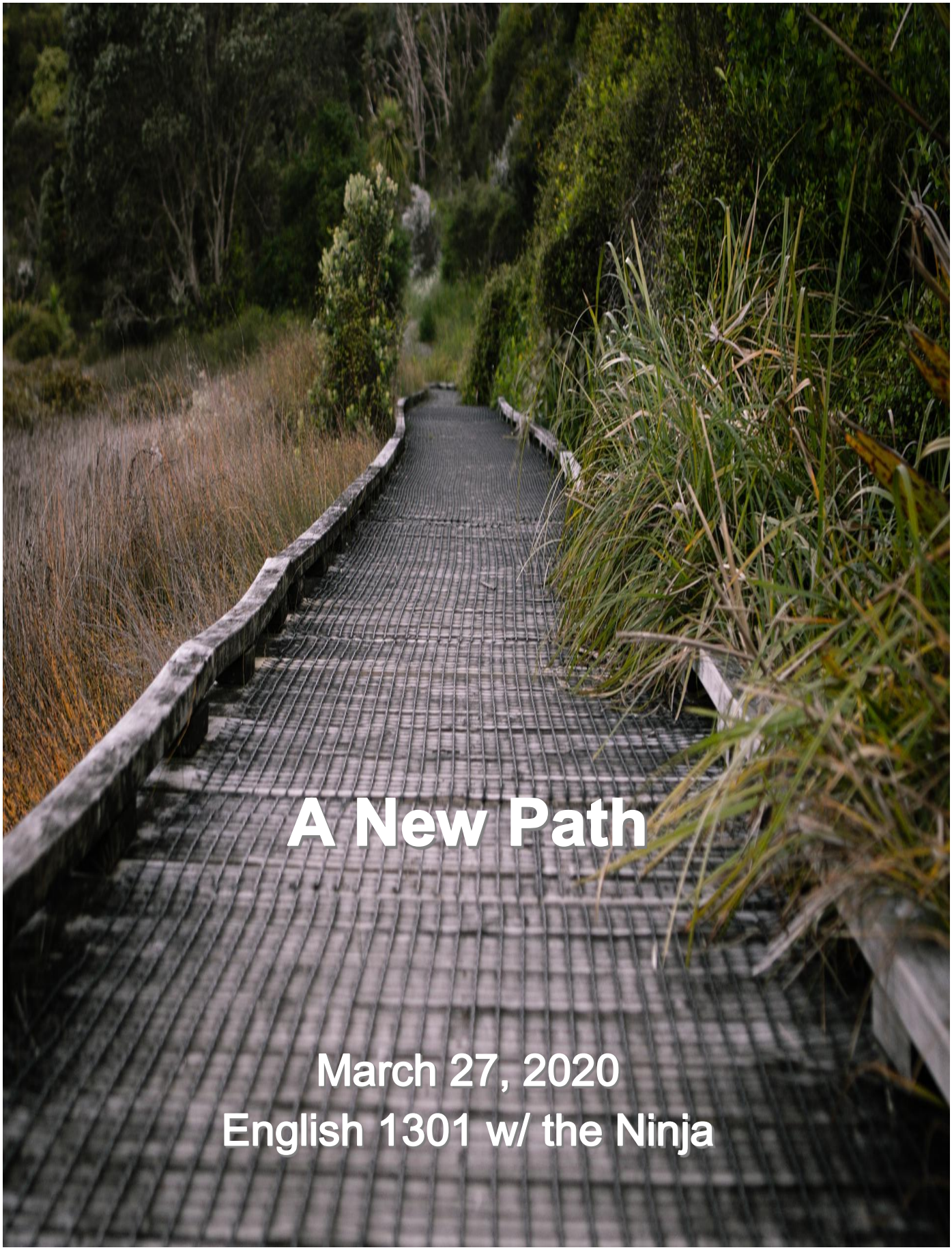

A New Path
March 27, 2020
English 1301 w/ the Ninja

This contains the online readings for the rest of the semester as well as our new schedule. They **do not** have the images in them. If you can, I really suggest you read these online, as many images illustrate what the writers are talking about in the articles.

It does not contain:

- Readings from *Writing down the Basics* (download that separately)
- Readings from *A Writer's Reference*
- Videos

Contact me

Text me via Remind: https://www.remind.com/join Our class code is @k786gh

Office Hours:

- Online through Blackboard Collaborate
  - Mondays from 1-3 p.m.
    - On the web: http://tiny.cc/MondayChat **OR**
    - Call: 571-392-7650 PIN: 364 703 6979
  - Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
    - On the web: http://tiny.cc/ThursdayChat **OR**
    - Call 571-392-7650 PIN: 607 380 9795

- Or by appointment: email or text me via remind and we can schedule a time to talk/video conference

Email: kwood@epcc.edu

Web: kelli.ninja

March 27, 2020
Kelli L. Wood
English Professor, El Paso Community College

Table of Contents

Important Citation Note

You can cite articles from this for the Media Analysis Essay. IF you do that instead of citing them from their original sources, you should cite articles from this individually as selections from an anthology.

Check out this webpage: https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2013/09/how-to-cite-an-anthology-or-collected-works.html Read and follow instructions in this section: "Work in an Anthology Citation."

I also discuss that in "What Kind of Source is This?" at this point in the video.

English 1301: Expository Composition
Section 3D, CRN 21503; MWF, 9-9:50
Section 3P, CRN 21513; T/Th, 11:30-12:50
Spring 2020

Instructor: Kelli Wood	**Text me via the Remind app**
Office Hours: Monday: 1-3; Thursday 11-1	**Email**: kwood@epcc.edu
Online through Blackboard Collaborate	**Web**: https://www.kelli.ninja

"You don't have to be great to get started, but you do have to get started to be great."

--Les Brown

Dear Favorite Class:

Here's a brave new schedule for our brave new world (hum. . .anyone read the book *Brave New World*?).

There are a number of videos where I go through essays and explain how the parts work. It is important that you make sure to watch at least a few of these. They are where I am really teaching you how to write the essays.

I put all of our online readings in this pdf handout, so, if you are working on an internet connection that isn't the greatest, or like me all the sudden must share it full time with other people in your house, you can download this and read it without an internet connection.

We will work on a weekly schedule. Our week will begin (mostly) on Tuesdays and end Monday midnight. That means you'll have until Monday midnight to get everything turned in.

I will post a new video every Monday on my YouTube channel and put a link to it on the Blackboard Announcements page. This will be a very short video just explaining what's going on for the week and answering any consistent questions that come up. Make sure and watch that!!!

Read through this schedule now so you have a feeling for the big picture. Make sure to watch the video I posted with it.

This is a far from ideal situation, and I'll miss being in the classroom with you. I can be in the middle of a horrible day, and within a few minutes of being in the classroom, that just doesn't exist. Still, I am here. Let me know when you have questions or need help with things.

Let's be kind and patient with one another—we're all working on figuring this out as we go along.

Take care,
Kelli

Schedule

Week 10: March 30-April 6

- ☐ **Learning about APA Citation**
  - APA Citation Basics (Video)
  - *Writing down the Basics*,
    - APA Formatting and Citation, pp. 79-97
  - *Writer's Reference*
    - APA Papers, pp. 437-449
  - APA Format (choose one)
    - APA Format: MS Word (Video)
    - APA Format: Google Docs (Video)
    - APA Format: Apple Pages (Video)
    - APA Format: Word for Apple (Video)
    - APA Format: Open Office (Video)
- ☐ APA Format Assignment

- ☐ **What's a Multimodal Text?**
  - *Writer's Reference*
    - Reading and Writing about Multimodal Texts, pp. 70-78

- ☐ **Stuff to Get Done: Due**
  - Week 10 Quiz
  - APA Formatting Assignment due on Blackboard

Week 11: April 7-13

NOTE: For Essay 3, you must use at least two of the readings we do which are marked with * on the syllabus or Essay 3 webpage. To access all of my YouTube Videos for this essay, go here.

- **What We're Doing Now**
  - Media Analysis Prewriting and Essay Assignment
  - *Sociology of Gossip* (Video)
  - Introduction to Media Literacy (Videos)
    - Part 1
    - Part 2

- **What the Experts Say**
  - *Advertising's Fifteen Basic Appeals*
  - *Advertising Analysis *
  - *Introduction to Media Literacy *

Think of these 3 articles as your basic textbook for how to do this. Read these carefully and go back to them as references.

- **How Others Have Done This**
  - Sample: Video Walk-through—Beamers Before Babies
    - Extras
      - Beamers before Babies the essay text
      - Check out the "ad"
  - Sample: Video Walk-through--Fat Food Fast
  - Sample: A Look Between the Lines (Video Walkthrough Here)

(Continued →)

- **To Do List: Assignments**
  - Week 11 Quiz
  - Week 11 Discussion: What current or past ads or TV shows stand out for you as you begin to think about this essay? Think of one, identify it, and tell us what it's saying when you read between the lines. Use examples to support your point. Don't forget to check back in over the course of the week and contribute to the developing conversation.

Week 12: April 14-20

- **More Expert Thoughts on This**
  - *Captive: How the Ad Industry Pins us Down*
  - *How Advertising Manipulates Your Choices and Spending Habits *
  - *Ads Don't Work That Way *

- **Some More Examples**
  - Sample: Everything's Important Except our Future (Video Walkthrough)
  - Sample: Women are Invincible (Video Walkthrough)

- **Getting Started on Your Analysis**
  - Prewriting 1 (Video) (Slideshow)

- **To Do List: Due**
  - Prewriting 1
  - Week 12 Quiz
  - Week 12 Discussion: Post a link to the ad you'll analyze and point out what you see in it in terms of what we've studied so far, then respond to a few others with ideas for what you also notice in those. Use this list to think about some of those things: http://kelli.ninja/1301/e3/ad-technique-appeals-short-list.pdf

Week 13: April 21-27

Keep the Expert Ideas Coming

- ☐ *Shame: The Secret Tool of Marketing * (Audio—this was originally a podcast. Listening is better with this one.)
- ☐ *Experts: Men Have Body Image Worries Too *
- ☐ *Jesus is a Brand of Jeans *

What Others have Done

- ☐ Sample: Dumb is the New Smart
- ☐ Sample: It's a Man, Man, Man World
- ☐ Sample: A Fat World Wearing a Skinny Mask (Video Walkthrough)

Developing Your Analysis

- ☐ Prewriting 2-Video (Slideshow)
- ☐ Prewriting 3-Video (Slideshow)
  - The form is on in the Prewriting 3 link on Blackboard.

To Do List: Assignments

- ☐ Week 13 Quiz
- ☐ Prewriting 2
- ☐ Prewriting 3

Week 14: April 28-May 4

Some Final Experts

- ☐ *The Power of Images: Creating the Myths of our Time *
- ☐ *Idols of the Marketplace *

One Last Reading from the *Writer's Reference*

- ☐ Draft and Revise—Draft a Conclusion, pp. 7-18

Penultimate To Do List: Assignments

- ☐ Use your prewritings to draft your essay.
- ☐ Turn in your **ESSAY 3 and COVER LETTER DRAFT** on Blackboard.
  - I will give you QUICK comments so that you can use those as you finish the final letter and essay.

Week 15: May 5-11

Your Final Essay

- Essay 4: Reflective Self-Analysis
- Samples linked on Blackboard

☐ **Last To Do List: Assignments**

- Final Exam/Quiz due on Blackboard by Dec. 10
- Week 15 Discussion: Overall, what have you learned to do to help yourself approach writing in the future? What things have helped? What things stall you in writing? What things help you overcome that? You also might want to share thanks, good wishes, and goodbyes.

Week 16: May 11-15 (Finals Week)

- ☐ Due by **Tuesday, May 12th** Essay 3—FINAL Ad Analysis and Cover Letter
- ☐ Essay 4 Due by **Wednesday, May 13th**

APA Format Assignment

APA Assignment Instructions

For this assignment, you will be formatting it in APA style—no abstract required. Make sure you've done your readings on the schedule for this assignment before you begin it.

Again, I am not grading your grammar here, but focusing on format and content. I will give you feedback on your grammar and writing to help you identify things to work on.

1. Read **one** of these articles:
   - The Benefits of Online Learning: 7 Advantages of Online Degrees
   - 8 Strategies for Getting the Most out of an Online Class
   - What I Wish Someone Told Me BEFORE Taking Online Classes
   - What Makes a Successful Online Learner?
   - How to Improve Your Concentration (The author here is the organization—Open Polytechnic)
   - How to Study with INTENSE Focus: 6 Essential Tips

Actually, I think they're all great and you should read them all. But, you only have to pick one. ☺

2. Write a 2-paragraph response.
   - In the first paragraph, summarize the article you've read. Your summary should be at least 150 words but can be more. Re/read "How to Write a Summary" before doing this. Use at least one quote and an in-text citation.
   - In the second paragraph, write about what your goals are for your learning and discuss some techniques you plan to use as you study. These may be things mentioned in the article or things you already do.

3. Using the instructions in *Writing down the Basics* and the video you watched for homework or another good source, format your paper in APA style.

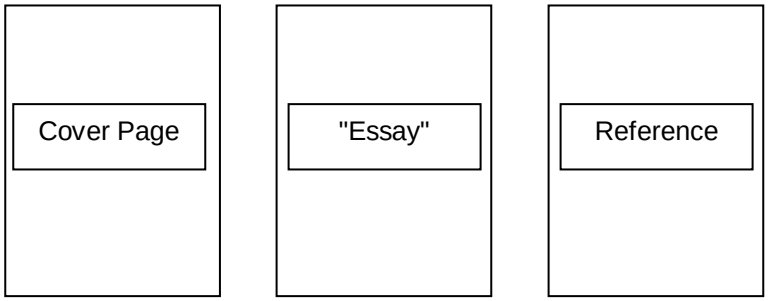
   a. Make sure you put in your title page, the "essay" page, and a References page. (NO abstract)

4. Cite the article you used. Use the instructions in the *Writer's Reference* for "Document from a Website" (page 473 in the 9th edition).

5. Proofread carefully. I recommend you take advantage of going to the writing center—get some of that extra credit while you're there!

6. Upload the paper to Blackboard under the Format Assignments link. Make sure to put it in the APA Assignment. Don't forget your Grammarly report.

All-in-all, you'll have 3 pages:



General Tips

- To **insert a new page** (for your cover page, essay, or Reference page) press CTRL + Enter, or select "Insert Page Break" under the INSERT tab in Word. (Macs use Command + Enter)
    - Use this to insert the blank page for your title page, essay page, and the one for your References, then you can fill in the information as you write your assignment.

- Remember, **APA uses Times New Roman as the font.** Make sure to use it in both the paper itself **and** the headers.

- Here are APA's actual instructions for getting the different running headers: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/running-head.aspx

Grading

I am looking specifically at these things:

- Margins
- Font
- Headers
- Paragraph Spacing
- Title Page
- Title on the first page of the essay
- Competing the assigned writing parts fully and thoughtfully
- References Page

Turn this in on Blackboard under the Format Assignments link.

How to Write A Summary

A stand-alone summary is a summary produced to show a teacher that you have read and understood something. It is common in many freshman and sophomore level classes to get assignments that ask you to read a certain number of articles and summarize them. This is also a very common type of writing assignment in upper levels and in graduate school.

Developing a Summary

1. Read the article and be sure you understand it. Reading out loud is proven to increase understanding. Do not rush. Taking your time while reading will save you time in the long run.

2. As you read, outline the article. Note the major points and highlight phrases and parts that are specifically important.

3. Write a first draft of the summary without looking at the article, then go back and fully develop your summary, adding in details, paraphrases, and quotes as necessary.

4. Always use paraphrase when writing a summary. When you give a paraphrase, don't forget that you need to use appropriate in-text citation for that as well.

If you do copy a phrase from the original, be sure it is a very important phrase that is necessary and cannot be paraphrased. In this case, put "quotation marks" around the phrase and use appropriate in-text citation.

Writing a Summary

1. Start your summary with a clear identification of the type of work, title, author, and main point in the present tense.

   Example: In the article "Four Kinds of Reading," the author, Hall (1983), explains his opinion about different types of reading.

2. Write using summarizing language (signal phrases). Periodically remind your reader that this is a summary by using phrases such as

   _____ [insert author's name] claims
   he/she suggests
   furthermore, _____ [insert author's name] goes on to say
   another important point that _____ [insert author's name] makes is

3. Use the appropriate convention for the writer's name. Make sure and use the author's name periodically—not to do so is disrespectful to writer's hard work.

   Do not write "it says" That is calling the author *it*.
   If there is more than one author, make sure to include all of them unless the documentation style you're using has rules for shortening the list of authors.

4. Make sure to use correct in-text citation as described in a trustworthy style guide.

5. Check with the original reading and your outline to confirm you have covered the important points.

6. Never put any of your own ideas, opinions, or interpretations into the summary.

7. Provide a full citation of the article in correct format required in your assignment. DO NOT simply give the URL. Read and follow the instructions in a trustworthy style guide. (Sometimes this will be required before the summary and other times afterward. Check your assignment guidelines or ask your instructor if it's not clear.)

8. Review the original assignment before you finish to make sure you have followed all of the instructions.

9. Proofread out loud, grammar check, and spell check! Make use of your college writing center!

The Benefits of Online Learning: 7 Advantages of Online Degrees

By Kelsey Miller | September 25, 2019
https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/benefits-of-online-learning/
Northeastern University Graduate Programs

Earning a master's degree online can seem daunting. Prospective students often wonder, "Is the experience online the same as on-campus?" and, "Will the format fit my lifestyle?" Roughly 6.3 million students in the United States are now enrolled in at least one online course, though, and that number is growing due to the flexibility and benefits of virtual learning.

Today's workforce is moving online. Forty-six percent of organizations recently surveyed by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) said they use virtual teams. With that, the number of professionals who regularly work from home has increased 159 percent over the last decade, with more than 4.7 million employees working remotely at least half the time.

It's clear, then, that learning online helps prepare professionals for this shift toward online work. Below, explore what online courses entail, explore seven key benefits, and get the advice you need to determine if online courses are right for you.

What Are Online Courses Like?
An online course requires just as much work as an on-ground format, and the amount of time you dedicate is also about the same. However, the online format—just as a virtual workplace—affords you more flexibility. As long as you meet your deadlines and communicate with your instructor and peers, it doesn't matter where or when you fulfill the requirements.

Each week, your instructor typically expects you to take the following actions yourself:

- Review the learning objectives
- Complete the assigned readings
- Submit assignments
- Go through the lecture materials
- Participate in the discussion boards

You are probably experienced at independently completing the first three actions from previous in-person courses. Learning from an online lecture is different, but you can also do it wherever and whenever.

Adjusting to an online learning model could be a challenge at first, but once you adapt to the format, there are numerous benefits to be realized. No matter the reason you choose to pursue an online education, earning an online degree can help prepare you for career

advancement and demonstrate key skills to potential employers. Here's a look at seven top benefits of online learning.

Seven Benefits of Online Learning

1. Added Flexibility and Self-Paced Learning

Not many people have the ability to take time off from work to commit to a full-time graduate program, and others often travel for work. For those who still need to juggle working and going back to school, the flexibility of an online program provides individuals with the opportunity to learn while still working and growing professionally.

By earning your master's degree online, you can learn on your own schedule. Rather than leave the office early or skip family dinner to commute to campus, you're logging on when it's convenient for you—at a time that doesn't interfere with other commitments. That flexibility allows you to more easily balance work, life, and graduate school.

Additionally, students don't always feel comfortable asking professors to repeat a point they made in their last lecture or dive into deeper detail on a specific topic. When learning online, you can revisit past material or stop the lecture to perform additional research or organize your notes. You can work through the lesson plan at your own pace to ensure you're really mastering the material before moving on to the next section. This added flexibility allows online learners to move through the course work at their own speed and get the most out of the degree program.

2. Better Time Management

Juggling work, family, and school isn't an easy thing to do. Employers recognize this and admire the time management skills it takes to balance all three. Because there are no set classroom times within an online degree program, and students have the flexibility to create their own schedules, it's up to the student to proactively reach out to faculty, complete assignments on time, and plan ahead.

One of the things we know employers expect is that we manage our time effectively. It's never enough to be at your desk on time in the morning and stay through the end of the day; most of us are expected to get more projects done in less time. Online classes keep you on a regular schedule of making and meeting deadlines, allowing you to practice managing your time and staying productive week-to-week. Employers often appreciate the time management skills needed to complete an online degree program and view these skills as a valuable asset in potential employees.

Melanie Kasparian, associate director of assessment at Northeastern College of Professional Studies, shares tips on how to be a successful online learner, recommending students work consistently throughout the week. A sample schedule, she says, may look similar to this:

> Monday: Begin required readings and multimedia.
> Tuesday: Continue reviewing materials.
> Wednesday: Post to the discussion forum and begin assignments.

Thursday: Continue posting and working on assignments.
Friday: Read and respond to posts and work on assignments.
Saturday: Read and respond to posts and finish assignments.
Sunday: Check your work and submit assignments.

Kasparian says, “Working on the train, during a lunch break, or in the morning—there’s really no right time to study, as long as it fits your life.”

3. Demonstrated Self-Motivation

By successfully earning your master’s degree online, you’re demonstrating that you can practice time management and are self-motivated, which are among the top 10 employability skills employers want to see in new hires. By succeeding in earning an online degree, you prove that you can tackle multiple tasks, set priorities, and adapt to changing work conditions.

Instructors expect students to be independent, to learn on their own, and to engage with the material that they are teaching. It’s the same thing in the workforce; employers want you to be self-motivated, go after things that interest you, and seek new opportunities and ways of doing things. The more you put your heart into it—whether it’s learning online or working for your employer—the more you’ll succeed.

4. Improved Virtual Communication and Collaboration

Learning to work with others in a virtual environment can make you a more effective leader. You’ll develop critical leadership skills by utilizing specialized knowledge, creating efficient processes, and making decisions about best communication practices, such as what should be discussed in-person or electronically.

In an online program, you’ll also participate in discussion boards with your classmates, communicate with professors via email, and collaborate through various software programs. As the program progresses, you’ll get better at pitching your ideas and making strong, succinct, professional arguments through text.

Participating in discussion boards is a lot like participating in a virtual team. Communicating your ideas clearly, getting responses, and projecting a professional image are necessary skills in a virtual workplace. Instructors, just like managers, expect you to write respectful, thoughtful, and polite communications, respond to different perspectives, and build a rapport with your peers. Luckily, in an online program, you’ll refine this skill quickly— post after post, week after week, course after course.

5. A Broader, Global Perspective

Students in online programs come from across the U.S. and all over the world. Because of the ability to log on from any location, class discussions feature a broader range of perspectives, helping you enhance your own cross-cultural understanding. Students then not only have the opportunity to network with people from around the globe, but can also broaden their perspective and become more culturally aware.

Businesses are looking for employees who can innovate, and innovation often comes from outside your immediate world. If you're interested in entrepreneurship, for example, hearing how other countries adopt certain technologies or approach specific industries can inspire new ideas or improve an existing concept you've been developing.

Being exposed to new ideas from professionals in other countries may spark creativity of your own—creativity that can turn out to be valuable for your organization.

6. Refined Critical-thinking Skills

Online learning facilitates the ability to think critically about what you do every day. The goal in the classroom is to challenge you to think differently, and employers want you to do that, too–to think critically in your role at work. Mastering this skill is what will set you apart as a student, and as an employee.

Critical thinking plays a role in any type of education; however, online learning forces you to develop your critical thinking skills in ways that you might not have practiced in an in-person classroom setting. This sort of self-paced and self-motivated learning demonstrates to future employers that you have the ability to think critically and overcome any obstacles that might stand in your way.

7. New Technical Skills

Your online degree also equates to strong technical skills, a definite plus for any job seeker. As part of your coursework, you will likely need to utilize digital learning materials, get familiar with new tools and software, and troubleshoot common issues. After a program's worth of technical hurdles, big and small, an employer could trust that you are versed in common collaboration tools, content management systems, and basic troubleshooting.

With more companies using virtual teams, it's important to learn how to collaborate remotely. Your classmates will likely live in different time zones, which you need to learn how to adapt to and schedule around.

Embracing technology is also crucial. When you're working on a group project, sharing files or status updates can become difficult via email, so you might need to utilize project management and communication tools such as:

Skype: The video conferencing software lets you speak face-to-face with your peers.
Dropbox: Share documents with your group and keep work in one place using the file hosting service.
Slack: The messaging platform is helpful if you need to instant message in real-time or break off into smaller groups to work on a specific part of the project.
Trello: The project management tool enables you and your team to create, assign, track, and prioritize to-dos.
Basecamp: Another, slightly more robust, project management tool you can use to share messages and upload files.

Most companies today are using some combination of the software above or other programs similar. Being able to state you have project management experience and are familiar with software like Basecamp can bolster your resumé. With an online degree experience, your future employer will know you're comfortable learning new technologies, building a rapport virtually, tackling tasks proactively and independently, and knowing your way around a computer and virtual workspace.

Is an Online Degree Right for You?

If you are considering whether an online graduate degree is the right choice for you, be sure to consider the benefits online learning has to offer. For students who are faced with the challenge of balancing work, family, and education, an online master's degree can be an ideal solution. Further, pursuing an online degree can prepare students for career advancement and showcase key skills to potential employers.

By earning a master's degree—no matter the format—you set yourself up to earn significantly more in your lifetime than bachelor's degree holders. You'll also gain access to more job options, given that by 2022, 18 percent of jobs will require a master's degree. Learning online builds on those benefits and helps prepare you for today's globalized workforce.

Editor's note: This article was originally published in April of 2016. It has since been updated for relevance and accuracy.

About Kelsey Miller

Kelsey Miller is a marketing specialist and contributing writer for Northeastern University's Graduate Programs Blog.

8 Strategies for Getting the Most Out of an Online Class

February 4, 2019

Northeastern University Graduate Programs

https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-taking-online-classes/

In the past, earning a college degree meant physically attending in-person classes, which often posed challenges for working professionals or those with complicated schedules. Now, thanks to advances in technology, it's easier than ever to find a degree program that offers the flexibility you need, whether through traditional in-person classes, online learning, or a blend of the two.

There are many advantages to online courses; they allow you to learn whenever, wherever, and however works best for you, making it easier to earn a degree while balancing work and family commitments. And without having to attend classes in person, online learning affords you access to top degree programs across the country that might have otherwise been inaccessible or highly inconvenient.

Online classes can present unique challenges, however, if you're not prepared. But if you develop skills for effective online learning, you'll find the courses can be an excellent alternative to a traditional classroom setting. Here are some tips for online learning success to make sure you get the most value out of your next class.

Tips for Taking Online Classes

If you're considering taking online college courses (or you're already enrolled in a program) the tips and advice below can help you address their unique challenges to get the most value out of your online program.

1. Treat an online course like a "real" course.

When it comes to online classes, you need to have the discipline to sit down and say, "I am going to work on this," as well as the dedication to actually follow through. Though you can be flexible as to when you choose to complete your work during the week, you can't put it off indefinitely.

One of the easiest ways to ensure follow through is to remember that you are paying to take this online course, just as you would for a traditional, in-person class. You must "show up" if you're going to get real value out of your class. Treat your online classes the same way you would a face-to-face class—or, better yet, a job—and you'll be off to the right start.

2. Hold yourself accountable

Set goals at the beginning of the semester, and check in with yourself weekly. In a traditional classroom setting, you'll often receive verbal or visual reminders of an assignment's upcoming due date. But without a professor actively reminding you, it's up to you to make sure you've allotted enough time to complete the work so you're not starting an assignment the day before it's due.

If you're having trouble holding yourself responsible, pair up with a fellow classmate, or

enlist the help of a spouse or friend to check in as an accountability partner. By being organized, proactive, and self-aware, you can get the most from your online class even when life outside of school becomes chaotic.

3. Practice time management.
The flexibility to create your own schedule is often one of the biggest appeals of taking online classes. But that freedom can also be detrimental if you do not have solid time management skills. Without them, you might easily to find yourself cramming before classes or handing in subpar assignments.

Though how you manage your time will depend on your schedule, learning style, and personality, here are some universally valuable tips to help you practice and improve your time management skills:

Look at the syllabus at the start of the semester and make note of major assignments. Mark them on a calendar you check regularly so you know what workload is coming in the weeks ahead. Don't forget to factor in prior commitments that may interfere with your regular study schedule, such as weddings or vacations, so you can give yourself enough extra time to complete assignments.

Create a weekly schedule that you follow, designating certain hours each week to reading, watching lectures, completing assignments, studying, and participating in forums. Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine, and set reminders for yourself to complete these tasks.

When working on your assignments, try time-blocking, allotting yourself a certain amount of time for each task before moving on to the next one and setting a timer to keep you accountable.

Check in periodically throughout the term, and look at how you're spending your time. Ask yourself: How much time am I dedicating to course reading and assignments? Am I regularly underestimating the time it's taking me to get things done, forcing me to cram the nights before the exams? A little self-reflection and adjustment can go a long way.

4. Create a regular study space and stay organized.
Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine. Whether your workspace is your kitchen table, a library, or the corner booth in a local coffee shop, it's important to determine what type of environment will work best for you. Experiment to discover which type of setting boosts your productivity. Wherever you choose, make sure there's high-speed internet access so you're not trying to take an online course over a lagging connection.

Setting up a regular workspace or office will also help you to stay organized. Knowing exactly where important dates, files, forms, syllabi, books, and assignments live will help keep you on track towards hitting your goals. When setting up your study space, make sure you:

- Have a high-speed internet connection
- Have the required books, materials, and software for the course
- Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important in shared spaces)

5. Eliminate distractions.
From Netflix to social media to dishes piling up in the skink, you'll be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best online students know how to lessen these distractions and set aside time to focus.

Exactly how much of a challenge these distractions will prove to be will depend on your own unique personality and situation. Some might find that they can tune out a noisy home by listening to music. Others might choose to work from a local coffee shop or library to eliminate their urge to multitask at home. Ultimately, you will need to find a strategy that works best for you.

Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up. And if you're still having trouble resisting the temptation to check your email or surf the web, try downloading a website blocker. Using applications like Cold Turkey and Freedom can help eliminate distractions by blocking the apps or websites that tend to compete for your attention, such as Facebook and Twitter.

6. Figure Out How You Learn Best
Once you've established where you'll learn, think about when and how you accomplish your best work. If you're a morning person, make time to study first thing. More of a night owl? Set aside an hour or two after dinner to cozy up to your computer. If the kids require your morning and evening attention, try to carve out a study session mid-day while they're at school. Brew your usual cup of coffee, put on your go-to playlist, and do whatever you need to get into the zone and down to business.

Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information help you best grasp new concepts and employ relevant study strategies. If you're a visual learner, for example, print out transcripts of the video lectures to review. Learn best by listening? Make sure to build time into your schedule to play and replay all audio- and video-based course content.

7. Actively participate.
Participate in the course's online forum to help you better understand course materials and engage with fellow classmates. This might involve commenting on a classmate's paper on a discussion board or posting a question about a project you're working on. Read what other students and your professor are saying, and if you have a question, ask for clarification.

Make sure you are checking in as often as you can, too. The flexibility of online learning

means that if you have 30 minutes before dinner plans, you could squeeze in a discussion response around your schedule. Set a goal to check in on the class discussion threads every day.

And if you do feel yourself falling behind, speak up. Don't wait until an assignment is almost due to ask questions or report issues. Email your professor and be proactive in asking for help.

8. Leverage your network.
Online classes may sometimes make you feel like you are learning on your own, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Most online courses are built around the concept of collaboration, with professors and instructors actively encouraging that students work together to complete assignments and discuss lessons.

Build relationships with other students by introducing yourself and engaging in online discussion boards. Your peers can be a valuable resource when preparing for exams or asking for feedback on assignments. Don't be afraid to turn to them to create a virtual study group. Chances are good that they will appreciate it just as much as you will.

Practice Makes Perfect
Online classes are an excellent option to help you earn that degree you need to fulfill your goals. Though they come with their own unique challenges, following the advice above can help you be successful even in the most chaotic of times.

What I Wish Someone Told Me BEFORE Taking Online Classes

By Kristina Ericksen on 12/04/2017

https://www.rasmussen.edu/student-experience/college-life/what-i-wish-someone-told-me-before-taking-online-classes/

One in four students now takes courses online—either as a part of an entirely online program, or mixed in with on-campus classes.

The perks of taking online classes are numerous. They offer additional flexibility for busy students, especially for those balancing school with work and family. They can attract professionals looking for career advancement, parents seeking to better provide for their families and returning students looking to pick up where they left off. Plus, many courses let you work comfortably at your own direction.

If you've never taken one before, you may not know what to expect. How do online classes work? Are online classes harder? What are some tips for taking online classes? Learn from those who have been in your shoes. Keep reading to see get some insider knowledge about what to expect when taking classes online.

7 Things you should know before taking online classes

You're not the first to have questions about taking classes online, and you certainly won't be the last. But there are some insightful lessons you can learn from those who have succeeded in online classes. Here are seven things they wish they had known before embarking on their online learning journey.

1. Online classes are not the 'easy' route

One of the most common questions asked on this topic is, "Are online classes easier?" Put simply, the answer is no.

Opting for online courses over traditional courses is not the easy route for your education. It's true that online courses offer you the flexibility to learn in your own time and space, but that doesn't change the amount of work you put in. You still have the same amount of work—just without the formal classroom setting.

The flexibility of online classes can be extremely helpful to busy students, but that same freedom also creates additional pressures on those enrolled. The ball is in your court—meaning it's up to you to avoid distractions and keep yourself on track.

"My advice to students looking at online classes is to be informed about the demands of an online course. Understand that not all online classes allow you to get the work done on your own time. Instead, this is heavily dependent on the other students taking the course," says Chandni Mistry of ChoYou. "If you're looking for less work, then I would suggest looking somewhere else."

2. You may actually do better in online classes

Students participating in online classes do the same or better than those in the traditional classroom setup. This is because the quality of education is the same; the difference is just in the delivery. And other studies show that students taking courses online score better on standardized tests.

Online lectures are a great option if you tend to feel lost in the crowd of a classroom. They give you the ability to pause and take thorough notes or even re-watch parts you didn't quite understand the first time. Plus, you can always reach out to your professor through a message to ask questions about material you didn't understand.

3. You're going to need the technology AND the support to be successful
Your online class will most likely be accessed through a personal computer or tablet. Our online course veterans recommend taking some time to become acquainted with the platform and utilize any orientation materials prior to class. Having a reliable internet connection and operating system is also crucial to staying on top of your work. You'll also want to make sure that your school has the resources to support distance learners. "Make sure to ask about IT support. How effective are they and how quickly can they resolve situations? Are they familiar with walking you through steps of the basic software requirements for your course work? Do they have tutorials to help you adjust for margins, page setup and similar?" suggests Montgomery Beyer of iKiBos.

4. You can make or break it with time management
It's your responsibility to take the initiative to keep up with your work when enrolled in online classes. It can be easy to let assignments slide and miss due dates because of the wiggle room and flexibility that come with online courses.

Procrastination is a slippery slope and can affect your grade negatively. It's important to stay organized and follow a schedule because it's difficult to catch up once you fall behind.

Many students underestimate the amount of time they'll spend studying for class. You should expect online courses to take about the same amount of time as traditional courses.

"I wish there were resources to help you schedule your time while taking an online class. I didn't know that there would still be strict deadlines in many of the courses, so although you're not meeting during class time, a lot of scheduling and planning still has to be done for the course," says Gianna Sollitt of Newberry Public Relations & Marketing.

"I thought initially that online classes would just let you submit everything on your own time, but most are not like that."

5. Don't think you're exempt from group projects
Just because your course is online doesn't mean that you'll be exempt from group projects. This staple of the traditional classroom is becoming easier and easier for

distance learners to tackle too. With collaborative tools like Google Docs making it easier for groups to work together, don't be surprised if you find yourself assigned to a group project in your online course.

