

He Who Pays The Piper - Calls The Tune

by liz smith

Advertising sings -
They con you
Into thinking you're the
one.

That can do what's never
been done;

That can win,
What's never been won.

Meantime life goes on all
around you.

Bob Dylan said that in "It's
Alright Me." Most criticism of
advertising is done by
songwriters, authors and
comedians. The mass media
rarely touches the subject.

More than three-quarters of
the income of magazines and
newspapers comes from
advertising. The entire revenue
of radio and television is from
this source. The media that
reaches the most people can't
afford to criticize their life
source and so the small group
of major corporations which

"Even minor qualities of
unimportant commodities are
enlarged upon with a solemnity
which would not be
unbecoming in an
announcement of the
combined return of Christ and
all the apostles."

In *The Industrial State*
Galbraith elaborates on this.
"The market for soap can only
be managed if the attention of
consumers is captured for
what, otherwise, is a rather
incidental artifact.
Accordingly, the smell of soap,
the texture of its suds, the
whiteness of textiles treated
thereby, and the resulting
esteem and prestige in the
neighbourhood are held to be
of highest moment.
Housewives are imagined to
discuss such matters with an
intensity otherwise reserved for
unwanted pregnancy and

There are laws protecting
the consumer against unfair or
misleading advertising, but
these are vague and peculiar.
For example, in Quebec,
restriction on beer advertising
forbids the companies to
discuss the merits of their
products.

The law assumes that the
consumer is well aware that he
is being sold something and
will disregard a large measure
of what is being said. The
consumer is left to pick the
truth from among the lies.

Informative advertising is an
economic necessity. When a
new commodity is entered on
the market, wide advertising
produces a mass market which
results in lower prices. The cost
of information on the new
commodity, and its availability
is not less justifiable than the
expense in making the product
available.

The proportion of
advertising expenditure made
to provide the consumer with
information is very small. After
the mass market is created,
advertising is purely
competitive, to shift the
patronage of buyers from one
particular brand to another.
The money spent on
competitive advertising raises
the price of the commodity to
the consumer. For example in
a ten cent chocolate bar, one
third of a cent goes to the
advertising company.

Without the psychological
propaganda, word of mouth
and individual choice would
divide the market, and the
pressure would not be for the
most clever and cunning
advertisement, but for the
most meritorious product.

GOOD CITIZEN CONSUMER

The advertisers have another
motive for continuing
competitive advertising as
explained by Galbraith: "...
the wants so created (thru
advertising) insure the services
of the worker. Ideally his
wants are kept slightly in
excess of his income.
Compelling inducements are
then provided for him to go
into debt. The pressure of the
resulting debt adds to his
reliability as a worker."

The advertisers rebut the
arguments against competitive
advertising with, "So long as
competition is believed to be a
desirable factor in human
welfare, just so long will
competitive means be used."
It is rather difficult to
understand whether
competition is a natural factor
in our lives or if it has been
developed by the advertising
industry.

One must decide Mr.
Jones thought he had one-up
on his neighbour by having two
cars, before the media told him
he did.

The manufacturers and the
advertisers want the public to
evaluate human worth by the
amount of material possessions
one has, regardless of whether
they are needed or used. This
has now become an important
characteristic of the society we
live in. It appears to be most
prevalent in the lower and
middle income stratas, the
classes which are most affected
by advertising.

Many of the winners of this
game, the wealthy, find they



WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM TO BRING
YOU A WORD FROM HER SPONSOR

undertake the bulk of all
advertising are in a position
free from public restraint. This
is a position even the
government can't maintain.

Research by General Foods
Corporation (which invested
111 million dollars in 1964
advertising) showed that the
typical American family -
father, mother, two children -
is exposed to 1,500 advertising
messages every day.

WHERE THEY'RE AT

"Psychological factors,
rather than need, are the
motivation for most
purchases," says S.H. Britt in
his book *The Spenders*.

