

FOCUS

# THE LIE WE CONSUME

**“We are forever conditioned — conditioned to believe, to believe we can’t be happy with less.”  
— Sting**

BY G. GRAHAM SIMMS

We live within a lie. Amusing ourselves to death. Fiddling while Rome burns. Dragged along, blinding ourselves to the crisis, seduced by the consumer value system. We have replaced faith and spirituality with this empty belief system of consumption, production, advertising and commerce. Our advertsizing and producing. Our amassing and relating to objects.

This consumer society forms our selves and our behavior. It dictates our identity and our social status. We use products as substitutes for people. Consumerism is our reality tunnel — it is a system that tells us what is true and what is good. Commodities are the new gods, and they give our lives meaning and purpose. It is our religion — it saves and gives ultimate meaning to our life. This commodity world view affects how we shop, think, feel, love and relate to others. It causes our obsession with sex, violence, and entertaining ourselves. We consume junk food, television, the latest useless plastic gadget, and other people. We live to consume.

It is a social control, and the stock market depends on it. Unless we fall in line and consume, abide by these rules and work to get money to have the nice car, we won't get the hot girl and our sex life will suffer.

Money is a way of defining who you are by what you have. The more we possess, the more existence we have.

We are conditioned to view each other as things — obstructions on the path of consuming. We want quantity and we get it through conflict. Our value and dignity comes

from the level of our domination. People are just objects — not living things and are therefore to be used and overcome.

The general system encourages people not to put our faith in personal relationships, but to put our faith in relationships with cars, products, TV's, and bank accounts. To avoid the vulnerability of love, we channel our passions into possessions and entertaining ourselves. We have lost all awareness of our internal lives and are becoming incapable of communicating with each other. We are cynical about other people, but we are in a romantic love with material possessions. Our value system judges people in a cost-benefit analysis.

Our consumerism makes us dislike anything that limits our choices, including the constraints of marriage and family. We like non-binding commitments and non-committal relationships. Could there be a link between our hedonism and the sad state of marriage and relationships?

We find freedom in refusing to distinguish between right and wrong, in moral relativism, in apathy, in refusing to impose any judgments or morality on our actions or those of others. Only children born for success should be born. People do not count unless they are certain replaceable, their value is in their marketability and productivity. Friendship, intimacy, love, pride, happiness and joy are products we consume. It is our way of life.

We are a productive, but suicidal culture.

The suicide rate of middle aged men in Japan seeking to cash in their life insurance policies after losing their jobs went up by 35 per-



**“WE SHALL SQUEEZE YOU EMPTY, AND THEN WE SHALL FILL YOU WITH OURSELVES!”**

cent in the last year.

By 1985, the suicide rate of young people in North America tripled from 30 years earlier. Children who are more depressed are also those who watch more TV. Girls who spend more time on shopping, hair and make-up are more depressed.

It's the American way for women to make up for feelings of powerlessness, low self esteem and unhappiness by overspending in a compulsive way.

Consuming, whether it's shopping or TV, distracts us, medicates our feelings and numbs our sensitivities to our interior life. We rely on protective devices to shield us from our consciousness. We take shelter in wealth, and comfort in stupor.

Advertising agencies create artificial needs to be fulfilled and we suck it up. We have enough of everything — we don't need dozens of pairs of shoes, scents and designer toilet paper. The only thing people lack is fulfilment. We are lied to, told that we can gain fulfilment from our "relationship" with these products. We develop relationships with products to replace relationships and emotions in our lives. They won't hurt us like people can, they only cost \$2.89 and they will

make you feel "Joy" or "Charmin." Go ahead — squeeze the Charmin.

Buying into any image or lifestyle is falling prey to the image makers. Even if it's healthy, organic food, the sneakers are not made in a sweatshop, the car is made in our country, it is killing us on many levels.

The richest 20 percent of the world consume 85 percent of manufactured products, releasing 75 percent of the world's pollutants. It is us, the rich elite that are ruining this beautiful planet — not the overpopulated South. The dark skinned starving masses tread very lightly on this planet.

Today's hero's are people like Ivan Boesky, Donald Trump, Michael Milken, and Bill Gates. Boesky told the graduating class of University of California School of Business Administration in 1985 "Business is healthy. Greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself."

The most successful acquirers often feel a void and see themselves, in their most private moments, as frauds and have little true sense of themselves.

The values of free economy, profit and economic freedom are only good if they serve the whole, including the poor, and are commit-

ted to justice and love. These values are dangerous if they are grounded in selfishness.

This is not about capitalism — it is about pure unmitigated greed. It is about a dehumanizing system that is based on atheism, class warfare, and corporate dictatorship. This manipulation is much more subtle than a totalitarian dictatorship, although they both suffocate spirituality.

If the pig-mask of our consumer selves is removed a terrible black hole will reveal itself. There is nothing beyond the good looking appearances — little substance to our beings. Sometimes the discontent in our complacent eyes-closed cage shows itself and we realize that we are living in a false existence. The only way to disengage from the sadness that comes from this joyless economy is to eliminate the desire itself.

We are slaves to our social programming. We are told to consume, fight, riot, drink, seek a mate, obey, eat, kill, fear, buy, hate, compete, gain more, sin, don't cooperate, seek differences, sleep.

But there is a choice: waking up and becoming aware; cooperation; trust; empathy; intuition; common vision; evolution; peace; prosperity, insight.

See the **BIG PICTURE**

mediapipe.ns.sympatico.ca

Get movie listings for anywhere in Nova Scotia.

**MTT**  
From here. To everywhere.™

MTT MediaPipe™, your online community info source, is the place to find movie listings and descriptions. We've got scads of them from all over the province. We even have the latest movie reviews so you can get the scoop before you get your ticket. Get out and about in Nova Scotia. Click in now.