"I didn't know that professors would still assign group work in online courses. Students should definitely know that they're not exempt from group work simply because they're in an online course," says Sollitto. "Before enrolling in an online course, I couldn't fathom how a group could possibly work together completely remotely on assignments. A lot has to be done using Google Docs or other file sharing services like it."

6. You'll want to make an effort to make connections

One of the benefits of going to school is the amount of people it puts you in contact with. Friendships, mentorships and networking can all come from academic experiences—but is that still the case with online classes?

"Online degrees can be less personable. You can go through multiple online classes without really connecting to anyone. It's easy to miss out on all the networking opportunities and friendships that on-campus classes can provide," says Lyn Alden of Lyn Alden Investment Strategy. "I would recommend that you really make an effort to get to know some of your online classmates or your professor."

Alden says she encourages students to reach out and discuss assignments—and even meet in person with classmates and instructors if you're close by.

"Online platforms are getting more and more advanced, and provide increasing ways to interact and network online. But you still have to be more proactive than you would in a classroom setting, and make the first move to reach out to people," Alden says.

7. Get excited for online classes!

"I wished I would have known how awesome the experience was," says attorney, author and advocate Alexis Moore.

"Traditional school is stressful in comparison to online education because of the precious time wasted for students: the drive to and from class, finding a seat and the endless distractions. So much is involved just getting to the classroom, whereas online you are in your own environment, safe from germs and the stress of driving. Online classes save you so much time that you can never get back."

Moore, who obtained her undergraduate and law degrees online, enjoyed the convenience and time saving aspects of online education. She also thought they allowed her to learn more effectively.

"The education is more effective and efficient because you can interact with professors more comfortably. You can choose whether to send them a private message or to speak aloud to ask a question during class."

Is online the right option for you?
Taking online classes may be a departure from the traditional classroom, but it's definitely a change for the better. This option brings the experience straight to you, allowing you to work at your own pace to make a better life for you and your family. Best of all, taking online classes lets you integrate your studies into your schedule at your convenience.

What Makes a Successful Online Learner?

Minnesota Department of Education

Two key advantages of online learning are flexibility and convenience. But online learning is a lot more challenging than it may seem.

Are you considering taking some or all of your courses online? Good for you!

But first, make sure you're ready to succeed. Online learning can sound so wonderful that some students start with an unrealistic vision. In reality, online courses require just as much, if not more, time and energy as traditional classroom courses. It also requires specific computer skills and learning strategies in order to succeed.

To see if you're ready, see how many items of the following skills you have:

1. Persistence
Persistence is perhaps the biggest key to success in online learning. Students who succeed are those who are willing to tolerate technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily on every class, and persist through challenges.

When you run into a challenge, keep trying and ask for help.

Set up a manageable study schedule for yourself and stick to it. Students who succeed are those who log in and make progress every day. This is especially important after the novelty of going to school online starts to wear off!

2. Effective Time-Management Skills
You must be able to manage your time well. Most courses are not taught in real time. There are no set times for classes.

This flexibility is one of the great benefits of online learning. It can also be a drawback for a student who procrastinates, is unable to stick to a routine study schedule, or is not able to complete assignments without daily reminders from a teacher.

Effective time-management skills don't just happen. They have to be learned. Once you do, they will benefit you throughout your life. Follow the tips below to develop yours:

- Review the syllabus for each of your courses. Develop a long-term plan for completing your major assignments.

- Make a daily "To Do" list. Have fun checking things off the list as you complete them.

It takes time to develop good habits, but you'll gain satisfaction from being well-organized and accomplishing your tasks.

3. Effective and Appropriate Communication Skills
Communication skills are vital in online learning because students must seek help when they need it. Teachers are willing to help students, but they are unable to pick up on non-verbal cues, such as a look of confusion on a student's face. Follow these tips:

- Use the tools provided by the school to communicate with your teachers. Many online schools and programs provide several ways for students and/or parents to communicate with teachers and staff. These might include e-mail, discussion groups, chat room office hours, cell phones, and even text messaging. Teachers and staff want to help you to succeed in your classes and will answer your questions. It may feel awkward to talk with your teachers this way, but don't worry. If your teacher has chat room or cell phone office hours, don't be shy about using those tools to communicate with your teacher.

- Use appropriate style and language for school. When communicating with teachers and other staff, you should write in full, grammatically correct sentences and with a respectful tone. Many students are used to a very informal style of writing in chat rooms, blogs, text messages, and so forth.

Because of the distance, it's tempting for some students to say things out of anger or frustration that they would never say to a teacher in person. Online teachers are professionals. Treat them with respect and courtesy.

4. Basic Technical Skills
Online learners need basic technical skills to succeed. These include the ability to create new documents, use a word processing program, navigate the Internet, and download software.

Most online schools have new student orientation programs. These teach students how to use the school's learning management system and other online tools, but they typically don't cover the basics.

If you lack basic computer skills, you may want to find an online tutorial such as the one available through The Library Network.

You'll also want to check the online school's main website for their hardware and software requirements. Make sure your own computer meets those requirements.

5. Reading and Writing Skills
Reading and writing are the main ways you'll communicate in an online class. Although

some hard copies of textbooks might be required, you should be comfortable reading a lot of documents on a computer screen and able to type.

Some tests and quizzes have multiple choice questions, but many of your assignments will involve writing short or long answers.

If you type less than 25-30 words per minute, it may be worth completing a typing software program before beginning online classes.

6. Motivation and Independence

To be successful, an online student has to want to succeed. Online learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity.

- Have you given some thought to your own personal reasons for attending school?
- Are you determined and self-motivated to succeed in school?

There are many worthwhile reasons to work hard in school. You might want a greater level of personal satisfaction with your future career. Or perhaps it's personal pride in your accomplishments. Or maybe you are seeking a wider range of opportunities available to you with higher education or a higher income.

7. A Good Study Environment

Another critical component of academic success is a good study environment.

- Get some peace and quiet. You will need a quiet place to work without distractions from things like television, family, or roommates.
- Avoid games. Consider uninstalling any computer games to avoid temptation. Or keep the games on a different computer in the house.
- Turn off your cell phone. Let friends and family members know the hours that you will be "at" school.
- Beware surfing the black hole of the Internet. It is easy to lose track of the time as you wander from site to site.

Consider ergonomics. Adjust the height of your chair, keyboard, and screen so that you are comfortable. Forearms and thighs should be level and parallel to the floor. Wrists should not be bent while typing.

Set up good lighting and comfortable seating. Lighting in the room should be at least as bright as the computer screen to avoid eye strain.

Source: Minnesota Online High School and Minnesota Department of Education

How to Improve Your Concentration

Open Polytechnic

https://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/current-students/study-tips-and-techniques/study-concentrate-and-remember/how-to-improve-your-concentration/

Many students complain that they just can't concentrate, and that minds race from one thing to another and their thoughts are all over the place - except on their studies. But almost everyone has the ability to concentrate.

Think of a time when you were totally engrossed in something you really enjoyed, for example a movie, a book, a game of rugby or netball. The trick is to use the right strategies to unlock your natural ability to concentrate and apply these to your studies. [. . .]

Getting started

Your choice of study space can influence your level of concentration. Choose a study space with good lighting and ventilation, which is a tidy, organised and pleasant place to work. This will help reduce distraction.

- Leave your cell phone outside or turn it off.
- If you like music that's okay, just ensure it is not a distraction.
- Draw up a study timetable that takes into account your energy levels at different times of the day, and stick to it.
- Divide your work into logical sections that have a beginning and an end. Our brains are holistic, so you'll find it easier to work on something that forms a whole, rather than something that's left hanging midway.

Make a plan

- Draw up a study timetable that takes into account your energy levels at different times of the day, and stick to it.
- Divide your work into logical sections that have a beginning and an end. Our brains are holistic, so you'll find it easier to work on something that forms a whole, rather than something that's left hanging midway.

Set goals for each study session

Before you begin studying, take a few minutes to think about what you'll achieve.
Write down your goals for the study period. For example: 'Summarise pages 40-65' or 'Complete the outline of Assignment 1'.

Set yourself a time limit before you start. For example: 'I'll summarise Chapter 2 in 40 minutes'. By doing this, you're setting yourself a goal and your subconscious mind will start working on completing the task in the time available.

Take breaks

Research has shown that people:

- Remember best when they study for shorter periods then recap and consolidate what they learned, as opposed to studying for longer periods.

- Learn better at the beginning and end of a study period.

So, plan to study for about 30-45 minutes, review what you have learnt, then take a five to 10 minute break.

Build in variety

Change the subject or study strategy every few hours. This will lessen the chance of your becoming bored.

- Use your study break for exercise (or perhaps housework). This changes the pace and helps to get rid of extra adrenaline.
- Alternate reading with more active learning exercises. For example: mind mapping or writing model answers.

Just say 'Stop'

Every time you notice your thoughts wandering, tell yourself to 'stop'. Then consciously bring your thoughts back to your studies. Initially, you might have to do this many times each study session, but with practice you'll find you are able to focus for longer periods. If you find it almost impossible to re-focus try taking a break, switching to another subject or topic, or using a different study strategy.

Schedule worry time

Allow yourself time to worry but decide beforehand when and for how long you're going to worry. Then, when something distracts you while you're studying, or if you start to feel anxious about something during the day, write your thoughts down and set them aside, telling yourself you'll deal with them during your worry time.

Learn actively

To help you concentrate and remember, learn actively. Active learners do something with what they have learnt, this may include:

- Putting what they learned into their own words.
- Comparing what they are learning with what they already know.
- Linking new facts to what they already know.
- Applying what they are learning to their own situation, and
- Using the new information.

How to Study with INTENSE Focus: 6 Essential Tips

Roxine Kee
Last Updated June 19, 2019
From *College Info Geek* website: https://collegeinfogeek.com/how-to-focus/

In *The War of Art*, Stephen Pressfield introduces a concept he calls Resistance:

> "Resistance cannot be seen, touched, heard, or smelled. But it can be felt. We experience it as an energy field radiating from a work-in-potential. It's a repelling force. It's negative. Its is to shove us away, distract us, prevent us from doing our work."

Basically, Resistance is that evil thing that makes us procrastinate and stops us from doing our work. It's not tangible. We can't shake it off or fight it physically. And we sure as heck can't ever be complacent and think we've beaten it for good.

In fact, if you don't read any further than this paragraph, I want you to take away one concept: Have a singular focus.

Research shows that our brains are wired to work on tasks serially, and not in parallel. This means that our brains suck at multitasking…but that we are good at focusing on one thing at a time.

The problem is, there are so many distractions these days that we've unconsciously trained our brains to not be good at focusing.

So how do you stay focused on one thing at a time when there are so many other, equally urgent tasks demanding your attention?

Here are six tips I've found to be helpful:

1. Pick One Thing the Night Before
"Unlimited possibilities are not suited to man; if they existed, his life would only dissolve in the boundless. To become strong, a man's life needs the limitations ordained by duty and voluntarily accepted." – *I Ching*

At the end of each work day, ask yourself, "If I could only get one thing done tomorrow, what would it be?"

Make sure you focus on just that one thing in the morning and, if all goes well and you finish that task, feel free to ask that question again and get started on your next task.

Of course, you'll have a hard time keeping up with your schoolwork if you only work on one thing a day, but the idea is to:

- Just get started on work, and
- Build momentum so you at least work for a little bit everyday

These points said, though, I also…

2. Have a Weekly Plan
This is a habit that I developed that not only helped me get organized – it also helped calm my anxious monkey brain.

Every Monday morning (or if I'm especially strapped for time that week, Sunday night), I'll take 60 – 90 minutes to map out what my week will look like in an Evernote file. I update the file at the end of every day to quickly plan out what I want to do the next day.

Here's what my Weekly Plan looks like:

[An image of her weekly plan. Suffice to say, it's very planned out!]

Having a weekly plan is not a 180 from my previous tip of working on one thing a day! For one, I know myself and how much I can work. I started with the tip of working on one thing a day, and now I've trained up my focus to the point that I can work on several things, one after the other.

And that's the beauty of a weekly plan: having everything you need to do time-blocked out helps you focus on the assignment in front of you when you're studying, because you don't have to worry whether you have time for that other thing you need to get to. You know that, as long as you follow the plan and finish the task, you'll have more than enough time for everything else.

3. Protect Your Focus Blocks
In the book *Deep Work*, one tip for cultivating a deep ability to focus is to "drain the shallow work." Cal Newport, the author, defines shallow work as:

> "Noncognitively demanding, logistical-style tasks, often performed while distracted. These efforts tend to not create much new value in the world and are easy to replicate." (6)

Shallow work includes things like sending emails, posting a new photo of your coffee on Instagram, and buying more instant noodles from the campus grocery store – things that anyone can do without much thinking.

Cal then goes on to warn against the danger of shallow work:

> "Spend enough time in a state of frenetic shallowness and you permanently reduce your capacity to perform deep work."

If we habitually check our phones, scrolling through our social media apps to see if a new notification has popped up, this will permanently hinder us from being the focus machines we want to be.

Yikes!

Reading this in the book made me paranoid, so I've invested in the Freedom App for my Mac, and (OFFTIME) for my Android phone.

These apps block certain websites and apps on my laptop and my phone for a specific length of time. I totally swear by them because without these, I wouldn't get as much done as I do. I'd still be in the infinite app-loop of checking YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and my email.

(Tip: A Freedom App subscription gives you access to both their desktop and iOS versions. Since they don't have an Android app, they've partnered with (OFFTIME) to allow site blocking on Android.)

4. Defend Your Rest

Let's get this straight: getting at least 8 hours of sleep every night, or taking time off is not laziness. In fact, in *Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning*, the authors explain that rest (or "unloading") is the way to prepare the body for work:

> "The purpose of this unloading week is to prepare the body for the increased demand of the next phase or period."

And if you've ever tried to sleep early, you know that it's not easy; It takes a great amount of discipline and commitment to excellence to tune out the world and turn in, when you'd rather stream just one more episode of Black Mirror (or watch White Chicks for the 15th time).

In fact, by giving yourself plenty of time recuperate, you're actually doing good, important "work" that will reap rewards down the road.

To underscore this point, in Stephen Covey's seminal personal development book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he calls attention to the importance of the 7th habit – Sharpening the Saw – with this quote from Honest Abe Lincoln:

> "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."

So if you find yourself watching video after video of pandas rolling around on the ground when you're supposed to working on an assignment, don't beat yourself up over it.

Instead, push away from your desk, take a deep breath, and have the courage to wrap things up, call it a day, and try again tomorrow.

5. Get Comfortable with a Routine
Getting started on schoolwork is hard enough without having to worry about where you'll do it, when you'll do it, and what supplies you need to get the job done.

The problem is worse for me because I'm a commuter student, so I don't have a quiet dorm room to sit in and do my work.

Here's how I've fixed that problem:

- I have a fixed time every week to do weekly submissions, readings, and assignments for class so I never miss a deadline
- I do my work in the same coffee shop near campus, and even sit in the same corner every time because I know exactly where the electrical outlet to charge my laptop is
- I have Brain.fm on my phone's home screen to make it easy to hit Play (plus Spotify's Peaceful Piano for when I get bored of the white noise)

Some thoughts on the last point, though: I'm OK with having a routine for most things, but when it comes to music, having the same old beats for hours starts failing me when I hit an afternoon slump.

If you're like me and you get tempted to hit the "Top 50 Global" playlist on Spotify after lunch every day, keep this quote from Pierce Howard, author of *The Owner's Manual for the Brain*, in mind:

> "The more routine a stimulus is the less it interferes with rival stimuli."

This means that when you're craving some pop-infused tunes in your day but you still have some work to do, be careful to at least pick music you can tune out.

(So maybe hold off on Tay-Tay's 2017 album reputation, in favor of her 2014 album, 1989, instead? 😉)

6. Make Focus Your Lifestyle
"Don't take breaks from distraction. Instead take breaks from focus." – Cal Newport, *Deep Work*

Imagine this scenario: Let's say you want to lose 20 lbs to look good for your date at prom or graduation gala.

Would you expect to hit your goal weight if you spent most of your week gorging on McGriddles, Coke, and candy, while only eating vegetables and whole foods on the weekends?

Yeah, didn't think so. If you wanted to lose weight, you'd spend most of your week eating

clean, whole foods, and maaaybe have a cheat day once a week, right?

Similarly, as Cal Newport argues in the quote above, if we want our minds to be in shape, we should spend most of our time in a state of focus, rather than a state of frantic distraction. Instead of taking breaks from distraction to focus when we need to do it, we should take breaks from focus to clear out our distractions.

This tip is counter-intuitive in today's age, and it may even seem archaic and needlessly limiting. So if you don't want to stop checking your phone 123,456 times a day cold turkey, just start practicing focusing for progressively longer periods of time.

A perfect way to practice this is to block out time each day to read without distractions.

You can start with reading for 15 minutes as soon as you wake up before you check your phone.

> (Pro Tip: Put your phone on Airplane mode before you sleep, so there's NO WAY there's going to be notifications on it in the morning. Better yet, bury your phone in your backyard every night so you're not tempted to reach for it first thing in the morning. A bit extreme, but whatever works, right?)

You can also carry a book around for those times when you're bored and itching for something to do, like I do on my 3-hour round trip commute to school. ☺

After a few days, you'll find that you start enjoying and craving the mental clarity. Plus – and this is speaking from experience – when you stop cycling through social media apps and blogs, you'll find that you have a ton of extra energy left over at the end of the day! (Now about that Brazilian Jiu Jitsu class I've been wanting to take…)

Conclusion

"Resistance has no strength of its own. Every ounce of juice it possesses comes from us. We feed it with power by our fear of it. Master that fear and we conquer Resistance." – Steven Pressfield, *The War of Art*

All we can do is struggle against Resistance to get our most important work out the door for the day.

When we do this, we put one more tick on our side against Resistance. And as we build momentum, it becomes a little bit easier to beat Resistance again the next day.

The goal of this article was to help you optimize your life so you can conquer resistance day after day. When you string together days of productive work, this is when the magic happens.

And you know what?

Now that I've written all 2,048 words of this blog post, it's time to fold up my Macbook and celebrate, because I beat Resistance.

But I also have to get some quality rest in tonight, because I have to live to fight Resistance another day.

Media Analysis Prewriting and Essay Assignment

In one way or another, all of us are influenced the media that surrounds us. Whether we realize it or not we are surrounded by it constantly on TV, the internet, even on clothes we wear. In this essay, you will analyze an advertisement, and you will get an introduction to documenting sources in APA style.

For this essay, you will write a formal essay in which you analyze the text* you've chosen and explain the advertising techniques used, as well as the myths, values, ideas, or cultural stereotypes it is selling and explain the comment that makes on society, consumers, or the various groups it's targeting or portraying.

The following outlines some of the introductory ideas you should keep in mind.

- Style: A formal essay should be written in your voice and from your perspective, but will use a higher level of diction and language. However, it should not be forced.
- Formal essays are written in the objective tone and do not use personal pronouns.
    - Instead, you should use the specific noun or group you're referring to.
        - I.e.: audiences, readers, advertisers, consumers, teens, adults, men, women, children, etc.
- Purpose: The purpose of this essay is to look carefully at an advertisement and explain what this ad reveals about contemporary culture: values, goals, acceptable roles in society, etc.
- Do not try to convince or preach to your readers. Simply explain your analysis and what it says of society or the specific group it's pointed at.
- Audience: The audience for this essay is a college-educated audience. They are familiar with the terms of analysis and advertising, so you do not need to explain those general ideas.
- Limitations: You may choose a print or video ad. You can choose multiple ads by the same company for the same product, or you may choose multiple ads on a similar theme. (E.g.: how police are portrayed in advertising.)
- You must use quotes from at least two of the readings we do over the course of this essay, and you must document them correctly. <u>You may **not** use the student samples as your sources.</u>
- We will do formal documentation for this essay. That means you need in-text citations where required, and must have a References page.
    - In class, I will teach APA format. We will also look at a sample essays in that format.

Finally, remember we begin with the prewriting assignments, so take it one step at a time. We will read articles, essays, and samples and discuss the details more as we move through the essay.

*In this case, *text*

refers to your ad.

Media Analysis Prewriting Assignments

E3: Prewriting 1

1. Describe the ad and make a list of things that stand out about it. This should be a paragraph or two.
2. Then list things that stand out that you might analyze. Include the things you can find based on the "Language of Persuasion" reading.

They could be symbolic things like colors or objects. It could be stereotypes, values, or myths.

E3: Prewriting 2

1. Now that you've described your text and noted some things that stand out, go back and look at those things again. What do those things imply? Make a list of those things and for each one write out the implication, myths, values, ideas, or cultural stereotypes that are implicit. (You should have at least three.)
2. Think about what your text is saying between the lines. What comment does that make on society, consumers, or the various groups it's targeting or portraying. Write that down in one clear statement. That's a draft of your thesis.
3. Write out the works cited citation for your ad(s). Make sure to read and follow the instructions in your *Writer's Reference* APA chapter.

E3: Prewriting 3

We'll do this prewriting in class. For it you need to have access to the sources you'll be using either by printing them out, making notes, or on your phone or tablet. Also, bring your previous prewritings. If you must miss class, you can use the form on the website, but late points will be deducted.
(Online classes—see your schedule for alternate instructions)

Final Essay: Remember, you do not get to revise this essay.

Begin work on putting this essay together by reviewing the grade sheet at the end of this handout. I grade looking for those things, so you need to make sure you keep those things in mind as you write. Once you've done that, look over your prewritings, and use those as a starting point to organize. Below are some important tips to remember. Since this is a formal paper, it should follow a fairly strict structure.

Remember that this is your goal:

> Write a formal essay in which you analyze an advertisement and explain the advertising techniques used, as well as the myths, values, ideas, or cultural stereotypes it is selling and explain the comment that makes on society, consumers, or the various groups it's targeting or portraying.

General Requirements

The essay should:

- Be correctly formatted: typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, correct heading and running header
- Be at least 3 pages long, exclusive of your References page
- Utilize and correctly cite at least 2 of the readings for the essay as well as the advertisement(s) you are analyzing. Remember, you may not use the student samples for your sources.

Tips

- □ Avoid the personal pronouns I/me/my. Instead, go with readers, viewers, consumers, buyers, advertisers, or something similar.
- □ Avoid you as if it will give you the plague, Ebola, or anything else equally frightening and life threatening. REALLY!
- □ Focus on the myth or cultural value endorsed, proposed, or underscored by the ad. What is it selling other than the product? (connect your thesis to that)
- □ Analyze how specific parts of the ad support your thesis.
- □ Describe the ad so that your readers know what you're talking about when you bring it up.
- □ Conclude by explaining what the ad reveals about contemporary culture: values, goals, acceptable roles in society, etc., and what this implies or reveals about our culture, desires, aspirations, or expectations.
- □ If a source is in your paper, it should be on the References page.
- □ If a source is on the References page, it should be in your paper.
- □ In-text citations go at the *end* of the sentence or section.
- □ Quotation marks mean you are using the exact words—they usually require an in-text citation.
- □ With a paraphrase, you don't need quotation marks since you're putting it in your own words, but you still need an in-text citation and/or a clear signal phrase.
- □ Have someone read it out loud to you for a real idea of what you've said in your essay as opposed to what you think you said.
- □ Proofread, proofread, and proofread again!

Turning Your Essay In

See your schedule for specific instructions.

Media Analysis Grading Criteria

Your essay will be evaluated based on the following standards. Please review them and take them into consideration when finalizing your essay.

Format/Professionalism

- Is the essay correctly formatted?
- Does it meet length requirements?
- Is it turned in on time?
- Is there a references page?

Thesis

- Does it explain what this ad reveals about contemporary culture: values, goals, acceptable roles in society, etc?
- Is the thesis clearly crafted and followed up throughout the work?
- Does it name the ad and the company/sponsor?

Content

- Does the essay include a description of the ad?
- Does the essay use the critical and analytical techniques studied? (Myth, advertising techniques, persuasion techniques, etc.)
- Does the final essay use at least two appropriate sources from the webpage?
- Are sources smoothly integrated?
- Is research cited with correct parenthetical citations as needed?

Development

- Does the description provide enough detail to help the reader see the ad and understand the writer's points?
- Does the writer support the thesis with logical, clearly discussed points, using specific details from the ad as support?
- Does the writing explain how the examples used illustrate or build the myth, cultural value, or technique being discussed?

Style

- Does the style—voice, tone, sentence style, and word choice—reflect the type of writing expected in this essay? (No I/me/my; formal tone and word choice.)

Clarity

- Does the writing reflect grammatical and mechanical correctness expected at this level?
- Are all sources correctly cited on the References page?
- Are all sources used cited, and all sources cited used?

*Advertising's Fifteen Basic Appeals
Jib Fowles

Emotional Appeals

The nature of effective advertisements was recognized full well by the late media Philosopher Marshall McLuhan. In his Understanding Media, the first Sentence of the section on advertising reads, "The continuous pressure is to create ads more and more in the image of audience motives and desires."

By giving form to people's deep-lying desires and picturing states of being that individuals privately yearns for, advertisers have the best chance of arresting attention and affecting communication. And that is the immediate goal of advertising: to tug at our psychological shirts sleeves and slow us down long enough for a word or two about whatever is being sold. We glance at a picture of a solitary rancher at work, and "Marlboro" slips into our minds. Advertisers (I'm using the term as shorthand for both the product's manufacturers, who bring the ambition and money to the process, and the advertising agencies, who supply the know-how) are ever more compelled to invoke consumers' drives and longings; this is the "continuous pressure" McLuhan refers to.

Over the past century, the American marketplace has grown increasingly congested as more and more products have entered into the frenzied competition after the public's dollars. The economies of other nations are quieter than ours since the volume of goods being hawked does not so greatly exceed demand. In some economies, consumer wares are scarce enough that no advertising at all is necessary. But in the United States we go to the extreme. In order to stay in business, an advertiser must strive to cut through the considerable commercial by any means available--including the emotional appeals that some observers have held to be abhorrent and underhanded.

The use of subconscious appeals is a comment not only on conditions among sellers. As time has gone by, buyers have become stoutly resistant to advertisements. We live in a blizzard of these messages and have learned to turn up our collars and ward off most of them. A study done a few years ago at Harvard University's Graduate School of Business Administration ventured that the average American is exposed to some 500 ads daily from television, newspapers, magazines, radio, billboards, direct mail, and so on. If for no other reason than to preserve one's sanity, a filter must be developed in every mind to lower the number of ads a person is actually aware of-a number this particular study estimate at about seventy-five ads per day. (Of these, only twelve typically produced a reaction-nine positive and three negative, on the average.) To be among the few messages that do manage to gain access to minds, advertisers must be strategic, perhaps even a little underhanded at times.

There are assumptions about personality underlying advertisers' efforts to communicate via emotional appeals, and while these assumptions have stood the test of time, they still deserve to be aired. Human beings, it is presumed, walk around with a variety of unfulfilled urges and motives swirling in the bottom half of their minds. Lusts, ambitions, tendernesses, vulnerabilities-they are constantly bubbling up, seeking resolution. These

mental forces energize people, but they are too crude and irregular to be given excessive play in the real world. They must be capped with the competent, sensible behavior that permits individuals to get along well in society. However, this upper layer of mental activity, shot through with caution and rationality, is not receptive to advertising's pitches.

Advertisers want to circumvent this shell of consciousness if they can, and latch on to one of the lurching, subconscious drives. In effect, advertisers over the years have blindly felt their way around the underside of the American psyche, and by trial and error have discovered the softest points of entree, the places where their messages have the greatest likelihood of getting by consumers' defenses. As McLuhan says elsewhere, "Gouging away at the surface of public sales resistance, the ad men are constantly breaking through into the Alice in Wonderland territory behind the looking glass, which is the world of sub-rational impulses and appetites."

An advertisement communicates by making use of a specially selected image (of a Supine female, say, or a curly-haired child, or a celebrity) which is designed to stimulate "subrational impulses and desires" even when they are at ebb, even if they are unacknowledged by their possessor. Some few ads have their emotional appeal in the text but for the greater number by far the appeal is contained in the artwork. This makes sense, since visual communication better suits more primal levels of the brain. If the viewer of an advertisement actually has the importuned motive, and if the appeal is sufficiently well-fashioned to call it up, then the person can be hooked. The product in the ad may then appeal to take on the semblance of gratification for the summoned motive. Many ads seem to be Saying, "If you have this need, then this product will help satisfy it." It is a primitive equation, but not an ineffective one for selling.

Thus, most advertisements appearing in national media can be understood as having two orders of content. The first is the appeal to deep-running drives in the minds of consumers. The second is information regarding the goods or service being sold: its name, its manufacturer its picture, its packaging, its objective attributes, its functions. For example, the reader of a brassiere advertisement sees a partially undraped but blandly unperturbed woman standing in an otherwise commonplace public setting, and may experience certain Sensations; the reader also sees the name "Maidenform," a particular brassiere style, and, in tiny print words about the material, colors, price. Or, the viewer of a television commercial sees a demonstration with four small boxes labelled 650, 650, 650, and 800; something in the viewer's mind catchers hold of this, as trivial as thoughtful consideration might reveal it to be. The viewer is also exposed to the name "Anacin," its bottle, and its purpose.

Sometimes there is an apparently logical link between an ad's emotional appeal and its product information. It does not violate common sense that Cadillac automobiles be photographed at country clubs, or that Japan Air Lines be associated with Orientalia. But there is no real need for the linkage to have a bit of reason behind it. Is there anything inherent to the connection between Salem cigarettes and mountains, Coke and a smile, Miller Beer and comradeship? The link being forged in minds between product and appeal is a pre-logical one.

People involved in the advertising industry do not necessarily talk in the terms being used here. They are stationed at the sending end of this communications channel, and may think they are up to any number of things-Unique Selling Propositions, explosive copywriting, the optimal use of demographics or psychographics, ideal media buys, high recall ratings, or whatever But when attention shifts to the receiving end of the channel, and focuses on the instant of reception, then commentary becomes much more elemental: an advertising message contains something primary and primitive, an emotional appeal, that in effect is the thin end of the wedge, trying to find its way into a mind. Should this occur, the product information comes along behind.

When enough advertisements are examined in this light, it becomes clear that the emotional appeals fall into several distinguishable categories, and that every ad is a variation on one of a limited number of basic appeals. While there may be several ways of classifying these appeals, one particular list of fifteen has proven to be especially valuable.

Advertisements can appeal to:

1 The need for sex
2. The need for affiliation
3~ The need to nurture
4. The need for guidance
5. The need to aggress
6. The need to achieve
7. The need to dominate
8. The need for prominence
9. The need for attention
10. The need for autonomy
11. The need to escape
12. The need to feel safe
13. The need for aesthetic sensations
14. The need to satisfy curiosity
15. Physiological needs: food, drink,
sleep, etc.

Fifteen Appeals

1. Need for sex. Let's start with Sex, because this is the appeal which seems to pop up first whenever the topic of advertising is raised. Whole books have been written about this one alone, to find a large audience of mildly titillated readers. Lately, due to campaigns to sell blue jeans, concern with sex in ads has redoubled.

The fascinating thing is not how much sex there is in advertising, but how little. Contrary to impressions, unambiguous sex is rare in these messages. Some of this surprising observation may be a matter of definition: the Jordache ads with the lithe, blouse-less female astride a similarly clad male is clearly an appeal to the audience's sexual drives, but the same cannot be said about Brooke Shields in the Calvin Klein commercials. Directed at young women and their credit-card carrying mothers, the image of Miss Shields instead invokes the need to be looked at. Buy Calvins and you'll be the center of much attention, just as Brooke is, the ads imply; they do not primarily inveigle their target audience's need for sexual intercourse.

In the content analysis reported in Mass Advertising as Social Forecast, only two percent of ads were found to pander to this motive. Even Playboy ads shy away from sexual appeals: a recent issue contained eighty-three full-page ads, and just four of them (or less than five percent) could be said to have sex on their minds.

The reason this appeal is so little used is that it is too blaring and tends to obliterate the product information. Nudity in advertising has the effect of reducing brand recall. The people who do remember the product may do so because they have been made indignant by the ad; this is not the response most advertisers seek.

To the extent that sexual imagery is used, it conventionally works better on men than women; typically a female figure is offered up to the male reader. A Black Velvet liquor advertisement displays an attractive woman wearing a tight black outfit, recumbent under the legend, "Feel the Velvet." The figure does not have to be horizontal, however, for the appeal to be present, as National Airlines revealed in its "Fly me" campaign. Indeed, there does not even have to be a female in the ad; "Flick my Bic" was sufficient to convey the idea to many.

As a rule, though, advertisers have found sex to be a tricky appeal, to be used sparingly. Less controversial and equally fetching are the appeals to our need for affectionate human contact.

2. Need for affiliation. American mythology upholds autonomous individuals, and social statistics suggest that people are ever more going it alone in their lives, yet the high frequency of affiliative appeals in ads belies this. Or maybe it does not: maybe all the images of companionship are compensation for what Americans privately lack. In any case, the need to associate with others is widely invoked in advertising and is probably the most prevalent appeal. All sorts of goods and services are sold by linking them to our unfulfilled desires to be in good company.

According to Henry Murray, the need for affiliation consists of 24 desires "to draw near and enjoyably cooperate or reciprocate with another; to please and win affection of another; to adhere and remain loyal to a friend." The manifestations of this motive can be segmented into several different types of affiliation, beginning with romance.

Courtship may be swifter nowadays, but the desire for pair-bonding is far from satiated. Ads reaching for this need commonly depict a youngish male and female engrossed in each other The head of the male is usually higher than the female's, even at this late date; she may be sitting or leaning while he is standing. They are not touching in the Smirnoff vodka ads, but obviously there is an intimacy, sometimes frolicsome, between them. The couple does touch for Cognac when "The moment was Martell." For Wind Song perfume they have touched, and "Your Wind Song stays on his mind."

Depending on the audience, the pair does not absolutely have to be young-just together. He gives her a DeBeers diamond, and there is a tear in her laugh lines. She takes Geritol and preserves herself for him. And numbers of consumers, wanting affection too, follow suit.

Warm family feelings are fanned in ads when another generation is added to the pair. Hallmark Cards brings grandparents into the picture, and Johnson and Johnson Baby Powder has Dad, Mom, and baby, all fresh from the bath, encircled in arms and emblazoned with "Share the Feeling." A talc has been fused to familial love.

Friendship is yet another form of affiliation pursued by advertisers. Two women confide and drink Maxwell House coffee together; two men walk through the woods smoking Salem cigarettes. Miller Beer promises that afternoon "Miller Time" will be staffed with three or four good buddies. Drink Dr Pepper, as Mickey Rooney is coaxed to do, and join in with all the other Peppers. Coca-Cola does not even need to portray the friendliness; it has reduced this appeal to "a Coke and a smile."

The warmth can be toned down and disguised, but it is the same affiliative need that is being fished for. The blonde has a direct gaze and her friends are firm businessmen in appearance, but with a glass of Old Bushmill you can sit down and fit right in. Or, for something more upbeat, sing along with the Pontiac choirboys.

As well as presenting positive images, advertisers can play to the need for affiliation in negative ways, by invoking the fear of rejection. If we don't use Scope, we'll have the "Ugh! Morning Breath" that causes the male and female models to avert their faces. Unless we apply Ultra Brite or Close-Up to our teeth, it's good-bye romance. Our family will be cursed with "House-a-tosis" if we don't take care. Without Dr. Scholl's antiperspirant foot spray, the bowling team will keel over. There go all the guests when the supply of Dorito's nacho cheese chips is exhausted. Still more rejection if our shirts have ring-around-the-collar, if our car needs to be Midasized. But make a few purchases, and we are back in the bosom of human contact.

