

BOOKS and REVIEWS

The Hidden Persuaders
By Vance Packard. 275 pp. New York. David McKay Co., Inc. \$4.00
Reviewed by PHIL THOMAS

Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov discovered early in this century that if a drop of acid is placed on a dog's tongue repeatedly and a bell simultaneously, eventually the sound of the bell alone will be sufficient to cause a salivary response.

Psychologists call this type of response the "conditioned reflex." Pavlov's work remained almost entirely within academic circles until the late 1940s and early 1950s when it was seized upon by advertisers and merchandisers.

How these groups adopted the conditioned reflex and other psychological and sociological methods to influence and manipulate the American people is the subject of Vance Packard's fascinating and frightening book, "The Hidden Persuaders."

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THE MERCHANTISERS who have adopted the so-called "motivational research" method to push their products no longer appeal to the conscious, rational level, where people know what is going on, and are able to tell why they prefer to hit the consumer.

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in the subconscious where he knows only in a vague way what is going on.

"One direction they began exploring... was the molding of the creation of distinctive, highly appealing 'personalities' for products that were essentially undistinctive.

The aim was to build images that would arise before our 'inner eye' at the mere mention of the product's name, once we had been properly conditioned. Thus they would trigger our action in a competitive sales situation," Packard says.

THIS ASSAULT on the subconscious reached new heights recently with the development of a machine which thrusts images or messages invisible to the human eye on television and movie screens.

Packard reports the case of a movie house which flashed invisible ice-cream ads onto the screen during the showing of a film. As a result, he says, the house reported a "clear and otherwise unaccountable boost in ice-cream sales."

"The use of mass psychonalysis to guide campaigns of persuasion has become the basis of a multi-million-dollar industry," Packard warns. "Professional persuaders have seized upon it in their groping for more effective ways to sell their wares—whether products, ideas, attitudes, candidates, goals, or states of mind."

Welcome to 1984.

By Evelyn Waugh. 160 pp. Garden City. Image Books (Doubleday & Company). 65c

Reviewed by SALLY PARSONS

Helena

It is with pride that the English language and his ability to create a character or situation with a flick of dialogue or a turn of phrase mark him as a superb stylist. Thus, as regards technical prowess Helena makes fine, rewarding reading.

The story itself emerges as a vivid, well developed tale of the Church and the Roman Empire at one of the decisive moments in history. This is, moreover, largely a result of creative interpolation rather than a simple retelling of history, because the amount of accurate information available on Helena's life as well as on the whole age of Constantine is very meager.

WALTON'S one great weakness is his lack of humility and compassion. This becomes frightfully evident in Helena when, because the purpose is to arouse the reader's respect and admiration for a saintly woman, it is necessary that the Christian ethic pervade the whole.

It cannot be denied that Waugh has great faith, but because he lacks humbleness of spirit, the character of this great woman which should sparkle and inspire awe remains lifeless and unappealingly common.

Waugh's skillful handling of the subject is in the service of serious literature, a perhaps unfortunate change because when Waugh gives up the ironic stance, his critical viewpoint is likely to seem bigoted, conceited, and archaic.

THE LEGEND of St. Helena presents a perfect vehicle for this new approach, because as a British princess, Empress, mother of the Emperor, she was a woman of the True Cross, Helena is what Waugh might consider the ideal character for this great woman religious figure living in the golden past.

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By McKinlay Kantor. 110 pp. New York. The World Publishing Co. \$2.75

Reviewed by ROBIN BAHR

Lobo

MacKinlay Kantor has written a wonderful story about a dog named Lobo. Actually Lobo was the most incredible animal. Even the illustrations show that the woman—an aristocratic, the eyes, and that hint of a smile implying some private joke—on you.

Even when his head and big floppy ears rested on your lap and those big golden eyes gazed up at you with such a sweet and helpless look, you had to watch out.

The real trouble was that Lobo was just too darn smart—his speaking five languages puts you at a slight disadvantage. You simply couldn't get away with anything.

AS SOON AS LOBO moved to Florida with the Kantors, he became the sly devilish look around the eyes, and the memorable story of his friendship with the author.

AT TIMES you will get the feeling, as did MacKinlay Kantor, that Lobo is not just a dog.

But whatever he was—a Mount-ain Warrior in a breed conjured by Kantor to satisfy port inspectors on their arrival from Spain), King of the Moors (which title Lobo claimed), or, at times, a damned nuisance; you will love Lobo and the memorable story of his friendship with the author.

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Steven Urban, Jr. is one of 38 assistant district managers of John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co., who recently completed a sales seminar at the company's home office in Boston. Urban, who is a member of the Cadillac district office of the company, makes his home at 1991 E. Lincoln street, Birmingham, Mich.

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