED-TV the terrific radio, TV station in San Francisco that included an interview with McLuhan in '66.

There he is on Canadian TV in a sort of TV Guide, basically.

Here's an invitation to Marshall from 'Something Else' which is Fluxus, Dick Higgins again to a "McLuhan Happening" which is taking place, and there's a little ad for it. Probably from the 'Village Voice' or something.

'66. Now this is an important image which some of you may know which is McLuhan relaxing in this kind of piece of lawn furniture that he had in his office. And ... famously with this huge picture of Allen Ginsberg, which I think it was given to him by Allen Ginsberg. And with - the caption underneath it says: -- this is in the Toronto Daily Star:

"Marshall McLuhan in his foxhole office in St Michael's College complete with 40-cup coffee urn (which is not just for display), 1936 Cambridge rowing oar,

Ginsberg photograph, and an accumulation of reading matter that gives his quarters the appearance of an overstocked used-book store." You know, this is not your typical photograph of an academic from 1967. He was very much the hipster. He's very much playing to the camera. He claims to have really not liked this photograph to be circulated. But, you know, I mean: he let it happen, right? So, I think, that he certainly knows what he's doing here.

And here's more of this kind meta-element, this folding-in at the corner of that same newspaper page, at the bottom corner where the McLuhan photo is at the top, with Ginsberg, we have this reproduction of the cover of Explorations 5. and it says at the bottom: "McLuhan's magazine cover showed a Star page" because in front of this, you know, ancient goddess if you look carefully, there's the Toronto Star Now -- in the Toronto Star The Toronto Star is commenting on ... you know, it's almost too much to think about at this hour.

"Why Marshall McLuhan Matters to You." New York Times. Again, something else quite obligatory is these synopses of the history of technology here. There's a visualization of his famous hot/cool comparison of why JFK works in the media and Nixon doesn't.

Here he is on the cover of Newsweek and you'll see that he's surrounded by Marshall McLuhan So, it's a sort of John Malkovich kind of McLuhan, McLuhan, McLuhan McLuhan ... inside, too. A crazy, constant collage in a McLuhan theme. Collages all over the place.

Again, more cartoons. Et cetera

This is from an architectural magazine, they're just -- you know, no one can resist -- I can't either, as you can see.

OK, there he is in Arts et Lettres "Une bombe philosophique venue du Canada." Now we're in France they're talking about him. This is this very pulpy publication which is fun. It's partly because of the cover, which cracks me up. But also because it reproduces -- it replays -- these images out of the Life magazine feature from the year before. "Joker or genius? Or both?" So of course we get all these speculations about whether he's for real.

Here in the New York Times -- We have now a story with a photograph about the release of The Medium is the Message that shows this kind of promotional campaign where they had these women in mini skirts, which are very dear to Marshall, parading around with signs showing the LP version of The Medium is the Message. It's getting complicated.

Here, as one of the sort of, you know, typical -- things typifying the "Le choc de '68" in L'Express in France we have an image from The Medium is the Message: "Le scandale McLuhan."

Germany.

Zagreb. France again. So now we're in '69. And here we have an image embedded in that magazine of the French version of the 'Voiceprints' which is one of the things that appears in The Medium is the Message. It says: "You You You" (or "Vous Vous Vous") although I noticed in the German translation that came out this year, it says: "You, you, you" and then it has the German text in small [letters]. So, it keeps going, you know. It keeps proliferating in very complicated ways. And now, as an epilogue ...

Oh boy -- and see, these things are all off the screen again. This is supposed to say The Freewheeling Marshall McLuhan. What I want to do is just play you some video clips. And the title is an homage to Bob Dylan (The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan) And I want to put McLuhan together: in a way, this is a gathering of some of the things I've been looking at, some of the explanations of his persona which we're now going to see a little closer up, in video form. And I want to put him together with various other people -- performers -- who -- all of the other ones American -- who epitomize freedom in this era: the early '60s.

So there's Ornette Coleman who made, of course, the album Free Jazz in 1960, and that was instead of having just individual, lots of little tracks, in an LP. It was an LP that was just one 40 minute track with his "two-part quartet" -- an octet, that he called a "two-part quartet". And, of course, it was very free harmonically -- and in other ways, as well. Lenny Bruce, a comedian who epitomized freedom not just because of the First Amendment stuff, because he was swearing a lot and was dragged off to jail, but also because he really loosened up the whole presentation style of stand-up [making it] much less canned and much more improvisatory and free form. And Bob Dylan. OK. So, let's ...