As self-directed as Americans pretend to be, in the last analysis we remain social animals, hungering for the positive, endorsing feelings that only those around us can supply. Advertisers respond, urging us to "Reach out and touch someone," in the hopes our monthly bills will rise.

3. Need to nurture. Akin to affiliative needs is the need to take care of small, defenseless creatures, children and pets, largely. Reciprocity is of less consequence here, though; it is the giving that counts. Murray uses synonyms like "to feed, help, support, console, protect, comfort, nurse, heal." A strong need it is, woven deep into our genetic fabric, for if it did not exist we could not successfully raise up our replacements. When advertisers put forth the image of something diminutive and furry, something that elicits the word "cute" or precious," then they, are trying to trigger this motive. We listen to the childish voice singing the Oscar Mayer wiener song, and our next hot-dog purchase is prescribed. Aren't those darling kittens something, and how did this Meow Mix get into our shopping cart? This

pitch is often directed at women, as Mother Nature's chief nurturers. "Make me some Kraft macaroni and cheese, please," says the elfin preschooler just in from the snowstorm, and mothers' hearts go out, and Kraft's sales go up. "We're cold, wet, and hungry," whine the husband and kids, and the little woman gets the Manwiches ready.

A facsimile of this need can be hit without children or pets: the husband is ill and sleepless in the television commercial, and the wife grudgingly fetches the NyQuil. But it is not women alone who can be touched by this appeal. The father nurses his son Eddie through adolescence while the John Deere lawn tractor survives the years. Another father counts pennies with his young son as the subject of New York Life Insurance comes up. And all over America are businessmen who don't know why they dial Qantas Airlines when they have to take a trans-Pacific trip; the koala bear knows.

4. Need for guidance. The opposite of the need to nurture is the need to be nurtured: to be protected, shielded, guided. We may be loath to admit it, but the child lingers on inside every adult-and a good thing it does, or we would not be instructable in our advancing years. Who wants a nation of nothing but flinty personalities?

Parentlike figures can successfully call up this need. Robert Young recommends Sanka coffee, and since we have experienced him for twenty-five years as television father and doctor, we take his word for it. Florence Henderson as the expert mom knows a lot about the advantages of Wesson oil.

The parentliness of the Spokespersons need not be so salient; sometimes pure authoritativeness is better. When Orson Welles scowls and intones, "Paul Masson will sell no wine before its time," we may not know exactly what he means, but we still take direction from him. There is little maternal about Brenda Vaccaro when she speaks up for Tampax, but there is a certainty to her that many accept.

A celebrity is not a necessity in making a pitch to the need for guidance, since a fantasy figure can serve just as well. People accede to the Green Giant, or Betty Crocker, or Mr. Goodwrench. Some advertisers can get by with no figure at all: "When E.F Hutton talks, people listen."

Often it is tradition or custom that advertisers point to and consumers take guidance from. Bits and pieces of American history are used to sell whiskeys like Old Crow, Southern Comfort, Jack Daniel's. We conform to traditional male/female roles and age-old social norms when we purchase Barclay cigarettes, which informs us "The pleasure is back." The product itself, if it has been around for a long time, can constitute a tradition. All those old labels in the ad for Morton salt convince us that we should continue to buy it. Kool-Aid says "You loved it as a kid. You trust it as a mother" hoping to get yet more consumers to go along.

Even when the product has no history at all, our need to conform to tradition and to be guided are strong enough that they can be invoked through bogus nostalgia and older actors. Country-Time lemonade sells because consumers want to believe it has a past they can defer to. So far the needs and the ways they can be invoked which have been looked at are largely warm and affiliative; they stand in contrast to the next set of needs, which are much more egoistic and assertive.

5. Need to aggress. The pressures of the real world create strong retaliatory feelings in every functioning human being. Since these impulses can come forth as bursts of anger and violence, their display is normally tabooed. Existing as harbored energy, aggressive drives present a large, tempting

target for advertisers. It is not a target to be aimed at thoughtlessly, though, for few manufacturers want their products associated with destructive motives. There is always the danger that as in the case of sex, if the appeal is too blatant public opinion will turn against what is being sold.

Jack-in-the-Box sought to abruptly alter its marketing by going after older customers and forgetting the younger ones. Their television commercials had a seventyish lady command, "Waste him," and the Jack- In-the-Box clown exploded before our eyes. So did public reaction until the commercials were toned down. Print ads for Club cocktails carried the faces of Octogenarians under the headline, "Hit me with a Club'; response was contrary enough to bring the campaign to a stop.

Better disguised aggressive appeals are less likely to backfire: Triumph cigarette has models making a lewd gesture with their uplifted cigarettes, but the individuals are often laughing and usually in close company of others. When Exxon said, "There's a Tiger in your tank," the implausibility of it concealed the invocation of aggressive feelings.

Depicted arguments are a common way for advertisers to tap the audience's needs to aggress. Don Rickles and Lynda Carter trade gibes, and consumers take sides as the name of Seven-Up is stitched on minds. The Parkay tub has a difference of opinion with the user; who can forget it, or who (or what) got the last word in?

6. Need to achieve. This is the drive that energizes people, causing them to strive in their lives and careers. According to Murray, the need for achievement is signaled by the desires "to accomplish something difficult. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one's self. To rival and surpass others." A prominent American trait, it is one that advertisers like to hook on to because it identifies their product with winning and success.

The Cutty Sark ad does not disclose that Ted Turner failed at his latest attempt at yachting's America Cup; here he is represented as a champion on the water as well as off in his television enterprises. If we drink this whiskey, we will be victorious alongside Turner. We can also succeed with O.J. Simpson by renting Hertz cars, or with Reggie Jackson by bringing home some Panasonic equipment. Cathy Rigby and Stayfree Maxipads will put people out front.

Sports heroes are the most convenient means to snare consumers' needs to achieve, but they are not the only one. Role models can be established, ones which invite emulation, as with the profiles put forth by Dewar scotch. Successful, tweedy individuals relate they have "graduated to the flavor of Myer's rum." Or the advertiser can establish a prize: two neighbors play one-on-one basketball for a Michelob beer in a television commercial, while in a print ad a bottle of Johnie Walker Black Label has been gilded like a trophy.

Any product that advertises itself in superlatives-the best the first the finest-is trying to make contact with our needs to succeed. For many consumers, sales and bargains belong in this category of appeals, too; the person who manages to buy something at fifty percent off is seizing an opportunity and coming out ahead of others.

7. Need to dominate. This fundamental need is the craving to be powerful-perhaps omnipotent, as in the Xerox ad where Brother Dominic exhibits heavenly powers and creates miraculous copies. Most of us will settle for being just a regular potentate, though. We drink Budweiser because it is the King of Beers, and here comes the powerful Clydesdales to prove it. A taste of Wolfschmidt vodka and

"The spirit of the Czar lives on."

The need to dominate and control one's environment is often thought of as being masculine, but as close students of human nature advertisers know, it is not so circumscribed. Women's aspirations for control are suggested in the campaign theme, "I like my men in English Leather or nothing all." The females in the Chanel No.19 ads are “outspoken" and wrestle their men around.

Male and female, what we long for is clout; what we get in its place is a MasterCard.

8. Need for prominence. Here comes the need to be admired and respected, to enjoy prestige and high social status. These times, it appears, are not so egalitarian after all. Many ads picture the trappings of high position; the Oldsmobile stands before a manorial doorway, the Volvo is parked beside a steeplechase. A book-lined study is the setting for Dewar's 12, and Lenox China is displayed in a dining room chock full of antiques.

Beefeater gin represents itself as "The Crown Jewel of England" and uses no illustrations of jewels or things British, for the words are sufficient indicators of distinction. Buy that gin and you will rise up the prestige hierarchy or achieve the same effect on yourself with Seagram's 7 Crown, which ambiguously describes itself as "classy." Being respected does not have to entail the usual accoutrements of wealth: "Do you know who I am?" the commercials ask, and we learn that the prominent person is not so prominent without his American Express card.

9. Need for attention. The previous need involved being looked up to, while this is the need to be looked at. The desire to exhibit ourselves in such a way as to make others look at us is a primitive, insuppressible instinct. The clothing and cosmetic industries exist just to serve this need, and this is the way they pitch their wares. Some of this effort is aimed at males, as the ads for Hathaway shirts and Jockey underclothes. But the greater bulk of such appeals is targeted single-mindedly at women.

To come back to Brooke Shields: this is where she fits into American marketing. If I buy Calvin Klein jeans, consumers infer, I'll be the object of fascination. The desire for exhibition has been most strikingly played to in a print campaign of many years' duration, that of Maidenform lingerie. The woman exposes herself, and sales surge. "Gentlemen prefer Hanes" the ads dissemble, and women who want eyes upon them know what they should do. Peggy Fleming flutters her legs for Leggs, encouraging females who want to be the star in their own lives to purchase this product.

The same appeal works for cosmetics and lotions. For years, the little girl with the exposed backside sold gobs of Coppertone but now the company has picked up the pace a little: as a female, you are supposed to "Flash 'em a Coppertone tan." Food can be sold the same way especially to the diet-conscious; Angie Dickinson poses for California avocados and says, "Would this body lie to you?" Our eyes are too fixed on her for us to think to ask if she got that way by eating mounds of guacamole.

1O. Need for autonomy. There are several ways to sell credit card services, as has been noted: MasterCard appeals to the need to dominate, and American Express to the need for prominence. When Visa claims, "You can have it the way you want it," yet another primary motive is being beckoned forward-the need to endorse the self. The focus here is upon the independence and integrity of the individual; this need is the antithesis of the need for guidance and is unlike any of the

social needs. "If running with the herd isn't your style, try ours," says Rotan-Mosle, and many Americans feel they have finally found the right brokerage firm.

The photo is of a red-coated Mountie on his horse, posed on a snow- covered ledge; the copy reads, "Windsor-One Canadian stands alone." This epitome of the solitary and proud individual may work best with male customers, as may Winston's man in the red cap. But one-figure advertisements also strike the strong need for autonomy among American women. As Shelly Hack strides for Charlie perfume, females respond to her obvious pride and flair; she is her own person. The Virginia Slims tale is of people who have come a long way from subservience to independence. Cachet perfume feels it does not need a solo figure to work this appeal, and uses three different faces in its ads; it insists, though, "It's different on every woman who wears it." Like many psychological needs, this one can also be appealed to in a negative fashion, by invoking the loss of independence or self-regard. Guilt and regrets can be stimulated: "Gee, I could have had a V-8." Next time, get one and be good to yourself.

11. Need to escape. An appeal to the need for autonomy often co-occurs with one for the need to escape, since the desire to duck out of our social obligations, to seek rest or adventure, frequently takes the form of one-person flight. The dashing image of a pilot, in fact, is a standard way of quickening this need to get away from it all. Freedom is the pitch here, the freedom that every individual yearns for whenever life becomes too oppressive. Many advertisers like appealing to the need for escape because the sensation of pleasure often accompanies escape, and what nicer emotional nimbus could there be for a product? "You deserve a break today," says McDonald's, and Stouffer's frozen foods chime in, "Set yourself free."

For decades men have imaginatively bonded themselves to the Marlboro cowboy who dwells untarnished and unencumbered in Marlboro Country some distance from modern life; ads, part of the same campaign, contain two strolling figures. In smokers' aching needs for autonomy and escape are personified by that cowpoke. Many women can identify with the lady ambling through the woods behind the words, "Benson and Hedges and mornings and me."

But escape does not have to be solitary. Other Benson and Hedges Salem cigarette advertisements, it can be several people who escape together into the mountaintops. A commercial for Levi's pictured a cloudbank above a city through which ran a whole chain of young people. There are varieties of escape, some wistful like the Boeing "Someday" campaign of dream vacations, some kinetic like the play and parties in soft drink ads. But in every instance, the consumer exposed to the advertisement is invited to momentarily depart his everyday life for a more carefree experience, preferably with the product in hand.

12. Need to feel safe. Nobody in their right mind wants to be intimidated, menaced, battered, poisoned. We naturally want to do whatever it takes to stave off threats to our well-being, and to our families'. It is the instinct of self-preservation that makes us responsive to the ad of the St. Bernard with the keg of Chivas Regal. We pay attention to the stern talk of Karl MaIden and the plight of the vacationing couples who have lost all their funds in the American Express travelers cheques commercials. We want the omnipresent stag from Hartford Insurance to watch over us too.

In the interest of keeping failure and calamity from our lives, we like to see the durability of products demonstrated. Can we ever forget that Timex takes a licking and keeps on ticking? When the

American Tourister suitcase bounces all over the highway and the egg inside doesn't break, the need to feel safe has been adroitly pluck. We take precautions to diminish future threats. We buy Volkswagen Rabbits for the extraordinary mileage, and MONY insurance policies to avoid the tragedies depicted in their black-and-white ads of widows and orphans.

We are careful about our health. We consume Mazola margarine because it has "corn goodness" backed by the natural food traditions of the American Indians. In the medicine cabinet is Alka-Seltzer, the "home remedy"; having it we are snug in our little cottage. We want to be safe and secure; buy these products, advertisers are saying, and you'll be safer than you are without them.

13. Need for aesthetic sensations. There is an undeniable aesthetic component to virtually every ad run in the national media: the photography or filming or drawing is near-perfect, the type style is well chosen, layout could scarcely be improved upon. Advertisers know there is little chance of good communication occurring if an ad is not visually pleasing. Consumers may not be aware of the extent of their own sensitivity to artwork, but it is undeniably large.

Sometimes the aesthetic element is expanded and made into an ad's primary appeal. Charles Jordan shoes may or may not appear in the accompanying avant-grade photographs; Kohler plumbing fixtures catch attention through the high style of their desert settings. Beneath the slightly out of focus photograph, languid and sensuous in tone, General Electric feels called upon to explain, "This is an ad for the hair dryer." This appeal is not limited to female consumers: J&B scotch says "It whispers" and shows a bucolic scene of lake and castle.

14. Need to satisfy curiosity. It may seem odd to list a need for information among basic motives, but this need can be as primal and compelling as any of the others. Human beings are curious by nature, interested in the world around them, and intrigued by tidbits of knowledge and new developments. Trivia, percentages, observations counter to conventional wisdom-these items all help sell products. Any advertisement in a question-and-answer format is strumming this need.

A dog groomer has a question about long distance rates, and Bell Telephone has a chart with all the figures. An ad for Porsche is replete with diagrams and schematics, numbers and arrows. Lo and behold, Anacin pills have 150 more milligrams than its competitors; should we wonder if this is better or worse for us?

15. Physiological needs. To the extent that sex is solely a biological need, we are now coming around full circle, back toward the start of the list. In this final category are clustered appeals to sleeping, eating, drinking. The art of photographing food and drink is so advanced, sometimes these temptations are wondrously caught in the camera's lens: the crab meat in the Red Lobster restaurant ads can start us salivating, the Quarter pounder can almost be smelled, the liquor in the glass glows invitingly imbibe, these ads scream.

Styles

Some common ingredients of advertisements were not singled out for separate mention in the list of fifteen because they are not appeals in and of themselves. They are stylistic features, influencing the way a basic appeal is presented. The use of humor is one, and the use of celebrities is another A

third is time imagery, past and future, which goes to several purposes. For all of its employment in advertising, humor can be treacherous, because it can get out of hand and smother the product information. Supposedly, this is what Alka-Seltzer discovered with its comic commercials of the late sixties; "I can't believe I ate the whole thing," the sad-faced husband lamented, and the audience cackled so much it forgot the antacid. Or, did not take it seriously.

But used carefully, humor can punctuate some of the softer appeals and soften some of the harsher ones. When Emma says to the Fruit-of-the-Loom fruits, "Hi, cuties. Whatcha doing in my laundry basket?" we smile as our curiosity is assuaged along with hers. Bill Cosby gets consumers tickled about the children in his Jell-O commercials, and strokes the need to nurture. An insurance company wants to invoke the need to feel safe, but does not want to leave readers with an unpleasant aftertaste; cartoonist Rowland Wilson creates an avalanche about to crush a gentleman who is saying to another, "My insurance company? New England Life, of course why?" The same tactic of humor undercutting threat is used in the cartoon commercials for Safeco when the Pink Panther wanders from one disaster to another Often humor masks aggression: comedian Bob Hope in the outfit of a boxer promises to knock out the knock-knocks with Texaco; Rodney Dangerfield, who "can't get no respect," invites aggression as the comic relief in Miller Lite commercials.

Roughly fifteen percent of all advertisements incorporate a celebrity, almost always from the fields of entertainment or sports. The approach can also prove troublesome for advertisers, for celebrities are human beings too, and fully capable of the most remarkable behavior if anything distasteful about them emerges, it is likely to reflect on the product. The advertisers making use of Anita Bryant and Billy Jean suffered several anxious moments. And untimely death can also react poorly on a product. But advertisers are willing to take risks because celebrities can be such a good link between producers and performing the social role of introducer. There are several psychological needs these middlemen can play upon.

Let's take the product class of cameras and see how different celebrities can hit different needs. The need for guidance can be invoked by Michael Landon, who plays such a wonderful dad on "Little House on the Prairie"; when he says to buy Kodak equipment, many people listen. James Garner for Polaroid cameras is put in a similar authoritative role, so defined by a mocking spouse. The need to achieve is summoned up by Tracy Austin and other tennis stars for Canon AE-l; the advertiser first makes sure we set these athletes playing to win. When Cheryl Tiegs speaks up for Olympus cameras, it is the need for attention that is being targeted.

The past and future, being outside our grasp, are exploited by advertisers as locales for the projection of needs. History can offer up heroes (and call up the need to achieve) or traditions (need for guidance) as well as art objects (need for aesthetic sensations). Nostalgia is a kindly version of personal history and is deployed by advertisers to rouse needs for affiliation and for guidance; the need to escape can come in here, too. The same need to escape is sometimes the point of futuristic appeals but picturing the avant-garde can also be a way to get at the need to achieve.

Analyzing Advertisements

When analyzing ads yourself for their emotional appeals, it takes a bit of practice to learn to ignore the product information (as well as one's own experience and feelings about the product). But that skill comes soon enough, as does the ability to quickly sort out from all the non-product aspects of an ad the chief element which is the most striking, the most likely to snag attention first and penetrate

brains farthest. The key to the appeal, this element usually presents itself centrally and forwardly to the reader or viewer.

Another clue: the viewing angle which the audience has on the ad's subjects is informative. If the subjects are photographed or filmed from below and thus are looking down at you much as the Green Giant does, then the need to be guided is a good candidate for the ad's emotional appeal If, on the other hand, the subjects are shot from above and appear deferential, as is often the case with children or female models, then other needs are being appealed to.

To figure out an ad's emotional appeal, it is wise to know (or have a good hunch about) who the targeted consumers are; this can often be inferred from the magazine or television show it appears in. This piece of information is a great help in determining the appeal and in deciding between two different interpretations. For example, if an ad features a partially undressed female, this would typically signal one appeal for readers of Penthouse (need for sex) and another for readers of Cosmopolitan (need for attention).

It would be convenient if every ad made just one appeal, were aimed at just one need. Unfortunately, things are often not that simple. A cigarette ad with a couple at the edge of a polo field is trying to hit both the need for affiliation and the need for prominence; depending on the attitude of the male, dominance could also be an ingredient in this. An ad for Chimere perfume incorporates two photos: in the top one the lady is being commanding at a business luncheon (need to dominate), but in the lower one she is being bussed (need for affiliation). Better ads, however, seem to avoid being too diffused; in the study of post-World War II advertising described earlier, appeals grew more focused as the decades passed. As a rule of thumb, about sixty percent have two conspicuous appeals; the last twenty percent have three or more. Rather than looking for the greatest number of appeals, decoding ads is most productive when the loudest one or two appeals are discerned, since those are the appeals with the best chance of grabbing people's attention.

Do They or Don't They?

Do the emotional appeals made in advertisements add up to the sinister manipulation of consumers? It is clear that these ads work. Attention is caught, communication occurs between producers and consumers, and sales result. It turns out to be difficult to detail the exact relationship between a specific ad and a specific purchase, or even between a campaign and subsequent sales figures, because advertising is only one of a host of influences upon consumption. Yet no one is fooled by this lack of perfect proof; everyone knows that advertising sells. If this were not the case, then tight-fisted American businesses would not spend a total of fifty billion dollars annually on these messages.

But before anyone despairs that advertisers have our number to the extent that they can marshal us at will and march us like automatons to the check-out counters, we should recall the resiliency and obduracy of the American consumer. Advertisers may have uncovered the softest spots in minds, but that does not mean they have found truly gaping apertures. There is no evidence that advertising can get people to do things contrary to their self-interests. Despite all the finesse of advertisements, and all the subtle emotional tugs, the public resists the vast majority of the petitions. According to the marketing division of the A.C. Nielsen Company, a whopping seventy-five percent of all new products die within a year in the marketplace, the victims of consumer disinterest which no amount of advertising could overcome. The appeals in advertising may be the most captivating there are to be had, but they are not enough to entrap the wily consumer. The key to understanding the discrepancy

between, on the one hand, the fact that advertising truly works, and, on the other, the fact that it hardly works, is to take into account the enormous numbers of people exposed to an ad. Modern-day communications permit an ad to be displayed to millions upon millions of individuals; if the smallest fraction of that audience can be moved to buy the product then the ad has been successful. When one percent of the people exposed to a television advertising campaign reach for their wallets, that could be one million sales, which may be enough to keep the product in production and the advertisements coming.

It is good to keep in mind that many of the purchases which might be credited to these ads are experienced as genuinely gratifying to the consumer We sincerely like the goods or service we have bought and we may even like some of the emotional drapery that an ad suggests comes with it. It has sometimes been noted that the most avid students of advertisements are the people who have just bought the product; they want to steep themselves in the associated imagery This may be the reason that Americans, when polled, are not negative about advertising and do not disclose any sense of being mis-used. The volume of advertising may be an irritant, but the product information as well as the imaginative material in ads are partial compensation.

A productive understanding is that advertising messages involve costs and benefits at both ends of the communications channel. For those few ads which do make contact, the consumer surrenders a moment of time, has the lower brain curried, and receives notice of a product; the advertiser has given up money and has increased the chance of sales. In this sort of communications activity, neither party can be said to be the loser.

Advertising Analysis

Media employ specific techniques to construct believable stories. They hook our attention through psychological devices and technical effects. The techniques are vast and many, but some common ones are easily recognizable and are identified here. Remember, advertisers will use many techniques not listed. Add to this list as needed.

Technical effects:

- Camera angles enhance perspective, such as low angles that give the subject power.
- Close-ups provide emphasis.
- Sound effects animate products, giving them emotion.
- Mise-en-scene (set and setting inside camera frame) creates cultural and ideological context. Is the set a concert, a mansion, a shopping mall?
- Accessories enhance the product. What's being associated with the product, such as clothes, props, models?
- Lighting is used to draw your eye to certain details.
- Happy and attractive people are made-up and constructed to enhance the message. What kinds of people are in the ad?
- Music, popular songs and jingles create pneumonic devices to program or trigger your memory (some songs are used for nostalgic reasons, while others are used to cross promote products, i.e. cars and Moby's latest album).
- Products are sold using three main emotions: fear, sex and humor. (See below for more examples). Ads appeal to our emotions through emotional transfer and are rarely dependent on intellectual analysis.
- Special effects bring inanimate things to life and make them exciting. This is especially true with children-targeted ads.
- Editing is used to pace and generate excitement. Notice how military and video game ads have very fast cuts, usually a scene change every second.

Common Attention-Getting Hooks:

- Emotional Transfer is the process of generating emotions in order to transfer them to a product. For example, a Coke ad shows happy, beautiful people but tells us nothing about the product. The point is to make you feel good and to transfer that feeling to the brand or product. This is the number one and most important process of media manipulation.
- Sex sells, without exception.
- Fear messages are directed at our insecurities, such as "no one will like you if you have dandruff," or "bald people are losers." This is a very common technique and extra attention is required to resist these messages.
- Symbols are easily recognized elements from our culture that generate powerful emotions, such as flags and crosses.
- Humor is often used because it makes us feel good and is more memorable. Notice how the majority of Super Bowl commercials are funny.
- Hype, don't believe it. Be skeptical of exaggerated claims, such as "America's favorite burger." Statements like these are meaningless and vague, but sound good.
- Fitting In is a very common technique that tries to influence us by stating that if everyone else is buying the product, so should you. This is often seen in beer commercials, which promotes a "big lie" that everyone drinks (alcoholics are the main consumers of alcohol).
- Cute. Children and animals always steal the show. Family and "girl next door" also fit this category.
- Vague Promises like "might," "maybe," and "could" are red herrings that divert our attention. "Super Glue may heal cuts better than band-aids," sounds absurd, but you will often hear claims as preposterous as this and it would still be true (because it can't be disproved).
- Testimonials are statements by people explaining why certain products are great. Famous or plain folk, or actors can do them. This is more powerful when someone we really like or respect endorses a product (such as Tiger Woods or Michael Jordan).

- "Beautiful" people are usually used to glamorize merchandise, especially unhealthy products like alcohol, tobacco and junk food. Models and actors generally have rare body types, and don't represent average people, but idealized notions of beauty that are constantly changing (compare, for example, Marilyn Monroe's body to a contemporary actress or model).
- Famous People such as Michael Jordan make products appealing and attractive through association.
- Ordinary People are people that might be like you or me. This is common in ads that stress community or family, like Wal-Mart.
- It's Easy. Simple solutions are often used to convince us that a product will solve our problems, such as "bald spot hair spray will get you a date," or "doorknob disinfectant wipes keep us healthy." Larger ideological messages are common as well, such as "cars enable us to conquer nature."
- Macho is generally used to appeal to males, but not exclusively. It demonstrates masculinity and male stereotypes; these are common in military and tobacco ads.
- Femininity is another gender stereotype used in a variety of ads, from teen make-up commercials to alcohol ads.
- Repetition is done to reiterate a sales pitch over and over again, like the phone ads that repeatedly display and annunciate the phone number to access their service (for example the Carrot Top ATT ads).
- Big Lies are exaggerated promises that are impossible to deliver, such as, "This is America's best all-whether vehicle" (also see hype). More subtle examples include "eating Sugar Corn Flakes will make you as strong as an Olympian."
- Exotic. This is the appeal of the "other"; it could be a beach location, tribal person, something strange or unknown. This is often meant to hook you through presenting something that is out of the ordinary or beyond our everyday experience.
- Flattery is used to make you feel good about you as a consumer and that you are making the right choice when you chose a product. "Smart people like you always buy premium aquariums when purchasing exotic fish..."

- Social Outcasts generally represents a put-down or demeaning comment about a competing product or cultural group. This is not limited to ads, but is common in propaganda as well ("they don't believe in God," etc.).
- Free Lunch offers you something in addition to the product such as "buy one, get one free" or tax cuts. Freebies constantly hook us, but there are always hidden costs. Rarely is a thing truly free.
- Surrealism. Commercial media employ some of the brightest minds of the media world and often require cutting edge artists to keep their material fresh (e.g. MTV). Often, as a reflection of how unreal the fantasy world of media is, you will see juxtapositions and dream-like imagery that make no sense because the advertiser is trying to get your attention by presenting something strange and different.
- The Good Old Days. Images, fashion, film effects and music depicting specific eras or subcultures are meant to appeal directly to the demographic represented in the ad (e.g. VW bus, classic rock music, sepia tone effects).
- Culture. Niche marketing is more common as advertisers hone their messages for specific cultural groups. Latino-targeted ads, for instance, might have family scenes or specific uses of language.

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*Introduction to Media Literacy

Media literacy is a set of skills that anyone can learn. Just as *literacy* is the ability to read and write, *media literacy* refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media messages of all kinds.

These are essential skills in today's world. Today, many people get most of their information through complex combinations of text, images and sounds. We need to be able to navigate this complex media environment, to make sense of the media messages that bombard us every day, and to express ourselves using a variety of media tools and technologies.

Media literate youth and adults are better able to decipher the complex messages we receive from television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, signs, packaging, marketing materials, video games, recorded music, the Internet and other forms of media. They can understand how these media messages are constructed, and discover how they create *meaning* – usually in ways hidden beneath the surface. People who are media literate can also create their own media, becoming active participants in our media culture.

Media literacy skills can help children, youth and adults:

- Understand how media messages create meaning
- Identify who created a particular media message
- Recognize what the media maker wants us to believe or do
- Name the "tools of persuasion" used
- Recognize bias, spin, misinformation and lies
- Discover the part of the story that's not being told
- Evaluate media messages based on our own experiences, beliefs and values
- Create and distribute our own media messages
- Become advocates for change in our media system

Media literacy education helps to develop critical thinking and active participation in our media culture. The goal is to give youth and adults greater freedom by empowering them to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media.

In schools: Educational standards in many states -- in language arts, social studies, health and other subjects -- include the skills of accessing, analyzing and evaluating information found in media. These are media literacy skills, though the standards may not use that term. Teachers know that students like to examine and talk about their own media, and they've found that media literacy is an engaging way to explore a wide array of topics and issues.

In the community: Researchers and practitioners recognize that media literacy education is an important tool in addressing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; obesity and eating disorders; bullying and violence; gender identity and sexuality; racism and other forms of discrimination and oppression; and life skills. Media literacy skills can empower people and communities usually shut out of the media system to tell their own stories, share their perspectives, and work for justice.

In public life: Media literacy helps us understand how media create cultures, and how the "media monopoly" - the handful of giant corporations that control most of our media - affects our politics and our society. Media literacy encourages and empowers youth and adults to change our media system, and to create new, more just and more accessible media networks.

Media Literacy Concepts

The study and practice of media literacy is based on a number of fundamental concepts about media messages, our media system, and the role of media literacy in bringing about change. Understanding these concepts is an essential first step in media literacy education.

We've organized Media Literacy Concepts into three levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Basic concepts focus on how media affect us. Intermediate concepts examine more closely how we create meaning from media messages. Advanced concepts examine the interaction of media and society, and the role of media literacy in bringing about change.

Basic concepts

1. **Media construct our culture.** Our society and culture – even our perception of reality - is shaped by the information and images we receive via the media. A few generations ago, our culture's storytellers were people – family, friends, and others in our community. For many people today, the most powerful storytellers are television, movies, music, video games, and the Internet.

2. **Media messages affect our thoughts, attitudes and actions.** We don't like to admit it, but all of us are affected by advertising, news, movies, pop music, video games, and other forms of media. That's why media are such a powerful cultural force, and why the media industry is such big business.

3. **Media use "the language of persuasion."** All media messages try to persuade us to believe or do something. News, documentary films, and nonfiction books all claim to be telling the truth. Advertising tries to get us to buy products. Novels and TV dramas go to great lengths to appear realistic. To do this, they use specific techniques (like flattery, repetition, fear, and humor) we call "the language of persuasion."

4. **Media construct fantasy worlds.** While fantasy can be pleasurable and entertaining, it can also be harmful. Movies, TV shows, and music videos sometimes inspire people to do things that are unwise, anti-social, or even dangerous. At other times, media can inspire our imagination. Advertising constructs a fantasy world where all problems can be solved with a purchase. Media literacy helps people to recognize fantasy and constructively integrate it with reality.

5. **No one tells the whole story.** Every media maker has a point of view. Every good story highlights some information and leaves out the rest. Often, the effect of a media message comes not only from what is said, but from what part of the story is not told.

6. **Media messages contain "texts" and "subtexts."** The text is the actual words, pictures and/or sounds in a media message. The subtext is the hidden and underlying meaning of the message.

7. **Media messages reflect the values and viewpoints of media makers.** Everyone has a point of view. Our values and viewpoints influence our choice of words, sounds and images we use to

communicate through media. This is true for all media makers, from a preschooler's crayon drawing to a media conglomerate's TV news broadcast.

8. Individuals construct their own meanings from media. Although media makers attempt to convey specific messages, people receive and interpret them differently, based on their own prior knowledge and experience, their values, and their beliefs. This means that people can create different subtexts from the same piece of media. All meanings and interpretations are valid and should be respected.

9. Media messages can be decoded. By "deconstructing" media, we can figure out who created the message, and why. We can identify the techniques of persuasion being used and recognize how media makers are trying to influence us. We notice what parts of the story are not being told, and how we can become better informed.

10. Media literate youth and adults are active consumers of media. Many forms of media – like television – seek to create passive, impulsive consumers. Media literacy helps people consume media with a critical eye, evaluating sources, intended purposes, persuasion techniques, and deeper meanings.

Intermediate concepts

11. The human brain processes images differently than words. Images are processed in the "reptilian" part of the brain, where strong emotions and instincts are also located. Written and spoken language is processed in another part of the brain, the neocortex, where reason lies. This is why TV commercials are often more powerful than print ads.

12. We process time-based media differently than static media. The information and images in TV shows, movies, video games, and music often bypass the analytic brain and trigger emotions and memory in the unconscious and reactive parts of the brain. Only a small proportion surfaces in consciousness. When we read a newspaper, magazine, book or website, we have the opportunity to stop and think, re-read something, and integrate the information rationally.

13. Media are most powerful when they operate on an emotional level. Most fiction engages our hearts as well as our minds. Advertisements take this further, and seek to transfer feelings from an emotionally-charged symbol (family, sex, the flag) to a product.

14. Media messages can be manipulated to enhance emotional impact. Movies and TV shows use a variety of filmic techniques (like camera angles, framing, reaction shots, quick cuts, special effects, lighting tricks, music, and sound effects) to reinforce the messages in the script. Dramatic graphic design can do the same for magazine ads or websites.

15. Media effects are subtle. Few people believe everything they see and hear in the media. Few people rush out to the store immediately after seeing an ad. Playing a violent video game won't automatically turn you into a murderer. The effects of media are more subtle than this, but because we are so immersed in the media environment, the effects are still significant.

16. Media effects are complex. Media messages directly influence us as individuals, but they also affect our families and friends, our communities, and our society. So some media effects are indirect. We must consider both direct and indirect effects to understand media's true influence.

17. Media convey ideological and value messages. Ideology and values are usually conveyed in the subtext. Two examples include news reports (besides covering an issue or event, news reports often reinforce assumptions about power and authority) and advertisements (besides selling particular products, advertisements almost always promote the values of a consumer society).

18. We all create media. Maybe you don't have the skills and resources to make a blockbuster movie or publish a daily newspaper. But just about anyone can snap a photo, write a letter or sing a song. And new technology has allowed millions of people to make media--email, websites, videos, newsletters, and more -- easily and cheaply. Creating your own media messages is an important part of media literacy.

Advanced concepts

19. Our media system reflects the power dynamics in our society. People and institutions with money, privilege, influence, and power can more easily create media messages and distribute them to large numbers of people. People without this access are often shut out of the media system.

20. Most media are controlled by commercial interests. In the United States, the marketplace largely determines what we see on television, what we hear on the radio, what we read in newspapers or magazines. As we use media, we should always be alert to the self-interest of corporate media makers. Are they concerned about your health? Do they care if you're smart or wellinformed? Are they interested in creating active participants in our society and culture, or merely passive consumers of their products, services, and ideas?

21. Media monopolies reduce opportunities to participate in decision making. When a few huge media corporations control access to information, they have the power to make some information widely available and privilege those perspectives that serve their interests, while marginalizing or even censoring other information and perspectives. This affects our ability to make good decisions about our own lives, and reduces opportunities to participate in making decisions about our government and society.

22. Changing the media system is a justice issue. Our media system produces lots of negative, demeaning imagery, values and ideas. It renders many people invisible. It provides too little funding and too few outlets for people without money, privilege, influence, and power to tell their stories.

