Information: The Making of an Age

Concepts of information i218
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Words structure cultural formations

*literacy*: knowledge of letters; condition in respect to education, esp. ability to read and write (1893)

*economic literacy* 1943

*functional literacy*: 1954

*cultural literacy*: ca. 1990

Also: *literacy rate, literacy campaign*, etc.

*literacy* arises in US, implicates a complex relation between education, class, knowledge, citizenship, and the role of the state in culture
"Information" as a cultural formation

Implications of information in its collocations & oppositions:

- information explosion, gap, storage, system, transfer, work;
- gathering, -giving, -seeking; information processing, information retrieval, information revolution, information science, information technology, information overload, information rich, information warfare.

Not to mention information age, information society, information anxiety, information glut, information haves & have-nots etc.

information in its semantic oppositions to data, knowledge, wisdom…

I.e.: information implicates a semantic field or conceptual scheme
Every Age Gets the Future it Needs

"Ballon-monstre, 1837"
"With a tear for the dark past, turn we then to the dazzling future, and, veiling our eyes, press forward. The long and weary winter of the race is ended. Its summer has begun. Humanity has burst the chrysalis. The heavens are before it."
Technological Utopianism: 1880-1930

Edgar Chambless, "Roadtown," 1910

"Instead of college, there will be an industrial university. Pounding literature into the head of a natural-born mechanic is both an economic and mental waste."

Roadtown

Milo Hastings, "City of Endless Night" (Berlin, 2041), 1920
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Norman Bel Geddes, General Motors Futurama, 1939 World's Fair
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General Motors Futurama, 1964 World's Fair
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Westinghouse Electric Home of the Future, 1939

Libbey-Owens-Ford, 1943
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Monsanto, House of the Future, Disneyland, 1957
"Everything is ultra-modern and almost entirely synthetic."

Philco, 1967 (“1999”)
"The American of tomorrow, clothed in plastics from head to foot, will live in a plastics house, drive a plastics auto, and fly in a plastics airplane." *Popular Mechanics*, 1940
Because everything in her home is waterproof, the housewife of 2000 can do her daily cleaning with a hose.
Plastics!
Looking for the Roots of "Modernity"
Looking for the Roots of "Modernity"
The Curve of "Modernity"