And in all of these clips I'm going to show you I want you to really pay attention [...] sort of formally. The sound may not be that good [but] it doesn't matter that much in most cases what they're saying I just want you to see, well, to see for yourself what he looks like on TV.

[McLuhan speaking]: "The forms of entertainment that work best on television, whether it's Paddy Chayefsky, or even the [Jack] Parr show, are ones which admit a great deal of casualness in which people can be introduced and dialogued with in the presence of the camera at

can be introduced and dialogued with in the presence of the camera at all sorts of levels of their lives. You capture them at all sorts of strange and offbeat moments of their existence. And this kind of probing and peeling off the superficial aspects of people, and so on is normal to this medium. It is a depth medium. So. Already very [...] out there you see what he's commenting on is how TV lends itself to a certain kind of casualness and he's pretty good, you know, at sort of getting up there and being casual." [Technical difficulties] [Mic test]

Now, I want to go straight into Bob Dylan with a very McLuhanesque Dylan quote This is from -- it's a clip from the 1967 movie Don't Look Back. But it's filmed by the Pennebakers in the spring of two years earlier -- '65. And there's a Time magazine reporter who's the guy we saw in the first shot and he's being harangued by this cocky young singer, Bob Dylan. Without even opening his mouth, he's basically being set straight by Dylan about -- it's -- as I said -- a little McLuhanesque riff. Let's see if I can go back to the beginning.

[Dylan]: "You hear it, see it and, uh, it's gonna happen fast. And you're not going to get it all. And you might even hear the wrong words, you know. And then afterwards I can't -- I won't be able to talk to you afterwards. I got nothing to say about these things I write. I write -- just write 'em. I don't need to say anything about 'em. I don't write 'em for any reason. There's no great message. So ignore the content. Just -- you know -- get with it. And now here's -- now I'm going to flip to McLuhan, I believe in '67 or thereabouts talking about his attitude to his own publications. Basically he's talking about how he doesn't pay much attention to them after the fact. [McLuhan]: "If I were to trust the observations of my critics, I would despond and despair to the point of cutting my throat. However, I find a certain amount of pleasure in such activities as I engage in and it is mainly in the process of making discoveries that I find my satisfactions. I find no satisfaction whatever in reading about them, or, I can't bear to reread anything I have ever written. Or, I couldn't bear to re-hear anything I've ever said. That is, I might have to bear it but it wouldn't be fun." [GL]: [laughs] So you see what's going on here. Dylan is saying: It's gonna happen fast. You're gonna miss it. There's too much going on. you're not gonna be able to take it in, and ... Tough! And McLuhan's saying -- Yeah, I write this -- And really one of the things Dylan is saying is: You know, I'm not playing by the rules. And I'm not just put on this earth for your, sort of -- so you can analyze me and kind of put me in a box, or whatever. I'm just sort of doing my thing and you can kind of take it or leave it. McLuhan is effectively saying the same thing with his publications: "You want to criticize me?" he says "Too late! I've moved on. I've already -- I don't even read my stuff. You read my stuff? Whatever." He doesn't -- so, it's a certain style, I think. A certain kind of freedom that is coming very much into vogue.

And really, I think, the kind of apotheosis to my mind, of McLuhan is in this 1967 clip from CBC. And I'll play it first, and then I tell you why I think it's so great. But I'll tell you in advance to really look at the camera techniques and just look at the cutting and the zooming, and the close-ups, and [at] how different it is from CBC just seven years earlier. And the audience. [Interviewer]: "What do you think Marshall McLuhan ought to do if he wants to be taken more seriously in the world today?" [McLuhan] "Marshall McLuhan is taken far too seriously." [Audience