23. We can change our media system. More and more people are realizing how important it is to have a media system that is open to new people and new perspectives, that elevates human values over commercial values, and that serves human needs in the 21st century. All over the world, people are taking action to reform our media system and create new alternatives.

24. Media literate youth and adults are media activists. As we learn how to access, analyze and interpret media messages, and as we create our own media, we recognize the limitations and problems of our current media system. Media literacy is a great foundation for advocacy and activism for a better media system.

Text & Subtext

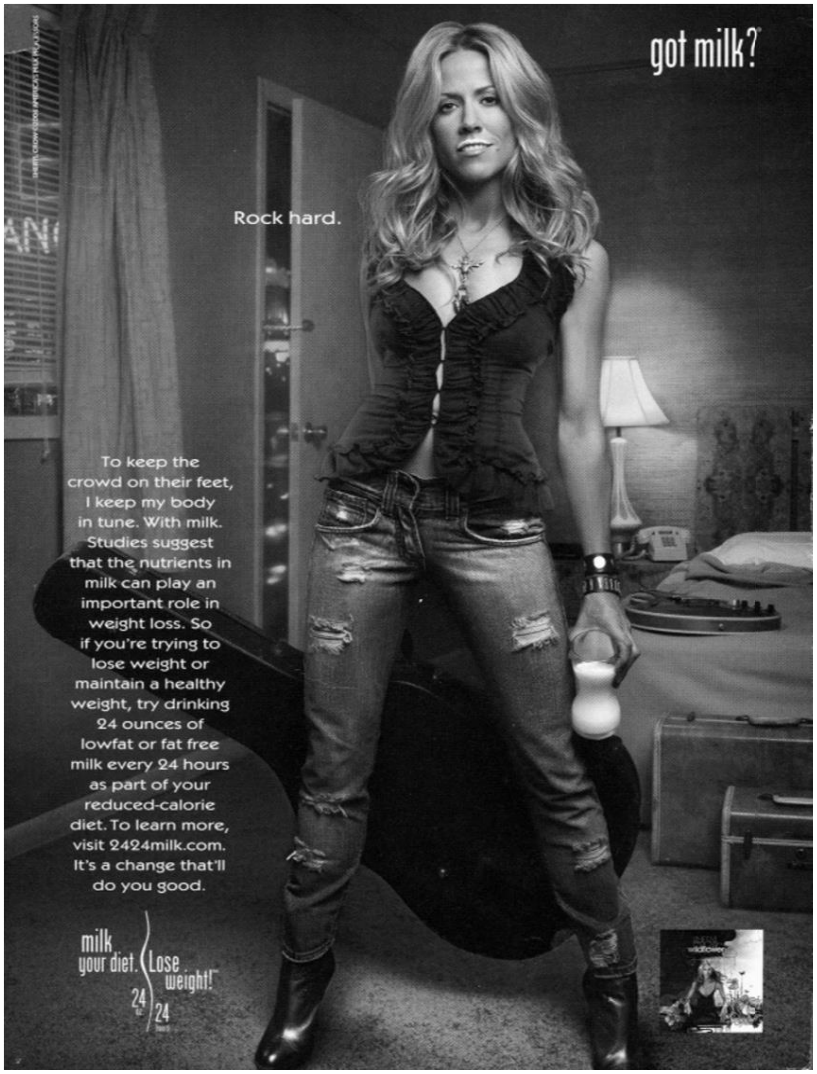
Text

We often use the word “text” to mean “written words.” But in media literacy, “text” has a very different meaning. The text of any piece of media is what you actually see and/or hear. It can include written or spoken words, pictures, graphics, moving images, sounds, and the arrangement or sequence of all of these elements. Sometimes the text is called the “story” or “manifest text.” For most of us, the text of a piece of media is always the same.

Subtext

The “subtext” is your interpretation of a piece of media. It is sometimes called the “latent text.” The subtext is not actually heard or seen; it is the meaning we create from the text in our own minds. While media makers (especially advertisers) often create texts that suggest certain subtexts, each person creates their own subtext (interpretation) based on their previous experiences, knowledge, opinions, attitudes and values. Thus, the subtext of a piece of media will vary depending on the individual seeing/hearing it

Example **Magazine ad: "got milk?"**



The text of this media message includes:

- An image of musician Sheryl Crow holding a guitar case and a glass of milk in a room with a lamp, bed, open door, etc. behind her.
- The logo "got milk?" and the words "Rock hard."
- The short paragraph: "To keep the crowd on their feet, I keep my body in tune. With milk. Studies suggest that the nutrients in milk can play an important role in weight loss. So if you're trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, try drinking 24 ounces of lowfat or fat free milk every 24 hours as part of your reducedcalorie diet. To learn more, visit 2424milk.com. It's a change that'll do you good."
- Another logo that reads "milk. your diet. Lose weight! 24 oz. 24 hours"
- A small image of Sheryl Crow's album Wildflower.

Possible subtexts include:

- Sheryl Crow drinks milk.
- Sheryl Crow can only perform well by drinking milk.
- Sheryl Crow wants to sell her album.
- Milk renders great concerts.
- If you drink milk you will lose weight.
- Beautiful people drink milk.
- If you drink milk, you'll be beautiful and famous, too.
- Sheryl Crow stays at cheap motels.
- Rock stars like ripped jeans

The Language of Persuasion

The goal of most media messages is to persuade the audience to believe or do something.

Hollywood movies use expensive special effects to make us believe that what we're seeing is real. News stories use several techniques – such as direct quotation of identified sources – to make us believe that the story is accurate.

The media messages most concerned with persuading us are found in advertising,

public relations and advocacy. Commercial advertising tries to persuade us to buy a product or service. Public relations (PR) "sells" us a positive image of a corporation, government or organization. Politicians and advocacy groups (groups that support a particular belief, point of view, policy, or action) try to persuade us to vote for or support them, using ads, speeches, newsletters, websites, and other means.

These "persuaders" use a variety of techniques to grab our attention, to establish credibility and trust, to stimulate desire for the product or policy, and to motivate us to act (buy, vote, give money, etc.)

We call these techniques the "language of persuasion." They're not new; Aristotle wrote about persuasion techniques more than 2000 years ago, and they've been used by speakers, writers, and media makers for even longer than that.

Learning the language of persuasion is an important media literacy skill. Once you know how media messages try to persuade you to believe or do something, you'll be better able to make your own decisions.

Advertising is the easiest starting point: most ads are relatively simple in structure, easily available, and in their original format. Media literacy beginners are encouraged to learn the language of persuasion by examining ads. Keep in mind that many media messages, such as television commercials, use several techniques simultaneously. Others selectively employ one or two.

Political rhetoric – whether used by politicians, government officials, lobbyists, or activists - is more difficult to analyze, not only because it involves more emotional issues, but also because it is more likely to be seen in bits and fragments, often filtered or edited by others. Identifying the persuasion techniques in public discourse is important because the consequences of that discourse are so significant – war and peace, justice and injustice, freedom and oppression, and the future of our planet. Learning the language of persuasion can help us sort out complex emotional arguments, define the key issues, and make up our own minds about the problems facing us.

NOTE: We've divided our list of persuasion techniques into three levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Basic techniques are easily identified in many media examples, and they are a good starting point for all learners. Identifying many intermediate techniques may require more critical distance, and they should usually be investigated after learners have mastered the basics. More abstraction and judgment may be required to identify the advanced techniques, and some learners may find them difficult to understand. However, even media literacy beginners may be able to spot some of the intermediate or advanced techniques, so feel free to examine any of the persuasion techniques with your group.

Basic persuasion techniques

1. Association. This persuasion technique tries to link a product, service, or idea with something already liked or desired by the target audience, such as fun, pleasure, beauty, security, intimacy, success, wealth, etc. The media message doesn't make explicit claims that you'll get these things; the association is implied. *Association* can be a very powerful technique. A good ad can create a strong emotional response and then associate that feeling with a brand (family = Coke, victory = Nike). This process is known as *emotional transfer.* Several of the persuasion techniques below, like

Beautiful people, Warm & fuzzy, Symbols and *Nostalgia,* are specific types of association.

2. Bandwagon. Many ads show lots of people using the product, implying that "everyone is doing it" (or at least, "all the cool people are doing it"). No one likes to be left out or left behind, and these ads urge us to "jump on the bandwagon." Politicians use the same technique when they say, "The American people want..." How do they know?

3. Beautiful people. *Beautiful people* uses good-looking models (who may also be celebrities) to attract our attention. This technique is extremely common in ads, which may also imply (but never promise!) that we'll look like the models if we use the product.

4. Bribery. This technique tries to persuade us to buy a product by promising to give us something else, like a discount, a rebate, a coupon, or a "free gift." Sales, special offers, contests, and sweepstakes are all forms of *bribery*. Unfortunately, we don't really get something for free -- part of the sales price covers the cost of the bribe.

5. Celebrities. (A type of *Testimonial* – the opposite of *Plain folks*.) We tend to pay attention to famous people. That's why they're famous! Ads often use celebrities to grab our attention. By appearing in an ad, celebrities implicitly endorse a product; sometimes the endorsement is explicit. Many people know that companies pay celebrities a lot of money to appear in their ads (Nike's huge contracts with leading athletes, for example, are well known) but this type of testimonial still seems to be effective.

6. Experts. (A type of *Testimonial*.) We rely on experts to advise us about things that we don't know ourselves. Scientists, doctors, professors and other professionals often appear in ads and advocacy messages, lending their credibility to the product, service, or idea being sold. Sometimes,
"plain folks" can also be experts, as when a mother endorses a brand of baby powder or a construction worker endorses a treatment for sore muscles.

7. Explicit claims. Something is "explicit" if it is directly, fully, and/or clearly expressed or demonstrated. For example, some ads state the price of a product, the main ingredients, where it was made, or the number of items in the package – these are *explicit claims*. So are specific, measurable promises about quality, effectiveness, or reliability, like "Works in only five minutes!" Explicit claims can be proven true or false through close examination or testing, and if they're false, the advertiser can get in trouble. It can be surprising to learn how few ads make explicit claims. Most of them try to persuade us in ways that cannot be proved or disproved.

8. Fear. This is the opposite of the *Association* technique. It uses something disliked or feared by the intended audience (like bad breath, failure, high taxes or

terrorism) to promote a "solution." Ads use fear to sell us products that claim to prevent or fix the problem. Politicians and advocacy groups stoke our fears to get elected or to gain support.

9. Humor. Many ads use humor because it grabs our attention and it's a powerful persuasion technique. When we laugh, we feel good. Advertisers make us laugh and then show us their product or logo because they're trying to connect that good feeling to their product. They hope that when we see their product in a store, we'll subtly re-experience that good feeling and select their product. Advocacy messages (and news) rarely use humor because it can undermine their credibility; an exception is political satire.

10. Intensity. The language of ads is full of intensifiers, including *superlatives* (greatest, best, most, fastest, lowest prices), *comparatives* (more, better than, improved, increased, fewer calories), *hyperbole* (amazing, incredible, forever), *exaggeration*, and many other ways to hype the product.

11. Maybe. Unproven, exaggerated or outrageous claims are commonly preceded by "weasel words" such as may, might, can, could, some, many, often, virtually, as many as, or up to. Watch for these words if an offer seems too good to be true. Commonly, the *Intensity* and *Maybe* techniques are used together, making the whole thing meaningless.

12. Plain folks. (A type of *Testimonial* – the opposite of *Celebrities*.) This technique works because we may believe a "regular person" more than an intellectual or a highly-paid celebrity. It's often used to sell everyday products like laundry detergent because we can more easily see ourselves using the product, too. The *Plain folks* technique strengthens the down-home, "authentic" image of products like pickup trucks and politicians. Unfortunately, most of the "plain folks" in ads are actually paid actors carefully selected because they look like "regular people."

13. Repetition. Advertisers use repetition in two ways: Within an ad or advocacy message, words, sounds or images may be repeated to reinforce the main point. And the message itself (a TV commercial, a billboard, a website banner ad) may be displayed many times. Even unpleasant ads and political slogans work if they are repeated enough to pound their message into our minds.

14. Testimonials. Media messages often show people testifying about the value or quality of a product, or endorsing an idea. They can be *experts*, *celebrities*, or *plain folks*. We tend to believe them because they appear to be a neutral third party (a pop star, for example, not the lipstick maker, or a community member instead of the politician running for office.) This technique works best when it seems like the person "testifying" is doing so because they genuinely like the product or agree with the idea.

Some testimonials may be less effective when we recognize that the person is getting paid to endorse the product.

15. Warm & fuzzy. This technique uses sentimental images (especially of families, kids and animals) to stimulate feelings of pleasure, comfort, and delight. It may also include the use of soothing music, pleasant voices, and evocative words like "cozy" or "cuddly." The *Warm & fuzzy* technique is another form of *Association*. It works well with some audiences, but not with others, who may find it too corny.

Intermediate persuasion techniques

16. The Big Lie. According to Adolf Hitler, one of the 20th century's most dangerous propagandists, people are more suspicious of a small lie than a big one. *The Big Lie* is more than exaggeration or hype; it's telling a complete falsehood with such confidence and charisma that people believe it. Recognizing *The Big Lie* requires "thinking outside the box" of conventional wisdom and asking the questions other people don't ask.

17. Charisma. Sometimes, persuaders can be effective simply by appearing firm, bold, strong, and confident. This is particularly true in political and advocacy messages. People often follow charismatic leaders even when they disagree with their positions on issues that affect them.

18. Euphemism. While the *Glittering generalities* and *Name-calling* techniques arouse audiences with vivid, emotionally suggestive words, *Euphemism* tries to pacify audiences in order to make an unpleasant reality more palatable. Bland or abstract terms are used instead of clearer, more graphic words. Thus, we hear about corporate "downsizing" instead of "layoffs," or "enhanced interrogation techniques" instead of "torture."

19. Extrapolation. Persuaders sometimes draw huge conclusions on the basis of a few small facts. *Extrapolation* works by ignoring complexity. It's most persuasive when it predicts something we hope can or will be true.

20. Flattery. Persuaders love to flatter us. Politicians and advertisers sometimes speak directly to us: "You know a good deal when you see one." "You expect quality." "You work hard for a living." "You deserve it." Sometimes ads flatter us by showing people doing stupid things, so that we'll feel smarter or superior. *Flattery* works because we like to be praised and we tend to believe people we like. (We're sure that someone as brilliant as you will easily understand this technique!)

21. Glittering generalities. This is the use of so-called "virtue words" such as civilization, democracy, freedom, patriotism, motherhood, fatherhood, science, health, beauty, and love. Persuaders use these words in the hope that we will approve and accept their statements without examining the evidence. They hope that few people will

ask whether it's appropriate to invoke these concepts, while even fewer will ask what these concepts really mean.

22. Name-calling. This technique links a person or idea to a negative symbol (liar, creep, gossip, etc.). It's the opposite of *Glittering generalities*. Persuaders use *Name-calling* to make us reject the person or the idea on the basis of the negative symbol, instead of looking at the available evidence. A subtler version of this technique is to use adjectives with negative connotations (extreme, passive, lazy, pushy, etc.) Ask yourself: Leaving out the name-calling, what are the merits of the idea itself?

23. New. We love new things and new ideas, because we tend to believe they're better than old things and old ideas. That's because the dominant culture in the United States (and many other countries) places great faith in technology and progress. But sometimes, new products and new ideas lead to new and more difficult problems.

24. Nostalgia. This is the opposite of the *New* technique. Many advertisers invoke a time when life was simpler and quality was supposedly better ("like Mom used to make"). Politicians promise to bring back the "good old days" and restore "tradition." But whose traditions are being restored? Who did they benefit, and who did they harm? This technique works because people tend to forget the bad parts of the past, and remember the good.

25. Rhetorical questions. These are questions designed to get us to agree with the speaker. They are set up so that the "correct" answer is obvious. ("Do you want to get out of debt?" "Do you want quick relief from headache pain?" and "Should we leave our nation vulnerable to terrorist attacks?" are all rhetorical questions.) *Rhetorical questions* are used to build trust and alignment before the sales pitch.

26. Scientific evidence. This is a particular application of the *Expert* technique. It uses the paraphernalia of science (charts, graphs, statistics, lab coats, etc.) to "prove" something. It often works because many people trust science and scientists. It's important to look closely at the "evidence," however, because it can be misleading.

27. Simple solution. Life is complicated. People are complex. Problems often have many causes, and they're not easy to solve. These realities create anxiety for many of us. Persuaders offer relief by ignoring complexity and proposing a *Simple solution.* Politicians claim one policy change (lower taxes, a new law, a government program) will solve big social problems. Advertisers take this strategy even further, suggesting that a deodorant, a car, or a brand of beer will make you beautiful, popular and successful.

28. Slippery slope. This technique combines *Extrapolation* and *Fear*. Instead of predicting a positive future, it warns against a negative outcome. It argues against an idea by claiming it's just the first step down a "slippery slope" toward something the target audience opposes. ("If we let them ban smoking in restaurants because it's

unhealthy, eventually they'll ban fast food, too." This argument ignores the merits of banning smoking in restaurants.) The *Slippery slope* technique is commonly used in political debate, because it's easy to claim that a small step will lead to a result most people won't like, even though small steps can lead in many directions.

29. Symbols. Symbols are words or images that bring to mind some larger concept, usually one with strong emotional content, such as home, family, nation, religion, gender, or lifestyle. Persuaders use the power and intensity of *symbols* to make their case. But symbols can have different meanings for different people. Hummer SUVs are status symbols for some people, while to others they are symbols of environmental irresponsibility.

Advanced persuasion techniques

30. Ad hominem. Latin for "against the man," the *ad hominem* technique responds to an argument by attacking the opponent instead of addressing the argument itself. It's also called "attacking the messenger." It works on the belief that if there's something wrong or objectionable about the messenger, the message must also be wrong.

31. Analogy. An analogy compares one situation with another. A good analogy, where the situations are reasonably similar, can aid decision-making. A weak analogy may not be persuasive, unless it uses emotionally-charged images that obscure the illogical or unfair comparison.

32. Card stacking. No one can tell the whole story; we all tell part of the story. *Card stacking*, however, deliberately provides a false context to give a misleading impression. It "stacks the deck," selecting only favorable evidence to lead the audience to the desired conclusion.

33. Cause vs. Correlation. While understanding true causes and true effects is important, persuaders can fool us by intentionally confusing correlation with cause. For example: Babies drink milk. Babies cry. Therefore, drinking milk makes babies cry.

34. Denial. This technique is used to escape responsibility for something that is unpopular or controversial. It can be either direct or indirect. A politician who says, "I won't bring up my opponent's marital problems," has just brought up the issue without sounding mean.

35. Diversion. This technique diverts our attention from a problem or issue by raising a separate issue, usually one where the persuader has a better chance of convincing us. *Diversion* is often used to hide the part of the story not being told. It is also known as a "red herring."

36. Group dynamics. We are greatly influenced by what other people think and do. We can get carried away by the potent atmosphere of live audiences, rallies, or other gatherings. *Group dynamics* is a more intense version of the *Majority belief* and *Bandwagon* techniques.

37. Majority belief. This technique is similar to the *Bandwagon* technique. It works on the assumption that if most people believe something, it must be true. That's why polls and survey results are so often used to back up an argument, even though pollsters will admit that responses vary widely depending on how one asks the question.

38. Scapegoating. Extremely powerful and very common in political speech, *Scapegoating* blames a problem on one person, group, race, religion, etc. Some people, for example, claim that undocumented ("illegal") immigrants are the main cause of unemployment in the United States, even though unemployment is a complex problem with many causes. *Scapegoating* is a particularly dangerous form of the *Simple solution* technique.

39. Straw man. This technique builds up an illogical or deliberately damaged idea and presents it as something that one's opponent supports or represents. Knocking down the "straw man" is easier than confronting the opponent directly.

40. Timing. Sometimes a media message is persuasive not because of what it says, but because of when it's delivered. This can be as simple as placing ads for flowers and candy just before Valentine's Day, or delivering a political speech right after a major news event. Sophisticated ad campaigns commonly roll out carefully-timed phases to grab our attention, stimulate desire, and generate a response.

Deconstructing Media Messages

All media messages – TV shows, newspapers, movies, advertisements, etc. – are made or constructed by people. One of the most important media literacy skills is deconstruction – closely examining and "taking apart" media messages to understand how they work.

Deconstructing a media message can help us understand who created the message, and who is intended to receive it. It can reveal how the media maker put together the message using words, images, sounds, design, and other elements. It can expose the point of view of media makers, their values, and their biases. It can also uncover hidden meanings – intended or unintended.

There is no one "correct" way to deconstruct a media message – each of us interprets media differently, based on our own knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and values. Just be prepared to explain your interpretation.

Key concepts for deconstructing media

- **Source.** All media messages are created. The creator could be an individual writer, photographer or blogger. In the case of a Hollywood movie, the scriptwriter, director,

producer, and movie studio all play a role in creating the message. Ads are usually put together by ad agencies, but the "creator" is really the client – the company or organization that's paying for the ad. The key point is: Whose message is this? Who has control over the content?

- **Audience.** Media messages are intended to reach audiences. Some – like primetime TV shows - are designed to reach millions of people. Others – like a letter or email – may be intended only for one person. Most media messages are designed to reach specific groups of people – defined by age, gender, class, interests, and other factors – called the "target audience."
- **Text.** We often use the word "text" to mean "written words." But in media literacy, "text" has a very different meaning. The text of any piece of media is what you actually see and/or hear. It can include written or spoken words, pictures, graphics, moving images, sounds, and the arrangement or sequence of all of these elements. Sometimes the text is called the "story" or "manifest text." For most of us, the text of a piece of media is always the same.
- **Subtext.** The "subtext" is an individual interpretation of a media message. It is sometimes called the "latent text." The subtext is not actually heard or seen; it is the meaning we create from the text in our own minds. While media makers often create texts that suggest certain subtexts, each person creates their own subtext (interpretation) based on their previous experiences, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and values. Thus, two people interpreting the same text can produce two very different subtexts.
- **Persuasion techniques.** Media messages use a number of techniques to try to persuade us to believe or do something. If we can spot the techniques being used, we're less likely to be persuaded, and more likely to think for ourselves. See the Language of Persuasion handout for a list of persuasion techniques and definitions.
- **Point of view.** No one tells the whole story. Everyone tells part of the story from their point of view. Deconstructing a media message can expose the values and biases of the media maker, and uncover powerful ideological and value messages.

Deconstruction questions

You can use the following questions to quickly deconstruct any media message. Use the basic deconstruction questions with beginners or younger learners, or when you only have a short amount of time. Use the intermediate or advanced deconstruction questions with other groups or when you have more time.

Basic deconstruction questions

1. Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?
2. Who is the "target audience"? What are the clues (words, images, sounds, etc.)?
3. What "tools of persuasion" are used?
4. What part of the story is not being told?

Intermediate deconstruction questions

1. Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?
2. Who is the “target audience”? What is their age, ethnicity, class, profession, interests, etc.? What words, images or sounds suggest this?
3. What is the “text” of the message? (What we actually see and/or hear: written or spoken words, photos, drawings, logos, design, music, sounds, etc.)
4. What is the “subtext” of the message? (What do you think is the hidden or unstated meaning?)
5. What “tools of persuasion” are used?
6. What positive messages are presented? What negative messages are presented?
7. What part of the story is not being told?

Advanced deconstruction questions

1. Whose message is this? Who created or paid for it? Why?
2. Who is the “target audience”? What is their age, ethnicity, class, profession, interests, etc.? What words, images or sounds suggest this?
3. What is the “text” of the message? (What we actually see and/or hear: written or spoken words, photos, drawings, logos, design, music, sounds, etc.)
4. What is the “subtext” of the message? (What do you think is the hidden or unstated meaning?)
5. What kind of lifestyle is presented?
6. What values are expressed?
7. What “tools of persuasion” are used?
8. What positive messages are presented? What negative messages are presented?
9. What groups of people does this message empower? What groups does it disempower? How does this serve the media maker's interests?
10. What part of the story is not being told? How and where could you get more information about the untold stories?

Looking Beyond the Frame

The ability to analyze and evaluate media messages is an essential first step in becoming media literate. Deconstructing individual media examples, identifying the persuasion techniques used, and applying the media literacy concepts discussed earlier in this section are important skills that can lead us to a deeper understanding of the media messages that bombard us every day.

But this is just the beginning. True media literacy requires “looking beyond the frame” of the media message – the individual TV commercial, news story or website, for example – to examine its *context*. This involves four interrelated concepts and skill sets:

1. Media messages reflect the social, political, economic, and technological environment of the media system in which they are created. They either reinforce that environment -– by perpetuating stereotypes, for example -- or they challenge it. For example, big-budget Hollywood blockbusters are produced by media conglomerates seeking to maximize short-term profits. They often rely on familiar character types, storylines, and genres because old formulas create a safer investment. In contrast, films made by independent filmmakers -- particularly those with little access to money and power -- are often more original, covering subject matter and featuring characters we haven't seen before. Instead of appealing to the lowest common denominator, independent films often challenge audiences' assumptions and beliefs. Looking beyond the frame to consider the context of both kinds of films enriches one's understanding of our media culture. This involves *deconstructing our media system* to examine issues of media ownership, power and control, and to recognize how these issues influence media content.

2. Examining the relationship between media and society raises the issue of *media justice*. Our media system produces a lot of negative, demeaning imagery. It privileges some people and some perspectives, and ignores or silences others. It renders entire groups of people invisible. The dominant media system – consisting almost entirely of private corporations producing and distributing media for profit – provides too little funding and too few outlets for people without money, privilege and power to tell their stories. The media system is unjust, and it perpetuates and strengthens injustice throughout society. The media justice movement works to create a fairer and more just media system that serves everyone, particularly communities that have been historically underrepresented and misrepresented in the mainstream media, including indigenous communities, people of color, the LGBTQI community, people with disabilities, working class people, and others. The media justice movement believes that communication is a human right and that media should belong to the people.

3. Just as *literacy* is the ability both to read and write, *media literacy* involves both understanding media messages and *creating* media. We all create media. We write notes and send email. We draw and doodle. Some of us play and compose music. Some take photos or make videos. Many people blog and use social-networking websites. High-tech or low-tech, our own media creations contribute to the media landscape. Learning how to express oneself in a variety of media is an important part of being media literate.

4. Media literate individuals are active participants in our media culture. While many people analyze and criticize media messages, and others focus on creating their own media, more and more people are also becoming media activists. They are changing the way they use media, challenging media messages and media institutions, supporting independent media, and working for media justice and media reform. Since media create so much of our culture, any social change will require significant change in our media environment, in media policies and practices, and in media institutions. Becoming an active agent for change in our media culture is a natural result of being media literate.

Media Literacy Project

The Media Literacy Project, founded in 1993, cultivates critical thinking and activism.

We are committed to building a healthy world through media justice. As a nationally recognized leader in media literacy resources, trainings, and education, MLP delivers dynamic multimedia presentations at conferences, workshops and classrooms across the country. Our media literacy curricula and action guides are used in countless classrooms and communities and our training programs have empowered thousands of people to be advocates and activists for media justice.

Our organizing campaigns such as Siembra la palabra digna, and our role as an Anchor Organization for the Media Action Grassroots Network (MAG-Net) center communities of color, poor communities, rural communities, and immigrant communities in the creation of local, regional, and national media policy.

NOTE: All sample essays in here are formatted in APA. To see that, check them out on the Essay 3 page of kelli•ninja

Beamers or Babies: Phallex--Advertisement or Confusion?

Christian Davis

We all know that advertisement is the best method to sell or introduce any product to the market, but it is also clear that some companies are also selling certain values to their customers. Sometimes the way advertisement is used can lead to other subjects other than what is being advertised. Phallex condoms is a perfect example of this type of advertising in parody form. Instead of promoting that the use of this brand of condoms will prevent Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD) or unwanted pregnancies, it's stating that the use of these condoms will save people from a poor financial state. In "Jesus Is a Brand of Jeans," Kilbourne (2006) says, "Advertising creates a world view that is based upon cynicism, dissatisfaction and craving. Advertisers aren't evil. They are just doing their job, which is to sell a product; but the consequences, usually unintended, are often destructive" (Substitute stories section). This commercial lives up to that claim. The integrity of young people and the values of men are being stepped on, and through this advertisement, the message that material things are more valuable than family, and that men are more interested in material things than family is being sold.

This Phallex (2006) advertisement is set in a nightclub, which is used to make viewers identify themselves with their typical night out. Obviously, this commercial is trying to get young people's attention. Attractive-looking females and handsome-looking men are used to identify the single lifestyle. Throughout the commercial, there are young people flirting and meeting each other. In the background, there's a female humming along with the music. As the main character in the ad goes introduces Phallex condoms, he states that he's not scared of getting STDs but he is petrified of obtaining LFDs (Life-term Financial Deprivation). Then he explains all the things he could buy with the money he would use to pay child support if he had a child. For example, he could have a new BMW every two years or a very luxurious home. At the end of the commercial, a young attractive female approaches him and asks him if he is ready. He grabs his condom and replies, "Always." The ad ends with a printed statement saying, "Putting a protective layer between you and poverty."

Saying that LFDs are more of a serious issue than STDs creates a confusing message. Young adults have already been thought of as immature, irresponsible, and thoughtless. In reality, young adults, for the most part, are very concerned about getting sexually transmitted diseases, and as a rule are responsible. This advertisement contributes to the image of young people being shallow and only focused on going out to party. Additionally, viewers are given the idea that clubs are only places for young people to meet and have sex with perfect strangers. For the most part, nightclubs are not necessarily that way. Many people go to nightclubs with friends and partners to dance, socialize, and have fun. Often they do not have sex on their minds. Playing on

a simplistic stereotype of young people contributes to a larger view of how young adults are seen in society.

More disconcerting, however, are the myths about men that this advertisement perpetuates. In this advertisement, having a child is being used as the cause of financial burden in the young community. The commercial implies that for most men, their main concern while having sex with a female is to make sure not to get her pregnant because of the financial burden it may cause. In addition, when the man in the ad gives examples of all the things he could be buying with the child support money; it assumes that men now are more materialistic than emotional. It suggests that men would rather have occasional sex without any type of responsibility. It assumes that for men today it's more important to have a nice new BMW in their driveway every two years than to have a child; moreover, it promotes the idea that the status symbols are more valuable than children are. While advocating use of condoms to prevent pregnancy is not outside of what any condom manufacturer should be doing, by focusing on the value of material things, and promoting the idea of men as materialistic, the ad diminishes men who actually take care of their responsibilities without thinking of it as a financial burden, and those men who do value having a family. By default, it sends the message that women are the ones who want children, not men, furthering the stereotype that men are not family-oriented and that women only think of having babies and trapping men into paying child support.

The ad could be construed as advocating careful choice in childbearing, and that is a noble cause, but instead, the ad points toward a message that being a father is not as valuable as having a nice car or home. It focuses on material wealth, and by doing so places human life in a position far below those markers of wealth. Phallex sells the myth that possessions are more important than consideration for a partner, or family.

Young people fight against a number of negative stereotypes these days. The idea that they are irresponsible is one of the most prevalent, followed closely by the idea that they are only concerned with partying and having fun. Furthermore, men are cast as uncaring and selfish throughout the media. The examples of this in the Phallex ad, parody those images, and in doing so make very relevant points: our ideas of young people, and young men specifically, are views that disrespect their integrity and values. In *"*The Idols of the Marketplace*,"* Kavanaugh (1986) writes, "If we ask ourselves what values we would like to see illuminating the lives of our children, students, parishioners and co-religionists, I think that designer jeans would fall pretty far down the list." After a close analysis of this advertisement, it's easy to see that Phallex condoms would fall pretty far down the list as well.

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Fat Food Fast

Luisa Ibarra

Advertising is one of the most significant marketing tools that companies use to sell their products to the average consumer. Most of us know that many advertisements have hidden messages that stimulate our brains and target a certain senses and groups of individuals, and we all know that commercials and advertising are a big part of our everyday lives. We are bombarded with advertising daily, whether it is newspapers, magazines, on a drive to work, or when we sit down and relax in front of the television. We may not realize it, but this daily dose of product bombardment through advertising affects the way we live, the clothes we wear, the car we drive, and most of all the food we eat. The average family in the United States experiences a much busier and hectic lifestyle than that of their parents due to the economy, an increased desire to have more in our life for our family and children, and a push to attend to fitness and wellness. A close examination of three advertisements by the Burger King Corporation illustrates how Burger King appeals to those circumstances and desires to appeal to consumers.

The combination of the three advertisements promoting fast food is needed to accurately display the image of the fast food experience. In the first advertisement, we see the typical fast food restaurant displayed with customers visibly waiting for service to satisfy their hunger. Although this could be any fast food storefront, the subject here is Burger King. The 2009 ad is attractive and pleasing to the eye with its bright colors in the restaurant. The bright colors of red and yellow are used to signify the brand. In addition, in the background above the Burger King sign, we see the words “on platform 13” with an arrow clearly showing we are in an area of transportation where people are on the move and in a hurry to get somewhere (Burger King, 2009). This relates to the idea that our lives have become busier and more involved when it comes to family, food, convenience, and speed. By setting this ad here, Burger King implicitly sends the message that its products are accessible despite our busy lifestyles.

The second advertisement of the three is set in a typical Burger King (1974) restaurant where we see an average family enjoying a meal. The advertisement gets our attention and targets our sense of family by showing us how happy this family is sharing a meal together in a fast food restaurant. Family is often used in fast food advertisements to entice the consumers to come and share the experience of a family meal of good food, fast. For the mother in this family this ad represents an escape from the kitchen at home. Fowles (1998) states in this excerpt from *Common Culture* that “Many advertisers like appealing to the need for escape because the sensation of pleasure often accompanies escape, and what nice emotional nimbus could there be for a product” (11 Escape section). When we see an advertisement for a fast food product like Burger King’s hamburger, we find that it appeals to our senses. This is done not only through taste and sight but also to our emotions for leaving a hot kitchen and dishes behind. This is a perfect example what Fowles means when he says that advertisers like to appeal to our feeling of escape.

In the third advertisement in this combination of ads is the picture of a mouthwatering

large hamburger at Burger King. This ad simply shows a Burger King Whopper being put together while the song “You’re Still the One,” plays in the background (Burger King 1997). Fowels (1998) notes that advertising is geared to satisfy us and that “the art of Photographing food and drink is so advanced sometimes these temptations are wondrously caught in the camera’s lens” (15 Physiological needs section). Although this advertisement is successful in reaching the consumer, it also promotes an unhealthy look at food consumption due to the enormous portion size.

In looking at the advertisement again of the ¼ pound hamburger, consumers see it as food that consists of both meat and vegetables, and that gives it the appearance of a healthy food. However, what we actually see can be very deceiving when it comes to this particular hamburger. The fact that we have an obvious display of vegetables in the hamburger such as lettuce, tomato, and onion tends to make us feel that we are eating healthier. The problem with the fast food hamburger shown in this advertisement is not the hamburger itself, but is that we have meat (two patties equal to ¼ pound of meat) which is well over the recommended amount of meat eaten in one meal according to the famous food pyramids suggest by most health organizations. We also have on the very same hamburger the addition of bacon (usually three slices), cheese, and a condiment of mayonnaise all of which contain large amounts of fats. In addition to the food preparation of all the above mentions items consist
more to the over-all calories contained in just one h

Notice how Luisa starts to make this more about the nutrition than the analysis of the ads? Make sure you don't make that classic mistake. (And just so you know, Luisa gave me permission to share this with you so you could see how easy it is to get off topic. This is an earlier draft. In her final one, she focused more on the ad, getting rid of a lot of these two paragraphs.)

