

# The New Criterion

## The Media

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### Religion or merely kooky?

by [James Bowman](#)

On the reporting of the Heaven's Gate suicides

In Britain, the popular tabloid press, for all its faults, is recognizably a part of the press *tout court*. In America, apart from a few big-city papers which are far less popular and, in fact, mostly struggling to survive, the tabloid press is sold in supermarket checkout lines and is beyond the journalistic pale. Yet one also finds in America, often in the supermarket racks next to *The Globe* and *The National Enquirer*, what amounts to tabloids for middle-brows—tabloids whose credentials as bona fide journalism remain unquestioned. America, after all, pioneered the concept of half-educating a majority of its people instead of properly educating a tiny minority, as most of the rest of the world still does, so there is a very large market here (about the same size as that for the tabloids in Britain, in fact) for *Time* and *Newsweek* and *U.S. News*—publications written by and for would-be i ...

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