laughter, applause] "I certainly wouldn't do anything to increase that."
[Interviewer] "Marshall McLuhan, you say TV has turned the world into a global village. Am I right? Will it turn us all into global village idiots?"
[Laughter] [McLuhan] "Again, uh, not -- there are worse fates. An idiot means a very private person. That's a Greek word, meaning a very private person. I'm losing my idiot status steadily. I'm becoming less and less private. I'd much rather be an idiot." [Interviewer]: "You've been quoted as saying you don't necessarily agree with everything that you say." [McLuhan]: "I have no point of view. As for example now, you see -- I couldn't possibly have a point of view. I'm just ... moving around and picking up information from many directions. No. A point of view means a static, fixed position and you can't have a static, fixed position in the electric age. It's impossible to have a point of view in the electric age. And [as to it] having any meaning at all, you've got to be everywhere at once whether you like it or not. You have to be participating in everything going on at the same time. And that is not a point of view."
[GL] And what's so incredible about this to me in this moment, you know, of '67, is really how so much of society has almost caught up with McLuhan. And you can see this whole thing is staged in a way where he's swivelling around without a point of view which lends itself to almost physical comedy, or, you know this kind of free form where he doesn't even have to [be] still. You can see that the lights in the background, the ... one could say gratuitous light show that was in behind him you know, there, too: I don't need to reiterate McLuhan's lightbulb-as-information.

But, you can really see, as I say, it's all come together. I mean even, you know, CBC has very quickly caught up with just what McLuhan -- with just where McLuhan said we were going. Almost done. I'm just going to go back to Explorations 5. Just because I want to give you a sense of that publication and this is a good time to do it. Because what this is, is a funny little -- Explorations is very interesting. It's this collage of often unsigned chunks of text. And so, we don't even know who wrote this. This is the whole thing. This is the whole section. I chopped it up. This is one page and the next page.

And somebody is saying: "I have been reading a book on East and West in religion by Radhakrishnan & am impressed at the starting point which is implied in Radhakrishnan's use of words. For example, he will say: 'Logic tends to reduce everything to identity but there is nothing that remains for two successive moments of its existence.'" Don't worry, I know this doesn't make sense "Our philosophers, however, do not think of themselves as reducing the non-identical to identity. They start with the validity, logical necessity of self-identity."

Now, this is the good part -- "This, incidentally, reminds me of a story, Lyman Bryson told me." It's really weird, cause we don't even know who "me" is. "When Warren Weaver was an India two years ago, he attended a court session where a village woman was giving testimony. The judge told her: 'You're testimony is false. Last week you gave a different story.' And the woman replied: 'This week I'm a different person. If I'd given you the same testimony then it would've been false.'" So we can see already in the '50s this fluidity of identity -- this refusal to be pinned down to a stable and single self -- found in other cultures. And as the world gets into this kind of secondary orality -- this tribal phase -- everybody's doing it. And on the front guard of that are Dvlan and

McLuhan.

And here's Lenny Bruce. And this is -- I'll just show a couple more -- almost done. This is Lenny Bruce in -- again, this is like Don't Look Back.

This is a film of '67 that shows a performance of '65. Lenny near the end of his life. And he's talking about how he gets criticized not for his performances per se but for an understanding based on a very mediated version of his performance that is beside the point 'cause, like, they weren't there. You'll see what I mean, I hope. I just want you to see him in action, too and see his kind of style. [Lenny Bruce]: "I figured out after four years why I got arrested so many times. Dig what happened. It's been a comedy of errors. Here's how it happened. I do my act at, perhaps, 11 o'clock at night. Little do I know that 11 am next morning before the grand jury somewhere there's another guy doing my act who's introduced as Lenny Bruce in substance. Here he is: Lenny Bruce! in substance. A peace officer who is trained for -- to recognize clear and present danger not make-believe -- does the act. The grand jury watches him work and they go: 'That stinks!' But I get busted. And the irony is that I have to go to court and defend his act. Cause they're going to send a complaint.

[GL]: Two more clips. Let's just close out with another one another clip from Don't Look Back. which is much more loose and really just shows -- again: look at the cutting. You might not even be able to even hear the sound, or interpret it. It doesn't really matter. What matters is just how kind of free things get. Very quickly. I mean there are precedents, in Cassavetes or whatever, but really quickly by '67 with this. And then I'm going to ... close with a McLuhan clip.

But here we go. Another very brief clip from the Pennebaker film Don't Look Back about Bob Dylan's '65 tour. [GL]: He's coming out of the concert here in London. [Albert Grossman]: "The vanishing American." [AG]: "This says you don't offer any solution." [Dylan]: "Anarchist!" [Dylan]: "Gimme a cigarette." [Dylan]: "Give the anarchist a cigarette." [laughter] [Dylan]: "Anarchist." [Dylan]: "A singer such as I." So we saw Dylan saying earlier that there's no message. Now, it's like: you're an anarchist people are saying because you offer no solution. These are people who bemoan the fact that he had gone from being a very meaningful protest singer to being something else.