This combination of fast food advertising definitely
family and convenience, but also promotes a diet o
healthy diet. The larger portions advertised by most
option to increase the size of the meal for a small in
beyond the average caloric intake for one individua
diet of these types of foods on a regular basis that
way too much fat content in the average Americans daily diet, it is no wonder why obesity is on the rise in the United States. Our continued relationship with fast food that is often considered unhealthful is contributing to the rise of obesity in the United States. The *Healia Health Guide* (2009) article entitled “What is Obesity?” noted that “obesity and being overweight are extremely common in the United States,” and that “one third of American adults are obese and another third are overweight; that means that two out of every three adults is either obese or overweight!”

Fast food advertising where the food is photographed to entice consumers to view the food as convenient, family friendly and healthy continues to contribute to the problem. The appeal of convenience and escape, which the advertisements clearly represent, create appealing views for all members of the family. As customers, we are encouraged to think that the food is healthy by its appearance when we can see the daily food groups of grain, meat, dairy, and vegetables. It may be fast food but that does not mean that it is healthy food or that the portions are in line with what doctors recommend for the daily nutritional requirements for a meal. Its contributions to the health problems of the country surely don’t make it convenient, and its message of escape does not guarantee quality time with the family. Instead of being "simply false or superstitious

ideas," Davis (1992), points out that these kinds of myths and images "are the ideas and stories that motivate daily behavior," and Burger King plays into those, creating myths about family, health and escape in the setting of our fast-paced lives (The New Myths section).

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A Look between the Lines:
The Appearance of Women in Advertising

Jim Paxon

With the invention of television comes advertising. Advertising uses a great many tools to sell their products and ideas. Over the years, advertising has had to change with political and economic changes and so they do not offend any of America's many diverse groups. This has not been so much a change of values, as it has been a change of not being blatant with sociological ideas. Women have long been viewed as the lesser sex. From the 1960s to present, women's rights have evolved, and advertisers had to present material in a new way as the years progressed. They could not show women as the lesser sex, but the connotations are still present. With the way advertisers show women in the present, viewers have to look harder to see that advertisers still show women as the lesser sex. The sociological evolution of women has changed, but advertising has not changed with it. The movement from overt sexism to more veiled sexism becomes clear in a comparison of commercials over the last fifty years.

A good example of overt sexism is the Gold Metal Flour ad called "Career Girl." This commercial shows an independent woman in the workplace. It starts with an apparently single woman walking to work while an announcer is talking about how a woman in today's workforce is strong and has to put up with everyday life. They show her taking the subway and having to learn what any man would know. The woman learns everything from the proper way to read a paper on the subway to enjoying the crude coffee of the workplace. They show her as a productive member of the workforce able to do the tasks asked of her. When her workday is over, the advertisement shows the woman going home and unlocking the door to her small apartment. The announcer states, "But this you do hold on to; every woman needs to be herself sometimes. Your answer is baking" (1962). It continues to show her putting on her apron, and the announcer says that to be happy you must "bake and bake often." The advertisement is sexist in the way it shows the women being a productive member of society, but not being happy until she can come home and cook. Even though she is single and has no one to cook for, she must cook to be considered to be a complete person. Fowels (1998) states that advertising has to show that people "[o]vercome obstacles and attain a high standard" (p. 8). This advertisement shows the woman overcoming work and attaining a higher standard by cooking. The sexist views are very prominent in this advertisement. In short, it states those women are accepted into the workforce and can be competent, but women still have to be the gender that cooks and cleans, and if women do not enjoy cooking and taking the time to do the woman's duties at home they can never be a well-rounded people.

In an advertisement created about thirty years later, "Oldsmobile Anti-Sexism Commercial (1995)," we see a commercial with a woman who is going undercover "to see if car salesmen treat women worse than men." The commercial is set in an investigative reporting style. The woman who is a news reporter for an unnamed agency goes in as herself, Sally. She goes into a car dealership and talks to a car salesman and gets the price of a vehicle. The reporter is impressed that the car salesman did not ask her where her husband is. She later goes in dressed as a man, Sal. She was "shocked" to find that Sal got the same price on the vehicle as Sally. The advertisement ends with Sal going into the women's restroom and the salesman also being shocked (Oldsmobile, 1996). This advertisement shows that if women want equal rights, they have to go to an Oldsmobile dealer to accomplish this. This is more like reverse psychology than being a sexist commercial. It plays on the idea that society is still very sexist, but this car

company is new and progressive. They will give everyone a fair price, even a woman. Throughout the progression of TV, audience members start to see the ideas change. Although the idea of women still not being treated as equals is still evident.

The third advertisement, "SNOWPOCALYPSE | Dodge AWD | Commercial (2011)," starts off with a camera shot of a street. Cars are slowly driving by, and there are palm trees in the background, creating the scene and sensation of a warm climate. Strangely, everyone is wearing coats. The camera zooms in on a man talking on a cell phone wearing a heavy overcoat. The man in the overcoat slowly turns around and looks into the sky. Looking up, the man sees a light dusting of snowflakes falling to the earth. The camera zooms in on the man's face where viewers see the calmness turn into an over-exaggerated panic. This is where all hell breaks loose; panic is in the streets. Once calm and docile, people are now running around like looters. Men are stealing jackets and supplies from the local hardware store, and old women are dumping canned goods into a shopping cart. As the snow begins to fall heavier, cars begin to spin out of control. They are being driven by men. Then men frantically get out of the cars and run away unable to handle the situation. It looks like a scene from an apocalypse movie. Then a car that stands alone drives by with no sense of urgency. As the camera focuses on the driver of this car, we see a woman in total control with not a care in the world, and looking on at the strange circumstances unfolding in front of the audience. This shows the audience that anyone can be a competent driver in bad weather, even women, if they own a Dodge AWD (Dodge, 2011). Although subtle, viewers can see how the advertisement company views women. Men are unable to handle any of the conditions that make themselves evident in the story line. The woman mentioned, drives the vehicle without a care in the world. This is much more subtle than the first advertisement, but still shows how advertisers think. The roads are not fit for driving, but even women who are historically bad drivers can surpass men, if only they have a Dodge AWD. Owning a Dodge AWD will make women superior drivers to men.

These suggestive commercials show the way that society often sees women. Equal rights for women have progressed greatly from the 1960s; although restrained, the way advertisers show women still implies they think women are still the lesser sex, and careful viewers can see the subtle progression of that idea all over the media. Davis (1992) states, "[W]e consciously transcend the Age of Image Communication and stop blindly accepting the myths of the image culture" (So Why Does this Matter section). As a society, we have to be increasingly vigilant with the ideas brought into our homes. It is no longer the 1960s; viewers need to realize that the ideas of advertisers are not the ones society would like to call their own and recognize the messages written between the lines. These subtle forms of stereotyping go beyond gender and are often so indirect that we don't notice them consciously; however, with multiple streams of media creating images of what people should be like based on gender, race, ethnicity, and any other kind of difference, we are all susceptible to falling into those roles, but more dangerously, dealing with others based on the stereotypes we've subconsciously taken in.

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*Captive: How the Ad Industry Pins Us Down

Dinyar Godrej

2 September 2006
New Internationalist Magazine
(https://newint.org/features/2006/09/01/keynote/)

Buddhism and Hinduism recommend it. A retreat from clamour, a wondrous detachment that allows the material world to float up, like a sloughed-off skin, for one's dispassionate consideration. Whether they offer useful advice on re-engaging after this revelation, I don't know. The first astronauts saw a floating world, too. It provoked suitably joined-up thoughts about its (and our) fragility and essential unity.
But there are other worlds. And the one that elbows itself to the front of our attention's queue painstakingly creates surface and whips up froth. It's the one that the 125 residents of Clark, Texas, signed up to in 2005 when they changed the name of their township to Dish in return for a decade's free cable TV from the DISH Network. Hey, what's in a name except a wacky corporate PR opportunity, right?

The bubbly, dazzling world of which Dish has become an emblem shows little sign of floating up for our inspection. If we inspect it nonetheless, it reveals itself to be firmly riveted down by that old culprit – disproportionate corporate power.

Advertising is a bit of a compulsive liar. In the early days it was quite bare-faced – the beverage giant, Dewar's, claiming in the 1930s that their Scotch whiskey repelled colds and flu; cigarette brands claiming that they soothed the throat and helped asthma. Some of this still goes on. Quack cures are advertised in numerous Majority World countries. The half of all Mexican citizens who are overweight are pummelled daily on TV by products that promise to melt 10 centimetres off the waistline in two hours.

Repeat after me

Nowadays, regulatory bodies will see off many of the more obviously fraudulent claims.
But advertising is involved in soul fraud instead. If that sounds a bit deep, just stay with me a while.

Advertising today has little to do with introducing a new product or describing an existing one's virtues. It has everything to do with images, dreams and emotions; stuff we are evolutionarily programmed to engage with but which is, almost without exception in the ad biz, fake. Imagine how much attention you would pay if there were just text and no images. When ads for Sprite (owned by Coca-Cola) proclaimed: 'Image is nothing, thirst is everything', they were reassuring people that they were right to be distrustful, while building up images of honesty and straight talk, using professional basketball players to push the product. Sprite jumped several notches up the soft-drink rankings; moolah was minted. Image was everything, even if it was purporting to be an anti-image. Amid the visual clutter, advertising – the chief agent of the mess – has to jump out at us. It must trigger off associations, however tangential, that will keep our attention. Endless repetition through media channels should build up a handy cloud of associations. According to one industry executive: 'In the context of most

advertising, particularly passively consumed media like television and cinema, learning is incidental, not deliberate. This is why people tell you they are not influenced by advertising. They are not actively trying to take anything away from the experience, and therefore are not influenced at that time; but the effects will show up later, long after a particular viewing experience is forgotten.' ^ 1 ^

Much effort is expended upon trying to sink boreholes into the vast iceberg of the subconscious mind, probably because the products being flogged are in reality just variations on the same old same old. A recent buzzword is 'neuromarketing'. Neuroscientists and psychiatrists are searching for the buy-button in the brain. This involves putting subjects into brain-scanning machinery and pitching concepts and images at them to see which ones make the lights flash. In one experiment, subjects were made to blind-taste Pepsi and Coke. Pepsi scored higher in terms of response in the ventral putamen, the part of the brain associated with feelings of reward – ie, most thought Pepsi tasted better. But when the subjects were informed which drink was Coke before they tried it, their medial prefrontal cortexes lit up. This is an area of the brain believed to control cognition. Most now said they preferred Coke. So just the name had prompted memories and brand nostalgia which influenced the taste of the stuff. ^ 2 ^ One might question the validity of using expensive hospital equipment and highly trained medical professionals to explain choices of fizzy drinks with no nutritional value whatsoever – but that would be to get a bit real.

The good news is that all this dubious effort is just as likely to fail as it is to succeed. If an ad can latch on to the emotion of a winning goal in a football match or the tears and triumphs of Pop Idol, then there's a good chance it will do the trick. Much else is trial and error. Focus groups assembled to pretest the vibe are notoriously unreliable as they can be suggestible and become dominated by loudmouths.

Anxieties of influence

One might well ask: so what? So what if silly money (for an indication of just how much, see column below) pushes the usual goods/junk, if I can still make an informed choice about what I buy?

Well, maybe... But how would you react if all this were seeping into the very pores of the culture you're part of – and changing it? Mass advertising is about brands with the most money behind them pushing to the top. Smaller companies with less of this fluff-muscle don't always survive.

More perniciously, corporate giants try every trick in the book to control our media channels. Much of the mainstream media exists to sell audiences to advertisers. Newspapers aren't profitable based on sales alone. The missing factor is ad money. It's their lifeblood. Teen magazines (especially those aimed at girls) are little more than catalogues for products – and that's the content. The profile of the chubby hero who saved a life is usually tucked away at the end. Here's what an agency representing Coca-Cola demanded in a letter to magazines: 'We believe that positive and upbeat editorial provides a compatible environment in which to communicate the brand's message... We consider the following subjects to be inappropriate and require that our ads are not placed adjacent to articles discussing the following issues: Hard News; Sex related issues; Drugs (Prescription or Illegal); Medicine (eg chronic illnesses such

as cancer, diabetes, AIDS, etc); Health (eg mental or physical conditions); Negative Diet Information (eg bulimia, anorexia, quick weight loss, etc); Food; Political issues; Environmental issues; Articles containing vulgar language; Religion.' ^ 3 ^ So, not much chance of a mention of the intimidation of union workers in Coke's Colombian plant, or of the charges of water pollution in India, then (read more at).

If anyone still thought they were watching 'the news' on CNN, anchor Jack Cafferty's on-air views might disabuse them: 'We are not here as a public service. We're here to make money. We sell advertising, and we do it on the premise that people are going to watch. If you don't cover the miners because you want to do a story about a debt crisis in Brazil at the time everybody else is covering the miners, then Citibank calls up and says, "You know what? We're not renewing the commercial contract." I mean, it's a business.' ^ 4 ^ In the US, one study found that 40 per cent of the 'news' content of a typical newspaper originated in press releases, story memos and suggestions from PR companies.

Hungry for cool

More subtle is the cultural shift wrought in the media – light, non-political television programming that contributes to a 'buying mood'; magazines filled with little nuggets of 'instant gratification'; serious newspapers that insert lengthy travel and fashion sections for no obvious reason. So much happiness, so unbearable. Advertising consistently portrays 'lifestyles' that are beyond the reach of all but the wealthy. This is somehow viewed as 'apolitical'. Yet charities' ads calling for dropping Southern debt or opposing cruelty to animals often fall foul of regulators or media ad-sales teams for being 'too political'.

As a child I loved the ads before the movie. They were zippy and bright. I found the varied angles they took before the 'Ta-dahhh!' moment when the product was plugged ingenious. I still find the creative energy that goes into them intriguing, but feel tired by their consistently conservative values and know better about the social, economic and environmental issues behind the products they push. I also feel fed up by the sheer volume of the glitzy deluge. Corporate advertisers know this fed up feeling all too well and have responded with marketing moves that look less like traditional advertising but seep more than ever into our lives. The upshot is that everything gets branded, logo-ed or sponsored. Supermarkets that shaft farmers sponsor children's play areas and school computers. Children are employed to hand out freebies to other kids and talk them up ('peer marketing'). Conspicuous charity abounds, trying to make the brand look more benign – for example, Ronald McDonald House offers accommodation to families with sick children. Product placement sneaks into movies, TV shows, computer games and even novels. Our email and cell phones are bombarded. Most websites would collapse without revenue from ads that get ever more lively and mysterious.

With traditional advertising showing diminishing returns, corporations get into all sorts of contortions. The apparel company Diesel ran a multimillion-dollar campaign contrasting clothing ads with scenes of hardship in North Korea; Benetton notoriously used the image of a man dying of AIDS to push its duds. Wow, just feel that edge!

Ever wondered where that urge to shop when you're feeling a bit down comes from?

A certain amount of advertising is probably unavoidable – indeed, countries that curb it often flood mental spaces with political propaganda instead. But the worldview the ad biz pushes is

so out of touch with real life that it can mess up our heads. Ever wondered where that urge to shop when you're feeling a bit down comes from? Or how our desire for social change or rebellion gets transformed into speed, sex, indulgence and living for the moment? Why is so much of our culture about dictating taste (the tyrannies of 'cool') and transforming it into want? Why are disadvantaged groups (be they dark-skinned, sexual minorities, people with disabilities, you name it) so absent from this trendy world, unless they are being fetishized by niche marketing?

With the deluge comes avoidance. Ungrateful wretches that we are, we try to block out as much as we can. TV advertising is in crisis. Ad guru Lord Saatchi thinks young people nowadays have 'continual partial attention' – the kind of brain that's constantly sifting but records little. His answer is for companies to strive for 'one-word equity' to fit this goldfish attention span – Be ^TM^, Live ^TM^, Buy ^TM^, anyone?

This dizziness is reflected in the philosophical musings of Maurice Lévy, top honcho of advertising giant Publicis: 'Consumers do not want only to be given an astonishingly wide-ranging choice. They want that choice to be renewed at intervals that are always shorter. This is the reason why we have to redefine our very notion of time. What we have to deal with is not only change, but an acceleration of change itself. Not only transformations, but the transformation of transformations: it will be a real challenge to make fidelity out of inconstancy.'^4^

He doesn't stop to ponder how his work is all about creating this blur of inconstancy. Advertising's influence is being implicated in eating, compulsive and attention-deficit disorders. In the Majority World the big brand steamroller is intent on creating Westernized aspirational cultures often at odds with local cultures. If we are to free identity from consumerism, reality checks are our strongest weapon. If struck by an ad, it's useful to measure how much of it is actually telling you something about the product and how much is image. Brands are eager that you identify with them, make them a part of your lives – deny them that privilege. Independent media (like the *NI* and, yes, this is a shameless plug) can give us all the dirt we need to chuck at corporate ad lies. Thinking before we buy, and buying nothing – especially when irrational urges prompt us to do otherwise – are bound to punch a few holes. The idea of our world and its public spaces as shared commons is becoming increasingly visible. Streets are being reclaimed by 'citizen artists' redrawing ads to reveal their subterfuges, and by social movements gathering to protest government by corporations.
There's quite a bit of ad-industry nervousness as brands come under attack and marketing tactics backfire. Could the industry one day start to tell us things we actually want to know? The distorting mirror will need to shatter first before a floating world comes into view.

Recommended reading

- Jean Kilbourne, _Can't Buy My Love_, Touchstone, New York, 1999 – social critique of what advertising does to our feelings.
- Naomi Klein, _No Logo_, Flamingo, London, 2000 – comprehensive anti-brand treatise.
- Gloria Steinem, 'Sex, Lies, and Advertising' – classic 1990 essay, available here.

- Amaranta Wright, _Ripped & Torn_, Ebury Press, London, 2006 edition – 'cool hunter' for Levi's sees the light.

Web resources:

- Feisty analysis of ad trends.
- US group Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting.
- Center for Media and Democracy on the interface between politics and advertising.

See also other websites mentioned elsewhere in this edition.

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Top global marketers
(ad spend, 2004)

	By Company	$ millions
1	Proctor & Gamble	7,922
2	General Motors	3,918
3	Unilever	3,462
4	Ford	2,798
5	L'Oréal	2,646
6	Toyota	2,608
7	Time Warner	2,495
8	DaimlerChrysler	2,371
9	Johnson & Johnson	1,922
10	Nestlé	1,899
11	Walt Disney	1,895
12	Nissan	1,812
13	Altria Group	1,645
14	Honda	1,642
15	Coca-Cola	1,507
16	Sony	1,480
17	Volkswagen	1,455
18	McDonald's	1,442
19	Pfizer	1,349

20	GlaxoSmithKline	1,303

	By Country	$ billions
1	US	141.0
2	Japan	38.0
3	Britain	18.4
4	Germany	18.3
5	France	11.1
6	Italy	9.4
7	China	9.0
8	Spain	6.6
9	South Korea	6.4
10	Canada	6.3
11	Australia	5.9

Total official world aid in 2004 amounted to $79 billion.
Total world expenditure on advertising in 2005 was $570 billion. In 1970 it had been $140 billion.
Sources: *Advertising Age*, The Worldwatch Institute, Vital Signs 2006-2007.

*How Advertising Manipulates Your Choices and Spending Habits

(and What to Do About It)

Adam Dachis

July 25, 2011
From: https://lifehacker.com/how-advertising-manipulates-your-choices-and-spending-h-30812671

Advertisements aren't inherently bad, but many use manipulative tactics that influence in ways we don't even realize. Despite how much you think you ignore them, and how little you may believe they affect you, that's not necessarily the case. Here's a look at how manipulative ads work, the problems they cause, and what you can do to avoid these negative consequences.

You see ads every day, whether it's on a web page, before a movie, or in the middle of a TV show, and it's easy to say "they're just ads" because, at worst, they feel like a nuisance or interruption. A lot of people have difficulty accepting the idea that ads are manipulative because we want to believe we're in complete control of our choices. While the concept of advertising isn't inherently problematic, we've moved on from the "Eat at Joe's" sign to far more complex and sometimes even moving, cinematic messages that are designed to create significant memories of a product. These memories are created because an ad succeeds at making us feel something—whether it's good or bad—and that emotional response can have a profound effect on how we think and the choices we make. Not all advertising is bad, but we're going to take a look at what's problematic, what isn't, and ways you can avoid the negative effects associated with so much of what you passively experience.

The Problem: Advertising Is for the Rich, Not You

Advertising exists because there's a product a company wants to sell and they want people to know about it so they can buy it. This much is obvious. Sometimes that product is a cleaning spray or a microwave oven, but often it's yet another article of clothing, a gadget, another meal out, or something else you don't necessarily need. These advertisements aren't for the average person with a small amount of spending cash, but rather they're for the rich.

Rich people don't make up a large portion of any population, but they're the ones with money to spend. They can see an ad, decide they want a product, go buy it, and it has very little effect on their wallet. The problem is that we all see the same advertising but can't necessarily afford the purchases. We all want the lifestyle of the rich, as we see it depicted in television, film, and commercials.

We Reference What We Desire

We're not so blind that we believe our studio apartments are servant-filled mansions, but we see people in similar situations on television who live in a way we couldn't afford. Take the show *Friends*, for example. Rachel and Monica shared a gigantic apartment in Manhattan despite Rachel working, for some time, as a waitress and Monica as a chef. Collectively they enjoyed a lifestyle they couldn't afford. This is

one example of many in which you'll find TV characters living outside their means with no consequences. Entertainment shows us average people living a better lifestyle than they can afford without many monetary concerns. And then we're shown advertisements, compelling us to buy the lifestyle depicted in our favorite shows. According to David M. Carter, a financial analyst and graduate of the master of applied positive psychology program, this is called referencing:

> Experts in the field call it "referencing". We reference, either intentionally or otherwise, to lifestyles represented to us (in the media or in real life) that we find attractive. We create a vision of ourselves living this idealized lifestyle, and then behave in ways that help us to realize the vision. The problem with this process is that the lifestyles most often portrayed, and ultimately referenced, are well beyond the means of all but a very small percentage of Americans. We aspire to something that the vast majority of us cannot possibly achieve. And, in this attempt to realize our aspirations, we borrow heavily, feel poorly about ourselves because we just can't seem to get there, and become addicted to a way of living that gradually and inexorably separates us from the things in life that bring us the most joy.

The Resulting Debt

We've borrowed a lot. According to American Consumer Credit Counseling, we carry over $680 billion dollars in revolving credit and over 1.7 trillion dollars in total debt. That comes out to about an $10,700 per household with only about half of individual credit card holders paying their balance in full each month. This is bad by itself, but factoring in high interest rates and the inability to afford more than the monthly payment—while the desire to spend doesn't decrease at all—this turns out to be a huge problem. It's particularly hard to get rid of debt when the desire to spend doesn't go away. It's always there because we are constantly receiving messages to want more and more things that we can't afford.

How Manipulative Advertising Works (and What to Do About It)

There are all kinds of ads, but in general they all aim to keep you from thinking and, instead, make your buying choices based on an emotional response. Here's a look at some of the tactics and what you can do to counteract them.

Don't Forget to Think

Advertising exists to tell you about a product, which can be as simple as "Brand X soap cleans your dishes" or "Restaurant Y serves food." Of course, when there's competition in the market the ads you see need to be a little more descriptive in order to set products apart. For example, a restaurant may serve a reasonably tasty, unhealthy hamburger in under a minute, but why would you choose theirs over another? Because they said so.

According to Dr. Julie Sedivy as you can't really tell the difference between a strong and weak arguments:

> A pivotal study by Ellen Langer and colleagues provides one of the earliest demonstrations [regarding the ease of persuasion]. In this experiment, students in a university library were approached by an under-cover experimenter who asked to jump ahead of them in the photocopying line and make a few copies. Sometimes, the experimenter would justify the request by saying "May I use the Xerox machine,

> because I'm in a rush?" But other times, no explanation was offered. Not surprisingly, students were more reluctant to grant the favor when the experimenter didn't bother to justify the request. But the justification didn't actually have to provide a good reason-it just needed to sound like one. So, students complied just as readily when the experimenter gave a "placebo" explanation that was utterly without content: "May I use the Xerox machine because I need to make some copies?" Apparently, just decorating the sentence with the word because was enough to sway the students.

Basically, if you're not prepared to think—and you often are not when you're watching television or reading a magazine—you'll pretty much accept any suggestion if it is offered to you. Since you're being so passive, you may not even realize it's happening. What can you do? Think. When your parents used to tell you "because I said so" you probably weren't ready to accept that answer. Don't do it subconsciously when watching an ad. Think about what the ad is saying. Play devil's advocate and consider the negative aspect of the products that definitely aren't being shown to you. It only takes a few seconds to consider that the chalupa you're seeing may or may not contain actual meat. Keep your brain active when you're looking at ads and you'll be better off.

Be Wary of Your Emotional Responses

No ad is more effective than one that makes you feel something because emotion and memory are tightly linked (more on this here). The video on the left belongs to Google and is considered to be one of the best commercials that aired during the 2010 Super Bowl. It uses search strings to tell how a young man goes to Paris, meets a women, falls in love with and marries her, and they start a family. What makes this ad so good is that it not only made many people feel good, but it also demonstrated 1) how Google works, and 2) that Google appears to be an effective way of finding any information you might need throughout your lifetime. Does it tell you whether or not Google is better than another search engine? No. Does it provide you with any potential downsides to using Google, such as whether or not the search results were actually useful? Of course not. It shows you that Google can find lots of different kinds of information and it makes you feel something to be sure you remember it. You may even remember that the scenario describe in an ad happened to you.

If you've ever purchased movie theater popcorn—which is among the unhealthiest foods you can eat (not to mention overpriced)—or chosen something pretty over something functional, you've made an emotional choice based on desire rather than thinking about it logically. This is not to say emotions are bad, but that without a balance of emotion and logic you might not always make the best choices. Emotional ads try to capitalize on that phenomenon. An effective ad gets you to buy the product, not buy the product *and* be happy with it. When you have an emotional response to an advertisement, you need to be wary of any decisions you want to make regarding the product it's selling.

The arousal of emotions passes with time, and so there are a couple of good things you can do to avoid any negative results. First, when thinking about buying something you want to identify whether your motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic. David Carter explains:

> Intrinsic motivation is represented by self-acceptance, affiliation, and community feeling. Extrinsically-motivated people, on the other hand, focus on financial gain,

their appearance, and social popularity. They generally seek acceptance by something or someone outside themselves.

If your motivation is extrinsic, chances are you want to avoid purchasing this thing you believe you want. Desire can be a powerful thing for people, and consumer addiction is a problem, so another tactic that can help is to enforce a mandatory holding pattern on your spending. Basically, the idea is that you require yourself to wait 48 hours before deciding whether or not to make a purchase. If you think you'll need help with this, find a friend who can hold on to your credit card. Make them the gatekeeper to your purchases. If you truly have an addiction to spending it's not going to go away immediately. Get someone you trust to help you out.

Watch Out For Products Indirectly Targeted at You

You want your dog to be healthy, but it's not like you're the one eating the dog food so you'd think you're more likely to make a logical choice when choosing their food. That's not necessarily the case, as ads can target you very well even if you're making a decision for somebody else.

The ad pictured here (see more) depicts two skinny dogs engaging in human-like intercourse while a fat dog watches. The tag line reads, "LIFE'S HARD when you're a FAT DOG." This ad is designed to be funny, but it's also designed for people to think about how humans judge fat people and play on their desires to lose weight. The ad isn't selling a better sex life for your dog—a dog that is likely spayed or neutered—but playing upon human concepts of sex and beauty. Sure, a fat dog is likely an unhealthy dog but where in this ad do you learn *why* the dog food is healthy? You don't, because, again, the ad isn't targeting logic—it's targeting your emotions. You don't ask whether or not the dog food is healthy because the ad is asking you if you *care* whether or not your dog is healthy. These types of ads make no real claims. They simply identify the problem and you connect the dots. *You* assume there's a connection when there may not be one at all.

So what do you do about it? You do your research. When you view an ad, it helps to ask why. Why am I reacting the way I'm reacting? Why does this product solve a particular problem? If the product interests you, the answer should too. Look for product reviews (while being aware of fakes) and other information that can help you determine if what you want to buy can actually do what you think it can do. Don't buy blindly—do your research first.

Avoid Ads Entirely

Muting or skipping ads on any medium may seem like an effective way to solve the problem, but ignorance doesn't mean the ad isn't still lodged somewhere inside your memory. While avoiding ads entirely is pretty much an impossible prospect, you can still make the effort to get as close as possible. Of course, this means making sacrifices. If you want to cut out ads from television and never, ever see them, your options aren't necessarily great. You can buy DVDs when they come out several months after the television season has ended, you can purchase content at a premium (either online or on demand through your cable provider), or you can download content via the internet (which may require a set of flexible ethics). You can't remove or block ads in a magazine or newspaper, so you'll have to start reading online and use an ad blocker.

Even with all of that, you still can't avoid billboard ads or ads you see outside of your personally cultivated ad-free zone. You're also not without the influence of reference lifestyles (as discussed earlier) unless you cut out entertainment media altogether. You simply cannot live without ads if you want to be a part of modern society, but a significant reduction is possible using the aforementioned methods.

While I, personally, do what I just described—and have for over a decade—there are plenty of reasons you shouldn't. First of all, if ad revenue is how companies are able to afford to provide entertainment, blocking or removing their ads can hurt their budget. If everyone did that, they'd have no money to produce the content you want. When you don't see ads, you'll sometimes find yourself lost in a conversation about ads and products you've never heard of. If you like watching televised sports, you don't get to watch them live (which can ruin the experience). In fact, you don't get to watch anything live and that generally means watching it the next day. Giving up ads requires patience and sacrifice. While I consider those two things to be very important skills, that's just my opinion. How you choose to approach this problem is entirely up to you. The most important thing is to remember to think, because regardless of how manipulative advertisements can be your choices are still yours and yours alone.

*Ads Don't Work That Way

by Kevin Simler

There's a meme, particularly virulent in educated circles, about how advertising works — how it sways and seduces us, coaxing us gently toward a purchase.

The meme goes something like this:

> Rather than attempting to persuade us (via our rational, analytical minds), ads prey on our *emotions*. They work by creating positive associations between the advertised product and feelings like love, happiness, safety, and sexual confidence. These associations grow and deepen over time, making us feel favorably disposed toward the product and, ultimately, more likely to buy it.

Here we have a theory — a proposed mechanism — of how ads influence consumer behavior. Let's call it **emotional inception** or just **inception**, coined after the movie of the same name where specialists try to implant ideas in other people's minds, subconsciously, by manipulating their dreams. In the case of advertising, however, *dreams* aren't the inception vector, but rather ideas and images, especially ones which convey potent emotions.

The label ("emotional inception") is my own, but the idea should be familiar enough. It's the model of how ads work made popular by *Mad Men*, and you can find similar accounts all across the web. A write-up at the Atlantic, for example — titled "Why Good Advertising Works (Even When You Think It Doesn't)" — says that

> advertising rarely succeeds through argument or calls to action. Instead, it creates positive memories and feelings that influence our behavior over time to encourage us to buy something at a later date.

"The objective [of advertising]," the article continues, "is to seed positive ideas and memories that will attract you to the brand."

Lifehacker echoes these ideas in an article intended to help readers mitigate the effect of ads. "An ad succeeds at making us feel something," it says, "and that emotional response can have a profound effect on how we think and the choices we make."

This is a decidedly *Pavlovian* account of ad efficacy. Like Pavlov's dogs, who learned to associate the ringing of a bell with subsequent food delivery, humans too can be trained to make more-or-less arbitrary associations. If Coke shows us enough images of people

beaming with joy after drinking their product, we'll come to associate Coke with happiness. Then, sometime later, those good vibes will come flooding back to us, and we'll be more likely to purchase Coke.

This meme or theory about how ads work — by emotional inception — has become so ingrained, at least in my own model of the world, that it was something I always just took on faith, without ever really thinking about it. But now that I *have* stopped to think about it, I'm shocked at how irrational it makes us out to be. It suggests that human preferences can be changed with nothing more than a few arbitrary images. Even Pavlov's dogs weren't so easily manipulated: they actually received food after the arbitrary stimulus. If ads worked the same way — if a Coke employee approached you on the street offering you a free taste, then gave you a massage or handed you $5 — well then of course you'd learn to associate Coke with happiness.

But most ads are toothless and impotent, mere ink on paper or pixels on a screen. They can't feed you, hurt you, or keep you warm at night. So if a theory (like emotional inception) says that something as flat and passive as an ad can have such a strong effect on our behavior, we should hold that theory to a pretty high burden of proof.

Social scientists have a tool that they use to reason about phenomena like this: *Homo economicus*. This is an idealized model of human behavior, a hypothetical creature (/caricature) who makes perfectly "rational" decisions, where "rational" is a well-defined game-theoretic concept meaning (roughly) self-interested and utility-maximizing. In other words, a *Homo economicus*— of which no actual instances exist, but which every real human being approximates to a greater or lesser extent — will always, to the best of its available knowledge, make the decisions which maximize expected outcomes according to its own preferences.

If we (consumers) are swayed by emotional inception, then it seems we're violating this model of economic rationality. Specifically, *H. economicus* has fixed preferences or fixed goals — in technical jargon, a fixed "utility function." These are exogenous, unalterable by anyone — not the actor him- or herself and especially not third parties. But if inception actually works on us, then in fact our preferences and goals aren't just malleable, but *easily*malleable. All an advertiser needs to do is show a pretty face next to Product X, and suddenly we're filled with desire for it.

This is an exaggeration of course. More realistically, we need to see an ad multiple times before it eventually starts to rewrite our desires. But the point still stands: external agents can, without our permission, alter the contents of our minds and send us scampering off in service of goals that are *not ours*.

I know it's popular these days to underscore just how biased and irrational we are, as human creatures — and, to be fair, our minds *are* full of quirks. But in this case, the inception theory of advertising does the human mind a disservice. It portrays us as far less rational than we actually are. We may not conform to a model of perfect economic behavior, but neither are we puppets at the mercy of every Tom, Dick, and Harry with a billboard. We aren't *that*easily manipulated.

Ads, I will argue, don't work by emotional inception.

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

Well then: how *do* they work?

Emotional inception is one (proposed) mechanism, but in fact there are many such mechanisms. And they're not mutually exclusive: a typical ad will employ a few different techniques at once — most of which are far more straightforward and above-board than emotional inception. Insofar as we respond to these other mechanisms, we're acting fully in accordance with the *Homo economicus* model of human behavior.

The guiding principle here is that these mechanisms impart legitimate, valuable information. Let's take a look at a few of them.

First, a lot of ads work simply by *raising awareness*. These ads are essentially telling customers, "FYI, product X exists. Here's how it works. It's available if you need it." Liquid Draino, for example, is a product that thrives on simple awareness, because drains don't clog all that frequently, and if you don't know what Liquid Draino is and what it does, you won't think to use it. But this mechanism is pervasive. Almost every ad works, at least in part, by informing or reminding customers about a product. And if it makes a *memorable* impression, even better.

Occasionally an ad will attempt *overt persuasion*, i.e., making an argument. It's naive to think that this is the most common or most powerful mechanism, but it does make an occasional appearance: "4/5 doctors prefer Camels" or "Verizon: America's largest 4G LTE network" and the like. Older ads were especially fond of this technique, but it seems to have fallen out of fashion when advertising hit its modern stride.

Perhaps the most important mechanism used by ads (across the ages) is *making promises*. These promises can be explicit, in the form of a guarantee or warrantee, but are more often implicit, in the form of a brand image. When a company like Disney makes a name for itself as a purveyor of "family-friendly entertainment," customers come to rely on Disney to provide exactly that. If Disney were ever to violate this trust — by putting too much violence in its movies, for instance — consumers would get angry and (at the margin) buy fewer of Disney's products. So however the promise is conveyed, explicitly or implicitly, the result is that the brand becomes incentivized to fulfill it, and consumers respond (rationally) by buying more of the product, relative to brands that don't put themselves "out there" with similar promises.