A guide for advertisers lists
these eight basic appeals:

1. enjoyment of food and
drink
2. comfortable clothes,
homes, surroundings
3. doing away with painful
things
4. winning every race,
keeping up with the Joneses
5. being wanted by the
opposite sex
6. providing the best for
loved ones
7. winning friends and
influencing people
8. enjoy life, living as long
as possible

Advertising skillfully
depraves and distorts these
popular desires, playing upon
people's anxieties and
frustrations to sell their
products.

As John K. Galbraith, a
leading U.S. economist, says,

nuclear war."

It is the housewife in her
role as consumer in this
capitalistic society, who bears
the brunt of the psychological
effects of advertising.

She is made to feel
inadequate if she doesn't add
at least four different products
(presoak, bleach, detergent,
softener) to her laundry.
Recent studies show that
despite all the new
labour-saving devices, the
housewife spends at least twice
the time doing housework that
her grandmother did.

Sex appeal is used more in
advertising than any other
appeal. Motivational analysts
discovered that a major need of
men and women in America at
mid-century was sexual
reassurance and sex now sells
everything from pick-axes to
automobiles.

Corporations feel no
obligation to be consistent,
even with their own standards, in
order to sell.

Shown on this page is an
advertisement for CBC radio
which recently appeared in a
magazine for high school girls.
It is the photo of a purse from
which spills marijuana, LSD
and birth control pills. The
title is "Your bag, our bag."
The psychological result is that
if you are a "cool", "in"
teenage girl you carry these
things in your purse.

The CBC is owned by the
Canadian government, the
institution which makes and
enforces laws against grass and
acid, and who calls sex under
18 "statutory rape"



Most raincoat companies
are so concerned how their coats
look in the sun, they forget how
they work in the rain.

The implication is to subtly slur competitors and give the
appearance that they are the only company which makes a
quality raincoat.

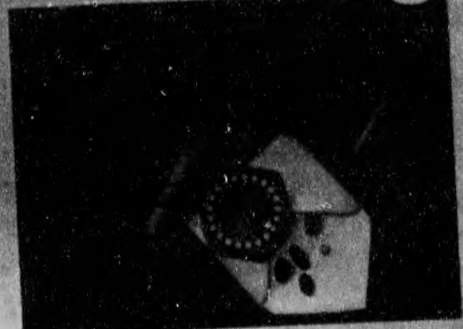
have not won anything and
convert their energy to public
service, and the quest for
power.

Many politicians (perhaps
most) have wealthy
backgrounds. Cyrus Eaton
went to Hanoi to investigate
the possibilities for peace, yet
he is probably making money
from the Vietnam War.
Bertrand Russell began the
International War Tribunal.
John Lennon is devoting his
time to a peace campaign.

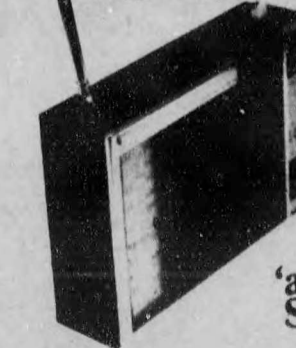
There are many more
examples.

It might appear then, that
this country's competitive
spirit was fabricated in the
name of free enterprise at the
expense, mental and physical,
of the majority. Our desire for
material goods may be
analogous to the proverbial
donkey chasing the carrot on a
stick. Soon we must reach the
enlightenment which the
donkey did, and stop chasing.

Your bag?



Our bag!



Pot, b.c. pills, acid. Some do, most don't.
They tell why on CBC Radio's Action Set.
Open minded, open ended.
Interviews with the Beatles, Dick Gregory
and many, many others who matter.
Music and the music scene from London,
Nashville, San Francisco, L.A., and Toronto.
Fashion, records, books, movies, ideas.
Features on protests,
pollution, politics...
Whatever your bag,
add CBC Radio's
'Action Set.'



'action set'
Saturdays

This is an obvious appeal to the modern in-crowd. They
assume that the drug culture is worth advertising for and
include marijuana, bennies, LSD, and birth control pills. This
helps people who use them to relate to their product.