And now finally I'm going to close with something that just came onto the web for the first time, the whole film by McLuhan. It had been one of the many little holy grails, at least in my experience of McLuhan studies: a movie that I knew he made called Picnic in Space which is made featuring him and Harley Parker, the designer of (among other things) Counterblast '69, who was an exhibit designer, head of exhibition design at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. And it consists, this film -- it's a very messed up narrative that -- half of which is McLuhan and Harley Parker kind of just hanging out in a field thinking about space. And it's more complicated than that, much more complicated and [there are] parts of it, which I suspect, were designed by Harley Parker or at least he had some influence in it. And you'll see, some of both -- the loose stuff and you'll see the other stuff, look more like an Eames film

like Powers of Ten by Charles and Ray Eames.

And you'll see all of that and more. And the more in this closing thing I'm going to show you is McLuhan commenting on how film works, what film is talking about black and white, you'll see a lot of pop references to various artists. Among them Warhol, Lichtenstein and Oldenburg. And then you'll see these, these two works, a couple of works by Jasper Johns, one of them consisting of a flashlight, and then of a light bulb. And it ends with McLuhan holding a flashlight and a light bulb kind of out in the field where he began talking. [video starts] And it's kind of corny in the way that The Medium is the Massage LP is [video re-starts] [McLuhan]: ... It never occurred to anybody that sight was something you received. Keep me in the apple of thine eye. It meant: Please keep me in existence. [music] [McLuhan]: ... the film was based on stills. Well then you add wheels to stills and you get movies. [ragtime piano] -- CUT -- Everything depends upon knowing just how far things are apart. I also remember -- [GL] [laughs] ... holding a light bulb and the flashlight from the previous scene.

So ... that's it! Thank you. [Applause]

[Stephen Kovats]: Thank you very much, Graham. We have a couple of minutes. We have to get out of here pretty much [by] six o'clock.

But, please: Questions. Comments. Feedback. [Graham Larkin] Yeah, we'll do what questions we can and I'll give you the microphone for the question and we can continue afterwards once we get kicked out // BREAK // ... to the dictaphone that Wyndham Lewis had used late in life. So -- but in a way -- in terms of his actual fingertip feel, he wasn't like Kittler. he didn't have the wherewithal to build a synthesizer. That's, like, some next-level stuff. I think, he stopped pretty much at the crystal radio. But there is a lot -- there's enormous evidence, for instance not for instance, but primarily in the case of McLuhan in the Canadian Museum of Science & Technology. They have all the stuff. I mean, we have everything. We have every typewriter that anyone ever used in Canada and every Teletype and everything else and so it wouldn't, despite the fact, that he didn't, he wasn't himself a kind of practitioner on the kind of deep level that you're saying Kittler was in building a synthesizer ... he didn't have depth of electronic or even, really, electrical media beyond me. He was, nonetheless ... we can still put this stuff together. One of the things, that I really want to do is take seriously some of the more mundane things without necessarily privileging his production. I've been focusing on his productions but one of the things, some of the sort of humble things that I like are all the different kinds of telegraphs. Because he lived in this absolutely critical period when, you know, everything changed. You can get this incredible succession of different telegraphs. I think, we really need to do a deep readings of these things We need to understand them on the level of surface materials. We need to know what was pre-printed what was over-printed and how it was done. We need to understand him on the level of language, of this 'telegraphese' which is somewhere between Morse Code and today's SMS or telex. These kinds of shortform languages. We need to understand him behind that on the level of the code. ASCII was developed in the early 60s for Telex which was [??] computer based [??] towards the telegraph. I think he knew what time it was. He knew what

towards the telegraph. I think he knew what time it was. He knew what was going on. You can't be writing Understanding Media and building synthesizers. Dealing with so many media on that level. Or, he couldn't anyway, and he didn't. That wasn't his thing.

But, I think he was very -- you can see from his clipping files exactly that he knew, really, what was going on.

[Female Voice] Do you have any more insights into how all this stuff was collected? Like did he just not have time to deal with things, and put things away in boxes: "I'll deal with it later, deal with it later, and then lived in a stable enough environment where he was able to keep everything? Or, did his wife keep things? Do you have any insight into just exactly the nature of that fetish, I suppose, as well as the life lived where it's possible. I know the Coach House at U of T[oronto] where he was for so many years -- was that where a lot of that stuff was? Was it in a family home? Those kind of insights. You know what I mean?

[Graham Larkin] Well, he had multiple offices One at his house, one at Saint Mike's [College] and then ultimately one at the Coach House. And that's where a lot of this stuff was in play in his lifetime. You know, in a sense it's probably easier to just keep stuff than throw it away, I guess. So in a sense maybe there's some efficiency there. Since he had the space to kind of stow this stuff. I think what's amazing, to me, is: for how long how deeply involved he was in everything. It became -- answering his mail -- he still did. He did that all the way through which is already mind boggling when you consider what it must be like to be Marshall McLuhan receiving mail in 1968. So, he actually answered those. In this case with the aid of a secretary and so on, to organize things and sort through and open the mail, and all that. The 'DEW Line', as I say, there's a lot of manuscript notes all the way through. So, in a short answer to that, I would say just how impressed I am by his depth of involvement in so much of it. I mean, the guy was really a serious workaholic as well as a hoarder.

[Dieter Daniels] How far is it possible to trace the process of assembling a book in the archive? Because, you've been showing some parts of The Mechanical Bride and the various stages of assembling image and text. Maybe the same is the case in the Medium is the Massage? Do you really get like a storyboard of how the book was developing through different stages? Is it all there? So, you -- like the making-of, like the backstage --

[Graham Larkin] Yeah, I think, you could really piece it all together for certain of the books on the basis of what's there. I didn't even show you the sheet of paper that shows the editorial coding systems -- that he kept, of course -- For the making of The Gutenberg Galaxy. But, I think, between just the sheer weight of what's there which itself implies a pretty obvious chronology, in most cases, of production. And, between the fact that this isn't ancient history so there's still sort of -- we can even talk to people who were involved in production circa 1960. And, given the fact, that there's so much circumstantial evidence or there's so much surrounding evidence from other productions of the time, I think: Yeah. Sure. We could really, in great depth, reconstruct the makings of this. But I think the most fascinating one, for sure, to me, in terms of the actual production, is the book that eventually became The Mechanical

Bride. And there, too -- I kind of told a highly simplified story, actually. There are all kinds of subject files you know, a big fat file on the Beatles and so many big fat subjects on TV, or whatever that sort of continued after, you know -- he continued to grow and evolve even after the production of that. It's a quagmire. But ... there, too, one can certainly piece together a story.

[Stephen Kovats]: OK. Thank you very much Graham. We're going to have to basically close down there. I'd also like to thank Erik Sievert who helped put this together, the technician.

And then, maybe as a closing question. I mean, you presented a whole cornucopia of new materials for a lot of us. New stuff, new insights. What will you be doing with it? So -- how do you continue this work, or how do you want to see this come ... what form of output will you have from it? And then we'll end off of that. So just a short comment on where you're going with it.

[Graham Larkin]: The ultimate fantasy would be to get involved in a highly serious collaborative project that would digitise at least all of the kinds of really good stuff that I've been showing you. And tag it properly with the kind of depth that I've been suggesting. Going through his shopping list and finding exactly what was what. And then, we will be really able to connect the dots. On the basis of that. So, I think, a deep archiving would be the most serious thing to do with that. And how one did it? There are any number of ways. If you can get the rights and get it out there you can crowdsource it or whatever. So to me, what's great about it, is this kind of meta-element, the fact that it is not only these records of so many 20th century technologies as they developed but also, as seen through the filter of this person who's reflecting so steadily and so deeply on it. So, I think that there would be a kind of perfection, in a way -- it would be a nice happy ending -- for this to be digitised, and be mined in that kind of depth. I think ... a lot of connections would emerge that would ... precisely ... to answer Dieter's question about how reconstructable things are, I think, they're incredibly ... mind-bogglingly reconstructable when you know what he was doing on Thursday night, of, you know, May 9th, 1935, what movie he was watching. You know, if we put all that together you could get pretty deep.

[Stephen Kovats] OK. Graham, thank you again for giving a happy ending also to the Retouching McLuhan Conference that began back in May. And thank you to Sarah, Katharina and Anja for all of you who came this evening. I hope that we'll have some more McLuhan-themed and McLuhan-focussed events here in the Marshall McLuhan Salon in the future. I hope, that you'll also be able to come back again. And Graham, thank you very much for this fantastic lecture.

[Graham Larkin] Thank you all for coming!