There's one more honest ad mechanism to discuss. This one is termed (appropriately) *honest signaling*, and it's an instance of Marshall McLuhan's famous dictum, "The medium is the message." Here an ad conveys valuable information *simply by existing* — or more specifically, by existing in a very expensive location. A company that takes out a huge billboard in the middle of Times Square is announcing (subtextually), "We're willing to spend a lot of money on this product. We're committed to it. We're putting money where our mouths are."

Knowing (or sensing) how much money a company has thrown down for an ad campaign helps consumers distinguish between big, stable companies and smaller, struggling ones, or between products with a lot of internal support (from their parent companies) and products without such support. And this, in turn, gives the consumer confidence that the product is likely to be around for a while and to be well-supported. This is critical for complex products like software, electronics, and cars, which require ongoing support and maintenance, as well as for anything that requires a big ecosystem (e.g. Xbox). The same way an engagement ring is an honest token of a man's commitment to his future spouse, an expensive ad campaign is an honest token of a company's commitment to its product line.

So far so good. All of these ad mechanisms work by imparting valuable information. But as we're well aware, not every ad is so straightforward and above-board.

UNDERHANDED ADVERTISING

Consider this one for Corona:

Whatever's going on here, it's not about awareness, persuasion, promises, or honest signaling. In fact this image is almost completely devoid of *information* in the most literal sense. As Steven Pinker defines it, information is "a correlation between two things that is produced by a lawful process (as opposed to coming about by sheer chance)." In this case, the image is so *arbitrary* that it can't be conveying any information about Corona *per se*, as distinct from any other beer. Corona wasn't specifically designed for the beach, nor does 'beach-worthiness' emerge from any distinguishing features of Corona. You could swap in a Budweiser or Heineken and no "information" would be lost. [1]

So instead of conveying information, this ad looks like a textbook case of emotional inception, i.e., creating an arbitrary, Pavlovian association between Corona and the idea of relaxation. The goal, presumably, is to seed us (viewers, consumers) with good memories, so that later, when shuffling down the beer aisle and spotting the Corona box,

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[1] *Corona*. As Greg Rader and Caroline Zelonka have pointed out, the association between Corona and the beach isn't wholly arbitrary. Corona is a Mexican beer, originally consumed (by American tourists) primarily in beach towns — so, as Greg puts it, there is at least a "circumstantial" basis for the association. Even for other products, the emotional or lifestyle associations probably have some anchor in reality.

we'll get the inexplicable warm fuzzies, and then: purchase!

Except I don't think that's what's happening here. I don't think this Corona ad — or any of the thousands of others just like it — is attempting to get away with inception. Something else is going on; some other mechanism is at play.

Let's call this alternate mechanism **cultural imprinting**, for reasons that I hope will become clear. It's closely related to, but importantly distinct from, emotional inception. And my thesis today is that the effect of cultural imprinting is far larger than the effect of emotional inception (if such a thing even exists at all).

Cultural imprinting is the mechanism whereby an ad, rather than trying to change our minds individually, instead changes the *landscape of cultural meanings* — which in turn changes *how we are perceived by others* when we use a product. Whether you drink Corona or Heineken or Budweiser "says" something about you. But you aren't in control of that message; it just sits there, out in the world, having been imprinted on the broader culture by an ad campaign. It's then up to you to decide whether you want to align yourself with it. Do you want to be seen as a "chill" person? Then bring Corona to a party. Or maybe "chill" doesn't work for you, based on your individual social niche — and if so, your winning (EV-maximizing) move is to look for some other beer. But that's ok, because a successful ad campaign doesn't need to work on everybody. It just needs to work *on net* — by turning "Product X" into a more winning option, for a broader demographic, than it was before the campaign.

Of course cultural imprinting works better for some products than others. What a product "says" about you is only important insofar as other people will notice your use of it — i.e., if there's social or cultural signaling involved. But the class of products for which this is the case is surprisingly large. Beer, soft drinks, gum, every kind of food (think backyard barbecues). Restaurants, coffee shops, airlines. Cars, computers, clothing. Music, movies, and TV shows (think about the watercooler at work). Even household products send cultural signals, insofar as they'll be noticed when you invite friends over to your home. Any product enjoyed or discussed in the presence of your peers is ripe for cultural imprinting.

For each of these products, an ad campaign seeds *everyone* with a basic image or message. Then it simply steps back and waits — not for its emotional message to take root and grow within your brain, but rather for your social instincts to take over, and for you to decide to use the product (or not) based on whether you're comfortable with the kind of cultural signals its brand image allows you to send.

In this way, cultural imprinting relies on the principle of **common knowledge**. For a fact to be common knowledge among a group, it's not enough for everyone to know it. Everyone must also know *that everyone else knows it* — and know that they know that they know it... and so on.

So for an ad to work by cultural imprinting, it's not enough for it to be seen by a single person, or even by many people individually. It has to be broadcast publicly, in front of a large audience. I have to see the ad, but I also have to know (or suspect) that most of my friends have seen the ad too. Thus we will expect to find imprinting ads on billboards, bus stops, subways, stadiums, and any other public location, and also in popular magazines and TV shows — in other words, in *broadcast media*. But we would *not* expect to find cultural-imprinting ads on flyers, door tags, or direct mail. Similarly, internet search ads and banner ads are inimical to cultural imprinting because the internet is so fragmented. Everyone lives in his or her own little online bubble. When I see a Google search ad, I have no idea whether the rest of my peers have seen that ad or not.

In a way, cultural imprinting is a form of inception, but it's much *shallower* than the conventional (Pavlovian) account would have us believe. An ad doesn't need to incept itself all the way into anyone's deep emotional brain; it merely needs to suggest that it *might have incepted itself* into *other people's* brains — and then (barring any contrary evidence about what people actually believe) it will slowly work its way into consensus reality, to become part of the cultural landscape.

Unlike inception proper (which I don't think actually exists), cultural imprinting is fully compatible with the *Homo economicus* model of human decision-making. It leaves our goals fully intact (typically: wanting the respect of our peers), and by imprinting itself on the external cultural landscape, merely changes the optimal *means* of pursuing those goals. The result is the same — we buy more of the products being advertised — but the pathways of influence are different.

To summarize:

> Cultural imprinting = shallow emotional inception + common knowledge → inception into consensus reality

AD EXAMPLES

Let's look at a few concrete examples. Here's a Nike ad:

The *emotional inception* story goes like this: The above ad creates an association between the Nike brand and the idea of athletic excellence. Over time and with enough exposure, the customer will internalize this association. And because he personally values athletic excellence, he'll begin to feel favorably disposed to the Nike brand and products. Later, when the customer is shoe-shopping, these positive associations and emotions will, at the margin, tip him toward buying a Nike shoe.

The *cultural imprinting* story goes like this: The above ad creates an association between the Nike brand and the idea of athletic excellence. (So far, so similar.) Over time and with enough exposure, the customer will realize that "Nike" is synonymous with "athletic excellence" *out in the broader culture*. Later, when he's shopping for shoes, his brain will use this information (intuitively) to predict what his peers will think of him if he shows up on the court wearing Nike shoes (vs. wearing some other brand). At the margin, this will tip him toward buying Nike.

Here's another ad, a kind of public-service health message:

At first blush, this ad seems to be making an individual appeal, a kind of argument: if you drink sugary beverages, you're going to get fat. It seem to be the kind of ad that a person could experience privately (e.g. while browsing the internet) without diluting its effect, which would certainly be the case if it were working by persuasion or inception. But consider how much more effective this ad is when it's displayed prominently in a public place — like on the subway (which is where it actually ran). Once everyone has seen the ad, it becomes common knowledge that sugary drinks are bad for you (and kind of disgusting), and you'll start to worry what your friends might think if they catch you drinking one. Peer pressure is an extremely powerful force, and if advertising can tap into it even a fraction of that power, it can have a sizable effect.

CONSPICUITY

The key differentiating factor between the two mechanisms (inception and imprinting) is how *conspicuous* the ad needs to be. Insofar as an ad works by inception, its effect takes place entirely between the ad and an individual viewer; the ad doesn't need to be conspicuous at all. On the other hand, for an ad to work by cultural imprinting, it needs to be placed in a conspicuous location, where viewers will see it *and* know that others are seeing it too.

We've already discussed how imprinting ads work best in broadcast media, but even within a single medium we should expect to see audience-size effects.

For example, consider advertising during the Superbowl, which draws 100 million viewers, vs. advertising during 100 different TV shows, each with an audience of 1 million viewers. Same total viewership, but in the case of the Superbowl, it's one giant audience (very self-aware of its size), while in the case of the 100 different shows, the audience is fragmented.

If an ad works primarily by making emotional associations, it shouldn't matter how fragmented the audience is — all that should matter is the total number of impressions (inceptions) the ad is able to make. On the other hand, if an ad works primarily by cultural imprinting, then we would expect the giant Superbowl audience to be more valuable than the fragmented audience of the same size. Why? Because during the

Superbowl, everyone knows that *everyone else* is watching, and so any brand image that's conveyed during the Superbowl is almost guaranteed to take root in the broader culture, and therefore to be perceived "correctly" at a later date.

If a relatively new/unknown brand of beer advertises itself as an "unpretentious fun-times party beer" during the Superbowl, you can bring that beer to your friend's barbecue later, confident that your intentions will be understood. Whereas if the same unknown brand advertised itself across 100 different TV shows, and you only saw one of them — on an obscure cooking show (say) — you'd have no idea whether your friends at the barbecue would have the same understanding of the brand image, and whether they would perceive your intentions correctly.

So if an ad works by inception, we should expect the value (to the advertiser) to scale *linearly* with the size of the audience. On the other hand, if an ad works by cultural imprinting, we should expect its value (to the advertiser) to scale *more than linearly* with the size of the audience.

Which is true? I don't know. But I suspect — confounding factors notwithstanding — that we see a more-than-linear relationship between audience size and ad value, which might account for some of the network effects enjoyed by big national (and international) brands.

PRODUCT TYPES

If brand advertising works by emotional inception, we would expect brands to advertise themselves roughly in proportion to the size of the market for their products. On the other hand, if branding works by cultural imprinting, we should expect brands to advertise themselves in proportion both to the market size *and* to the conspicuousness of product usage.

Bed sheets are the perfect example. If ads work by emotional inception, why not seed us with the idea that Brand X bed sheets are the smoothest, softest, best-night's-sleep bed sheets money can buy? On the other hand, if ads work by cultural imprinting, then we should expect almost no branded advertising for bed sheets, because their consumption is almost perfectly obscure (the opposite of conspicuous). It's unlikely that any of your peers will ever see or feel your bed sheets, nor even inquire about them. Bed sheets just aren't a social product, so cultural imprinting can't work to convince us to buy them.

Q: Have you ever seen an ad for bed sheets? Can you even name a brand of bed sheet? If ads work by emotional inception, wouldn't you expect to have seen at least a few ads trying to incept you with the idea that Brand X bed sheets are going to brighten your day?[2]

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[2] *bed sheets*. Caroline and Alex Hawkins point out that bed sheets *are* sometimes advertised, in a way that smacks of inception. See e.g. the ads for Wamsutta sheets. I'd still suggest that the

Here's another market where brand advertising is conspicuously absent: gas stations. Let's compare gasoline to soft drinks. Both are more-or-less commodity products. Yes, there are some minor variations in quality, but for the most part, one cola or gasoline is as good as the next. Both are product categories that the average American spends a lot of money on — probably in the $hundreds for soda and in the $thousands for gas. And yet we find brand advertising far more frequently in the soda market than in the gas market. Coke, Pepsi, Sprite, 7-Up, Dr. Pepper — these brands advertise themselves everywhere, creating identities for themselves that have almost nothing to do with their underlying products. Somehow Coke "convinces" us that drinking it will bring us happiness. But why don't we see the same type of arbitrary associations crafted around gas station brands? If Coke can use advertising to charge a few more pennies per bottle — and finds it overwhelmingly in its interest to do so — why don't Mobile, Citgo, Exxon, Valero, Shell, or Texaco do the same? If ads work by emotional inception, it seems these gas stations would benefit enormously by trying to seed us (consumers) with positive vibes, so that when we're at an intersection with three different stations, we're more likely to choose the advertised brand. The answer, I think, is that going to a gas station is a personal rather than a social activity, whereas drinking a soda is so often done in the company of others.

Admittedly Chevron does attempt, in the US, to carve out a brand image for itself, but the brand is largely based on a promise of quality rather than an arbitrary emotional or lifestyle association. The argument I'm making is that, if inception actually works, then we would expect to see a *lot* more of it in the (rather large) market for gas stations.

WHY AREN'T BRANDS TWO-FACED?

The inception model predicts that brands would benefit from being "two-faced" or "many-faced" — i.e., that brands ought to advertise to each audience separately, using whatever message is most likely to resonate with each particular audience, in order to provide maximum emotional impact.

So Corona, for example, could advertise itself to stressed-out dads as a relaxing, beach-vibes beer (like it does now). Meanwhile, it could advertise itself to college students as a fun-loving party beer, and to car-racing enthusiasts as the beer of champions. On NPR it might pose as distinctive or intellectual. Of course this immediately strikes us as wrong, somehow. But why? Beers advertise themselves in all sorts of ways. There are very few intrinsic qualities to a given product (like Corona) that forces it to stick with one brand image. So why do brands limit themselves to one central message?

Gatorade is another brand that could flit between various positive associations, or hedge its bets with multiple associations at once, as long as the emotions didn't interfere with each other. In fact, layering associations on top of each other could conceivably produce an even greater effect, more than the sum of the individual associations. One ad might link Gatorade to athletic performance, while another might link it to "having fun," while

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scarcity of bed-sheet ads (relative to, e.g., soda ads) is largely due to the asocial nature of the product, but it seems there are exceptions.

yet another might play up its taste. Why not? All of these are time-honored branding strategies. Who doesn't like to have fun or drink something that tastes great? Plus, we all already associate Gatorade with sports — why not give us *another* reason to buy it? It's like making multiple emotional "arguments" for the same product.

But clearly this is not what happens. Instead, brands carve out a relatively narrow slice of brand-identity space and occupy it for *decades*. And the cultural imprinting model explains why. Brands need to be relatively stable and put on a consistent "face" because they're used by consumers to send social messages, and if the brand makes too many different associations, (1) it dilutes the message that any one person might want to send, and (2) it makes people uncomfortable about associating *themselves* with a brand that jumps all over the place, firing different brand messages like a loose cannon.

If I'm going to bring Corona to a party or backyard barbecue, I need to feel confident that the message I intend to send (based on my own understanding of Corona's cultural image) is the message that will be received. Maybe I'm comfortable associating myself with a beach-vibes beer. But if I'm worried that everyone else has been watching different ads ("Corona: a beer for Christians"), then I'll be a lot more skittish about my purchase.

Brands build trust over time, and not just trust in the quality of their product, but trust that they won't change their brand messaging too sharply or too quickly.

ABSENCE OF PERSONAL ADVERTISING

If ads work by inception, then we should be able to advertise *to ourselves* just as effectively as companies advertise to us, and we could use this to fix all those defects in our characters that we find so frustrating. If I decide I want to be more outgoing, I could just print a personalized ad for myself with the slogan "Be more social" imposed next to a supermodel or private jet, or whatever image of success or happiness I think would motivate me the most. And I would expect such an ad, staring me in the face every day, to have a substantial "inception-style" effect on my psyche. I would gradually come to associate "being social" with warm feelings, and eventually — without ever lifting a finger — I would find myself positively *excited* about the prospect of going out to bars and parties. Effortless self-improvement: isn't that the magic bullet solution we're always seeking?

But there is no magic bullet, because these arbitrary-association ads don't work by inception. They work by cultural imprinting, and when the intended audience is a single person, there's no "culture" on which to imprint — no one else to appreciate the intended messages.

The blog Take Back Your Brain advocates "personal marketing," i.e., advertising to oneself. Affirmations and motivational posters seem to be after a similar effect. But if inception is as effective as advertising commentators make it out to be, I'd expect to see a lot more personal marketing than we actually observe.

NO IMMUNITY

A final thought.

The problem with the inception model is that it fuels a hope that we *could* be immune to ads, if only we were diligent enough or if we developed the right kind of mental fortitude. If only we had a stronger psychological "immune system," ads wouldn't be able to get in — even by the emotional backchannel.

You can see such hope glimmering whenever someone admonishes you to "think critically" about advertising. The Lifehacker article I mentioned earlier, for example, offers two tactics for countering the effects of unwanted ads: (1) Don't Forget to Think, and (2) Be Wary of Your Emotional Responses. The article admits that we may never develop full immunity, but with enough care and practice, it suggests, we can at least learn to mitigate some of the more pernicious effects.

But if I'm right about how ads actually work, then this advice is useless. Ads get us to buy things not in spite of our rationality, but *because* of it. Ads target us not as *Homo sapiens*, full of idiosyncratic quirks, but as utility-maximizing *Homo economicus*.

When ads work by conveying honest information, of course, we're happy to consume such ads (and the products they're marketing), because the ads are doing us a valuable service. But when an ad works by cultural imprinting, we feel we're being manipulated somehow. *And we are*. Before seeing the ad, the product wasn't worth very much to us, but after seeing the ad, we find ourselves wanting to buy it (and at a premium, no less). The problem is that there's no escape, no immunity, from this kind of ad. Once we see it — and know that all our peers have seen it too — it's in our rational self-interest to buy the advertised product.

Avoiding ads doesn't help much either. Because brand images are part of the cultural landscape we inhabit, when we block ads or fast-forward through them, we're missing out on valuable cultural information, alienating ourselves from the zeitgeist. This puts us in danger of becoming outdated, unfashionable, and otherwise socially hapless. We become like the kid who wears his dad's suit to his first middle-school dance.

Of course, haplessness isn't so bad for some people in some cultural niches, and I count myself extremely lucky to live among such a crowd. But if most of your peers are exposed to these ads, you're missing out by not watching them too.

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Everything's Important, Except for Our Future

Karina Magill

It has been stated many times before that propaganda and subliminal messages fed to us through TV can alter and change the way we think. Although many people find this topic unrealistic, and even might feel it's a conspiracy theory, we might want to take a closer look at what messages we are really projecting. Many of us can look back on our childhood and recall many positive reinforcements. It is hard to remember how many times we were told we were the future, but are we doing that to our younger generation? It is easy to say that we motivate our own younger family members. However, social media, propaganda, and TV are doing the same. Kavanaugh (1986) says, "[o]ur social myths, our economic gospels and our revelation system of television, advertising and printed matter are a formation system, educating us towards certain values, attitudes and modes of behavior" (Buying Ourselves section) This could not be truer; we, the adult community, are setting standards and allowing standards to be set for our children. In the commercial for Sprint (2013), "At Sprint Everything's Important," teens are comically portrayed in a very unrealistic manner, but it is convincing enough to leave us adults wondering how broad our youth's mentality really is. Our youth is being patronized and underestimated, and we, adults, are in return not being supportive to encourage their confidence.

The Sprint (2013) commercial is very simplistic; it begins with a yellow screen, "Sprint Honors Lizzy and Kim's call" featuring James Earl Jones and Malcolm McDowell. These two men are dressed in suits and are center of focus with nothing but stools and a black background. As they begin to speak narratively, the first impression given is a serious one, set by the imagery, tone, and their voices alone. As the commercial progresses, it becomes comical as the dialog between them is very much juvenile and mindless. They have a dialog about how "hot" a certain boy named Ryan is and continue to repetitively gush about this Ryan's good looks in a purely slang based language. Their facial expressions are very serious but the mannerisms used are very suiting to the girly conversation continuing between them. Malcolm McDowell has his arms crossed but has a sassy sway as he says, "Obvy! He's amaze-balls! He's like the hottest hottie who's ever hottied!" James Earl Jones holds a straight posture, with one exception, his hands are curled out like a gushing teen, and he continuously moves them to express how "hot" Ryan is. The conversation goes back and forth in a dialog consisting of slang such as "totes McGoats, cray cray, McHotterson, and adorbs." The commercial ends with another yellow screen and a narrative voice saying, In honor of everything you do."

This commercial is disparaging of teens, despite its goal. Sprint would like to deliver the message that no matter what your conversations consist of, no matter how extensive your talks or texts may be, they care about and honor you. What they are really saying is, no matter how mindless and time consuming your teenaged kids conversations are, we have reliable plans that won't leave you broke. The irony of this commercial is that it is so adult made, it has close to no reflection of the truth to how our youth really converse, speak or even what slang terms they use. We are portraying them so poorly and negatively in this commercial, and fail to see how far from reality we adults are. This commercial leaves a little reel of tape in our minds, leaving us with a long lasting impression that teenaged girls do in fact use this speech and also indeed do repetitively say the same things over and over. What is going unnoticed is that we are also leaving this same reel of tape in our children and teenagers' minds. It is a fact that teenagers are

very impressionable, and by having a commercial like this, we are consequently building a mold for what we expect them to be and how we expect them to act. In an article, "Jesus Is a Brand of Jeans," Kilbourne (2006) states, "[o]n this deeper level, rampant commercialism undermines our physical and psychological health, our environment and our civic life, and creates a toxic society" (Substitute Stories section). We are allowing for commercialism to undermine the people of tomorrow, and as Kilbourne stated, creating a toxic society.

Additionally, this ad sets up a negative model for our young people. While many of us laugh when watching this commercial, that is the problem. We don't notice or fix something unless we see it for what it really is. The comic relief used in this commercial makes it so passive that it nearly goes unseen. What is not unseen is our reaction to the commercial, and for many of us with younger family members watching us laugh at this type of behavior we are giving them a guideline for what we find acceptable and likeable. Just because this group of people, 10-17 year olds, may not all be considered children, does not mean they still are not continuously looking up to us and trying to please us. Unknowingly, the commercial is aiding us to create a mold of stupidity for our younger family members. We are showing them that this mindless conversation is likeable and completely acceptable, and we are silently telling them it is ok to be brain-dead because it is funny.

This leaves our future generation in a small mold that is easy to fill, but what happens once this mold is set? Years later, these young children and teens, the ones these commercials are targeted toward, are the ones on whom we will be relying to clean our teeth, do our taxes, and check our hearts. They are the people of tomorrow. We are limiting them in a passive and quiet manner. This one commercial is not single handedly ruining our future, but this commercial is one of many spewing the same image to our kids. Not only are we patronizing our youth, but also we are being convinced to not have faith in tomorrow or the people of tomorrow. If we continue to ignore this subliminal brainwash, we are unfortunately leaving the aspirations of many children and teens to go unheard and unnoticed.

We must all keep in mind that it is not solely Sprint, or commercials in general, it is not TV shows or music, or any type of propaganda doing this to us and our adolescents. We adults are in control. An advertisement can only go so far and do so much, but it is we who indoctrinate our youth. We must continue to be supportive, not just of those we love but those around us of all ages. It is vital to remember that these young faces will be the ones who guide and help us through our older age. We must view commercials as simply that, commercials, and be thoughtful when it comes to what messages we accept and pass on.

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Women are Invincible: PAM Non-Stick Advertisement

Maria T. Almanza

Most of the time, women seemed to be portrayed in the media through beauty, body image, or as sexual objects that are weak and vulnerable. In terms of personality, women are represented as nurturing, sensitive, affectionate, gentle, and dependent. Women have long struggled for equal rights, and many women have aspired to do more than stay home and cook and clean. Currently, advertisements in some way more accurately reflect the true diversity of women's social and occupational roles than earlier time periods, and a recent ad for PAM cooking spray is no exception. This ad works to appeal to women's multiple roles in society and the pressure they face to be superwomen.

In an ad for PAM in *Family Circle* magazine, the attention of the reader is captured by placing a gigantic electric grill on an entire page. On the grill is a grilled cheese sandwich with the cheese melting out of it and clearly sticking to the grill. On the gigantic grill a well-dressed woman appears standing beside the sandwich. She is dressed in a sporty kaki skirt, a red blouse, and is wearing high heel sandals. Her hair is combed back in a ponytail and she has noise proof headphones on. With yellow construction gloves she holds a large jackhammer that reaches all the way to her waist. Her facial expression demonstrates the hard, exhausting work she is carrying out trying to remove the melting cheese from the grill. At the bottom of the page, in the right corner in large letters it reads, "PAM HELPS YOU PULL IT OFF" (ConAgra, 2010, p. 47).

In this ad, ConAgra Foods (2010), the makers of PAM, seek to appeal to working women. Different from other media advertisements that present women as beauty queens, provocative and showing body parts to grab people's attention, PAM demonstrates a woman with character focused on being in charge, acting decisively with emotion at achieving her task. PAM non-stick spray has been around since the 1960s. In the past, their advertisements showed cookies flying off the cookie sheets, or a fried egg sliding from the frying pan to the serving plate. As more women have been consumed with both family affairs and working away from home, preparing complicated meals for the family seemed to be out of the question. All the hours in the day are hardly sufficient to perform the duties of today's' women compared to the 1960s. Life has become too complicated and goals have switched, so that the woman is not only taking care of the family, but also being part of the workforce. Presenting this woman with a jackhammer in her hand speaks to the claim that PAM can help with tough messes, and emphasizes the role of women out of the house as well as in.

Women today demand goods and services that make managing a home easier in order to live up to the myth of the superwoman. Using the words "PAM helps you pull it off" implies a promise to women that they are going to get through their work quickly and easily without the hassle of having food sticking to their pans (ConAgra, 2010, p. 47). The myth of having to be the superwoman in the family circle still prevails, as does the idea that being a good homemaker is always the best and most important thing to do. Women have been sold the idea that a woman

is not truly complete or fulfilled unless she personally takes care of the family meals and cleanup.

Women are being encouraged to represent standards of perfection that are beyond reach. Women are more progressive than the 1960, because now they can and do work outside the home, have their own ambitions and money, raise kids on their own, or freely choose to stay at home with their family rather than being forced to. Women now have choices, they are in control of their own destiny, and they have autonomy. Such choice has proved that they are capable of devoting time to their careers, and time to their role at home. Yet, even though women have gone into the work world to bring home the bacon, the home world is still the place they are expected to do the bulk of the work. It's a well-known fact that working women still do the majority of housework. This ad for PAM offers a relief by implying that it is easier for women to clean pots and grills, and waste less time cleaning after a meal. As noted by Davis (1992), media specialist, ". . . advertisers quickly learned that the most effective way to sell products was not through stories or plain-text facts, but through the creation of image that appealed to the basic human needs" ("The History of Communication," para. 5). The ad appeals to a woman's knowledge that work isn't over even after she clocks out, and her desire to lighten the load just a little bit.

This ad also appeals to ideas of women's equality. This particular PAM advertisement brings back the memory of Helen Reddy's 1972 song "I Am Woman": "I can do anything. I am strong. I am invincible." In the 1970s it paved the way to today's outspoken, independent strong women. This song was the inspiration for women who wanted to do more in life than just be housekeepers. Such strength and independence is depicted in this PAM non-stick spray advertisement. The jackhammer represents a job that is usually considered men's work—construction. The use of this image creates a subtext that communicates the idea that not only can women do any type of work they want to, but also that PAM, and vicariously ConAgra, is a supporter of equality for women.

In her article "Jesus is a Brand of Jeans," Kilbourne (2006) points out,

> Advertising performs much the same function in industrial society as myth did in ancient societies. It is both a creator and perpetuator of the dominant values of the culture, the social norms by which most people govern their behaviour. At the very least, advertising helps to create a climate in which certain values flourish and others are not reflected at all. ("Unnatural Passions," para. 7)

This ad reflects society's growth and stagnation at the same time. Beneath the simple picture of a grilled cheese sandwich on a grill, is a larger message. This ad speaks to the desires, pressures, and realities of women. Though women's rights and roles have changed drastically over the last fifty years, women are still faced with the majority of the household chores, the idea that they must do everything, and a subconscious push to go beyond being human and to move into the world of superwoman. This ad for PAM speaks to all of those desires and anxieties and is a good mirror for women in this new century.

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*SHAME: The Secret Tool of Marketing

Terry O'Riely

CBC Radio · Posted: Jun 01, 2013 12:00 AM ET | Last Updated: May 31, 2013
Under the Influence: Shame: The Secret Tool of Marketing (Season 2 Episode 1) - EP - CBC Radio (Audio—this was originally a podcast. Listening is better with this one.)

This week on *Under The Influence*, it's an encore broadcast as we explore one of the most effective marketing strategies ever devised: The use of "Shame."

First emerging in the late 1800s, toothpaste ads suggested a fresh mouth could help you attract a mate. But advertisers had a major obstacle to overcome - bad breath and body odour were not socially unacceptable then. So advertisers focused their sizable resources to linking odours to shame, and then shame to product solution.

From bad breath, dandruff and ring-around-the-collar to gray hair, plastic surgery and skin lightening, the strategy of social shame has become the most lucrative selling strategy of all time.

Join us as we peel back the layers of shame in our modern world.

Source: YouTube ["I did not have sex with that woman."]

It was a startling declaration coming from a sitting President.

After Monica Lewinsky revealed she had sex with the President at the White House, President Clinton went on national television to call her a liar. But seven months later, he would change his story.

In 1995, a tape showing actress Pamela Anderson having sex with her new husband, rocker Tommy Lee, caused a media frenzy.

pamela_anderson_tommy_lee_.jpg Source: The Insider.com

Less than four weeks before the debut of her reality show, The Simple Life, a tape surfaced showing Paris Hilton having sex with her boyfriend.

Paris Hilton Simple Life.jpg Source: hollywood0nlinetv.blogspot.com

Three years later, a sex tape is released to the internet starring Kim Kardashian.

kim-kardashian-.jpg
Source: People.com

Then, in 2011, another politician makes a startling admission:

Source: CNN

The death of shame has opened a new door to the world of celebrity. What would have been considered shameful activity in another decade, is today a viable strategy for fame.

Yet that strategy can only exist in a world where shame is no longer considered appalling.

But there is another world where shame is critical.

And that is the world of marketing.

The strategy of "shame" is one of the most powerful marketing tools in modern times. Fear of being judged by our peers has led to billions of dollars of products being sold.

Social embarrassment isn't just a mix of humiliation, mortification and distress, it's also a heady cocktail of marketing, strategy and product solutions. And the marketing industry has a vested interest in keeping shame alive and well.

The use of "social shame" as a marketing tool has a long and interesting history.

It can be carbon-dated to the industrial revolution, when luxury items first appeared.

Prior to the industrial revolution, most people lived a rural existence on farms, growing their own food and making their own clothes, so status wasn't a social imperative. Soon, people began judging each other by what they had purchased - and in particular, on personal appearance.

As this newly discovered "self awareness" spread, advertisers were quick to seize upon it as a marketing strategy.

One of the earliest brands to take advantage of "social shame" was Sozodont tooth powder.

The headline of an 1884 print ad said, "Beauty and fragrance are communicated to the mouth by Sozodont."

Sozodont Toothpaste ad.jpg Source: flickrhivemind.net

And with that, social status worked its way into advertising.

It was clear advertisers saw the lucrative possibilities in the linking of shame and solution - they just had to convince the public that body odour was socially unacceptable.

Prior to that, women believed deodorants were not only unnecessary, but unhealthy.

Enter Odorono, an underarm deodorant product that prevented female perspiration and

eliminated embarrassing odour. Advertising agency J. Walter Thompson began a campaign that tackled the first obstacle to sales - by explaining that blocking perspiration was not unhealthy.

Print ads also pointed out that Odorono was safe because it was developed by a doctor.

odorono2.jpg SOURCE: cladriteradio.com

Sales jumped initially, but then flattened.

So in 1919, Ordono changed its strategy. It wasn't enough to convince customers that a remedy for perspiration merely existed.

They had to convince the population that sweating was a serious social embarrassment.

They did that by framing the issue of perspiration odour as something friends and acquaintances would never talk to you about directly, but were happy to gossip about behind your back.

Which created an insecurity.

odorono armhole test.jpg Source: advintageplus.com

This ad instructed girls to smell of armhole of their dresses, because that was the way they smelled to others.

Ordorno labelled that smell, quote, "a humiliating odour" and by doing so, attached a feeling of shame. That strategy would fuel sales for decades.

The era of "critical self consciousness" was in full swing.

Enter Listerine.

Listerine was initially used as a floor cleaner, a scalp treatment and even a cure for gonorrhea. Then it was discovered it was good at killing oral germs. There was only one problem:

Bad breath wasn't an issue.

Sure, people back then had bad teeth and gum disease, but mouth odour wasn't considered socially offensive.

But the makers of Listerine asked their chemists to label the condition of bad breath - and they called it "Halitosis."

It was a golden problem that Lambert's mouthwash could solve.

From that day forward, the world has been acutely aware of halitosis. And Listerine has been marketed as the product that eliminates it.

Listerine ad Source: melissabradyking.blogspot.com

The "shame" of bad breath is one of the most lucrative marketing strategies of all time.

The strategy of shame has been used as the underpinning for many product categories.

Like coffee:

Source: YouTube

The shame of Dandruff arrived in 1960:

Source: YouTube

And let us not forget foot odour:

Source: YouTube

Then there's detergent. Launched in 1958, Wisk was one of the first liquid laundry detergents. But it was ten years later that Wisk hit on the idea that made it famous:

Source: YouTube

Wisk promised to remove "Ring Around The Collar" by pouring the detergent directly onto clothing, creating a new use for the product. But it wasn't the men who suffered the shame, it was their wives.

Source: YouTube

Wisk's "Ring Around The Collar" may have been annoying, but it helped triple sales between 1968 and 1974. The campaign ran successfully for over 30 years.

Today, the power of shame as marketing tool plays a critical role in categories that weren't even around 50 years ago.

In countries like the Philippines, for instance, there are many ads for skin-whitening products:

Source: YouTube

The underlying message is that lighter skinned people are more attractive and achieve greater success.

In India, the caste system there has historically favoured lighter-coloured skin as a sign of wealth and importance. One research firm recently stated that more skin whitening creams are sold in India than Coca Cola.

Check out this TV commercial from India:

Source: YouTube

But when you look closer at the animated product demonstration - you see it promises to lighten the skin colour of a woman's genitals. The slogan: "Freshness that brings out whiteness."

The commercial created a lot of controversy in India. And by the way, similar products are selling well in the U.S.

Welcome to the intimate areas of shame in the 21st century.

Source: YouTube

Clearly, men are not exempt from shame marketing.

While this recent Axe deodorant campaign uses humour, it cleverly equates excessive perspiration with that most dreaded of male shames; premature ejaculation.

The anxiety a shame-based message creates increases the need to surrender to a solution. And while inducing shame in young people creates a future market, one of the biggest shame strategies in marketing is centred around growing old.

Or shall I say, to visibly grow old.

In our culture, aging is not celebrated. As a result, hair coloring is one of the most popular anti-aging categories.

Source: YouTube

The very foundation of the cosmetic industry is the tease of a fountain of youth.

Like this ad for Covergirl featuring Ellen Degeneres:

Source: YouTube

The humour of Ellen takes the sting out of the pitch, but the shame of aging is still the underpinning of the sell.

In the last 50 years, could there be a greater signpost for the shame of aging... than plastic

surgery.

Source: YouTube

Plastic surgery dates all the way back to Ancient India in 600 BC. Back then, plastic surgery was employed to restore various body parts that had been damaged due to injury.

It wasn't until Ancient Rome that surgery became cosmetic - and based in shame. They began by removing scars from the backs of men.

They were marks of shame, because it suggested that a man had turned his back on battle.

Over 14 million cosmetic procedures were performed on Americans in 2011. That's an 87% increase since the year 2000. The United States ranks number one in cosmetic surgeries, Brazil is number two, and Canada ranks at number 15.

