

PSYCHOLOGY

"Ghost" Ads Overrated

➤ YOU DO NOT need to be afraid to turn on your television set or go to the movies for fear you will be "brainwashed" by some form of invisible commercials or propaganda.

The claims that have been made for the power and effectiveness of this "subliminal salesmanship" have been greatly exaggerated in the opinion of psychologists familiar with research in the field of perception below the threshold of awareness.

Whether such perceptions would have any effect at all on your actions has not been established scientifically, one prominent investigator told SCIENCE SERVICE. It is certainly not possible to predict that the TV or movie audience could be made to go right out to buy "No-Blemish Toothpaste" or "Live-it-up-Beer."

What is definitely known by psychologists today is that we can and do perceive a great deal that we are not aware that we are seeing or hearing. Thus, your mood is probably affected at a movie by background music even though you seem to pay no attention to it and could not possibly describe it to a friend or name the composition.

It is well to understand that the learning of children is affected not only by the things they are consciously attending to—

the teacher's voice, the letters on the blackboard or in their books—but also by a thousand other trivial things that flit by on the fringes of their awareness.

Here is an experiment that has been conducted at New York University by Drs. Sheldon Bach and George S. Klein of the Research Center for Mental Health: A group of young women were asked to look at faces flashed briefly on a projection screen. Superimposed over the faces were either the word "happy" or the word "angry" flashed so briefly that they could not be consciously seen. To most of the girls the face appeared more pleasant when viewed with the invisible "happy" than when paired with "angry."

However, it is a long step from having such below-threshold perceptions influence your impression of a face to having them move you to buy a certain brand of cigarettes or to vote for a certain candidate for election.

Science News Letter, October 26, 1957

EDUCATION

Study Science in History Classes, Schools Urged

➤ SCIENCE should be included in history, government and other social science classes, teachers were advised in a report by the National Council for Social Studies, a department of the National Education Association.

If discoveries and inventions of this technological age are overlooked, it is charged that social studies courses will ignore today's students who are excited about aviation, electronics, medicine and other important fields of science and technology.

A start in integrating science and social subjects can be made, the report states, "by recognizing the central role of science and technology in making our social institutions what they are today."

Science News Letter, October 26, 1957

PHYSIOLOGY

TV Viewers Run Risk of Dangerous Blood Clots

➤ TELEVISION VIEWERS should get up and walk around at least once an hour, or they run the risk of getting serious leg disorders, Dr. Meyer Naide, Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, reports in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Oct. 12).

He reports three cases of dangerous blood clots which formed in the leg vessels of patients who had been sitting in awkward positions watching TV.

One patient sat with the back of his knee pressed against the edge of the chair for one and a half hours, another man with his leg thrown over the arm of the chair for an hour, and a woman with her leg tucked under her.

Similar disorders may occur after driving long distances in a car, especially in tall men who are peculiarly susceptible to such ailments.

Girdles and other tight garments should be removed before prolonged TV watching, and the viewer should move his legs frequently.

Twenty-one deaths are reported to have resulted from this type of circulatory disorder in England during World War II when air raid victims had to spend long periods of time sitting on chairs or benches in shelters. The blood clots which formed in the leg veins as a result of "long sitting" were carried up to the lungs and caused sudden death.

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SPUTNIK'S BEEPS—Pulse patterns transmitted by radio from the Russian satellite were recorded by Carl McIlwain, right, graduate student at the State University of Iowa. He is showing Prof. James Jacobs what was at that time the satellite's clearest and strongest minute of "sending" as its orbit brought it over the Midwest at approximately 11:12 p.m. on Oct. 6. One foot of the tape was used for each minute of pulse patterns received and recorded.