

\* With 8% of the world's population, North America produces 50% of the world's garbage. \*

## subconscious marketing and subliminal images

by patrick blackie

Ever wonder why you have to walk through an entire grocery store if you want a loaf of bread? Ever wonder why commercials always portray beautiful women and men being happy with their new product, or why companies will sink enormous amounts of money into ad campaigns that achieve nothing more than pissing us off?

Simple. Companies have to make money.

But if you think about their methods, it can be somewhat disturbing. Companies invest billions of dollars into researching what people will like. They test their commercials until they receive the desired effect.

That's easy enough to swallow, but then when you consider it to little more depth, then it starts to stink.

Ever wonder why a grocery store is laid out the way it is? Why orange juice is right next to the liquor boutique, or why all the frozen 'box food' is scattered all over the store instead of in one section? Is it for the shoppers convenience?

No. Stores pay people to layout their store so that people will be statistically inclined to buy more stuff. Years of

research has revealed that some people will be more prone to purchasing something, depending on its location. Subconsciously.

For example, some people are more likely to pick up a product if it is within easy reach on the way to the cash register, and based on things like whether or not most people are right or left handed, or how many shoppers are of a specific age group, stores will strategically place goods for more pick up.

Not to say that by strategic placement of goods, people will buy more stuff, but in the long run, the research pays off for the store. In the span of a year, how many people saw something on their way to get a loaf of bread and came out with a roast chicken?

But this attack on the subconscious goes farther than grocery stores. Sex — far less subtle but far more potent — has always been a popular selling tool. Companies like Gap and Calvin Kline use attractive men and women to advertise their products.

What's wrong with that, you may ask? Easy. Using the beautiful men and women in their ads sends the message that attractive people wear their clothes or smell of their

fragrances, and in order to be part of the cultural and social elite, you need a brand name.

This is a result that is inevitable, given the prominence that these companies. They may not have started it — pretension has always been a human characteristic — but they are perpetuating it. Kids growing up to Gap commercials will not lose their materialistic view when they reach maturity — they are being raised by this shit. It won't happen to all, but it will happen to some, and that is bad enough.

Ever wonder why diaper companies seem to be advertising a new diaper every week? That's because they make a new diaper.

Keeping a kid in diapers is an expensive thing for any parent. It is worsened when companies like Huggies develop a new diaper for a different age range, keeping kids in diapers and parents in stores.

But hey, there's no way people can get suckered like that...is there?

But there is. Sad but true. People are surprisingly trusting. The assumption is that if Huggies were to make a diaper for 3-6 year olds, then there must be a good reason. Hopefully when the 5-10 year

old diaper comes out, people will pay a little more attention and maybe not buy it.

They don't lie too blatantly. They do not operate a secret service to determine what people want, and they don't kill to keep their secrets.

They do, however, put billions into researching personal habits and tendencies,

create marketing campaigns designed to groom crops of customers and they do keep their intentions in the obscure.

Well, most of them do. Cigarette companies don't need to — they have the power-base to blatantly sell a harmful addictive drug. How long before the Gap can get away with subliminal images or personal threats in their ads.

### Week of Reflection

The week of November 22 to November 26 will see a variety of events happening at Dalhousie in commemoration of the "Week of Reflection." The "Week of Reflection" is part of the global initiative called "Sixteen Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women," which was declared by women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981. November 25 is the "International Day to End Violence Against Women," and this date was chosen to commemorate the death of the Mirabel sisters, who were brutally murdered in the Dominican Republic in 1960. On November 25th look for Dalhousie Women's Centre representatives to be handing out "No means No" coasters and stickers. If you don't get one, give us a call and we will gladly give you one.

"Ten Years and Counting: Have We Made Progress Towards Ending Violence Against Women?" will be the title of a panel presentation and discussion on Wednesday, November 24. This will take place in the Green Room of the SUB, 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Panel members include: Cathy Love, Executive Director, Bryony House; Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, Chair, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women; Marie Paturel, Nova Scotia representative, National Association of Women and the Law, violence against women working group; and Peter Davison, Men for Change. This will be a panel presentation, followed by questions from the floor. Everyone is welcome and sign language interpretation will be provided.

Pauline Mantley and Marjorie Willison will give a presentation entitled, "A Warm and Humane Legal System," on Thursday, November 25, during Law Hour (12:00 to 1:00) at the Dalhousie Law School. Pauline is the author of "Sile it Cries," her book which recounts her experience with the legal system that helped her to obtain a prosecution for childhood sexual assault/abuse. This is an inside look at an historic Nova Scotian case. Everyone is welcome. Bring your lunch.

A display table with information relating to ending violence against women will be in the Dal SUB on Friday, November 26, from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. Stop by, pick up a pamphlet, get a sticker and a coaster.

Starting on Monday, November 22, the Dalhousie Women's Centre will have Purple Ribbons available. The Purple Ribbon campaign was started as a way of raising awareness about violence against women, and is symbolic of the Montreal Massacre, December 6th. All donations received for ribbons will be given to Bryony House, a local transition house for women leaving abusive relationships. Look for a display and donation box through out campus.

December 6th will mark the ten year anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. This year's event marking the tragedy will be held in the Green Room, Dal SUB, December 6, at 7:00 pm. Music, poetry, prose, speakers, readings and candles will once again be used to mark this day. Come early for a seat. Sign language interpretation will be provided.

All "Week of Reflection" and December 6th events are free of charge and everyone is welcome. For more information or to get involved on any of the above events, please call the Dalhousie Women's Centre at 494-2432.