Age range purchasing the most plastic surgery: 40 to 54 year olds.

Women account for 91% of all cosmetic procedures, with Caucasians topping of the list at over 70%.

With shame as a leverage point, the pursuit of less than perfect customers is a bottomless well. In the modern world, shame fuels the need to erase the humiliation and products are solutions.

When modern marketing first encouraged critical self awareness, it stumbled upon what may be the most lucrative marketing strategy of all time.

Because in this day and age, it's easy to see that satisfied customers are not as profitable as discontented ones...

... when you're under the influence.

The Washington Post

*Experts: Men Have Body Image Worries Too

By JOCELYN NOVECK
Friday, October 6, 2006

NEW YORK -- That guy in the Abercrombie & Fitch ad doesn't have a head, but does it really matter? His upper body is as sculpted as Michelangelo's David _ all chiseled muscle, washboard abs and not a follicle of chest hair.

You don't just see him in the provocative ads for Abercrombie, the youth-oriented clothing chain: On billboards and in magazines everywhere, it seems, there's a male Adonis _ buff, sleek, hairless. Like that famous 500-year-old statue, it's nice to look at. But how does it make the average guy feel?

Maybe not so great. With all the attention these days on the effect paper-thin models and actresses can have on girls and women, it's worth noting that men can suffer from body image problems, too.

"Body image is not just a concern for women," says researcher Deborah Schooler, who's looked into the adverse effects such media images can have on male self-esteem. "It affects men, too, and it demands attention."

In the past, research has understandably focused mostly on women, and the dangerous eating disorders that can stem from body-related emotional issues. And when looking at men, researchers asked the wrong questions, Schooler argues.

"Asking men about just weight or size misses the boat," Schooler, a research associate at Brown University, said in a telephone interview. What men are more concerned about, she says, are other "real-body" factors, like sweat, body hair and body odor.

In a study published last spring and recently featured in Seed magazine, Schooler, then at San Francisco State University, and a colleague looked at 184 male college students. The more media these young men "consumed" _ especially music videos and prime-time TV _ the worse they felt about those "real" aspects of their bodies, the researchers found.

Further, they found that such negative feelings impacted their sexual well-being, in some cases leading to more aggressive and risky sexual behavior. (The study appeared in the journal Psychology of Men and Masculinity.)

Does all this mean it's unhealthy for "Average Joes," as the researchers titled their study, to aspire to the lean, muscular body idealized by Michelangelo and Abercrombie alike? One prominent promoter of men's fitness argues no _ unless, of course, it's an obsession.

"What's good about that image is that it's the picture of health," says David Zinczenko, editor of Men's Health magazine and a best-selling diet author. "With diabetes rates skyrocketing over the past 70 years, a little more 'lean' wouldn't hurt us."

Zinczenko points to all the role models with healthy and realistic bodies that have graced magazine covers: George Clooney, Matt Damon, Tom Cruise, Hugh Jackman.

Indeed, the very concept of the male ideal appears to change with the seasons. "We seem to go from rugged to smooth, rugged to smooth," says the longtime fitness personality Richard Simmons, of "Sweatin' to the Oldies" fame. "You're either the Marlboro Man or you're the Surfer Boy. You're a cowboy, or you're a lean, mean swimming machine."

Body image, says Simmons, who now has a show on satellite radio, "is a very personal, private thing for guys _ something they don't want to talk about." But make no mistake, he says: "Getting into a pair of jeans is just as important for a man as a woman. He wants to look good."

Years ago, Simmons says, when he was overweight, he would turn off the TV when he saw the ultrafit exercise guru Jack LaLanne, because it depressed him. Now, he says, at age 58, 148 pounds and "cute as a button," he spends his time trying to convince people to appreciate the bodies they have.

However complicated body-image issues are for men, it seems they will always be more fraught for women.

"For boys and men, engaging with these media images is more of a choice," says Deborah Tolman of the Center for Research on Gender and Sexuality in San Francisco. "There's just not the same requirement for a man in our society to look a particular way. As a man, you can look terrible and still be very well respected."

As a girl, "you can be the best debater at school," Tolman says. "But if you're fat, you don't get people's admiration, despite your skill. That's not true with boys."

And what of LaLanne, now 92, who so depressed the young Simmons decades ago that he turned off the TV?

Of the incessant media images, the still-avid exerciser says, "Maybe at least that'll get 'em out doing something!" Aspiring to today's ideal body is fine, he says, as long as it's what you want. He deplores, though, the overly muscular type that "looks like they use steroids. Once you start fooling with Mother Nature, you're in trouble."

As for his own image issues, LaLanne, who still works out two hours every morning, says they're solely focused on sticking around a while longer.

"I can't afford to die," LaLanne explains. "It would wreck my image."

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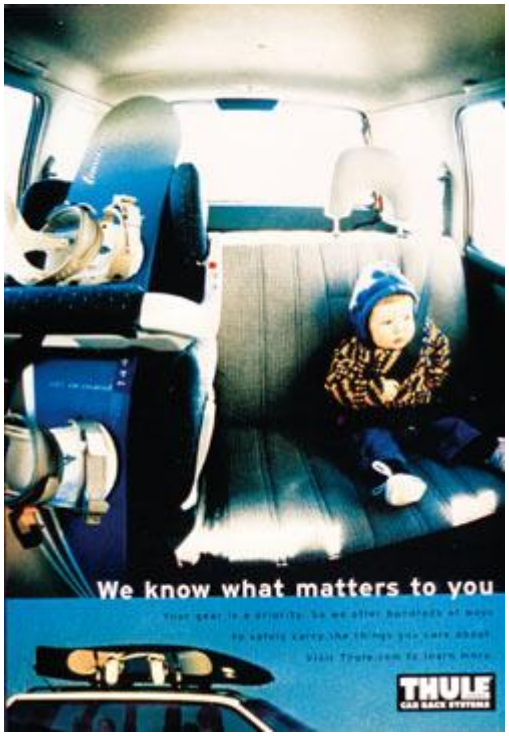
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/06/AR2006100600913.html

*Jesus Is a Brand Of Jeans

Jean Kilbourne
2 September 2006 issue of *New Internationalist*



A recent ad for Thule car-rack systems features a child in the backseat of a car, seatbelt on. Next to the child, assorted sporting gear is carefully strapped into a child's carseat. The headline says: 'We Know What Matters to You.' In case one misses the point, further copy adds: 'Your gear is a priority.'

Another ad features an attractive young couple in bed. The man is on top of the woman, presumably making love to her. However, her face is completely covered by a magazine, open to a double-page photo of a car. The man is gazing passionately at the car. The copy reads, 'The ultimate attraction.'

These ads are meant to be funny. Taken individually, I suppose they might seem amusing or, at worst, tasteless. As someone who has studied ads for a long time, however, I see them as part of a pattern: just two of many ads that state or imply that products are more important than people. Ads have long promised us a better relationship via a product: _buy this and you will be loved_. But more recently they have gone beyond that proposition to promise us a relationship with the product itself: _buy this and it will love you_. The product is not so much the means to an end, as the end itself.

After all, it is easier to love a product than a person. Relationships with human beings are messy, unpredictable, sometimes dangerous. ‘When was the last time you felt this comfortable in a relationship?’ asks an ad for shoes. Our shoes never ask us to wash the dishes or tell us we’re getting fat. Even more important, products don’t betray us. ‘You can love it without getting your heart broken,’ proclaims a car ad. One certainly can’t say that about loving a human being, as love without vulnerability is impossible.

We are surrounded by hundreds, thousands of messages every day that link our deepest emotions to products, that objectify people and trivialize our most heartfelt moments and relationships. Every emotion is used to sell us something. Our wish to protect our children is leveraged to make us buy an expensive car. A long marriage simply provides the occasion for a diamond necklace. A painful reunion between a father and his estranged daughter is dramatized to sell us a phone system. Everything in the world – nature, animals, people – is just so much stuff to be consumed or to be used to sell us something.

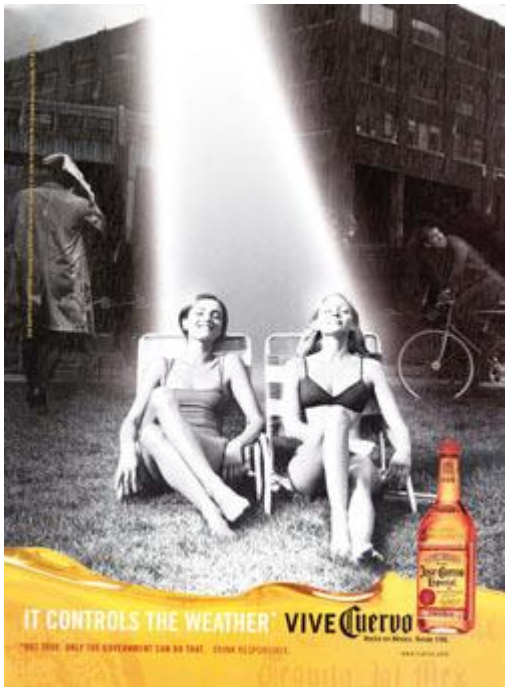
The problem with advertising isn’t that it creates artificial needs, but that it exploits our very real and human desires. Advertising promotes a bankrupt concept of _relationship_. Most of us yearn for committed relationships that will last. We are not stupid: we know that buying a certain brand of cereal won’t bring us one inch closer to that goal. But we are surrounded by advertising that yokes our needs with products and promises us that _things_ will deliver what in fact they never can. In the world of advertising, lovers are things and things are lovers.

It may be that there is no other way to depict relationships when the ultimate

goal is to sell products. But this apparently bottomless consumerism not only depletes the world's resources, it also depletes our inner resources. It leads inevitably to narcissism and solipsism. It becomes difficult to imagine a way of relating that isn't objectifying and exploitative.

TUNED IN

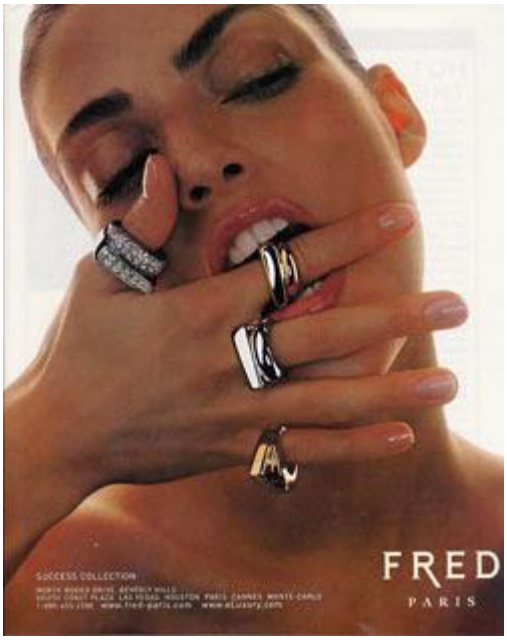
Most people feel that advertising is not something to take seriously. Other aspects of the media are serious – the violent films, the trashy talk shows, the bowdlerization of the news. But not advertising! Although much more attention has been paid to the cultural impact of advertising in recent years than ever before, just about everyone still feels personally exempt from its influence. What I hear more than anything else at my lectures is: 'I don't pay attention to ads... I just tune them out... they have no effect on me.' I hear this most from people wearing clothes emblazoned with logos. In truth, we are all influenced. There is no way to tune out this much information, especially when it is designed to break through the 'tuning out' process. As advertising critic Sut Jhally put it: 'To not be influenced by advertising would be to live outside of culture. No human being lives outside of culture.'



Much of advertising's power comes from this belief that it does not affect us. As Joseph Goebbels said: 'This is the secret of propaganda: those who are to be persuaded by it should be completely immersed in the ideas of the propaganda, without ever noticing that they are being immersed in it.' Because we think advertising is trivial, we are less on guard, less critical, than we might otherwise be. While we're laughing, sometimes sneering, the commercial does its work.

Taken individually, ads are silly, sometimes funny, certainly nothing to worry about. But cumulatively they create a climate of cynicism that is poisonous to relationships. Ad after ad portrays our real lives as dull and ordinary, commitment to human beings as something to be avoided. Because of the pervasiveness of this kind of message, we learn from childhood that it is far safer to make a commitment to a product than to a person, far easier to be loyal to a brand. Many end up feeling romantic about material objects yet deeply cynical about other human beings.

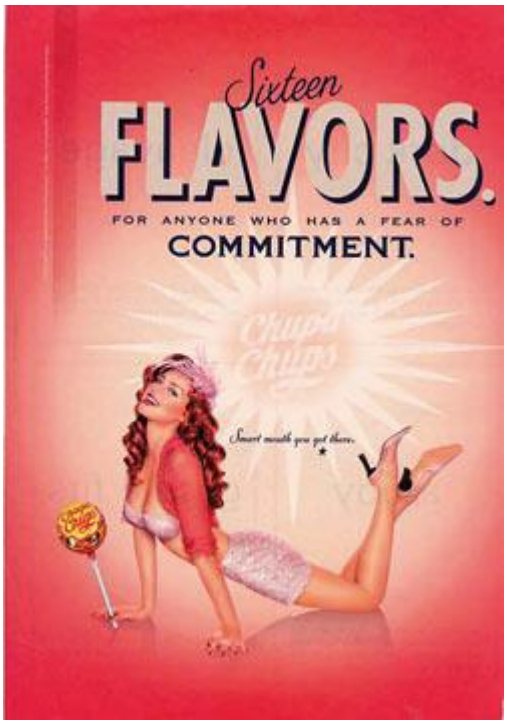
UNNATURAL PASSIONS



We know by now that advertising often turns people into objects. Women's bodies – and men's bodies too these days – are dismembered, packaged and used to sell everything from chainsaws to chewing gum, champagne to shampoo. Self-image is deeply affected. The self-esteem of girls plummets as they reach adolescence partly because they cannot possibly escape the message that their bodies are objects, and imperfect objects at that. Boys learn that masculinity requires a kind of ruthlessness, even brutality.

Advertising encourages us not only to objectify each other but to feel passion for products rather than our partners. This is especially dangerous when the products are potentially addictive, because addicts do feel they are in a relationship with their substances. I once heard an alcoholic joke that Jack Daniels was her most constant lover. When I was a smoker, I felt that my cigarettes were my friends. Advertising reinforces these beliefs, so we are twice seduced – by the ads and by the substances themselves.

The addict is the ideal consumer. Ten per cent of drinkers consume over sixty per cent of all the alcohol sold. Most of them are alcoholics or people in desperate trouble – but they are also the alcohol industry's very best customers. Advertisers spend enormous amounts of money on psychological research and understand addiction well. They use this knowledge to target children (because if you hook them early they are yours for life), to encourage all people to consume more, in spite of often dangerous consequences for all of us, and to create a climate of denial in which all kinds of addictions flourish. This they do with full intent, as we see so clearly in the 'secret documents' of the tobacco industry that have been made public in recent years.



The consumer culture encourages us not only to buy more but to seek our identity and fulfillment through what we buy, to express our individuality through our 'choices' of products. Advertising corrupts relationships and then offers us products, both as solace and as substitutes for the intimate human connection we all long for and need.

In the world of advertising, lovers grow cold, spouses grow old, children grow up and away – but possessions stay with us and never change. Seeking the outcomes of a healthy relationship through products cannot work. Sometimes it leads us into addiction. But at best the possessions can never deliver the promised goods. They can't make us happy or loved or less alone or safe. If we believe they can, we are doomed to disappointment. No matter how much we love them, they will never love us back.

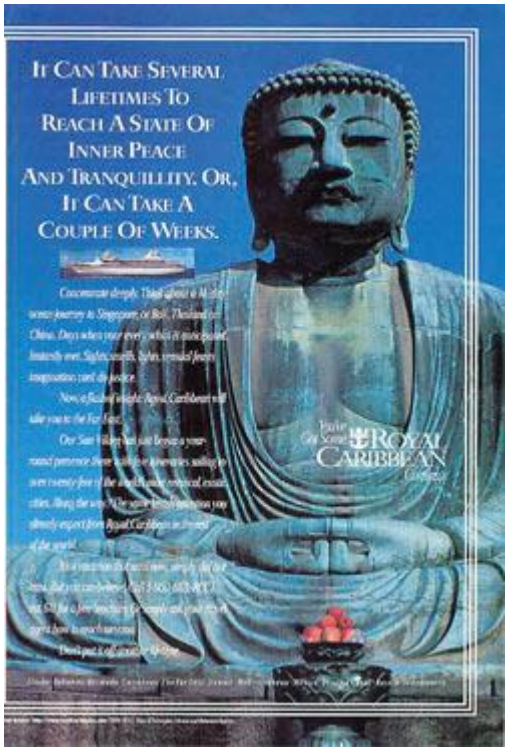
Some argue that advertising simply reflects societal values rather than affecting them. Far from being a passive mirror of society, however, advertising is a pervasive medium of influence and persuasion. Its influence is cumulative, often subtle and primarily unconscious. A former editor-in-chief of _Advertising Age_, the leading advertising publication in North America, once claimed: 'Only eight per cent of an ad's message is received by the conscious mind. The rest is worked and re-worked deep within, in the recesses of the brain.'

Advertising performs much the same function in industrial society as myth did in ancient societies. It is both a creator and perpetuator of the dominant values of the culture, the social norms by which most people govern their behaviour. At the very least, advertising helps to create a climate in which certain values flourish and others are not reflected at all.

Advertising is not only our physical environment, it is increasingly our spiritual environment as well. By definition, however, it is only interested in materialistic values. When spiritual values show up in ads, it is only in order to sell us something. Eternity is a perfume by Calvin Klein. Infiniti is an automobile, and Hydra Zen a moisturizer. Jesus is a brand of jeans.

Sometimes the allusion is more subtle, as in the countless alcohol ads featuring the bottle surrounded by a halo of light. Indeed products such as jewellery shining in a store window are often displayed as if they were sacred objects. Advertising co-opts our sacred symbols in order to evoke an immediate emotional response. Media critic Neil Postman referred to this as

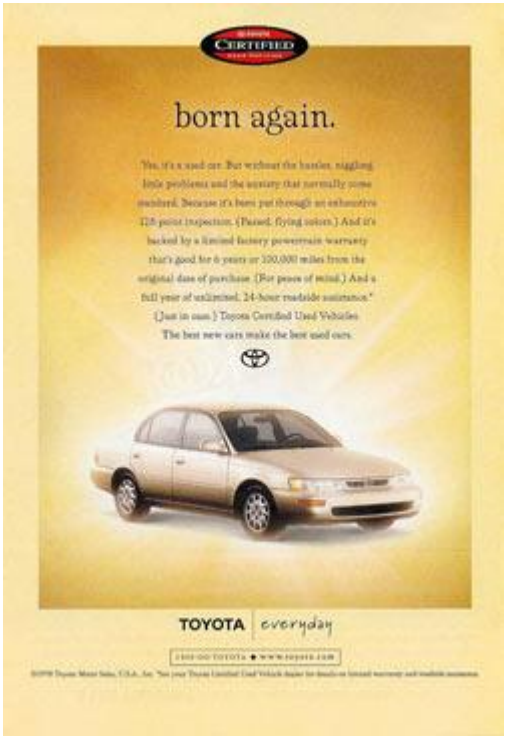
'cultural rape'.



It is commonplace to observe that consumerism has become the religion of our time (with advertising its holy text), but the criticism usually stops short of what is at the heart of the comparison. Both advertising and religion share a belief in transformation, but most religions believe that this requires sacrifice. In the world of advertising, enlightenment is achieved instantly by purchasing material goods. An ad for a watch says, 'It's not your handbag. It's not your neighbourhood. It's not your boyfriend. It's your watch that tells most about who you are.' Of course, this cheapens authentic spirituality and transcendence. This junk food for the soul leaves us hungry, empty, malnourished.

SUBSTITUTE STORIES

Human beings used to be influenced primarily by the stories of our particular tribe or community, not by stories that are mass-produced and market-driven.



As George Gerbner, one of the world's most respected researchers on the influence of the media, said: 'For the first time in human history, most of the stories about people, life and values are told not by parents, schools, churches, or others in the community who have something to tell, but by a group of distant conglomerates that have something to sell.'

Although it is virtually impossible to measure the influence of advertising on a culture, we can learn something by looking at cultures only recently exposed to it. In 1980 the Gwich'in tribe of Alaska got television, and therefore massive advertising, for the first time. Satellite dishes, video games and VCRs were not far behind. Before this, the

Gwich'in lived much the way their ancestors had for generations. Within 10 years, the young members of the tribe were so drawn by television they no longer had time to learn ancient hunting methods, their parents' language or their oral history. Legends told around campfires could not compete with Beverly Hills 90210. Beaded moccasins gave way to Nike sneakers, and 'tundra tea' to Folger's instant coffee.

As multinational chains replace local character, we end up in a world in which everyone is Gapped and Starbucked. Shopping malls kill vibrant downtown centres locally and create a universe of uniformity internationally. We end up in a world ruled by, in John Maynard Keynes's phrase, the values of the casino. On this deeper level, rampant commercialism undermines our physical and psychological health, our environment and our civic life, and creates a toxic society.

Advertising creates a world view that is based upon cynicism, dissatisfaction and craving. Advertisers aren't evil. They are just doing their job, which is to sell a product; but the consequences, usually unintended, are often destructive. In the history of the world there has never been a propaganda effort to match that of advertising in the past 50 years. More thought, more effort, more money goes into advertising than has gone into any other campaign to change social consciousness. The story that advertising tells is that the way to be happy, to find satisfaction – and the path to political freedom, as well – is through the consumption of material objects. And the major motivating force for social change throughout the world today is this belief that happiness comes from the market.

Jean Kilbourne is the author of *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* and the creator of the award-winning *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women* film series.

Dumb is the New Smart:
Stereotypes in State Farm's "State of Disbelief" Commercial

Mauricio Hernandez

They introduce the latest car, the newest gadget, and the most convenient service. Most people see hundreds of them day after day and millions of dollars are spent producing them. It's known as the dreaded commercial. Usually, viewers see commercials as minor annoyances, which interrupt their favorite TV shows. In "Jesus is a Brand of Jeans," Kilbourne (2006) points out that, "Most people feel that advertising is not something to take seriously" (Tuned in section). Most viewers don't realize or acknowledge that these "annoyances" actually do more than just annoy, but also reinforce society's stereotypes. Humor, sex, and fantasy are commonly used in advertisements to mask underlying fallacies that are implied. State Farm Insurance (2012) uses humor in the commercial "State Farm® State of Disbelief French Model" to reinforce several stereotypes that exist in society: blonde women are dumb and gullible, men are emotionless, and men believe they are superior to women.

State Farm's (2012) commercial begins with a man standing in front of his car using his smartphone. Then, a woman enters the scene and says, "oh hey. . .what are you up to?" The man says "Ooh just diagraming this accident with my State Farm pocket agent app." The woman responds, "I thought State Farm didn't have all those apps." Then, the man asks, "Where'd you hear that." The woman replies, "On the internet." The man says, "And you believed it?" The woman says, "Yea, they can't put anything on the internet that isn't true." Then, he replies, "Where'd you hear that?" Both say, "On the internet," together. The last scenes of the commercial are of the woman getting picked up by a man she met on the internet. She believes that the second man is a French model because that's what he falsely told the woman over the internet. A onetime viewing of this commercial and the viewer is left with a humorous and innocent impression. Lopez (2004), in his article "Advertising Analysis," notes that, "Humor is often used because it makes us feel good and is more memorable" (Common Attention-Getting Hooks section). While the humor in this ad does make it memorable, this commercial must be viewed thoughtfully and without bias to see its underlying stereotypes.

When first analyzing this commercial, we see that it reinforces the stereotype that blonde women are dumb and gullible by using a blonde woman in their commercial and having her believe everything she hears on the internet. Blondes are often ridiculed for being easily fool or impressed. Society has carried the stereotype that blonde women are "airheads" or "not all there." In the commercial, the blonde woman believes the second man that enters the scene is a French model because he told her over the internet that he was. She never once questions the validity of the "French model's" statement. She believes that the man is a French model even when the "French model" meets the woman in person, and she can obviously see that the man is neither French nor a model (State Farm Insurance, 2012). Humor is used to reinforce this stereotype in the viewer's subconscious; this happens even if the viewer doesn't realize right away that the woman is in fact a blonde. State Farm purposely used a blonde woman in their

commercial to play into this stereotype that's well embedded in society.
Upon further analysis of this commercial, it's obvious that State Farm is trying to reinforce another stereotype that is typical in society: men have no emotions toward each other or the opposite sex. The first clue for the viewer is when the woman is telling the first man that she believes everything she hears. He has no response to her irrational statement except to simply be dismissive of her and to continue about his business. He shows no desire to politely educate the woman about her misdirected beliefs. The second bit of evidence comes when the second man, or "French model," enters the scene. The "French model" shows no regret or forgiveness about lying to the woman. In addition, the first man shows no interest in intervening in the "French model's" lie and is fine with allowing the woman to be lied to by another man (State Farm Insurance, 2012). This commercial by State Farm uses body language and inaction to imply that men are emotionless.

Finally, through thoughtful analysis we are able to discover this commercial's deepest rooted societal stereotype: that men feel superior to women. The male superiority stereotype encompasses the commercial as whole. There are glimpse of the stereotype throughout the commercial. The first hint of this stereotype is in the first man's dismissiveness of the woman as though he expected her gullible nature because she is a woman. Then, the viewer sees that the "French model" has an unwavering confidence that his lie will be accepted without question because he is lying to a woman. When his lie, is in fact, accepted without question then the commercial further plays into the superiority stereotype. Last, State Farm uses two men and one woman in this commercial to also show, subtly, that men feel to be above women. Through much analysis, a viewer can discover this commercial's hidden overall message and stereotype, which is that men feel they are superior to women.
The commercial concludes with "Unbelievably Mobile" in white letters on a red background (State Farm Insurance, 2012). Humor is a tool that State Farm uses in its commercials very tactically. In particular, they use humor to hide stereotypes in their commercials like in "State Farm® State of Disbelief French Model" It's not unbelievable that using a State Farm application can make life easier. It's unbelievable that the average person will never realize that commercials like the one by State Farm are reinforcing many of society's stereotypes, day after day. Kilbourne (2006) writes, "Some argue that advertising simply reflects societal values rather than affecting them" (Unnatural Passions section). It may not be clear whether advertisers are influencing society or the other way around, but what can be said is that viewers aren't "unbelievably mobile," but unbelievably oblivious.

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It’s a Man, Man, Man World: A Closer Look at Dr. Pepper Ten

Kenneth Griffing

A new product has just hit the market, and with it comes a new commercial on the airwaves. Dr. Pepper has released a new, ten-calorie version of their well-known soft drink. The latest commercial for the aforementioned beverage is, at first glance, a humorous play on the differences between men’s interests and women’s. However, a closer look at the advertisement will reveal that it promotes an unhealthy assumption that men and women should enjoy completely different activities without companionship from the opposite gender. The ad also promotes the idea that male activities are, to some degree, superior to female.

The commercial opens with a tough-looking man running through a jungle that looks like it could be from an Indiana Jones movie. He is carrying a laser gun yet uses his fist to destroy a robotic snake. He opens by saying, "Hey, ladies! Enjoying the film? Of course not! Because this is OUR movie!" (Dr. Pepper, 2011). He is trying to outrun what appear to be Japanese ninjas. He jumps off a cliff and lands in a Jeep. While speeding through the jungle in his partner's Jeep, the actor continues, "And Dr. Pepper Ten is our soda. It's only ten manly calories but with all twenty-three flavors of Dr. Pepper" (Dr. Pepper, 2011). While pouring his drink of choice into a glass, the announcer spills some of the beverage, implying that he is driving over a rough trail. As he crushes the can in his hand, he says, "It's what guys want; like this. . ." (Dr. Pepper, 2011). The camera cuts to three presumably antagonistic men pursuing him on motorcycles. As he throws the can, it hits a stake in the ground, triggering a net to fall and stop the bad guys. While the Jeep screeches to a halt, the actor says, "Catchphrase!" He continues, "So you can keep the romantic comedies and lady drinks. We’re good" (Dr. Pepper, 2011). He faces away from the camera and drinks from another can of Dr. Pepper Ten. The commercial closes with a can of the featured beverage shaking in front of an explosion and an announcer saying, "Dr. Pepper Ten, it's not for women" (Dr. Pepper, 2011).

As noted earlier, this advertisement seems to be harmless and funny. Reading between the lines, it appears to say what no man would dare voice aloud: time with the guys is more important than time with a spouse or significant other. In his opening lines, the announcer implies the assumption that women don't like action films and that such movies are only for men to enjoy. His last line in the ad inversely implies that men do not like typically "girly movies" like romantic comedies (Dr. Pepper, 2011). Digging deeper into these implications reveals the real assumption behind these statements: the male need to escape from the supposed chore of personal time with females. Fowles (1998) notes, “An appeal to the need for autonomy often co-occurs with one for the need to escape, since the desire to duck out of our social obligations, to seek rest or adventure, frequently takes the form of one-person flight" ("Need for Autonomy," para. 1). This message is reinforced when the announcer says (regarding Dr. Pepper Ten), "it's what guys want. Like this. . . " He is implying that guys only want low-calorie drinks and action movies chock full of explosions and violence rather than meaningful quality time with women.

This also implies that men are unhappy spending time with the women in their lives and that Dr.

Pepper Ten can fulfill their desire to be free men. Davis (1992) comments on the media myth that products can make us happy:

> Happiness, satisfaction and sex appeal, just to name a few, are imminent-and available with the next consumer purchase.
>
> Alas, even when we are wealthy, there's always something missing. We don't have the right woman or man, our car stalls at an intersection, we spend too much time doing housework. But a whole group of images imply that we are on the verge of being happy. ("Myth 4," para. 4-5)

This ad suggests that buying Dr. Pepper Ten will make men happier.

Twice in the advertisement, the announcer uses the possessive pronoun “our” to refer to men. In the opening, he says, “this is OUR movie” and shortly afterward he states, “and [Dr. Pepper Ten] is our soda” (Dr. Pepper, 2011). The use of “our” implies that action movies and, by consequence, the featured beverage are intended only for men, and that women should stay out of a man’s business. This is stated in no uncertain terms at the end of the ad when the announcer says, “Dr. Pepper Ten, it’s not for women.” This is essentially telling women to keep their hands off products geared toward men. It’s also telling men that it is acceptable to deny women much-needed quality time and to tell them to stay out of their business. This corresponds to another of the many appeals in advertising. As Fowles (1998) says, this preys on the human “[n]eed to dominate. This fundamental need is the craving to be powerful-perhaps omnipotent” ("The Need to Dominate" para. 1). The commercial also appeals to the male desire for guy time. Once again, Fowles notes, “In any case, the need to associate with others is widely invoked in advertising and is probably the most prevalent appeal. All sorts of goods and services are sold by linking them to our unfulfilled desires to be in good company” ("The Need for Affiliation," para. 1). In this ad, these appeals are not even subtle. They dominate the whole commercial, and imply a dominance of men and the select nature of male preference.

This commercial for Dr. Pepper Ten is, at best, a shameful mockery of men as a gender. The advertisement puts down women as inferior to other men and as unimportant in a man’s life. It shows a complete lack of regard for women’s needs or interests. This commercial assumes that all men desire to be free of quality time with women and uses that assumption to sell their product. They appeal to the human need for escape by saying their product is for men only and then associate their drink with stereotypical manly activities. This is underscores a theory that advertising continues to dole out to our culture: stereotypes are based in a truth that encompasses the whole of the group. While entertaining, the implications in this advertisement are dangerous. Men who take this ad to heart will soon find themselves alone with action movies and low-calorie sodas but no female companions to enrich their lives.

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A Fat World Wearing a Skinny Mask

Aaron Aguilar

We all know that in today's society advertisements are an everyday thing. We can see them everywhere we go such as television, radio, and the internet. The images that we see in these advertisements affect how we live our everyday lives. Even kids see the standards and stereotypes that we hold the rest of the world to, as Kavanaugh (1986) states in his article "Idols of the Marketplace":

> Before she had ever gotten to primary school - if she is an average child in the United States - she had spent as much time in front of a television set as she would spend in classroom lectures throughout four years of college. Her home life is dominated by television. (Cultural Ground section)

Even when kids are learning to listen and speak, they are also learning how advertisers portray the world. One of the stereotypes that advertisers usually show is how people can be happy if you look how their actor or models look and if you have what they are advertising. A clear example is in KIA's (2014) "2014 Kia Soul Hamster Commercial Lady Gaga Applause," where they show the stereotype that if people change themselves to be skinny, good-looking, and drive a nice car, then people will be liked more and treated as a celebrity. The thing is not everybody can be like the actors and models, and there is nothing wrong with that. The problem comes when people start thinking less of someone, or treating them differently because they don't meet the stereotypes or standards that we have put on each other.

In KIA's (2014) "2014 Kia Soul Hamster Commercial Lady Gaga Applause," it begins on an empty beach with three hamsters who are jogging along the water. They quickly stop and start gasping for air, and then the scene changes to a gym. There the same three hamsters are working out. The gym is pretty packed with people that are already fit and look strong. After that, they show one of the hamsters lifting with two big and strong guys—one on each side—which make the hamster look pretty fat. The scene cuts and then they show a clip of a designer drawing the car they are advertising, then it goes back to the hamsters. It shows a hamster running on a treadmill next to two fit and pretty women, and then they turn and look at him and he trips and falls. The commercial goes back to the designer, but now he is sculpting the car out of clay, then the commercial goes back to the hamsters.

It continues to show clips of the hamsters working out, and then all of a sudden it shows the hamsters at a hair salon getting their hair done (Kia, 2014). One of the hamsters looks at his watch then shakes his heads at the other two to signal that it's time to go. After that, the car being advertised comes out and they make it seem as if the hamsters are riding in the car. "I live for the applause" are the lyrics that are coming from the song in the background. Finally, the car arrives at its destination and parks in front of a red carpet. Many people are there, and a lot of camera flashes can be seen. The door to the car opens and the hamsters walk out—they are a lot thinner than before and have much more sleek haircuts—and as soon as they do, the all the people there start cheering and screaming, but the ad focuses more on screaming beautiful women. They continue to walk inside, taking pictures with people and kissing girls hands along the way. Right before they walk inside one of the hamsters looks back at the car and it reads above the car, "Totally Transformed," then the ad ends.

To most people this commercial would be both a fun and funny commercial, but what they don't realize is that this commercial is implying the stereotype that people need to change themselves to be good looking and to be liked. This is a very common thing in our society. People feel that they aren't good enough to meet society's standards of having a lot of people liking them and them feeling they are good-looking. In the ad when the hamsters are bigger and working out in the gym, nobody is paying attention to them, almost as if they aren't even there. The fact that most people in the gym are already fit and healthy looking just makes the hamsters stand out more, almost as if they are outsiders and don't belong with everybody in there that is already fit and good looking. In addition, the fact that they make the hamsters clumsy while they are still big gives the impression that if a person is bigger other people won't take them seriously, and they will just embarrass themselves. A clear example is when the hamster is running on the treadmill next to the girls, and as soon as they look at him, he gets distracted then trips and falls. Here it is almost as if the advertiser is saying that if people are big and overweight then they will embarrass themselves and not be able to talk to women.

After they have worked out and gotten haircuts—changed their looks—they show up to the red carpet. Now that they are skinnier, have better haircuts, and drive a nice car, everybody loves them and treats them as celebrities. The fact that they were only treated like this after they changed how they look goes to show how our society works. We hold ourselves and other people to a standard that we like. The fact is that not everybody can be defined and good-looking. There are people with thyroid problems and other genetics that may not allow them to be thin and good-looking. There isn't a problem with having a standard of health, but the problem is when the people are held to standards that only a small proportion of society can achieve. There are numerous commercials like this that bring down people that might not be considered good looking and thin with muscles. They usually don't do it in a mean way, usually as jokes to make it funny, but the thing is we are taking it to the real world and holding everyday people to that unreachable standard, and this causes problems.

This problem is not just in this commercial, but most commercials where we see people that don't look like the average person we would see in our classrooms and jobs. In fact "The body type portrayed in advertising is portrayed naturally by only 5% of American females" according to the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, a non-profit organization since 1976 (n.d., Did You Know section). Anorexia and other eating disorders are still very prevalent and actually increasing in men too. This is because media places such an emphasis on how they portray people—even though they use models—to look a certain way; we see them as standards that we have to meet or else people won't like us and we won't fit in with society.

Don't get me wrong, there isn't a problem with having nice things, and working out to be fit and to have a better body. The problem is when people think that if we don't have nice things and don't look a certain way then we aren't as much as person as someone who is. In his article "Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time" Davis (1992) states, "Many-if not most-of the women and men we see in the media are slim, muscular, and good-looking. We, on the other hand, are always too fat, out-of-shape and smelly… We are never told that almost all photo-advertisers make their subjects look better, so that legs are slimmer, eyes are bluer and faces have no freckles" (MYTH #5. Your Body is not Good Enough section) Countless people suffer

because of the way media portrays people, but we add gas to the fire when we take it into the real world.

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*Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time

By J. Francis Davis
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We see them everywhere: on billboards, in magazines, on bus placards. They come in the mail and in our Sunday newspapers: glossy pictures of women and men in silk robes, pictures of electric twin-foil shavers and Dirt Devil hand-held vacuums. And we see them on TV: living rooms with two sofas, white-lighted football stadiums, even Wild West gunfight and bloodstained murder scenes.

Images. They are so compelling that we cannot not watch them. They are so seductive that they have revolutionized human social communication. Oral and written communication are in decline because a new form of communication, communication by image, has emerged.

The History of Communication

The history of human social interchange has evolved through three distinct phases: oral, text-based, and now image-centered communication. In oral cultures, learning and tradition were passed on by word of mouth, primarily through storytelling. The invention of writing made it possible to preserve information and literary traditions beyond the capacity of memory, but the circulation of hand-written books was still limited to an elite few.

With the invention of the printing press, written texts were in effect transferred from the exclusive property of those wealthy enough to afford hand-copied manuscripts to a broad reading public. Elizabeth Eisenstien, in The Printing Press As An Agent of Change, dramatizes this emergence by considering the case of inhabitants of Constantinople born in 1453, the year that he Byzantine capital fell to the Turks.

People born in that pivotal year who lived to be 50 saw more books produced in their lifetimes-some eight million-than been written in the previous thousand years of Constantinople's existence. The Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the rise of Western science are just a few of the revolutions spurred by the ability to mass-produced books and newspapers and the growing ability of common folk to read them.

A similar revolution began about 150 years ago with the invention of photography. For the first time, visual representation of objects in space could be reproduced on a mass scale. Image communication was born.

It only took about 50 years for this new method of representation to become a major player in the communication of social values in American society. The rise of the advertising industry spurred this change, for advertisers quickly learned that the most effective way to sell products was not through stories or plain-text facts, but through the creation of images that appealed to basic human needs and emotions.

Television cemented the era of image communication. In one sense television has turned back the clock to the era of oral storytelling, for television tells stories and we watch and listen just like our ancestors who sat mesmerized around campfires.

But television's most important stories are those not verbalized-the stories and myths hidden in its constant flow of images. These images suggest myths-and thus help construct our world and values-in much the same way that stories did in oral culture.

What Are Images?

Simply put, images are pictures. However, in our culture pictures have become tools used to elicit specific and planned emotional reactions in the people who see them. These pictures-these images-are created to give us pleasure-as when we watch The Cosby Show-or to make us anxious when we forget our deodorant or lipstick. Images work best at this task when they are vivid and emotionally saturated. The American flag elicits more powerful emotions than an Idaho potato on a couch, for example. The potato might make us laugh, but the flag is full of multiple and often contradictory meanings and associations-everything from the story of how Francis Scott Key wrote the The Star-Spangled Banner to flag burning as a protest against the Vietnam War.

The flag works as an image because it suggests a long list of stories and myths that are buried inside us. Image makers hope that in the moment it takes to "consume" an ad or commercial frame, their carefully selected graphics-like the image of the flag-will evoke emotions and memories bubbling deep within us. Pictures that evoke these deep memories can be very powerful-and also very spiritual.

In calling up these deep emotions and memories, however, today's images have taken on new meanings and have created new myths that are shrouded-often deliberately-by these deeper memories. These new myths lie at the heart of modern American culture, and illustrate the double-edged power of today's images.

The New Myths

Traditionally, a myth has been defined as a story or idea that explains the culture or customs of a people. Often myths describe heroes or explain why a people revere the sun, or why elders should be respected. Myths are the motivating stories or ideas common cultural practices.

This understanding of myth leaves little room for the common misperception that myths are simply false or superstitious ideas. Instead, myths are the ideas and stories that motivate daily behavior.

The key to recognizing the new myths of the image culture is to think of them as ideas that emerge from long exposure to patterns of images-not as myths that can be seen readily in one or two images. In fact, these myths are unconvincing unless one thinks of them as emerging from a huge glut of images which come from many sources, including advertising, entertainment and news.

Another way to put this is to say that today's images must be read on two levels. First there is the immediate, emotional level on which we recognize the flag or the sexy body and react in a way that taps our inner stories or emotions.

But second, there is a much broader stage on which we can step back and look at one image in context with hundreds of others. This second level is where we can see the new myths of the image clearly otherwise these basic ideas are obscured by the powerful stories and emotional connections that are used to sell them. Once identified, however, they are easy to recognize, even among all the media messages that daily bombard us.

MYTH #1. The world is a dangerous place and we need guns, police and military to protect us.

Media critics often focus on violent entertainment dramas such as cop shows and movies like Terminator 2. But graphic reports of crime and terror on the news probably have a greater influence in creating our feeling that the world is unsafe. Newsmakers feature shocking, violent stories because they sell newspapers and raise ratings. And our belief that news stories are "real" and thus could happen to us heightens their impact.

MYTH #2. Leave it to the experts (who are usually white men).

Again, "real life" images-or those we assume to be real-are most important here because they set the pattern for our assumptions about who has power. The authority figures we see presenting the national news are white, middle-aged men. And when an "expert" is interviewed about a crisis or program, as in a

study of Nightline guests by the progressive media criticism organization Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (F.A.I.R.) the pattern is predictable; nine out of 10 were white males. On Nightline and elsewhere, the views of women, persons of color and representatives of alternate voices of all kinds are customarily absent.
Images found in advertisements and commercials, as well as the national news, reinforce this power structure. Contrast the traditional sex roles of advertisements for Chivas Regal, showing successful professional men in business suits with the stereotypic portraits of women and men in food ads that cast women as kitchen "experts." Many other media images depend on predefined roles based on gender or race.

MYTH #3. The good life consists of buying possessions that cost lots of money.
Living well is synonymous with wealth, according to the pictures and advertisements we see of homes and yards and cars. Big houses, yachts, fancy wine, dinner parties with silver and crystal, romantic evenings overlooking the ocean, vacations to Bermuda, sailing, BMW's, fancy two-oven sunlit kitchens: the list goes on and on. All are part of a luxurious lifestyle that is available for our enjoyment-if only we can afford it.
We can even purchase a little of it vicariously, if we can't have it all, by drinking fancy liquors or by driving a car that's out of our price range and financing it over 10 years. Some people call it status-but the myth behind the status myth is that we are getting the "good life."

MYTH#4. Happiness, satisfaction and sex appeal, just to name a few, are imminent-and available with the next consumer purchase.
Alas, even when we are wealthy, there's always something missing. We don't have the right woman or man, our car stalls at an intersection, we spend too much time doing housework. But a whole group of images imply that we are on the verge of being happy.
These images are largely advertisements. For example, Hope perfume. Joy dishwashing detergent, or "Oh what a feeling-Toyota!" People in these advertisements are gleefully happy, surrounded by lovers, leaping into the air in rapturous joy. Often, the instrument that brings this instant happiness is technology. We can buy the technology to make us happy.

MYTH #5. Your body is not good enough.
Many-if not most-of the women and men we see in the media are slim, muscular and good-looking. We, on the other hand, are always too fat, out-of-shape and smelly-though our friends don't always tell us so forthrightly. We are trained to worry, for example, that people will not even tell us if we smell bad because that kind of criticism is embarrassing.
Most disturbing, however, is the constant stream of perfect people advertising everything from auto parts to Haynes stockings. We are never told that almost all photo-advertisers make their subjects look better, so that legs are slimmer, eyes are bluer and faces have no freckles.

MYTH #6. Businesses and corporations are concerned for the public welfare.
Short of an environmental disaster like the Alaskan oil spill we see almost no advertisements and few news stories that shed negative light on corporations or businesses. This is not to suggest that all of these organizations are bad. It is worth noting, however, that most corporate images appear in ads purchased or stories placed by the businesses themselves, so it's hardly surprising that the messages we hear are relentlessly positive.
We see full-page color ads for Chevron talking about its concern for the environment. Or news items reporting that gasoline emissions are down because of a new formula developed by ARCO. Ads from tobacco companies like R.J. Reynolds discourage kids under 18 from smoking. And business-oriented magazine and talk shows like Wall Street Week cater to the interests of PBS' upscale audience, reporting business and financial trends, while we see none from a labor perspective.

So Why Does This Matter?
To ask the question another way, how are these myths hurting us? The rest of this issue suggests a

variety of answers, but in the *Rise of the Image Culture*, Elizabeth Thoman perhaps put is best when she points out that these myths have become a substitute for the search for meaning which other generations sought in more expansive and significant ways. We no longer face uncharted oceans and unexplored continents, but with a universe of space and time to explore uncounted problems to solve we need not end all our quests at the shopping mall.
Many of us feel a sense of dissatisfaction, a void that the myths of the image culture and the material goods they sell do little to fill. Besides the money, creativity and resources that the making and selling of these images waste, they also represent a gigantic "red herring," a signpost to an empty journey, a joust with the windmills of our culture, leaving us like confused Don Quixote's looking for a real opponent.

In this sense, the myths of the image culture are "false or superstitious ideas" as well as "motivating stories or ideas behind common cultural practices."

We do have signposts pointing other ways, however, and learning to read images is the first step in the right direction. This issue and its accompanying Media Literacy Workshop Kitï¿½ are designed to be a primer on the basic principles of media literacy, using analysis that helps us read images as a beginning point.

Only when we learn to read these myths on a daily basis will we have the power to substitute other motivating ideas and goals of our choosing. Only then can we consciously transcend the Age of Image Communication and stop blindly accepting the myths of the image culture.

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Idols of the Marketplace

By John Kavanaugh, SJ

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In the gospel according to Madison Avenue, what we buy defines who we are. A healthy spirituality can open our hearts to what is real.

> "She said that the only thing she really wanted for Christmas was a pair of Sasson jeans."
>
> - a blue-collar worker, speaking of his nine-year-old daughter

> "The human person cannot be relinquished. We cannot relinquish the place in the risible world that belongs to us. We cannot become slaves of things, shires of economic systems, slaves of production, slaves of our own products. A civilization purely materialistic in outline condemns the human person to such slavery."
>
> - Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominus*

If we ask ourselves what values we would like to see illuminating the lives of our children, students, parishioners and co-religionists, I think that designer jeans would fall pretty far down the list.

We might speak of human dignity, compassion, a well-grounded individual identity and an ability to relate to others as people and not as things.

Our young friend has reversed this standard. Instead of basing her identity on her potential and qualities as a person, her value in her own eyes rests upon a purchased object. What is forming the life of this young woman? What is most profoundly educating her? Have the social system, the production system and the media system conspired to lead her into a condition of servitude and inhibit the various dimensions of her human personhood?

The answer is clear. Our social myths, our economic gospels and our revelation system of television, advertising and printed matter are a formation system, educating us towards certain values, attitudes and modes of behavior.

In the most general sense, values always are a function of the culture that forms them, since culture explains all the expressions of who we are.

Cultural Ground

Psycho-socially, culture is a tilling, an elaboration of the human. Like agriculture, culture yields the human product that in turn feeds and sustains us. The culture, in this sense, is our food — our social, psychological and corporate sustenance and nutriment. It provides the very sustenance of our self-understanding, our purpose, our meaning and our fulfillments.

Herein lies culture's danger. It can form us in its own image and likeness rather than in the image and likeness of personhood from which culture has its derivation.

As a child of media-centered late 20th century capitalist culture, this woman-child with her Sasson jeans is operating out of an already fashioned culturally determined belief and behavior system that has implications for every area of her life.

The things she buys determine her identity. The formation of her social identity is based upon commercial imagery and acceptance. Her relationship to her parents is fixated at this level. Sullenness and manipulation characterize her affect. Sensibilities for right order, simplicity, compassion are already deadened. A coalition of pressures from commercialism, advertising and social programming dominates her consciousness. She is manipulated, educated and propagandized. Much of that manipulation is attributable to media.

Before she had ever gotten to primary school - if she is an average child in the United States - she had spent as much time in front of a television set as she would spend in classroom lectures throughout four years of college. Her home life is dominated by television.

The preponderance of programming and advertising in the U.S. delivers a continual message to the viewer: human beings in relationship to each other (in soap operas, series, talk shows, game shows) are trivialized and alienated. People are most likely to be unfulfilled, unfaithful, unhappy, frustrated, foolish. The only times that persons are presented as uniformly happy and ecstatically fulfilled are in commercials: purchasing, collecting or consuming products that resolve problems, deliver self-assurance, win friends.

Television and magazine content is interlaced by the financial fabric of advertising and its covert ideology of happiness through commodities. A commodity-like identity is the end result of the cultural education system in North America.

If we are taught to relate to persons as if they were expendable objects and to relate to things as if they were substitute persons, we are led into the distressing inversion that the pope alludes to when he speaks of becoming slaves to products or slaves to production systems.

Objectified Values

Value formation is achieved by the very names we give to products. Merit is a cigarette. True goes up in smoke. We eat Life in a box. Joy and Happiness are perfumes. Love, Caring and Hope are cosmetics. New Freedom is a sanitary napkin. Spirit is an automobile. It is precisely the value that is commodified and sold.

As Joan Evans of the Evans Marketing Group in New York has said: "Any industry that sells hope is going to continue to grow. And that's what we're selling." Or as another advertiser said in Advertising Age, "Calvin Klein jeans are not blue jeans, they are a sex symbol. Miller isn't a beer. It's blue collar macho... Polo doesn't sell clothing. Polo sells fashion status." The marketers realize a fact we often repress: it is precisely value that is bought and sold, that has a price, that is quantifiable, that is reduced relative to the status of trinkets.

The only times that persons are presented as uniformly happy and ecstatically fulfilled are in commercials.

The valorization of objects is enhanced by the personalization of products that appears in so much advertising. Products are not "Just Born" - they have mothers and fathers. Affection is continually poured out over bottles of mouthwash, toilet paper, diapers, dogs, Mustangs and paint cans. "This much squeezable softness deserves a hug," the woman says to the toilet paper with a baby's face on the package. Your brandy or your blue jeans are called your "friends."

The language of family relationship is subsumed into corporate identity. "Think of her as your mother." (American Airlines). "World's Greatest Dad." (Seagram's Crown Royal). "We don't love you and leave you." (Xerox). "More dependable than a man." (Payroll Savings Plan). Fidelity and commitment are words describing our relationship to washers and dryers and car stereos.

While this personalization of products is taking place, the actual image of family life in advertising, young women's magazines, rock music and best sellers is severely fragmented. Soap operas, articles in Cosmopolitan, bubble gum and pre-teen music portray men and women as being unfaithful to each other. Sexuality is rarely related to covenant or committed intimacy or family. Married people are rarely portrayed as being fulfilled or happy. As an ad for furniture in the New York Times had it, "If your husband doesn't like it, leave him."

Buying Ourselves

For over two years now, the most significant advertising phrase for Saks Fifth Avenue has been "We Are All the Things You Are."

Wouldn't they love us to believe it? If everything we are is found at a department store, if we have to purchase our identity, then we are in a condition of servitude, the slaves of products.

The ultimate moral imperative is to consume as a matter of identity. Our very meaning is wrapped up in the economics of production and consumption of more products. Products are portrayed as the condition of happiness: "Nikon: what would life be without it." "Money buys everything." (Polaroid). The media and the economic system coalesce into a book of religious revelation. "Because she believes in us, she'll believe in you. Her Bible is your Bonanza," Seventeen magazine boasts to the corporate readership of Advertising Age.

Buying is theologized in products called "Spirit," "Jesus Jeans," in diamonds that assure possession of the supernatural, in perfection that can be bought with Beef-eaters, in Calvin Klein, whom women are said to "believe in."

The theological virtues have become commodified. Buicks are "something to believe in." "Hope (cosmetics) is all you Need." "Trust Woolite." Love is a diaper, a bottle of Amaretto, a carpet shampoo.

Value formation is achieved by the very names we give to products. Merit is a cigarette. True goes up in smoke. We eat Life in a box. Joy and Happiness are perfumes. Love, Caring and Hope are cosmetics.

Thus the media-culture-economy formation is complete. We have not only a philosophy of human identity and human relationship collapsed into the world of buying and selling, we have a full blown theological system. The result is cultural ideology as idolatry.

Cultural information system is religious formation system. We form our young in the image and likeness of the products and production systems we have created by our own hands.

> *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.*
> *They have mouths hut do no' speak; eyes, hut do not see;*
> *They have ears hut do not flea,-, noses but do not smell;*
> *They have hands but do no! feel; feet, but do not walk;*
> *And not a sound comes from their throat.*
> *Those who make them become like them;*
> *So do all who trust in them.*

As Psalm 115 suggests, we become like the products we worship. Since our identity and fulfillment is wrapped up in the possessing and consuming of our commodities, we "style" ourselves after products, and where were not good enough, we are replaced or remodeled. The natural body is to be rejected in favor of the fabricated one.

Everything about our natural bodies is wrong: we're too fat, too thin, we have split ends, pimples, bad breath, body odor, our breasts or hips are too large or too small, we're not manly enough so we need a Brut's perfume or a diet macho beer. "Want a Better Body?" the ad for Formfit says, "Let us rearrange it for you."

Consumption as Fuel

In these references to advertisements I am attempting to suggest that there is an economics to issues of identity, relationship, family, commitment, human sexuality, human anxiety, the devaluation of chastity, the rejection of one's natural body. There is also a latent formation system in a culture economically based upon the continual expansion of products, consumer goods and productivity.

This formation system, whether deliberately constructed or not, has a tendency to educate human persons into a mode of thinking, believing and acting that serves the imperatives of the economic system itself.

Perhaps this may be suggested by a set of questions: In an economic system founded upon continually expanding consumption, in a society that already has a surfeit of goods, in a culture whose people are already over consuming, what kind of person will best fit, what kind of formation will be most appropriate?

How can people be convinced that they must produce and possess more? Is it better to have people with stable and happy lives or unstable and dissatisfied lives? Is it better for them to have a sound personal identity and fulfilling relationships, or 10 experience a personal and

relational emptiness that must be filled in some way?

What kind of person would be considered an economic liability? One who is at home with himself or herself? One who has a sense of justice and compassion? One who is capable of delayed gratification for the sake of longer-range values?

Awareness of the effects of these messages on ourselves and our families is the first step in counteracting them, with efforts to educate a wider public and associated discussions a useful corollary.

Beyond that, however, we must consciously seek to help those we work with uncover cultural ideology and instill methods of solitude, self-understanding and experiencing of the interior life. A commitment to relationships, the reversal of the culturally taught insensitivity to human suffering and contact with whose the culture rejects as worthless, can help counter our built-in biases.

Only direct experience and self-discovery can help us reach beyond the limited script that our objectified values system writes for us. With this transcendence, we will better relate to each other as we learn to savor and appreciate — not merely collect and consume — the goods of the earth.

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Essay 4: Essay of Revision

> Any new approach, any new way of seeing the world or one's work, is what we're after. That's the hallmark of creation, after all. If we only teach our certainties, then we might as well just record our lofty thoughts and prescriptions and hit "play" at the beginning of the term. —Robin

Introduction

Often one of the hardest things to do in writing is to look back at a work and find ways to take a different approach to it. It is important that we fix our errors and spruce up the details of sentences and mechanical issues; however, getting to true revision, the point where you really re-see your work in a clearer, more crystallized way, is tough but primary.

Alan Ziegler notes in *The Writing Workshop* that looking back on previously published pieces of writing is often difficult; "faults jump out . . . awkward sentences demand to be reshaped, a word looks embarrassingly out of place . . . an image falls flat, or a hole exists which I could now fix easily." "But," he continues, "it is these very errors that serve as indications that I have become a better writer."

The Writing Task

For this assignment, you will write *an essay about* what you'd change in *one* of the first two essays we wrote in the course, as well as ways you'd capitalize on your successes there. In short, you will analyze your own writing and work to identify places and ways you can strengthen it even more. *Do **not** revise the essay. Instead, analyze it and discuss what you would do if you were going to revise.*

I expect you to quote from your original essay, point out specific paragraphs or sections, and talk about how the quote or section it represents works now, as well as how the changes you suggest making will improve it. I also expect to see analysis and discussion of moments that work well. How do they contribute to the strengths of the essay? Could you extend them or use the techniques elsewhere?

Remember, this too, should be a well-developed essay. It must discuss these things:

- What **strengths** does your essay have?
- What is a specific example of that?
- Why is it a strength, how does it add to the essay, or how could it be used elsewhere in the essay?

- What **improvements** can be made to your essay?
- What is a specific example of that?
- Why does it need improvement?
- How might it be strengthened? Discuss and give a specific example.
- How will that improve it?

Please note that I don't have permission to openly distribute these models. You need to return these to me when we meet in class.

Notes:

- Unlike your work, these were written over the course of two weeks: there is a difference between work done out of class over time and work done in-class or on a short time line. I realize that and grade with that in mind.
- → I am looking for you to follow instructions and be thoughtful! ←
- The first two essays <u>almost</u> accomplish the goals. They discuss specific points, but don't give examples of how to fix them. They are also light on discussing strengths and backing those up with specific examples and discussion.
- The final essays, clearly hit all the requirements of the assignment.
- This essay is really between you and me; you don't need to retell or summarize your essay. I'll remember it.
- You can choose to write this in the style (adding the needed details) of the first two—more analytically, or in the style of the final essays—more familiar and narrative.

What I'd like to Revise in my "Sunny Day" Essay

In my last assignment, I attempted to capture my own enjoyment of warm winter days and communicate it to the reader. What I'm not sure I did, is to convince the reader that a sunny day really is of great value. The examples I chose were concrete events that I thought conveyed how sunny warm days allowed for enjoyable activities. But I think I failed to fully discuss the feelings that these days engender, therefore weakening my argument.

Dwelling upon what feelings sunny days evoked for me is only one of many ways I could improve this essay. In general, I think I need to apply deeper analysis to all elements of the work. The simplicity of this essay is most evident when I state my thesis in the second paragraph: "A sunny day, amidst plenty of stormy ones, is as valuable as an oasis in a parched desert." The sentence itself is not faulty, but as a thesis statement, it lacks depth. It's veiled in a catchy analogy, but on its own really only states that a sunny day is very valuable. To add more interest to the essay, I think I might strive for more complexity in my thesis. For example, in which less superficial, less obvious ways does the presence of sunshine uplift and enhance the experience of a day?

In my attempts to flesh-out a rather simplex essay, I tend to resort to lots and lots of description. Description does add interest, but too many descriptive passages give the essay the appearance of a short story, or it may even become too poetic. For instance, my opening paragraph consists entirely of description and metaphors, "In the thick of dreary winter, my house seems to shudder whenever the clouds purge the icy cold rain they've harbored in their gray masses." I might instead begin with some description and then elaborate more on my thesis statement.

On a more mechanical, grammatical level, many of the sentences in this essay were too lengthy. I tend to pack lots of information into one sentence, causing many to become borderline run-ons. My reluctance to split up long sentences leaves my writing a little awkward sounding at times. One such sentence follows: "I had never been to the Bay Area without the protection of at least a sweater, but as we walked along Fisherman's Wharf, waiting for my dad to join us from his convention, not even the slightest breeze chilled our bare shoulders." This

can obviously be remedied simply through creating two new sentences.

One of the most glaring faults of my essay was the conclusion. In my haste to wrap up another assignment, I whipped up one of the most general, cliché, boring, summary paragraphs I've ever composed. Without much thought, I compacted the content of my entire essay into a few very overused phrases that seemed to sum up and restate a very elementary thesis. "Sun seems to have a positive effect on everyone, making us all find the silver lining in daily events." The result was utterly dull and predictable. I might have written, in place of this "rehash paragraph," something refreshing—perhaps I could have used something to *represent* my thesis message, instead of very obviously restating it.

In a revision of this "sunny day" essay, I might focus on presenting my arguments with more personal and emotional evidence. While occurrences made for clear and communicative examples, supporting evidence that expressed my own feelings might further convince the reader of sunlight's value. Moreover, I might use more analytical techniques to portray these feelings, so my content would show through, rather than being disguised by heavy description and overly elegant wording.

Adding Some Details

Every essay needs revised. My second assignment essay needs a few major revisions to make it better. First of all, the assignment was focused on adding detail to my descriptions. While I added some detail, my descriptions could have used a lot more. I also could have talked about a smaller portion of my experience. For instance, instead of describing the whole situation from the beginning to the end, I probably should have focused more on the exact moment when the injury occurred. Other than that, my essay could have used a few technical changes, but the main problem was the lack of detail in my descriptions.

My introductory paragraph was good and provides an overview of the rest of the essay. One sentence stands out, though, "I remember all the details vividly from that experience." After reading the essay all the way through once, as a reader, I am still searching for those details that are so vividly remembered. I do not describe the weather at all, even though it was winter, and the snow should have provided a good opportunity for me to include some details. These details about the weather would have fit nicely in the second paragraph. This second paragraph should also include an overview of the situation.

My next two paragraphs focus on the rides my friend and I took on the hill. I described the rocky hill, the speed of the sled, and the way we rode down the hill, but I did not successfully describe my feelings during this experience. I said, "We must have been going twice as fast, and we flew off of one of the jumps!" This is a decent description of the actual situation, but descriptions of my feelings would have helped to give the reader a more complete sense of what was going on.

Other than the lack of detail, there are a few technical things which stand out. First, there is one sentence which says, "It sure felt weird." This is not a particularly effective sentence in my essay. Obviously, it would be a weird feeling looking at your knee and seeing a gaping hole and blood, but I should have described this better. I also focused a lot on the lessons I learned from the scar. This is good, but when I revise, I should clean this up to make the essay stronger.

After reading my essay and looking for areas to improve, the main thing that came across to me was the detail. The assignment was set up to improve my descriptions, and I did

not completely fulfill this assignment. Improving my descriptions will greatly improve my essay. The other revision that would help make the essay better would be to improve my sentences and other mechanical issues. This was not a major problem in my essay, but it would certainly help.

Discovering Revision

I've never liked revising. I usually like exactly what I've written the first time around, and besides a few spelling or grammatical errors, not very much gets changed in my essays. Oh, sure, once in a while I can find a way to make something make a little more sense (like I could do with that sentence), but I'd rather not. "Raw" writing intrigues me more than a finished, polished product, even though I know it's the polished-ness that people want. I've never really worked for other people. But this essay called for something different. It called for a thorough revision of something. Careful thought about my already satisfactory writing, thought on what could be better and how to make it better. Am I capable of this? Me, Miss Anti-Revision? Well, things you don't expect happen every day, so I decided to give it a go.

Reading through my essay I first noticed that I used a decent amount of description. And I also noticed I could've elaborated on most of it. "…the day where we got to hold koalas..." doesn't exactly mean much to anyone who wasn't on the trip with me. Why did we get to hold koalas? Why was that so exciting? And, come to think of it, who were "we"? Reading through my essay I noted this was a real trouble spot. I had referred to things that were completely obvious to me, but to the "naïve but interested reader" confusing and un-descript.

So what could I do? Go back and write my second paragraph *all over again*? Some things just have to be done, I suppose. Here it goes:

> I can still remember the day I first saw the necklace with crystal clarity. The day was one of the pinnacles of the trip, and every other teenager on the adventure with me was just as excited as I was. This was the day we not only got to feed kangaroos and watch a boomerang throwing demonstration; this was the day we got to hold koalas. And, not only did we get to hold koalas, we got to have a picture of us with the koala e-mailed to our homes half the globe away. To put it mildly we were ecstatic, and none of us could wait for the moment of total koala-bliss. I decided to pass the time I spent waiting for my turn in the gift shop, trying to turn my energies and thoughts to something besides holding koalas.

I liked that a little better. A bit more explanatory and clear, especially when it came to

explaining what exactly we were doing holding koalas. Also, as I read through my original I couldn't believe how many synonyms I had used for 'koala'. "Friendly ball of fuzz"? What was I thinking?

I said before I had used a decent amount of description, and I also said I could've elaborated on it. A "…koala charm…carved out of shiny, iridescent mother of pearl and hung on a thin silver chain." could be many things, depending on whom you're talking to. I decided to elaborate my description, but not in my third paragraph, except to add the word "small" in before "koala".

I thought the larger elaboration would fit better in my fourth paragraph, after my first sentence, "Now I can't really imagine myself without that necklace." I'm adding in this, "Every time I look in the mirror it looks back at me, a little smiling koala the size of two peas and as cute as a button." I also changed the first sentence of my last paragraph, from "Though the paint on the koala's eyes and nose is long gone, and it has been joined by a charm of 16th notes, its still the same necklace bought on the best adventure of my life," to "Even though the black paint on the koala's eyes and nose is long gone, and it constantly gets tangled with all of my other necklaces, it still stands out as the necklace bought on the best adventure of my life."

"What else is there to fix?" I found myself almost eagerly thinking. Then I realized what I was doing: I was turning into a revision freak. Why me? The immense task of re-reading, re-thinking, and re-writing an essay was not supposed to be *fun*. I decided it must just be the spirit of the evening, who wouldn't be happy after doing their Shakespeare homework?

I noticed I jumped around a little in my essay. My transitions weren't always the smoothest, but I liked them that way. Is that anti-revision showing its face? No, I like jumpy styles in everything. When scenes randomly pop up in movies, and chapters seem to come out of nowhere in books, that's when I'm hooked. Though my essay isn't completely random, it's the way I like it, and isn't that the best way?

After reading through my essay again I decided there was only one thing left that I really didn't like, and that was the closing sentence of my fourth paragraph, "It's just a bank full of everything." That sentence doesn't really sound like it belongs. It also doesn't sound like a

good close for that paragraph or lead in to the next paragraph. I decided to change it to something a little bit more descriptive, “It’s a photo album filled with not just pictures, but moments of my life, moments that are the most special to me.” That sounds much better.

Am I done already? That wasn’t so bad. As I write these final sentences on my essay about revision I wonder if I’ll have time to revise this. I decide that I’ll make time. Revision isn’t really evil, and though I wouldn’t call it benign, it’s closer to fun than I thought. I like my essay better now, I enjoyed having another chance to work on my essay, and the work I put into it now reflects even more than it did before. Best of all, my essay is now something I can be even more proud of.

Revision Essay

Whenever I write, it seems like I do most of the work of revising from the start. It takes me such a long time to write a single paragraph, or choose a single word, that by the time I'm finished there are very few grammatical or organizational mistakes. I scrutinize everything, and one of my favorite parts of having people read my writing is that they point out things I should change that I had never noticed, even though I'd gone over those exact words seemingly millions of times. One strength I have when it comes to revising is that I really don't mind having my writing critiqued and criticized; at first it was hard to accept other peoples' opinions, but I've come to realize that if I'm proud of what I write, even the most negative comments won't change that fact. I've learned how to use critiques to my advantage; knowing what other people think of my writing gives me different perspectives and ideas.

It still is really hard sometimes for me to let go of words or sentences that end up not working. Like in the last paragraph of my essay, "Writing to Annie," you said the last sentence was kind of cliché and that I needed to remember to show and not tell. I wrote: "It was the first time I ever pulled emotions out of my heart and set them to paper, and I believe it was the beginning of my life as a true writer." Originally I had loved that sentence! I thought it was perfect—a good, strong ending that summed up everything I had wanted to express throughout the essay. But I didn't realize that the entire point of writing the essay was so I didn't *need* that sentence at the end; I was supposed to be able to convey that idea without one clear, concise sentence—showing, not telling. I took the easy way out without even trying to.

Looking back now, it really does seem kind of sappy and cliché. It's the type of thing parents or judges of an essay contest would probably love—people who aren't necessarily looking for flaws other than technicalities. They might not like my revised sentence as much because it requires more thinking and doesn't set everything out in the open. But for the sake of improving my writing I attempted to change it, and even though I was critical of it at first, now I think I actually like it more than the original sentence. "I was disappointed that I couldn't find my exact words, but I still remember clearly the gist of what it said. Pulling emotions out of my heart and setting them to paper created honest and sincere letters to my beloved lost dog—but in the end they were actually much more." Although it still might need even more

revising, I think it's a lot better than what I had at first.

That was the major change I made to my essay. Pretty much everything else was just cut and paste, one word deleting, and starting new paragraphs. For instance, in two spots I started paragraphs in different places to put emphasis on certain parts of my essay. I moved "Finally my fingers touched the keys, tentatively at first, slowly spelling out the words" to the end of the paragraph before it so that the beginning of my letter to Annie could start the next paragraph. That definitely made a strong impact on the start of the paragraph and was a really good idea.

I'm glad the organization of my paragraphs was originally good. Sometimes it's hard for me to tell if the transitions between ideas and paragraphs are smooth or not, so I was glad to hear that they worked out. I was happy with the way I was able to begin by showing what was happening—me sitting at the computer—to talking about how I had always loved writing. When I first started writing the essay I had no idea I was going to delve into my past as a writer, describing my first writing experiences in kindergarten and detailing how I found my personal writing style. It occurred to me as I was writing the essay. When I was finished, I wasn't sure if it really fit in with everything else, or if it was too off the subject. I was relieved that you thought it fit right in.

In everything I write I like to make sure I have plenty of figurative language and alliteration so that no matter how persuasive I'm trying to be, it can sound pretty, too. For me, writing has to be interesting and flow. If I read something and all the words are straightforward and boring, without any "frills," I won't be interested. My favorite writers are the ones who come up with the best similes and metaphors, original and unique, but accurately describing whatever it is at the same time. I'm always impressed with good figurative language because it's just so gorgeous when it's used right. I think my favorite sentence in the entire essay is, "The next night I was back at the computer, the same white glow filtering onto my young, freckled face, my eyes perusing the words I had written the night before. They sounded good to me, connected smoothly like long, satin ribbons on the page." For some reason I really like how I compared my words to "long, satin ribbons." I was also proud of this sentence: "I wrote until I couldn't think of anything else to say, and I looked over both of my

letters to Annie, satisfied with the words I had so carefully strung together, blinking and glittering with emotion like Christmas lights delicately placed around a tree." Lights on a Christmas tree evoke such a pretty, delicate image to me. Once again, I was comparing my view of the letters I wrote to something else.

Now I feel even more confident about my essay, "Writing to Annie." Revising gives me such a sense of completion and crisp neatness; there aren't any messy sentences or awkward wordings anymore. The whole essay flows, using the right word choices and transition sentences. Although revising is the hardest part of writing to me, I've come to realize through experience how necessary it is. Even if I think something I write is perfect, there will always be some way to make it even better.

You made it all the way to the end! Yay, you!

Here's a present!

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER