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TRUTH IN ADVERTISING  
*and other heresies*

Walter Weir

McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.

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**TRUTH IN ADVERTISING and other heresies**

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*who are in advertising—Christopher,  
Anthony and Karyn—as well as to  
those who are only exposed to it—  
Stephen, Jeremy, Brenda and Walter.*



## Foreword

At a dinner party not long ago, the subject of advertising came up in the conversation with all the irresistible force of a whale rising to the surface to blow. Everybody erupted at once. In this polite bedlam, the young matron on my right clutched my arm and indicated that I should bend down so she could speak directly into my ear.

"Tell me," she said seriously, "what are advertising men *really* like?"

"What are they *like*?" I repeated, a bit appalled at the enormity of the job, yet intrigued by the challenge. The mind can reel at tasks like this. I began to tell her what I believe advertising men are like, meeting her serious question with a serious effort to answer. As I spoke of the job of persuading people to buy things, I talked about talent, the qualities of creativeness, a desire to serve, the constant effort to be in good taste, and, above all, to be honest. And I added that often

these same men had wit, charm, poise, and interesting presence. As I talked, an image of a man kept popping into my mind. This man is Walter Weir. He is an advertising man.

A tall, slender man, who walks or runs with a speed and agility that would shame a junior account executive, Walter Weir is what many advertising men would like to be when they grow up. Although he's been writing advertising copy for 35 years, ever since he joined N. W. Ayer in 1928, his brown hair is still predominately brown, and he's the youngest-looking 53-year-old I've ever seen. Perhaps more important, his ideas and thoughts, and the fire of his convictions, are everlastingly youthful.

These convictions are no less strong because he is a gentleman and behaves, and expresses himself, in the way a gentleman would in meeting an adversary and standing his ground. While he might give his opponent the first shot, his aim would nevertheless be sharp. His fire would be no less devastating because it was delivered cleanly, and without powder burns, right between the eyes.

A number of times in recent years we on *Printers' Ink* have injected ourselves into controversies with so-called "thought leaders" outside of advertising. Almost

invariably, the occasion would be a speech, or an article, or a public appearance of some kind. In each instance, the "thought leader" would deliver himself of some emotional tirade on advertising. Without exception, as far as I could see, such criticism was based on ignorance. Worse, this ignorance was padded and bolstered and prodded by what seemed to me to be ulterior motives of jealousy and envy. Hypocrisy was rampant, for even those who honestly criticized advertising obviously enjoyed the fruits of the economy advertising helped so much to build.

Usually we looked for a spokesman for advertising who could express himself extremely well. In addition, we looked for someone whose cultural and literary background would give him the soundest possible base from which to aim his shots. We also wanted an individual who would meet hysteria with calm, who could douse anger with sweet reason, and who could slice hypocrisy with the cutting edge of irony. Almost always we turned to Walter Weir. And he never failed us.

I naturally was delighted to find that two of the controversies in which he engaged are discussed in this volume. When we asked Walter to tangle with the Reverend McCracken of Riverside Church, he deliv-

ered what we regard as one of the most devastating answers to religious critics of any kind, anywhere, on any subject (pages 141–151).

In his debate with Marya Mannes, a vigorous and articulate critic of our manners and modes, Walter cut her arguments to pieces (pages 133–140) with implacable logic—reminding readers that one of the reasons irrelevant criticism of advertising finds receptive ears is that those ears seldom had cultivation by anybody who supports and explains advertising.

While writing the kind of advertising copy through the years that personified his high standards of creativity and persuasiveness, Walter Weir has dedicated much of his time as a speaker, television panelist, and writer, to explaining the role of advertising in our society today.

In almost every instance, he is gallant—a gentleman who would rather persuade by facts, logic, and a creative phrase or telling couplet than with a club. He would shrink from a battle in which an adversary must be vanquished by a meat cleaver, preferring somehow to meet with those whose minds are capable of absorbing new facts and ideas and thus are capable of change. And it is his kind who will, who must, inherit the industry.

A deceptive advertisement brings worse agony to

Walter Weir than to any deceived consumer. To him, deception goes against all grains. In the first place, the art of communication is defiled. He's sorry, of course, that a consumer may be fleeced—but then he knows that a disappointed purchaser will never return for the second purchase. The real problem is that deception will destroy the advertising business. As he says (page 49), "... No matter how we analyze the human or the business situation, we come inevitably to one conclusion: no one can afford to disregard or offend against truth or human sensibility. And the sooner we come to that conclusion, the better the advertising we can and will create. And the better will be the image and acceptance of the business through which we create it. And the lower will be the A/S (advertising-sales ratio) of the advertisers we serve."

Throughout this interesting and, to me, useful book, Walter Weir tackles the attitudinal problems that continually face men in advertising. Invariably, he shows that their solutions are always better—in every pragmatic sense, let alone on moral and ethical grounds—if the problems are solved on a basis of truth and honesty. And he manages to convey his wish that all advertising men would recognize this without raising his voice or getting into a sweat about it. The real sweat of battle should be reserved for those issues, national

and international, that almost never lend themselves to reason.

While discussing many of the dilemmas that confront advertising men today, Walter Weir also takes exception to the way advertising is taught in many colleges and universities. He says (pages 203–204),

I think advertising could be noticeably improved through a difference in attitude regarding it on the part of those who profess to teach it in our colleges. From conversations I have had and correspondence I have maintained with academic friends and acquaintances, I am all too regretfully led to the conclusion that these people teach advertising without having arrived at a fundamental philosophy concerning it—or even a belief in its basic value as communication. I believe they reflect the attitude of a considerable portion of our population about advertising—that its essential purpose is to “trick” as many people as possible into preferring and purchasing a particular brand above all others, regardless of the actual value of that brand or its actual desirability. These people, after all, teach from textbooks written about advertising which concern themselves chiefly with so-called techniques of persuasion—not with the essential function of advertising in the production-consumption process. I find it completely inexplicable that I have heard little demand for advertising improvement from academic circles and highly regrettable that I have witnessed no

program for advertising improvement from academic circles. I have heard condemnation of current advertising practices from a number of academic sources, including John Kenneth Galbraith. But I have not heard, even from John Kenneth Galbraith, five words of constructive criticism. I have spoken at a number of colleges. What has disturbed me more than anything has been the astonishment on the part of the students I have addressed that I, as an advertising man, believe and express my belief that advertising, as currently practiced, is faulty and open to improvement—and, in order to enjoy improvement, must be subjected to constant and unremitting questioning.

Perhaps the major contribution academic circles could make to advertising would be through teaching it as a form of communications, exactly as journalism is taught as a form of communication; second, to encourage in students a desire to develop a philosophy of advertising; and, third, to look upon themselves as one of the most important sources from which a general improvement in advertising can come.

While this book will probably be read mostly by advertising men, and is designed to help even the most sophisticated improve his own stance and thus contribute to the improvement of the advertising industry, I would nevertheless hope that it would also be read by many outside of advertising—especially those thought leaders who sanctimoniously believe that because they

are experts in their own fields they are automatically authorities on advertising. Walter Weir demonstrates, again and again, that if talented advertising men were not in advertising, they probably would have become leaders in the fields of journalism, books, the drama, teaching of all kinds, and religion...and that many advertising men have brought talents to their present work that generally go unrecognized.

Walter Weir not only has the soul of a poet—he *is* a poet...and has written this book with a poet's passion that advertising be honest, be improved, be always useful. Like a good poet, he sees what *is* with shattering clarity. At the same time, he doesn't hesitate to hope that, whatever advertising *is* today, it may be, and *will* be, much more in years to come. There will be those who will disagree with some things Walter says; I find a point here and there I might quibble about, too. But such points are so minor they aren't worth mentioning. The vast majority of his thoughts and conclusions are so good, so sound, so filled with insight, that they deserve to be read and pondered. His heart and his mind and his passion are there for all to see. Like any gifted poet, Walter Weir has the power to lift and move people to act. And in this fine book, he does it well.

*Woodrow Wirsig*

## Introduction

"The general verdict is that I can do a lot if I don't give up and write advertisements. . . . I'll croak before I write ads or sell bonds—or do anything except write."

*Letters of James Agee to Father Flye*

Maggie Cousins, of Doubleday, whose critical decisions, originally at *Good Housekeeping* and later at *McCall's*, resulted in a number of my typescripts being set in honest-to-God type and printed, made what to me is one of the most concise summings up of James Agee—every bit as devastating as Harold Ickes' summing up of Thomas Dewey as "the little man on the wedding cake" or of Wendell Willkie as "the barefoot boy from Wall Street." Maggie—who is a Texas prairie come to life—said to me, in a voice like the wind across the prairie, "James Agee is, essentially, the James Dean of literature."

I do not wish to derogate James Agee. *Nil nisi bonum*. Yet I find his attitude toward the writing of advertising somewhat pretentious and, beyond question, naive. Above all, since Agee, in Maggie's brilliant description, has achieved a sort of sainthood, I find his judgment of advertising and the skills it requires (skills someone so seasoned as Aldous Huxley considered highly demanding) not just uninstructed but, to anyone engaged in or only just interested in advertising as a career, explosively challenging.

Agee's comment suggests that somehow the writing of advertising is cheap, commercial and corruptive. It assumes that the writing of fiction is somehow above being cheap and commercial and corruptive—despite some of the countless paperbacks paraded as literature. (Not to mention some of the hard bindings.)

I aspired to the publication of a novel, the production of a play, the performance of a musical composition which I had created. And, for a time, I considered advertising a second choice. But I was haunted and churned and tortured, as I wrote the advertisements I was instructed to bring into being, by the realization that I was still dealing in human communication—and this, I could only feel, demanded the utmost in mental discipline to achieve clarity, understanding and credibility.

I find it disturbing that any human activity should so arbitrarily be considered nobler or less important than any other human activity. I am no longer sure that human life is any more important in the scheme of things than animal life or plant life, but I *am* sure of this: that whatever fulfillment human life and human activity are capable of is realizable only through profound dedication.

The arguments in this book I have voiced on numerous occasions, not just in the hope of improving my chosen profession but seriously hoping I could in some way contribute to the improvement of the human lot, which at the moment (and perhaps at any moment) could stand a little improving. However, the human lot has arrived at the point in time that it has mainly because of the emergence and evolvment of communication. Without this, the experience of dead generations would be of as little consequence to surviving generations as the experience of the whale to its progeny, or the bird, or the dog, or the horse.

Human life may be confined to the planet on which we live. It may have no future but eventual extinction. Yet, while it persists, it presents the most reassuring proof possible of a purpose to existence.

It is difficult to rise above the insights or knowledge of the period in which we have our existence. However,

I think at any time we bring about more satisfactory and productive human relationships through proper communication, communication related mercilessly to the reality it is assumed to represent. In recent years, charges have flown about almost as numerous as the satellites we have launched into space—and as dramatic—that advertising is not always related to the reality *it* is assumed to represent. This, in turn, has called into question the worth of its contribution to our society.

In our society—in which no one man attempts to provide all his needs or to satisfy all his wants by himself but, by specializing, attempts to perform a service sufficiently desirable to induce other people to exchange what *they* produce for what *he* produces—the public must be acquainted with the products and services its members have produced and offer for sale. So far, advertising has evolved as the most efficient way of meeting this requirement. And in doing this, it seems to me obvious that advertising must at all times describe as accurately and honestly as it can the products and services it proclaims.

This book attempts to specify the conditions under which the form of communication we call advertising can best contribute to what stumping politicians regularly refer to as “our way of life.” Obviously “our way

of life” changes from day to day imperceptibly and from year to year perceptibly. But as it continues generally in its present mold, it will beyond doubt require a form of communication such as advertising to keep it viable.

*Walter Weir*

Langhorne, Bucks County, Pa.

December 4, 1962

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*TRUTH IN ADVERTISING*  
*and other heresies*



# 1

## *The Language of Advertising*

I would like to address myself to the current stage of advertising—which I consider a very crucial and critical stage. I mean this period during which we in advertising are the subjects of uncomplimentary books about what we consider our profession, are smeared with citations by the Federal Trade Commission against particular ads and commercials, and are generally made to appear as literary prostitutes. What concerns me deeply about all that is happening is the complacency with which most of us confront it. No one seems in the least concerned—or stirs himself to investigate why it is taking place or what effect it might possibly have on our profession or what we might be doing to counter

what is being said about us and the threat it poses to our jobs.

Instead, we tell ourselves we are unfairly criticized. We cite statistics. We prove that only a minor percentage of advertising has been cited by the FTC. We point out that, by and large, the American public likes advertising and looks for it, that the advertising it finds objectionable is minuscule in comparison with the whole.

But daily and weekly and monthly the cries about advertising do not diminish, they multiply. And nothing we say in defense seems to quiet the voices raised against us. It is completely unrealistic to say that those voices are only a fraction as numerous as the voices that accept and even applaud what we create—on TV and radio and in magazines and newspapers.

However, at any time it is the vocal minority that is threatening and dangerous, not the silent majority. I have come to have a deep respect and admiration for our system of government, a respect born of a careful study of the public opinion polls. For, when you analyze these polls, you come to realize that, as a country, we have reached the almost platonic ideal of government by the philosophic elite—the I-don't-knows of the Gallup Poll, the uncommitted, the independents. The people who swing elections in this

country are the minority, not the majority. The Democrats and the Republicans, who vote strictly along party lines, to a large extent cancel each other out. It is the independents who—by making up their minds at the last minute, after all the available evidence is in—confuse the public opinion polls and elect the candidate who most appeals to them.

Similarly, it is the minority of vocal critics among us who bring about the significant changes. They may be right or they may be wrong. However, like the board member who speaks either the longest or the loudest, they carry the day. Never forget the most significant attribute of Marcus Cato. We remember him for his famous "*Delenda est Carthago*" phrase—*Carthage must be destroyed*—which he kept repeating in season and out of season.

The great movements—for good or evil—in this country and in the world at large, throughout history, have almost always started, not with vast numbers of people, but with one person—who slowly gathered about him a few devoted disciples. Aristotle. Jesus of Nazareth. Buddha. Mahomet. Napoleon. Hitler. The list is not too long. Good or evil, these individuals had one thing in common—they had deep and strong beliefs and they voiced them constantly.

Can we, therefore, take solace in the fact that the

voices raised in criticism of advertising are few and the advertising they criticize is not typical of all advertising? What we must bear in mind above and beyond the vast area of silence is the fact that voices *are* raised and *are* attracting increasing attention.

We must, in addition, bear in mind that these voices cannot be silenced by anything short of removing the cause of their criticism. Constitutionally, laws cannot be passed to stifle their criticism; but constitutionally laws *can* be passed to hobble advertising. These are the facts, unpleasant as they may seem.

To be as realistic as we can, considering all the facts, it behooves us to look within ourselves and our profession. Should we be satisfied that only a small percentage of advertising can be criticized? Should we not, rather, ask why even a small percentage is open to criticism?

I do not believe advertising that is objectionable from the standpoint of either veracity or taste is objectionable because someone wished it to be. Or decided that it *should* be. It becomes objectionable, unfortunately, for reasons that are all too good—because a client insists on advertising that will “move” his product, and the copywriter feels he should develop as strong an argument as possible, forgetting that frequently strength is as unwelcome in terms of flavor as it is

welcome in terms of a safety device; or because competition is claiming the world and somebody decides that the only way to beat competition is to claim the universe; or because somebody feels that big black Gothic type is somehow more cogent than Caslon; or that you can't discuss corns or colds or perspiration odor in delicate terms.

Few people in advertising start a commercial, for TV or radio, or print, intentionally to be objectionable. I have cited a number of reasons why an advertising message, begun with the best of all possible intentions, can end by being objectionable. However, when you analyze away all the superficial influences, you find in your hand a cause which it is difficult to deny—a lack of skill.

This lack of skill has its effect in the book publishing business as well as in advertising. When a Hemingway or a Marquand writes a novel, almost without fail it makes the *Times* best seller list. But not only are there all too few Hemingways and Marquands—the Hemingways and the Marquands who do exist produce all too infrequently. As a consequence, the public must choose among the incompetent, the inadequate and the shallow all too many times.

How many Marquands and Hemingways do we have in advertising—a profession that has no tradition

of excellence and often discourages literary competence rather than encourages it?

Advertising—and advertisers—sorely require the skills of people trained and talented in the purely literary facility of communication. Communication—effective communication—is not a facility with which we are born. Records of human beings in one way and another reared apart from civilization and civilized people show that, without demands made upon us to return communication, we would develop little more than a few primitive and limited grunts. The effective communicators throughout history have been chiefly those who steeped themselves in the communications of others—principally the communications of the literarily competent.

I have been dismayed by the little attention given to the communications arts in the schools my children have gone to—by which I mean spelling, reading, grammar, rhetoric. These, in my opinion, are absolutely vital and fundamental to education—and, perhaps, should be taught to the exclusion of all other subjects until the student is competent in communicating clearly with himself as well as with others. For our principal source of communication, inescapably, is ourselves. We converse with ourselves even when conversing with others. Asleep and awake, we ques-

tion ourselves, we consult with ourselves, we try to explain ourselves to ourselves. The greater our skill in symbolization, in the use of words, right words, meaningful words, words that most clearly sum up our feelings and doubts and convictions, the more sanely and reasonably we can live. I am confident learning would be more rapid and thorough if children brought to the subjects taught them a thorough grounding in language and its correct use. There is no other way in which these subjects can be absorbed and understood.

When businessmen insist on having placed as writers on their accounts persons experienced in their particular lines—without determining if these people have the basic and essential skill of effective communication—I am appalled. The peculiarities of particular businesses can be learned in precious little time. Effective communication requires a lifetime of devotion, and then is never wholly learned, certainly never fully mastered.

The most desirable writer to have in an agency—for TV or print—is the writer who values writing, the use of words, above all other activities; who does not cease writing when he leaves his daytime job; but who, immediately after dinner, sits down at his typewriter to work out a poem or a tract or a story. If he doesn't do this, he isn't a writer—he's a pretender. He makes

use of his limited language skills without in any way trying to enlarge them. Suspect this kind of person, and avoid him—eschew him, if at all possible, for the individual who cannot go through a day without reading in a book or struggling with a poem or a story. This man has what advertising needs—dedication to spinning the threads of communication which bind people together in understanding and helpfulness.

It is not essential, may I interject, that a copywriter spend his evening or his weekend hours struggling over a short story or a poem. It *is* essential, I believe, that he spend more than eight hours a day devoting himself to the art of communicating. He could spend his evenings, for example, brooding over or struggling with advertising messages. But he should, in some way, be ceaselessly concerned with improving his ability to communicate. And I think this can most effectively be done by experimenting with other forms of communication. Those who try their communications skills in strange and unaccustomed media, I think, most acutely become aware of the arcana of substituting words for reality and causing them to represent reality.

With more of these people behind the typewriters from which modern advertising emanates, more of modern advertising would be less objectionable—and, I am confident, more effective—than it is. For the

people who object to objectionable advertising object also to objectionable literature and objectionable movies and objectionable magazines. Never believe they single out advertising alone. They criticize any human activity they consider incompetent or in bad taste.

We can set up within our profession committees and boards to watch for objectionable advertisements. We can urge them to clip these ads and send them to the Four A's for criticism and action, as has been suggested in *Advertising Age*. But this will accomplish little more than call attention to the symptoms—it cannot possibly eradicate the causes, one of which is incompetence. Incompetence in writing skill. Incompetence in clear, honest and effective communication.

Once we look earnestly for the literarily competent, the genuine writers, give them scope for their talents and do not try to stifle them, a number of healthy things will happen. Not only will advertising improve in tone—it will be more readily accepted on all intellectual levels and *an increasing number of competent writers will be attracted to it.*

All too many advertising fabricators today consider their end purpose the snaring of consumers. They talk in terms of selling propositions—by which they mean a marshalling of arguments that few people will be able to withstand. I cannot believe this is the end pur-

pose of advertising. I believe the end purpose of advertising is to enable the reader or listener or viewer to experience as vividly as he can through language or visualization whatever it is the use of the product will accomplish for him. The objective of the advertising writer is not to make a victim of the reader, the listener, the viewer. His objective is to create a "continuing" consumer, and to accomplish this he must so communicate that when his reader buys and uses the product he is satisfied he has not been misled.

In short, if we want to get our critics off our backs, let us get ourselves off our fundamentals and put a premium on literary competence. It is not only a practical solution to present problems, but one of the greatest hopes for advertising's future.

## 2

### *Advertising: The Unexplored Areas*

At any time, one of the greatest mistakes human beings make is to assume that all that possibly can be known is known. This sanguine assumption is most generally made in such fields as morals, politics and one's own specialty. Insofar as the last-named is concerned—and, I suspect, insofar as all are concerned—no small amount of self-defense and self-justification is involved. It is disquieting to feel that someone, within the next several moments, might become more expert than we consider ourselves to be. Yet, actually, it is only through the emergence of the more expert that not just progress but a larger fund of working knowledge—and the progress that makes possible—are achieved.

Our greatest privilege as human beings, I think, is to have the capacity of knowing that someone soon or late will shatter that which we know with so much certainty—to erect a rationale he will probably worship with equally tenuous certainty. Hence, let us examine some of the unexamined areas of advertising. Let us, at least, glance over some of the many areas waiting to be explored. For as much as we assert that the practice of advertising has become overwhelmed with research, we have not begun to investigate areas that exist even now in which research is urgently needed.

If enough of us pry and question, it is possible that even before we leave it, advertising may grow a little, may become a degree more effective than it is, may inspire even more respect than it does. I am most concerned that, despite all our protestations of the importance of advertising to what we call “our way of life,” our profession at the moment is probably at its lowest ebb of respect.

Someone said that we are evolving a “people’s” taste and thus challenged the validity of any questioning of our standards by a so-called intellectual elite. This, I believe, is looking in the wrong direction along the stretching and apparently endless road of human development. It also overlooks the main source of ad-

vancement along that road—the lone voices that have urged the tardy millions on. As I have mentioned, the great movements for good or evil throughout history have sprung, not from the crowd, which can only roar approval or disapproval, but from individuals who have had deep and strong beliefs and who have voiced them constantly.

Protesting that we are not properly appreciated, or that our critics are a minority, is probably the least effective, least realistic way in which to gain the respect which we, as professionals, may feel we deserve and would like to have. In fact, I find it difficult to understand a profession as volubly criticized as ours has been, burying its head in the sand and not asking itself why it is being criticized and how to avoid even the least criticism. If any of the products we advertise were subjected to a tenth of the criticism we have been subjected to during the past few years, the managements responsible would have had everyone in any way involved in the front office in a crash effort to get the products questioned beyond criticism. How can we be so presumptuous as to consider *our* product unfairly set upon and to demand that the public, not we, change? In so doing, are we being as intelligent as we would like to think ourselves? I have read reports, recently, of speeches claiming that we, in advertising, are being

perhaps too critical of ourselves. Can you imagine the sudden diminution of scientific achievement if scientists should begin discouraging criticism and skepticism and honest doubt among themselves? The majority of critical letters the FTC has received about our profession and product have not objected so much to dishonesty as they have to blatancy and bad taste, to exaggeration and a seeming total disregard of human feelings and sensitivity. Is it not time we were asking ourselves if we are not decreasing the efficiency of advertising by stirring such waves of criticism? Certainly this is an area crying for honest and searching exploration.

Advertising is essentially communication—not a magic incantation. Consequently, the more credible it is, the more likely it is to gain cooperation from the person to whom it is directed. Another quality it must have is clarity—so that understanding is engendered. Here, too—in the area of sheer communication—much more exploration than we have had is desirable.

I think it is curious, for example, that most of the measurements we have devised to determine the reach of advertising have seldom gone beyond the person directly touched. We estimate the cost of advertising in terms of the total number of people exposed to the message. But the effect of the message does not necessarily stop with those physically confronted with it.

There are few who will not confess that the most convincing and powerful kind of advertising is that known as "word of mouth." Yet when we speak of "word of mouth" advertising, we speak of it as if it came into being like Topsy—or required a specially engineered "whispering campaign." The truth of the matter is, that the more convincing the impact of advertising is on those who first see or hear it, *the more likely it is to stimulate "word of mouth" spread of itself*; while, the more skepticism it provokes, the greater is the amount of resistance it builds—among countless millions never measured by Starch or Nielsen or Trendex or any other currently employed measuring service.

It is an entirely plausible assumption that the enthusiastic repetition of an advertising message, by one human being to another or to several others, increases its total effect. Therefore, it becomes vital to consider and learn how to create the kind of advertising *most likely to cause people to become couriers of the message*. Indeed, it is entirely possible—since advertising is essentially communication—that the first aim of advertising should be to foment favorable and widespread conversation. And I do not believe anyone can be expected to speak favorably to another about an advertising message which he reads the FTC has cited as objectionable or which he hears derided by his peers

or even only the intellectuals in his community. Is it unrealistic to think in these terms? Is it more realistic to think in terms that promise *less* exposure for our message? As I have said, I believe this, too, is one of the sadly neglected areas of advertising crying for exploration. It is just possible we might find that one highly acceptable commercial does more good than three irritating ones—and so save ourselves important money or enable us to get more good out of the dollars we are already spending. On a strict economical basis, I think it behooves us to find out more than we currently know in this area.

In another book, I have written of “total” advertising—by which I mean advertising which affects *all* the factors requiring influence of one kind or another in the sale of a product. I mentioned specifically the failure of the automobile industry to use advertising to combat, for example, the wholesale application of gasoline taxes by both state and federal government—a trend that could only encourage the rise in favor of the economical European car. Traffic congestion, also, I pointed out, could only have an adverse influence on the sale of motor cars—as well as the lack of parking facilities in large urban centers. Should such threats to automotive sales be blithely ignored? In fact, the very excessive use of the motor car in commuting from sub-

urban areas into cities built long before the motor age, could easily prove one of the most destructive influences to automobile ownership. One has only to take a cab from the center of New York out to one of its air terminals—LaGuardia or Idlewild—at eight-thirty to nine o'clock of a weekday morning to see one of the greatest threats to the future of the automobile industry: countless cars, bumper to bumper, creeping expensively into the city, uneconomically carrying one commuter or, at the most, two toward overcrowded and much too expensive city parking lots, burning gasoline at a rate that can only eventually discourage those same people from a folly that no one, least of all Detroit, is currently urging them to avoid. Can this condition have no import for future automobile sales? If so, would it not make good sense to do something about it *now*? How shortsighted can we become? And how shortsighted do we make ourselves by thinking primarily in terms of today's sale? Is this really being as practical as the so-called "hard-boiled realists" would have us? I do not think so. I think we should be realistic enough to explore such areas as either beneficial or harmful influences on future sales. I am sure similar situations exist in many industries—undoubtedly most critically in those enjoying the greatest current prosperity. For there is nothing like success to make us self-satisfied,

overconfident, blind to pitfalls as well as to opportunities. It is chiefly when we "have it made" that we become conservative. Until we reach that point, risk and experimentation hold the greater promise. Once we "have it made," the tendency is to play it safe. And nothing is more dangerous.

Another area for exploration is not just the geographical market but the psychological market. There are definite trends in our thinking and emotional outlook—both as a nation and as individuals. Rather than fall victim to these trends, we could more profitably anticipate them in order to be able to cope with them or to change our product to benefit from them.

For example, during the late forties and early fifties the Sunday newspapers in New York City lost some 5,000,000 in circulation. A ready answer—a too-ready answer—was: TV. But a check of Sunday circulation in other metropolitan markets with heavy TV viewing, notably Los Angeles, showed that the pattern varied and did not necessarily fall off as TV viewing increased. The answer had to lie elsewhere—and did: in changing living habits, in the enormous growth in outdoor cooking, boating, fishing, golfing and other weekend activities that left less time than previously for Sunday newspaper reading. One of the major reasons for the lack of circulation fall-off of the Los Angeles *Sunday Times*

appeared to be the growing popularity of its home magazine section—which tied in with the trend.

Are we justified in crowding the television screen with monotonously repetitive westerns and cruelly sadistic detective mysteries on the sheer basis of the audience figures that result? Can we sleep quietly and peacefully by telling ourselves that we are only giving the public what it wants; and that by doing so we are actually boosting our “standard of living?” Do we allow our children complete license to destroy because this is what *they* want? No small segment of the public wants to cheat and steal and indulge its animal nature without restraint or consequence. If it is so important to give everyone what he wants, what kind of bacchanalia and slaughter might we wind up with if we carried this point of view to its logical conclusion? Pandering undoubtedly contributes to the circulation of money—is it therefore justifiable?

In Theodore White’s *The View from the Fortieth Floor* a highly significant comment in this respect, I think, is put into the mouth of John Ridgely Warren, the hapless individual hired to save the failing magazines, if possible, or to put them out of business if necessary. What Warren says comes as an afterthought, as hindsight. He and his wife are standing at a window,

among all that is left of the now demolished magazine empire. They are observing the view from the fortieth floor, looking at all the countless buildings that stretch over the island of Manhattan.

"I thought," said Warren, "you could measure everything the way a builder measures buildings. So much for engineering estimates, so much for ground cost, so much for construction costs, so much for mortgage—and then you rented out the space at a profit. If the figures were right, you couldn't miss. But that's not so. That's where I went wrong, that's where the whole gamble went wrong."

He continues:

"...every tower out there was built on someone's dream. The dream first, then they measured it out... this country was built of dreams as well as appetites. And I gambled on the appetites. I thought if I measured and packaged enough appetites in a big enough audience, I could come out with a profit and be free. But...even if I'd won that one, I would still have been caught.... The way the TV boys are caught. The way all the balance-sheet boys are caught. You have to start not with the figures, but with the dream...the highest towers in this city were built by people who had dreams. That was the way the whole country was built.... This business of ours was a business of truth and dreams. That's what they wanted...that's where the responsibility was...and I let them down."

When I read *The View from the Fortieth Floor*, I said to myself that this is pretty much how so many business novels end today, with a moral awakening on the part of the protagonist—which so seldom happens in real life. And I was about to criticize these books for not being a totally accurate reflection of life—when it occurred to me they might actually be an improvement on it.

I submit that if unsightly pimples appear on the face of advertising, it is symptomatic of a systemic disorder. It is a sign that all is not well within. Are we being as rational and scientific as we like to fancy ourselves when, instead of looking for a cause, we excoriate those who call attention to the need for remedial treatment?

Our research has to a large extent been shortsighted research. It has studied only the near things, the superficial things, the undisturbing things. The things that really matter, the things that are most fundamental, that offer the greatest promise if investigated—and the greatest threat if ignored—we largely neglect, out of timidity, perhaps, or lack of vision. And you know the reference, in Proverbs, to what happens where there is no vision.

Advertising has reached the mammoth proportions of \$12 billion annually. This is a lot of advertising. It may not seem much in relation to the Gross National

Product—which has also risen over the years. But our country has not grown any larger physically. In fact, the population increase has only served to make it smaller, consuming space by crowding more people into the same area. As advertising expenditures increase, this, too, takes up more “space”—or time. Is there perhaps a point at which the American people might be confronted with too *much* advertising? We emphasize the need for repetition of a message, for frequency of insertion. So we find new ways and places to advertise—in taxicabs, on buses, in every conceivable nook and cranny of railroad stations. A \$12 billion business. This is impressive, but is it good? I don’t know. I do know that people get pretty mad when they have three commercials thrown at them between television programs—as well as confess their inability to remember so much exposed to them in so short a time. Is it biting the hand that feeds one to suggest that maybe we should investigate how much advertising the American people can take, still find acceptable, retain and react to? Wouldn’t this simply represent sound economic sense?

There are many areas of advertising which invite and, indeed, need exploration. I have mentioned only a few. My purpose is not to catalogue all the areas, or to overdramatize any I have mentioned, but to call attention to the need and the opportunity. If I have been success-

ful, you have undoubtedly already begun to explore. And the most vital area we can explore is, in the end, ourselves—our motives, our beliefs from which our motives stem, and where these are leading us. This is the chief area, indeed the only area, from which major improvement can come.



# 3

## *The Problem of Restraint in a Free Society*

Under our system of government we are historically inclined to tolerate any evil as being preferable to the evil of dictatorial authority, meaning the dictatorial authority of a George III. This abhorrence of tyranny has been handed down to us in our very blood—as a sort of insurance, bequeathed us by our ancestors, against the loss of the liberties which they won at great cost. Without knowing the actual source of what we say, we many times affirm that “the best government is the least government” and that “eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” For awhile we believed in “no foreign entanglements,” seeing these as alien influences cor-

ruptive of what we chose to call “our way of life”—and which we still reverently refer to as “our way of life” despite the fact that “our way of life” has changed continually over the years—as it was intended to change and to be changeable.

Our political and economic traditions, however, we expect to see changed by evolution rather than by fiat, by an orderly process rather than through the process of an order. Hence we are inclined to resist any suggestion of change, preferring to have any change we deem desirable come about slowly, without too much disruption of the status quo. There are also those of us who resist change or the suggestion of change because we find the status quo very much to our liking.

One of the many problems of achieving restraint in a free society is being able to know clearly whether we are restraining liberty or license.

In this respect, competition does not necessarily keep us on the road of progress. In the name of competition we resort to practices that are not always fairly competitive. We incline to seek for ourselves positions of advantage—regardless of whether these positions are equally available to our competitors. We proclaim our belief in the ultimate triumph of quality or unique advantage, but—in the pinch—we resort to stratagems that are largely fictitious or nonexistent, trading on the

public's acceptance of language, on the willingness of people to believe what they see or hear.

In the name of competition and profit we engage in many practices considerably more expedient than wise, which bring no long-term benefit, which cause confusion and distrust and which threaten either forcible restraint or eventual ruin. For example, television commercials which we proudly refer to as "hard sell" but which become sheer annoyance in all too many living rooms around the country. Print advertising tends to elicit fewer complaints, but chiefly, I suspect, because the opportunity to escape it by turning the page of the magazine or the newspaper is considerably more convenient than having to go all the way to the bathroom. Advertising in print media is, therefore, less intrusive on our privacy, but not necessarily in better taste.

Few critics of advertising have been so widely read as Vance Packard—whose book, *The Waste Makers*, I fear, introduces a term that may plague advertising every bit as much as the term *hucksters* or *hidden persuaders*.

I object to these terms in the same way that I object to advertising in poor taste—and to Packard's books: as being unrepresentative of the whole, but sensational enough to come to be applied to the whole.

*The Waste Makers* takes up the subject of planned

obsolescence and of advertising as an important means of speeding the process. Packard, I believe, can also be accused—in the manner in which he has written his book, which is the manner in which he has written all his books—of causing a needless depletion of our natural resources, specifically our wood pulp supply.

The blurb on the dust jacket states that “though Mr. Packard has no quarrel with legitimate technological advancement, he seriously questions the morality and economic validity of a system that in order to exist depends upon artificially shortening the useful life of products.”

What Mr. Packard has done, actually, as he did in his other books, is to engage in the kind of research that *The Literary Digest* used to engage in in order to create and renew itself once a week: collect from various publications quotes and opinions and, occasionally, even a reported fact. He goes one step further: he collects, in the main, only that material which helps support his case—plus a lot of material that only seems to support his case. The unanalytic will proclaim this a prodigious amount of research and, because research as a word has a sacred ring about it today, will assume that *The Waste Makers* accurately depicts us as a nation and a society.

It doesn't. For example, Mr. Packard to prove that ours has become a “throw-away society” tells of an an-

nouncer on a television program chanting, "You use it once and throw it away—You use it once and throw it away" and he states that this chant was employed to promote the sale of a deodorant pad. Now this product was meant to be thrown away after a single application. I can see nothing virtuous in saving once-used deodorant pads, and can only look upon their re-use as slightly repugnant.

Following this Packard cites a steel company which, in a television commercial, showed a pleased housewife dropping a metal can that had contained a soft drink into the wastebasket. He comments, "No fussing with returns." Again, I can only protest that I see no particular advantage in saving old cans or returning them to have them re-used. My grocer would also resent this.

Mr. Packard speaks of plastic toys and implies—in fact, states—that in their use, children are taught at an early age "that everything in this world is replaceable." He speaks of "steaks and other meats" which "have appeared in disposable aluminum frying pans. When the steak is done," he comments wryly, "just throw away the pan with the nasty old grease." He writes of muffins that come in "throw-away baking tins" and Hungarian goulash in "throw-away plastic boil-in-bags."

He mentions the sale of countless new "push-button foods" sold in aerosol cans and again laments that, when

finished, you "just throw away the dead squirt can." His son found, he reports, that by punching a hole in the bottom of these cans, an additional spoonful or two of the contents could be extracted. Following this, however, I suspect that even the Packards throw away the punctured receptacle, since injured in this way it is rendered *decisively* useless.

He builds mounting evidence of our disposable form of living by telling of going to a dentist to have some work done, after losing an inlay, and having the dentist advise him that two of his thirty-odd fillings needed replacing and that it might be a good idea to replace all of them, since they all seemed to be getting old. Isn't it possible that this was just sound professional advice? I am surprised that Mr. Packard did not indict God for having failed to give him a permanent set of choppers.

He says that millions of Americans are now buying inexpensive watches and throwing them away when they need repairs. If "millions" of Americans are doing this, I am amazed that our city dumps are not now ticking away furiously. He says that each year American housewives throw away hundreds of pounds of food scraps that used to be fed to dogs. The research I have seen indicates an overwhelming number of women mix food scraps with dog food, reluctant to waste them.

Mr. Packard's examples are extreme but colorful—

and highly quotable. I do not consider all either applicable or typical. I could cite, for example, against his disposable cans, the stratagem of the jelly makers, who pack their jams and preserves in jars made to be re-used as drinking glasses—as do the peanut butter and processed cheese packers. I can also cite, from personal experience, that these are not only re-usable but seemingly unbreakable. Long after one's cherished crystal is down to a single remaining goblet, his closets are bulging with miscellaneous jelly and cheese and peanut butter containers that refuse even to chip and threaten eventually to engulf his entire house in a sea of thoroughly indestructible glass.

While Mr. Packard's presentation of his case against planned obsolescence may be laughable to those who read critically, it is a book not to be laughed away. For its case is so presented that, despite some back-tracking in the final chapter, many readers may agree with its blanket condemnation of a way of life far from perfect but is not entirely as Mr. Packard pictures it.

Indeed, it is because the advertisements that offend against taste and propriety are colorful in the same way that Mr. Packard's examples of waste are colorful and memorable, that they tend to cast suspicion on all advertising.

I once received a letter from a lad, then in the Navy,

who had thought of entering advertising once he had fulfilled his military obligations. He wrote me, in part, as follows:

Recently I have had a great many reservations about making advertising my career. Unfortunately, although I have heard much articulate abuse heaped upon the industry by those whom Charles Brower has called "the misinformed eggheads and the uninformed meat-heads," and have read most of the . . . fiction and non-fiction relating to it from *The Hucksters* to Martin Mayer's *Madison Avenue, U. S. A.*, I was unable to find an equally articulate spokesman who would speak up in defense of the industry until your book, *On the Writing of Advertising*, was published.

Naturally I found this gratifying. However, he continued—significantly:

The young men who are dedicated, honest and sincere, believing the public image of hucksterism as they read of FTC indictments . . . and see patently false presentations of benefits which do not exist . . . are going to go elsewhere. Advertising will be left with the disenchanted and dispirited, with the . . . mediocre on the one hand and the opportunistic on the other.

Referring again to my book he said he was encouraged to see conviction and dedication "in the midst of a culture where qualities of human personality seem,

along with everything else, to be up for sale." I wrote this young man immediately and told him to hurry up and get into advertising, for it sorely needed people like him.

Here, however, is further evidence of a weakening of the entire structure which occurs because of a lack of intelligent restraint in fashioning advertising messages. But how is intelligent restraint to be achieved? How can the advertising business impose the necessary discipline on itself to avoid excesses—and so avoid curbs dictated from Washington? Human nature being what it is, will there not always be those who—for want of talent, scruple or simple regard for their profession—produce advertising with little regard for its side effects on human nature? And so long as they feel this way, will they not always let somebody else worry about what happens to the profession generally?

I cannot avoid remembering that circulation statements, issued by publishers, were not always accepted so readily and without question as they are today. There were publishers who, in the name of competitive necessity, falsified their statements. And I recall it was expressly to make circulation statements acceptable that the Audit Bureau of Circulations came into being. It was a brilliant move—a body created by the industry itself to correct improper industry practices. Naturally this body did not come into existence overnight, but it

was formed, and it did eventually evolve into today's successful Bureau.

I believe the example of the ABC might well be considered by the advertising profession. A Committee on Improvement of Advertising Content now exists and operates within the Four A's. However, I think it is unrealistic to expect competitors to feel comfortable criticizing one another. If an ABC—an Audit Bureau of Criticism—were to be set up to function with the necessary authority, I believe it would have to consist of people not earning their livelihood directly from the creation of advertising. Certainly the woods are full today of distinguished former advertising men, now honorably retired, from among whose number one or more might be found to head up such an operation. He (or they) would, of course, have to be assisted—probably by a legal staff, perhaps by a general semanticist or two, and quite likely by some independent creative people capable of suggesting ways and means by which a distasteful appeal might be modified without any loss of persuasive power. And above all, such an organization would have to have a research staff constantly in the field, or a broadly scattered and representative consumer panel, so that the criticisms audited would be those of the public and not simply the opinions of a committee—some of whose members may have gotten

out of the wrong side of the bed or had a bad cup of coffee for breakfast or missed a train on the way to work.

In fact, through such a research-backed audit, much might be learned about the numerous ways in which advertising functions, the qualities that make it acceptable and welcome and those which cause it to be resisted or rejected. I should think advertisers and agencies alike would welcome information of this kind, since it would be eminently practical and highly usable, enabling them to derive most benefit from every advertising dollar they spent.

Contributions to the support of such an ABC would, of course, have to be voluntary but should probably come from all major advertisers, advertising agencies and media, since its findings would be chiefly to their benefit and advantage. Eventually, I believe, it could become an honor and a mark of professional competence to be a contributing member of such an organization.

I offer this suggestion as one possible answer to perhaps the chief problem facing advertising today. In fact, it is entirely possible that we might find the solution to this vexing problem of needed restraint, to use an expression, as simple as ABC.



## 4

### *The Advertising to Sales Ratio*

During the period 1940 to 1960, advertising in the continental United States more than doubled in volume—and undoubtedly, during the next twenty years, will again double. I should hope, however, that in another twenty years, it will have solved a number of the problems that presently beset it—one of the chief of which seems to be how best to be accepted by the people it is intended to influence.

There are many, of course, who do not consider this a problem—who are so convinced of the necessity for advertising that they conclude it makes little difference whether advertising offends or irritates, overstates its case or even misleads. They remind me of the success-

ful father who, when his son was about to embark on a business career, advised him, first, to be honest in all things, since honesty is the best policy; and then to study corporation law, so that he might be familiar with the many ways in which he could be honest legally.

Early in 1961, the New York State Legislature introduced an amendment to the general business law "in relation to false and deceptive practices (in advertising,) providing for recovery of a civil penalty by the attorney-general in connection therewith." The Advertising Federation of America objected to certain phrases in the amendment and suggested changes. The changes were accepted and the amendment passed on March 10th, 1961. In this respect, we have never operated, as businessmen or as advertising men, entirely free from legislation of some kind; and over the years the legislation under which we operate has grown more rather than less. It is reasonable to expect that, over the next twenty years, it will grow still more in volume, extent and complexity.

As businessmen, however, we should be less concerned with laws enacted to restrain certain questionable practices—since such laws affect all equally—than with a much greater threat, a threat which can only make advertising more costly and considerably less dependable in use, the threat of growing public disdain

and apathy. It is in this respect that I find the man who believes that the only responsibility of advertising is to "sell," the so-called realist in advertising, highly unrealistic and impractical. For by overlooking some of the other areas in which advertising has responsibilities he allows the very base on which it operates to be undermined, the base of general public acceptance without which advertising cannot properly function—and with which, but against mounting skepticism, it cannot function as effectively or as efficiently as it should *if its cost in relation to sales is to be kept as low as possible.*

No one concerned with maintaining a low A/S—or advertising to sales ratio—can afford to allow the public mind to become calloused. This is a realistic fact of life which must enter the consideration of any and every advertising campaign: is it written so as to encourage belief not only in its particular message but in all messages that will appear with it or come after it? For the A/S ratio goes up in direct relation to the acceptance of the advertising message and the action taken as a result of it; and as one campaign contributes to building resistance to others, the A/S of all inevitably rises.

How can this unprofitable practice be prevented—or at least discouraged? In an issue of *Printers' Ink* which appeared during the spring of 1961, an article

appeared written by a certified public accountant, one Thomas Higgins. Accountants are generally considered grossly unimaginative people. I would be loath to put Mr. Higgins in this class. Indeed, Mr. Higgins, in his approach to advertising's problem, exhibited much more imagination than many advertising people have demonstrated. Mr. Higgins' thesis was that advertising suffered chiefly because it had not yet become a profession—despite the loose use of that term to describe advertising's place in the general scheme of things.

"In the strictest sense," Mr. Higgins wrote, "advertising is not a profession. . . . There is . . . no enforcement of a standard of conduct." To be brutally frank, of course, there is no standard of conduct—to be or not to be enforced. Mr. Higgins mentioned the Four A's and its 345 members throughout the United States. He said, "The 4 A's has excellently stated standards of conduct which inveigh against the use in advertisements of false statements, misrepresentations, offensive suggestions, misleading claims and unsubstantiated ones. Many agencies," he continued, "have written statements of the behavior to which they aspire. But there is no centrally enforceable code." Implied was the fact that any advertising agency can behave as it sees fit, without penalty, which is all too true. "Is it at all professional," Mr. Higgins asked, "that agencies are permitted to en-

croach on the business of other agencies?" We in the business tend to consider this "healthy competition." But *is* it healthy—just because we tend to consider it so?

Mr. Higgins quoted Earl Kintner, then Chairman of the FTC, on professionalism in advertising, which he defined as "... a willingness to respectfully disagree with one's clients; to tell one's client forthrightly that there are severe objections to a proposed course of action; to recommend an unobjectionable program, and, yes, to resign from the service of the client if he persists in violating the ethical precepts of his adviser. If advertising men," Kintner concluded, "develop this sense of professionalism, and if advertisers absorb the lesson that goodwill and public reputation, slowly and painfully acquired, may well be dissipated by an ill-advised and short-term campaign, public respect for advertising will be assured."

Mr. Higgins stated his belief that business "must look beyond the profit motive, for leadership in the world today calls for dedication to new and larger purposes." But let us remain with the profit motive. I think for the very protection of the right to make a profit—as well as to assure a continuing profit—business and businessmen must recognize a number of responsibilities that devolve on them which, if not met, cut their profit by increasing the cost of their doing business.

In the same *Printers' Ink*, an item referred to talks by Ed Miller, publisher of *McCall's*, of Dan Yankelovich, the research man, and of Nick Samstag before regional meetings of the American Marketing Association. "According to these experts," the item reported, "marketing needs a philosophy if it is to construct a body of morals and ethics that recognize the whole man, not just man's consuming functions; and recognize marketing's place in the total society, not just in the distribution of goods."

We tend to shrink from high-sounding words like "morals" and "ethics" as abstractions we somehow feel incompatible with or out of place in business. Let us honor our given word, but simply because it is "good business"—let us not sissify it by calling it moral or ethical to do so; these are qualities better discussed in a philosophical frame of reference.

Since adhering to a bargain made or a word given because it is "good business" or a "business responsibility" provides us with terms with which we feel more comfortable than with terms like morals or ethics, let us confine our discussion to these. We have, I believe, if we analyze the process by which we conduct business at a profit, a number of responsibilities which we can overlook only at great and eventual loss. We have, first of all, a responsibility to the business we represent—

either as management or as a counseling agency. We must avoid at all costs any course of action which threatens the life or the profit of the business, for the time being or for the long run. For businesses, as we all too frequently forget, exist in time as well as in space, and grow or shrink in both dimensions. If people are careless of a company's physical plant, the plant deteriorates—not all at once, but gradually. And the same deterioration can overtake the existence of a business in time—through increasing costs of operation or the loss or diminution of a reputation for reliability. Such responsibility we must recognize in every advertisement we prepare, asking ourselves if, in our impatience to achieve a short-term objective, we are impairing or injuring the business for the long run. If we do this, we are inescapably led to protect the thread of belief on which the business operates and the respect it must enjoy if it is to function profitably over the years.

Another responsibility we have is to the public. Business exists as it exists not because entrepreneurs have a right and a privilege to make money. Business exists as it exists because no one so far has found a more effective way to improve the material existence of all of us—as employees, as consumers, and as human beings—without at the same time impairing our freedom of choice and action.

In this respect may I point out that business has not always proved the most effective source for the material improvement of human beings. During the early thirties it found itself—and the system of *laissez faire* which it proclaimed so essential and untouchable—suddenly incapable and powerless. And government intervened, as it had first intervened in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Interstate Commerce Commission; as it will and must intervene whenever business, as a system, does not benefit, or loses the confidence of, people.

We have a way of saying that business must make a profit; that this is its sole reason for being. But profit is essentially a by-product of business operation—no matter how stoutly we insist it is the be-all and the end-all of its reason for existence. For profit is achieved and maintained *only as a product or a service of some use or benefit to human beings is provided*—there is no other way profit is possible. A man cannot make a cash profit from himself—he must make it from services performed for other people. And in order that people use proffered services, those services must not only be made known, their benefits must be made clear. This is the function of advertising. And when advertising fails to build a sound and continuing acceptance of the products and services it proclaims, it can only harm the business it

purports to help; it can only risk the security of all who depend on the business for employment.

A third responsibility is the responsibility advertising owes to those who never see its messages—either because they are too distant geographically, speak another language, are unborn or are already dust. For if business is a continuum in time as well as an entity in space, it is only because human beings and all the activities of human beings, of which business is one, are continua and entities. The faith in words which makes business and advertising possible is a human factor on which business trades. It was not brought into being for the sole use of business. It lies at the very base of civilization and made civilization possible; and when we do anything to corrupt it, we sin against both past and future. It is all too easy to condemn the Russians for the corruption of human language and belief. Any misuse of either, no matter by whom, no matter how slight, is still corruptive.

As for the unborn and the dead, I believe we owe it to those who made possible the level of existence on which we find ourselves to add to what they have already contributed—for the benefit of those who come after. And we cannot do this meanly. We can only do it nobly.

When Charles Wilson of General Motors was Secretary of Defense in the Eisenhower administration, he

achieved a reputation for saying the right things in the wrong way at the worst of all possible times. One of the statements he presumably garbled came out as, "What's good for General Motors is good for the country." The opposition jumped on this because, in its verbal construction, it appeared to put the welfare of General Motors before the welfare of the country. However, if the statement is analyzed, either forward or backward, it makes sense—provided you do not interpret it to mean that the good of General Motors must be considered apart from the good of the country. Only a very short-sighted person would believe that the good of General Motors or of any business—or of any one of us—could possibly be considered apart from the good of the country or of the entire globe on which we live. In John Donne's words, *no man is an island*.

For our own good, for the good of the businesses we operate or work for, and for the protection and continued assurance of the profit they and we profess to be interested in, for the attainment of the lowest possible A/S, let us try to be a little more conscious of the interdependence of us all.

More important, let us realize that it is only in this interdependence and because of it that our lives have the least meaning and economic value. Let us be moral about it, if we are so inclined. Let us be idealistic. Or

realistic. No matter how we analyze the human or the business situation, we come inevitably to one conclusion: no one can afford to disregard or offend against truth or human sensibility. And the sooner we come to that conclusion the better the advertising we can and will create. And the better will be the image and acceptance of the business through which we create it. And the lower will be the A/S of the advertisers we serve.



# 5

## *The Crossroads*

Albert Camus' *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* is a collection of penetrating articles written by Camus first as a member of the French Resistance Forces and later as a world figure. An Algerian by birth and upbringing, Camus was able to feel strong sympathies with both the Arabs and the Algerian French and to see that each had more to gain together than separately. "On this soil," he wrote in 1956, "there are a million Frenchmen who have been here for a century, millions of Moslems, either Arabs or Berbers, who have been here for centuries, and several vigorous religious communities. Those men must live together at the crossroads where history put them. They can do so if they will take a few

steps toward each other in an open confrontation. Then our differences ought to help us instead of dividing us. As for me," he continued, "here as in every domain, I believe only in differences and not in uniformity. First of all, because differences are the roots without which the tree of liberty, the sap of creation and civilization, dries up. Nevertheless, we stand facing each other as if frozen, as if struck with a paralysis that can be cured only by brutal and brief outbursts of violence."

A year later, in *Franc-Tireur*, writing about the tragedy of the Hungarian rebellion, Camus commented, "Our faith is that throughout the world, beside the impulse toward coercion and death that is darkening history, there is a growing impulse toward persuasion and life."

As an advertising man, the glimmer of hope in the mention of *persuasion* enlisted my immediate interest and began winding up the watch of my imagination.

What I have long enjoyed about advertising has been its stimulation—the stimulation of problems crying for solution. Advertising, as a practice, is frequently looked upon by many of the pundits to which our society so freely gives birth as trivial and inconsequential. (Clifton Fadiman, in his review of Frederic Wakeman's *The Hucksters*, praised advertising with faint damns by calling it "such ingenious means to such trivial ends.")

Now the actual ends of advertising—the sale, for example, of a particular brand of baked beans, or cigarettes, or carbonated water—may appear trivial, but the means *are* ingenious. And whether the end of the persuasion of one human being by another is the consumption of an unfiltered cigarette instead of a filtered one, or the resolution of the differences between the French and the Arabs in Algeria, or of those between the East and the West, the mental processes called into play are remarkably similar.

They are the processes, first, of trying to understand what has been said; then of weighing, of assaying the logic, the sense of the statements made; next of reviewing or checking the reliability of the source of the statements; and finally and inescapably, of comparing promise with performance. Whether we are exposed to Russian propaganda or United States advertising, these are the essential mental processes of the average intelligent person.

All too frequently, the aim of the propagandist—and, similarly, the aim of the advertiser—is shrewdly to confuse and confound the operation of the early processes; to pick and choose certain words and to use them in such a way that what is suggested is a lot more compelling than what has actually been said and to provide tests or testimony from sources advanced as authorita-

tive in order to assure acceptance and belief. *But there is no way whatsoever in which either the propagandist or the advertiser can change or alter or temper the ultimate comparison between promise and performance.* This is what presently we call "the moment of truth."

Which brings me back to Mr. Camus: "Beside the impulse toward coercion and death . . . there is a growing impulse toward persuasion and life." There are too many people in advertising—not alone in advertising agencies, but, as well, in positions affecting the shape that advertising will have, the face it will expose—who feel that, to be effective, advertising must coerce, must produce no matter how. And this coercion, because it relies chiefly on overstatement and exaggeration, leads inevitably, at the moment of truth, to death—the death of belief, the death of trust.

There is no denying that people are influenced, strongly, by words. It is the realization of this that leads so many in advertising to inflate the words used, to "step up their power" beyond that which the true situation warrants. We forget that the mind eventually reacts to words as the body reacts to drugs: it builds resistance. Morphine, for example, employed to blind the nerves to pain, eventually must be taken in greater and greater doses as the body builds resistance to it. Eventually, unless death intervenes, the body experiences

fully the pain that has been lying in wait all the while. In a similar way, words can for awhile blind the mind to certain defects or shortcomings lying in wait in the product. But, eventually, these are met and experienced—the product cannot be bought and used without this happening. No matter how much we increase the verbal dosage, we cannot escape the final facing up to fact. The world is not only too much with us but it is not always as we wish it might be—it is as it is; and none of us ever avoids confronting it as it is. “And yet,” as Logan Pear-sall Smith has said, “we brush our hats, pull on our gloves, and go out and ring doorbells.” We remain eternally hopeful that somehow we can find the magic word or the magic combination of words that will cause people to overlook completely the sameness of the product to competition—or its failure even to equal competition. It is in the product, not the advertising, where the difference must eventually be found.

But if the purpose of advertising is not to heap even undeserved encomium upon the product in order to bring about its purchase, what then *is* its purpose—and how is an advertiser to protect himself against a competitor who does not hesitate to exaggerate? This is generally where the best intentions come a cropper and the highest ideals topple like a child’s tower of blocks.

What *does* one do?

It depends entirely on what one happens to believe. And what one believes he does not come by overnight. What he believes is what he has thought about and pondered and mentally wrestled with for months, for years. In fact a person is, eventually, no more and no less than what he believes—which is why it is so vital to develop beliefs.

If he believes, for example, that competitors who promise more than they are able to produce can only expose their inadequacy by having their promise put to the test of performance, then he exercises patience and waits, to use the old saw, for virtue to triumph—as it must, despite the cliché.

The belief must be more than an idle belief. It must be a belief that has been active enough to cause whoever it is who holds the belief to weigh the possibilities, to observe. It must be a belief that has been bolstered by careful research.

What are the facts?

The facts are that no matter how much you may wish to conspire with Fate to change the sorry scheme of things entire, you simply cannot shatter it to bits to remold it nearer to your heart's desire. You take it as it is because there is no other way to take it.

Significantly and hopefully, you see a gradually increasing number of advertising messages whose au-

thors seem to have taken this inescapable fact into consideration.

Take, for example, the advertising of Volkswagen, which confounds so many critics of advertising.

Here is a product, the Volkswagen, that can hardly be looked upon as an esthetic triumph. The car looks like nothing so much as a beetle—and one of the earliest Volkswagen advertisements said just that. It did not ask its readers to compare the product to a gazelle. And the Volkswagen advertising has been highly successful, much more so than the advertising of any other foreign car. It represents, I believe, the wave of the future in advertising; messages that seek genuinely to enlighten and help the reader make up his mind whether or not to buy. The trouble with most advertising is that it presents itself to the reader or viewer as if he had only two choices—to buy the product and live happily ever after or to reject it and thus prove himself a complete and utter nincompoop. Americans, human beings in general, no matter what their income bracket or educational status, are simply not that naive. In fact, the less they have to spend the more critical they tend to and must be.

You have only to dwell on the ceaseless activities of your own mind to be acutely aware that the chief quest of human life is for what we choose to call *truth*—the

essence of things, the hard facts. Even when we become escapists, it is because we hope to escape what we admittedly recognize as the core of reality.

Why, then, in the writing of advertising do we so frequently assume that our fellow human beings will permit themselves to be beguiled into accepting as reality a verbal misrepresentation of reality? For awhile, maybe; but for no longer than the interval between reading about the product and using it. I would certainly not accuse those who resort to distortion in advertising of being Communists or of being even communistically inclined. Invariably they are the most rabid of capitalists. Yet, paradoxically enough, it is in the Communist countries that verbal distortion has become one of the chief means of governing. Indeed, the governments in such countries resort to every device—from the censorship of the press to the jamming of outside radio broadcasts—to keep the populace separated from things-as-they-are. No individual advertiser under capitalism has this opportunity, this safeguard—hence any attempt to distort the truth is necessarily and ultimately doomed to failure.

Significantly, the words and combinations of words that live longest and exercise the most influence on people are those most readily recognized as representing things-as-they-are. Churchill's promise of blood, sweat,

toil and tears. The words of Tom Paine: "These are the times that try men's souls . . . what we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value." Burke's "I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people." The words that have lasted longest and even served to substitute for new thinking have been those that most clearly summed up the state of things, things-as-they-are:

Haste makes waste  
Time and tide wait for no man  
Better late than never  
Beggars cannot be choosers  
Half a loaf is better than none  
A friend in need is a friend indeed  
You cannot eat your cake and have it, too

John Heywood, who lived from 1497 until 1580, collected most of these. How long they existed before Heywood assembled them is anybody's guess. But they are still voiced.

The most remembered lines of Shakespeare are not necessarily the pleasantest but those that cut most sharply to the core of truth, to life as it is, to things-as-they-are:

*Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows*  
*He that dies pays all debts*

*I have no other reason than a woman's reason;  
I think him so, because I think him so*

*And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,  
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot;  
And thereby hangs a tale.*

*Neither a borrower, nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.*

*This above all: to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

These are words by which people order their lives, even though they cannot identify the source. The average person recoils from the thought of reading or listening to Shakespeare, yet his thoughts are shaped in verbal molds wrought by the Bard four centuries ago.

I hesitate mentioning Shakespeare for fear what I say might be considered too "literary" for practical application, particularly to advertising. Why advertising should be considered a form of human communication different from any other I shall never understand. Yet, to its own detriment, it is. Ads are fashioned from other ads, resulting in a sort of inbreeding that produces so many of the monstrous inanities we see in magazines and newspapers and witness on our TV screens. It is as if someone who sought to develop more interesting postcards looked for his inspiration only to other postcards.

In this way, only deterioration can—and does—result.

It is to be regretted that so many practical businessmen incline to consider any writing called “literature” impractical, and those who embrace it incapable of transmitting the messages business wishes to transmit. This is a division of North and South, of Algerian French and Algerian Arabs, that should be resolved. For each has so much to offer the other. Indeed, the genuinely literary person, because of his deftness and skill at communication, has so much to offer business that the conflict is not only tragic but, from the business point of view, a blow to profit.

I am not urging a sudden efflorescence of sonnets in advertising, of philosophical essays. I am urging a better, a clearer, a more compelling quality of writing. And how is this to be achieved? In, I believe, two principal ways:

*First:* by the businessman’s restraining his temptation to edit what a skilled writer and communicator has written. If, in his concern over obtaining the most compelling advertising prose it is possible to obtain, the businessman feels unsure of what is submitted to him, let him have it tested—but let him not impose on it his own unpracticed hand;

*Second:* by the writers of advertising refreshing themselves and their verbal supply at the Pierian spring;

by reading more than they do; by foregoing *The Untouchables* and *Gunsmoke* and *Adventures in Paradise* for *Hamlet* and *Moby Dick*; by not avoiding exposure to other printed messages and spoken commercials, but at the same time finding time for Yeats, for Housman, for Emily Dickinson. We do little better than those we take for our models. The worship of heroes has its practical side. Advertising can profitably seek to improve its basic function by making offerings at shrines other than those which contain only its own image.

As Camus foresaw the advantages of the Algerian French and the Algerian Arabs resolving their differences, so I believe business can benefit in its communications from a larger dose of good writing than it has permitted itself. If it does, I am confident the suspicion which advertising must first overcome before it can persuade and accomplish the ends of business will not be encountered and the effectiveness of advertising will be immeasurably increased. Certainly the possibility is worth investigating. It never hurt to put quality in a product, and from my own experience I know it helps enormously to put quality into advertising. It is the only way I know of building solidly for the long run.

## 6

### *Truth in Advertising*

In his book of essays, *Fenollosa and His Circle*, Van Wyck Brooks covers the lives and production of a number of American writers of little significance to modern-day readers—not just the orientalist, Ernest Fenollosa, but Randolph Bourne, considered at one time a literary radical, Fanny Wright, John Lloyd Stephens, George Catlin. All little more than names now, and names only when evoked by someone as interested in the literary scene as Van Wyck Brooks.

The name of Charles Van Doren will, undoubtedly, one day have as little meaning or significance. For some years, however, he will be remembered as the son of a poet, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. In

the scheme of things, however, Charles Van Doren has, perhaps, done more for his fellow man than Ernest Fenollosa or Randolph Bourne or John Lloyd Stephens. Certainly his emotion-laden confession of his selling out to Albert Freedman, producer of the phoney quiz show, *Twenty-One*, deserves better than oblivion—if only for the following paragraph:

I was beginning to realize what I should have known before, that the truth is always the best way, indeed it is the only way, to promote and protect faith.

It was reported in the papers at the time that many college students sympathized with Van Doren and averred that, under the circumstances, in a position to win as much money, they might have done the same. Others, trying to relate Van Doren's action to something larger than their own limited viewpoint, wondered if Van Doren was not simply reflecting the materialism of his time.

There can be little doubt that many of us sell out for considerably less than Van Doren did—in much less dramatic fashion and before a considerably smaller audience. But no matter how we do it, or before how many, if not even before a mirror, we betray something essential to our own continuance as an individual and to the continuance of the complex, inexplicable crea-

tures we identify, not as animals, but as human beings.

"I was beginning to realize what I should have known before..." Try to consider these sentiments entirely aside from their moral overtones. Try, for the moment, to assume that we have outgrown, we human beings, the need for a moral code; that morals are themselves old-fashioned and outdated—fine if you have a religion to sustain them, but embarrassingly out of place in this highly competitive, materialistic world of the twentieth century; this world made so prosperous and richly rewarding by scientific achievement and progress. Tell yourself, bluntly and truthfully, that religion with all its commandments and codes of conduct—promising you if you adhered to them a complimentary ticket to heaven and a sure and certain place in that paradise when you depart this earth—never began to clothe and feed and house and entertain so many people on so broad and lavish a scale as has been made possible through the application of cold and amoral scientific method.

In addition, I would like you to be, for a moment, if you can, a sensitive and highly conscious American, defending your system against all other systems, particularly against the Communist system. Assume—as Congressional committees and those who have made millions out of our system as it is presently constituted

expect you to assume—that it is the best of all possible systems. Try to believe in it so unquestioningly that the statement I have just made causes you to wonder about and to be suspicious of my own political sympathies. I want you to embrace and swear complete allegiance to the free enterprise system, to capitalism as we know it, and to the importance of making a profit; to the right to compete; to the right to attain, through your own effort, advancement, financial reward and—if you can achieve it—eventual independence.

I am attempting to brainwash you—except that the mental laundering I am trying to give you has, as its object, cleansing your mind of all but currently accepted doctrine. I then want you to place yourself in the position, as you may well be, of creating, or causing to be created, or approving after it has been created, an advertisement or an advertising campaign whose aim and purpose is to cause more people to prefer and buy a particular product than prefer and buy similar products manufactured by the enemy. Not Communism in this instance. Competition. But still the enemy. Not companies that also give employment and provide a consumer service and help support the economy. But companies to be defeated—or bested.

At this point I want you to picture yourself before your typewriter, or in a meeting, in the act of evolving

strategy to overcome all the competitive products against which the product in which you are interested must struggle for a major share of market.

What is *your* attitude? What are *you* interested primarily in doing? Are you saying to yourself, "If I manage to come up with an idea the client feels will overcome competition, I shall become a hero—to the client, first of all; and, because *he* considers me a hero, management will also consider me a hero. This will benefit *me*. It may get me a *raise*. Or a *promotion*."

A lot of people feel this way. A lot of people base what they do on this kind of thinking. And why not? They have said to themselves, "This is free enterprise under which I am working—therefore, anything goes. Ours is a competitive society—therefore, let's draw up sides. Under our system, I have the opportunity to amass as much as I am able to keep—after taxes. So why not?"

At this point, the dim, small voice of conscience makes itself heard. But it is quickly stifled because "science"—and the philosophy of pragmatism, which is based on scientific method—clearly indicate that all that matters is what "works," what achieves the desired end, what overcomes competition. So (let us be honest with ourselves) most of us do what we do principally to win acclaim in one way or another—through writing copy which the client will enthusiastically ap-

prove or which, when published or aired, will overcome competition. We think all too little, all too seldom, of the reader or auditor to whom we address our message. When we *do* think of him, we think of him primarily in terms of his being a "victim," *our* "victim," a person whom we must master and control—through any means which enable us to cause him to do our bidding. If the truth isn't sufficient, then—since our overriding aim is to move him—we feel justified in resorting to other means.

I would like to quote one additional remark of Van Doren's, which he voiced to justify his agreeing to go along with rigging the program. "I knew that most people," he said, "would believe me. Most people did. I honestly thought I was doing the right thing."

Most people believe advertising.

If they didn't, the opportunities to deceive them would not be so numerous or so ready. In fact, advertising exists and is made possible only because of the ready willingness of people to believe.

It has taken, not centuries, but tens of thousands of years to arrive at this point. Early cave man carried a club not as a walking stick or as a piece of ready kindling but as a result of his lack of belief and trust in his fellow man; of his recognizing that if he didn't swing first, he might swing his last; and that, as W. C.

Fields used to say, one should never give a sucker an even break.

Out of sheer necessity—out of the sheer desire to be rid of the burden of carrying so heavy a weapon, perhaps—man arrived at a bargain with his fellow man, and that bargain was, “If I can trust *you* not to clobber *me*, *you* can trust *me* not to clobber *you*.” So civilization came into being. On faith.

As Harry Scherman, who started The Book of the Month Club, has pointed out in his book, *The Promises Men Live By*, this is the very foundation of our monetary system. Without belief in the value of money, people would not accept it as payment for expended effort. In fact, it is only because of this belief that counterfeiters have the least hope of success in printing and distributing phoney bills.

It is much less difficult counterfeiting language. You don't need engravings or a printing press. And the legal penalties are not quite so severe. However, the ultimate consequences are no less disastrous. We are discussing the writing of advertising. And we are discussing the writing of advertising under no moral restraints whatsoever. For purposes of discussion we have decided to be completely scientific and be interested only in what “works.”

Why adhere strictly to truth? Why not exaggerate

—just a *little*? Keep within legal limits, of course, so you and your client will not be sued, but to be just a little more certain the copy will “sell,” why not claim just a little more than the product will or can do? They’re only words you’re using. And if the product doesn’t move in the volume expected, some other agency will get the account. Besides, the overriding purpose of advertising is to *sell*.

I’m sure you have had thoughts such as these running through your head at one time or another. If they seemed a little rumpled and unsightly on the moral side, you found them completely proper and even correct on the economic side.

Only they aren’t.

Charles Mortimer, of General Foods, once commented that economics is only people wanting to buy or not wanting to buy, or words to that effect.

Now advertising cannot in any way make a product something it isn’t. It was not advertising alone that gave Cadillac its aura of luxury and success. Packard and Lincoln turned the field over to Cadillac originally—and G. M.’s design engineers took full advantage of their generosity. Packard was never able to regain its lost distinction—despite advertising that tried desperately to do so.

At no time can advertising do more than allow the

consumer to sample the product *in absentia*, to create through words or pictures or both the situation that will come into being when, as, and if the product is purchased.

It does not, in short "sell." It excites interest in a product and if the interest excited is sufficient, the consumer hies himself to a corner grocery, or a neighborhood hardware store or a nearby automobile dealer to confront the product, to appraise it. At the last minute his confidence in the product and what it may do for him may not be strong enough to consummate the purchase—which is where, and why, effective and informative packaging and point-of-sale material can be highly productive and successfully supplement the advertising.

Now the product is bought and the consumer takes it home to try it. If the advertising has not overstated its case, if when the new owner actually puts the product to use it meets his expectations, if it performs exactly as the advertising said it would—or even better—then and only then has a sale been made. Only then has the second and third and fourth sale been made easier—and it is in repeat sales that profit lies and future volume is made possible. For if a product, through unsatisfactory performance—or performance that fails notably to live up to advertising claims, enjoys only a one-time purchase, selling costs become prohibitively high.

It is because the selling process involves so much more than the one-time exchange of money for a product *that it becomes imperative for advertising to adhere strictly to the truth.*

I have suggested that you be completely cynical about your use of truth or falsehood in advertising. Consider your aim to be the sale of the product—regardless of whether or not the ultimate consumer, once he buys it, is satisfied or disappointed. This is a completely economic, a completely scientific outlook. We are now concerned solely with business—and the future of the business that happens to be your client's. If you cause consumers to buy your client's product because of the claims you make for it—and, once they buy it, they find the product does not live up to those claims—obviously, they will not buy it a second time. They will turn to another product. It is a scientific not a moral fact that a lack in the product cannot possibly be compensated for by a lie in the advertising.

Indeed, I would like to propound that the scientifically inclined person, seeking earnestly to arrive at fact, at provable truth in his quest, prays, even more reverently than the so-called religious person, for revelation and clarification. It is possible and, I think, demonstrable that a person employing scientific method is more passionate and devoted in his search for truth and

the ultimate reality than the purely religious person who adheres blindly to what he accepts as already "revealed" truth.

It is for these reasons I believe that if you wish to create genuinely successful advertising, you must stick to the facts, you must eschew exaggeration, you must avoid the little white lie no matter what your temptation to employ it. *It doesn't work*. No matter how much we wish to delude ourselves, we wind up facing the inescapable facts of life. We confront reality—not life as we might like to imagine it. And advertising which deludes the public, which deceives it no matter how slightly, is unscientific, is advertising which flies in the face of reality.

Human beings tend to delude themselves—but do not delude yourself about one thing: at the end of every minute of life is fact, is the truth. The great religions of the world invented moral codes to help people cope with fact, with reality. Unfortunately, over the years, morality—as a word—has become confused with what many people consider unrealistic idealism. I propose to you that the cynic, who believes the public can be conveniently deceived, is decidedly much less realistic than the idealist who proceeds on the theory that one must treat every man as he himself hopes to be treated. Honestly. In accordance with the facts. Nothing else

exists. We cannot awaken to a dream. We waken inevitably to reality.

If you want to write effective advertising, this is the way to do it: to stick to the facts, to relate the facts to individual wants and needs, to be interesting and even entertaining but, in all you do, to prepare the reader or the auditor for the ultimate experience he will have with the product. Trying to achieve good advertising any other way is placing your trust in magic. Any writer who sets out to deceive the public must first deceive himself—by believing that anything but the facts can, in the long run, prevail.

# 7

## *Image Building*

Lying in a pathetic, dusty little heap is the remembrance of the silent movies of my childhood. In those days, the days of the silent movie, tommy-guns did not go *uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh* as TV- and radio-directed children insist they go today. In those days tommy-guns described an arc. Silently.

Could it be, I ask myself, that as a child I lived in an age considerably more advanced than this verbal, cacophonous age in which my children live? Certainly in the day of the silent movie, the late late show on television—if video had existed forty years ago—would have been considerably easier to take. However, I tell myself, if we *are* on the threshold of an age of purely visual com-

munication, as I have heard, television may at long last become bearable and I may look forward to drifting off to sleep with only the surf of the night's sea of silence breaking in my ears. I shall no longer have to wish, as I wish now when my offspring have the volume knob of their TV turned to its utmost limit, that television would pass quickly from infancy to childhood so that it might just be seen and not heard. I can conceive of no improvement, electronic or otherwise, over the satisfyingly quiet communication of a good book, which combines magnificently the finest features of both verbal and visual communication; for type, even though it transmits words, transmits them visually. Reading, therefore, must be considered visual communication. Indeed, I believe that verbal communication increases in effectiveness to the degree that it rears visual images in the mind. "Be concrete, not abstract," teachers of English urge their pupils. This is tantamount to saying, "Use words that evoke visions of the things they are intended to represent—rather than words that register only their own alphabetical form on the mind."

I was highly gratified recently in reading through Volume 2 of that inexplicably but phenomenally successful publication of James E. Newman's, *The World of Mathematics*, to come upon a realistic yet sympathetic appraisal of the late Sir Arthur Eddington. I forget

when I first held excitedly in my hands his absorbing *The Nature of the Physical World*. Like so many books I read at the time, it came from the public library; it was not mine to keep for constant and ready reference. As a result, I did with it what I did with so many other books I found exciting and meaningful but beyond my pocketbook to own—I typed excerpts from it. Indeed, as a result of this practice, I wound up—like the little old lady who saved potato pancakes—with trunkfuls and trunkfuls of excerpts, of ana. I cannot say that what I excerpted from Eddington I found more precious than what I excerpted from any other author, but I did find myself valuing it for its communicative power, as I valued the best from Hardy and Conrad and George Moore and Paul Valéry and others who, unlike Eddington, were not astronomers but practicing word-smiths.

Eddington wrote with a great deal of the clarity of H. M. Tomlinson, another author whose writing style gripped my youthful imagination. Untrained in both physics and astronomy, I found my excitement rising when I would come upon sentences that began, “It is like . . .” or “It is as though . . .” For these words announced, impending, a metaphor, an image, that I knew would cause window shades in my mind to fly up with a rattle, a clatter, a bang, flooding my mind

with meaningful light. In a commentary on Eddington, Newman quotes a number of what he calls "Eddington's famous images" which, he says, "were an indispensable part of the technique by which he awakened a wide audience to the excellence, rare fancy and revolutionary implications of modern science."

Notice the word "image" suggesting visual communication. Newman cites his own collection of these—Eddington's description of an atom, for example, as a heavy nucleus with a "girdle or crinoline" of electrons; his remark that calcium is so prominent in the chromosphere because its atoms, though heavy, had mastered "the art of riding sunbeams;" his fable of the race of flat fish swimming in curved paths around a mound on the ocean floor (a mound they cannot see because they are two-dimensional) to explain the curvature of space-time. Newman cited another of Eddington's images which I found I had saved in more nearly whole form—his colorful reference to reality as an illusion. "The external world of physics," he wrote, "has become a world of shadows. In removing our illusions we have removed the substance, for indeed we have seen that substance is one of our greatest illusions... Perhaps, indeed," he concluded, "reality is a child which cannot survive without its nurse illusion."

I think of an entry in Hardy's diary for January 9 in

the year 1889. "Art," he wrote, "is the secret of how to produce by a false thing the effect of a true."

This is connotative language in the semantic sense; it is not denotative. It is poetry—not science. Still, I think it can be argued that it serves the cause of clarification and understanding. And this, of course—clarification—is what Mr. Eddington was trying to achieve by making flounderlike images stand for light waves bending through space, or a lady's girdle stand for the circle of electrons surrounding an atom.

I hold no brief for the advertiser whose intent is to deceive—even if only a little bit. Like murder or pregnancy, I do not think deception admits of degrees. But how *is* one, in print, to describe or sell a product? By a careful enumeration of its physical properties? People, unfortunately for the dedicated semanticist, stubbornly resist seeing things as they are—at least, as they are at the subatomic level—not just lilacs and violets, sunsets and rainbows, but Cadillacs, picture windows, split-level homes and, more than once in awhile, other people. In communicating, I believe, it is essential to keep in mind one's auditor's preparedness for what it is you wish to communicate to him. If he is unskilled in the language of mathematics, you must necessarily talk (if, for example you are trying to describe relativity) in terms of men in boats in a stream moving at so many

miles an hour, or of two boys on a moving train throwing a ball between them. This is not the thing itself—this is not relativity, but neither for that matter are mathematical symbols. The purpose in advertising is to place the item advertised in the potential customer's area of reference, in the general scheme of things *as he sees that scheme*.

There is an acuity the sensitive writer can sometimes achieve by throwing verbally scientific accuracy to the winds and deciding, instead, to be artful. But he must strive honestly and earnestly to express truth as he sees it. Visual images can be created through words, yet remain visual. We can see them. And, somehow, when we see them they speak to us with a clarity, a substance, that abstractions cannot match in vividness. The verbally created images we see certainly are not real; they are visible only to us; we are their only beholder; yet as Eddington stated, they are the nurse without which the child, reality, could not survive.

In advertising and public relations today it is taken for granted that human beings tend to create within themselves images to represent products and institutions. When they think of catsup, for example, they do not necessarily envision the traditional catsup bottle wearing a white cap. The image is rather likely to be of the self, smiling in enjoyment over the spicy taste of the viscous red liquid. Or it might be of the bottle

on a gingham tablecloth in the shabby dining room of a poor man's house. I am not saying that these are the actual images a bottle of catsup evokes; I am saying rather that a bottle of catsup is likely to evoke images such as these—images other than the bottle itself. Indeed, the images evoked will be strongly influenced by the reader's experience.

The automotive industry is particularly rich in terms that build visual images in the mind. The *Rocket* engine of Oldsmobile, for example, or Ford's *Thunderbird*—the latter combining the evocation of the crackling, rumbling, majestic power of a storm and the swift, flowing, effortless flight of a bird. I understand from sports car enthusiasts that the Chevrolet *Corvette* is far superior as a sports car, but certainly its name fails to give any intimation of this, deriving as it does from the Latin *corbita* which means a slow-sailing vessel.

McCall's "Togetherness" was a word that evoked a whole series of visual images in the mind—scenes of family life, happy, pleasant and cooperative.

An advertising man, aware that such images do arise and do affect the individual's attitude and behavior toward products, services and corporate entities, attempts *to cause only favorable images to come into being.*

Image creation, of course—particularly on the favor-

able side—is not limited to advertising or public relations. In this sense we are all of us propagandists. With our working companions, acquaintances whom we meet on the street, or our neighbors, we consciously strive to create what we call “a favorable impression.” It is generally only with our family that we are insensitive enough to allow a picture of our baser nature to be established—for seldom, even to ourselves, are we one image; we are many; and during our lifetimes we are fortunate if we strive constantly to better the image we evoke—for, in doing so, we quite frequently, if slowly, manage to improve our essential self.

Visual communication then—the creation of images to convey meaning—is a basic, is a never-ending preoccupation of human nature. And whether we are concerned with words or pictures, I think we are all engaged fundamentally in visual communication, in the transmission and creation of images, to ourselves as well as to others.

In this sense, I think it is important to bear in mind that the visual image with which we are primarily concerned is not necessarily the *exterior* vision—the person, the object or the representation scanned by the eyes. It is, rather, the *interior* vision, the vision evoked within the temple of the mind, brought into being not by light waves striking the retina, but by electronic im-

pulses aroused by memory and the countless traumata of our particular experience. In fact, I think it can be said—and I believe it *has* been said, though I cannot recall the source—that what we see with the “back” of our eyes is considerably more “real” and affects our behavior much more forcibly than what we see with the “front.”

In this context, it would appear as if we had, behind the lenses of our eyes, a visual pattern into which the image transmitted to us either fits or does not fit—and we accept or reject the image presented accordingly. I think of Chrysler’s attempt to sell its *Imperial* as “the car of the successful man”—chiefly, I suspect, because research had indicated that Cadillac’s favorable acceptance by the public was due to its symbolization of “success.” However, Cadillac’s design fitted the interior “pattern” and *Imperial*’s didn’t.

In attempting to create favorable attitudes toward products or corporations, therefore, I think it is important that the copywriter or public relations person remember:

- First:* that people in general seem to think, feel about, react to and evaluate products or business institutions by creating images of them;
- Second:* that the copywriter or public relations per-

son cannot "force" an image of a product or a corporation on a person against that person's better judgment;

*Third:* that the most effective way to create a more favorable image of a product or an institution is by making real and tangible improvements in the product or institution itself.

This whole process of image building and image acceptance represents a highly important area—among all too many others—of which, in my opinion, modern management must be acutely aware, not only to achieve harmony in public and employee relations but to provide an important edge in marketing. I believe that image building, today, is inseparable from the successful operation of a business and, as a result, must be skillfully employed in every phase of business operation. And that, of course, necessarily implies that management must know and at least appreciate, if not understand, the whole process of visual communication.

## 8

### *The Art Director*

In his highly entertaining column, Trade Winds, in *The Saturday Review*, Jerome Beatty, Jr. noted that Vance Packard, in *The Status Seekers*, had completely ignored one of the most important status symbols of our time—the sun tan.

“The person with the best tan,” Beatty commented, “is at a terrific advantage at the beginning of the season. A man can ride in Manhattan’s elevators, or walk its streets, and feel a certain pride in noting that everyone else is rather pale.

“For the females,” he observed, “the absolutely lowest notch in status is to appear at the beach or pool: (1) pale; or (2) in an old bathing suit. Getting the old

bathing suit replaced,” Beatty wrote, “is a matter of domestic relations, but No. 1 can be avoided only by sneaking out into the backyard a few moments each sunny day before the season opens. You wear the old bathing suit for this. That’s why you must be sure that the new suit has straps in the same place, or you’ll have funny white streaks where you don’t want them on that big day when you first show yourself off. That’s bad for your Sun Tan Status.”

I am sure any one old enough to have been alive and conscious on July 20, 1935 will recall *The New Yorker* magazine of that date and its cover which, with so much self-identifiability, showed the curious and disdainful stares of a group of bronzed beach-loungers as a scrawny, pale male made his way timidly and self-consciously among them to the water’s edge—where, I am confident, he decided to drown both himself and his nacreous, etiolated shame.

Into a business meeting, in much the same way, does an art director slink. Blanched—like an untoasted almond. Not only naked to his enemies, but lily-white naked. An account executive might enter such a meeting wearing a white carnation or a blue cornflower in his lapel buttonhole, and no one would be surprised. If an art director entered the same meeting, not wearing

a flower, but carrying it, no one would be surprised either. Such is the status—or lack of status—of the art director. He is the modern Bunthorne who walks down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in his hand.

Why?

This sad, this tragic state of affairs needs urgent analysis—and correction. Because the art director and his contribution are absolutely indispensable to the growth and development of a business and the sale of its product or products.

Let us start with the verbal message—the copy—over which the client pores so long and judiciously. Having begun his studies long before finger painting replaced reading and spelling as required subjects, he naturally avoids poring over the layout. He has neither anything to contribute to what he might consider its betterment nor any facility through which he might make a contribution. His criticism, if he feels courageous enough to criticize, and most clients do, is generally limited to confessing he doesn't know why he doesn't like the layout, but he doesn't. This is far better, of course, than having him do to the layout what occasionally he does to the copy—tinker with it. At least, when a client kills a layout, the art director can start afresh. And this is important. For the layout, the illustration, the typog-

raphy of a print ad, as well as the art direction behind a commercial, determine three things vital to the verbal message:

- a. they wave it temptingly or annoyingly in front of the reader's or the viewer's face;
- b. they help carry him through the length and development of the sales argument or they let him slip out of its net of logic or completely discourage him from reading or listening any further; and
- c. they create, in addition to the verbal communication, a nonverbal communication which, much more cogently and irresistibly than words, causes a favorable or an unfavorable "feeling" to come into being about the product and the company which manufactures it and offers it for sale.

All these are vital and essential to the selling process. Let us, therefore, in assessing the importance of the art director and the value of his contribution, consider each in turn and the manner in which each is accomplished.

Bringing it to the reader's or viewer's attention. Unless the message is delivered by radio, the prospect's *visual attention* must somehow be caught. A visual vehicle must be created to hold the message, to carry it, to get it before the prospect. Even if the copywriter's original typewritten or handwritten copy is to be pre-

sented to the ultimate audience in the exact way it came out of the typewriter—or the pen—it must be reproduced or shown or filmed. And this requires creative design. If the copy is handwritten, someone must make the simple visual decision—is it legible? Can the reader read it? This is fundamental, but not final. Because the message must compete for attention with other messages—as the message in one female competes with the message in another for male attention—someone must judge whether or not the presentation is as attractive as it must be to compete successfully and, if he feels it isn't, take effective steps to enable it to. This is necessarily a visual operation, not a verbal one.

Consider Starch ratings. Aside from the provocation of the headline—which must be seen to be provocative—most of the known methods for bringing about high noting and reading are visual, lie in the skill of the art director, not the copywriter. In fact, the reading-habit studies of Starch and Gallup and Clark for the first time made it essential that the copywriter consider the visual presentation of his message. A solid piece of text, for example, could not very well be adapted to the known high-reading device of the picture-caption technique. As a result, either the art director must be permitted to take the copy back to the copywriter and tell him that, if he wants to have it read, he had better break

it up into four-line paragraphs, or the copywriter must, in advance, either by knowing something of layout design or by talking with the art director about the ultimate design of the layout, write his copy in such a way as to conform to the physical format in which it will eventually appear.

This need has become even more vital with the growing use of television. In writing for television, the copywriter cannot, like the novelist, write only to be read. He must, like the dramatist, write to be heard *and seen*. And in television, what is seen is frequently much more powerful—in a communicative sense—than what is heard. For example, on the night of December 10, 1959, Revlon sponsored Harry Belafonte. I happened to see the show. As the *World-Telegram's* columnist, Harriet Van Horne, wrote, "The Belafonte repertoire is scholarly and earthy. It includes folk songs, field hollers, work songs, jailhouse laments and gay little nonsense-syllable 'game songs.' All were rendered in immaculate style. Also appearing on the bill was the noted folk singer, Odetta (and oh, what melancholy in that deep, rolling voice) . . ." Revlon, for reasons about which I do not wish to speculate, decided to use only beginning and end commercials. This might have been gracious—if the beginning and the end commercials were visually related to the show itself. But they weren't. From the

simple, earthy folk-song atmosphere of the show we were jolted into a phoney, décolletage, unreal dream world of the commercial. The contrast was so severe as to divert completely all interest from whatever the busty, evening-dressed female announcer said. The loss of impact was the result not of verbal failure but of visual failure. The client probably liked it. He thought it was "high-class." And it probably was—like a marbled plastic toilet seat. But, like one of those seats, it seemed completely out of place visually.

I cannot feel that anyone versed in the visual arts was consulted about this. It is likely that an art director made a storyboard. It is also likely that the commercial would have been much better in a show such as, *The Arthur Murray Show*. But in a show based on the simple, deeply human appeal of folk music, the overdressed Revlon commercial was jarring. I sincerely believe that if an art director had been called in to help plan an appropriate commercial, he would have resisted anything not in keeping visually with the show itself.

Why are art directors so seldom called in on the initial planning of TV commercials? Why is it they generally get in on a commercial only when a finished storyboard is needed? Is it because they are considered too impractical to be able to contribute anything really "solid"? Too inexperienced in moving, dramatic vis-

ualization? Again, I think, the basic problem is one of image—the image existing in the so-called “practical” mind of the art director. He is looked upon either as a pariah—too dangerously radical to be consulted, too difficult to work with, too temperamental—or as a pansy—too far removed from the practical world of business to be able to contribute anything of a utilitarian nature. As a consequence, his principal contribution is using his sketching skill to make understandable the visual ideas of strictly non-visual people.

A sad state of affairs. Because, to take up the second of the art director’s three major contributions, without his skill the advertiser would not begin to derive from the space or the time period in which his message appears quite the value he gains with that skill. This, of course, is a generality and, like most generalities, it goes slightly beyond the median of the factual. For the intervention of the art director does not necessarily guarantee the best of all possible exposures for the message. And there is a good reason for this.

I find it ironic, for example, that readership techniques, while chiefly visual in nature and application, are known to far more copywriters than they are to art directors.

I find it equally ironic, and tragic, that copywriters, by and large, take research so seriously as often to be

stified by it while art directors have remained so aloof from it as to be largely unaffected and unbenefited by it. For some reason, the art director—in general, not specifically—tends to look to himself, to his intuition, for the answers he seeks. Perhaps because it requires more training to be able to handle a pencil skilfully than it does a typewriter, the art director—once he develops facility—concludes he has struggled long and hard enough. That advertising encompasses at least a few sciences does not concern him. He finds it sufficient that he can draw a straight line competently, or a circle, or sketch a figure, or a hand. This skill he acquired by doing—it was instruction directed to his muscles rather than to his mind. Consequently, the intellectual assimilation of research postulates he blithely avoids—yet this is the one area in which he might find communication with his client as well as practical application of his talents in a way—a dollars-and-cents way—his client could understand and appreciate.

As it is, he talks flow and balance and, in general, uses a language that communicates little if anything to the practical man of affairs unschooled in esthetics and bewildered when confronted with art. Yet he could—justifiably and with really very little effort on his part—talk in terms of extra readers per dollar attracted to and held throughout the message through the use of

research-proved techniques. He could talk the common-sense language of fitting the surroundings to the subject, of holding the ready-made interest of the audience through the entire commercial. He could, by exhibiting the advertising of competition, demonstrate the rightness and advisability of a particular art technique. He must not indulge in the presumption of expecting the businessman to understand *him*—*he* must attempt to understand the businessman and, by understanding him, bridge the gap that now yawns between them.

There is urgent need for such understanding. I mentioned three vital contributions the art director can make to the advertiser, the third of which is to “create, in addition to the verbal communication, a non-verbal communication which, much more cogently and irresistibly than words, causes a favorable or an unfavorable ‘feeling’ to come into being about the product and the company which manufactures it and offers it for sale.” This, as I added, has come to be known as the product or company “image.”

On one occasion, a friend of mine in another agency took exception to a comment of mine which was quoted in Doris Willens’ column in the *Journal-American*. I had attributed the recent crackdowns of the FTC to “a general public revulsion to the poor taste in so much of

advertising." I also remarked that I did not think the crackdown unjustified.

"Mr. Weir's argument," wrote my friend, "seems to focus on the point of 'the poor taste in so much advertising.' Who," he demanded, "decides *that*? It so happens," he continued, "that I think Mr. Weir's neckties are in poor taste—and also his indestructible penchant for personal publicity. But maybe I envy his cravats and his publicity—so that disqualifies me as a judge of his taste in these matters."

In my opinion, when someone who has transgressed it denies that such a thing as taste exists, he washes his hands before the multitude. I do not deny that taste is relative from time to time and even from person to person. Yet I believe any era, any civilization, has its standards and these exist as genuinely and functionally as truth exists. Neither truth nor taste may have the Aristotelian solidity it had during the nineteenth century, but within limits it is something to conform to or to deviate from. The Managing Editor of *Harper's*, Russell Lynes, wrote an amusing and instructive book on the subject, *The Taste-Makers*. "Taste," Mr. Lynes claims, "is our personal pleasure, our private dilemma and our public façade." Bearing testimony to its intangibility yet its undeniable existence, Mr. Lynes fur-

ther observes, "Taste in itself is nothing. It is only what taste leads to that makes any difference in our lives."

Confessing that, like Richard Gump, author of the book, *Good Taste Costs No More*, he does not know what *good* taste is, Mr. Lynes writes, "I do know that taste is not constant and that it is a creature of circumstance. . . . It seems apparent that not only is one generation's good taste very likely to be the next generation's bad taste, but one individual's ideas about what is good taste and bad taste change as he matures, moves to a different place or a different way of living, and acquires new sets of values for judging not only his surroundings but what he wants out of life."

Lynes finds the "fluid" and "elusive" element of taste made up, essentially, of three things common to everyone: education, sensibility and morality. He also believes the real reason for having taste is "to increase one's faculties for enjoyment." The development of taste, I believe, is what causes one to advance from the enjoyment of American wines to the enjoyment of Chamberlain, Montrachet or Château Yquem—and not to travel in the opposite direction unless it be out of sheer economic necessity; or to find broader and deeper delight and satisfaction in Hemingway than in Mickey Spillane.

No matter how indefinable or shortlived, the element of taste—and the relativity of *good* taste and *bad* taste

—have both being and effect. In fact, good taste is one of the most powerful and important elements an art director can add to advertising—whether in print or on the air. Through taste in design, in type, in illustration, in fashion, interior decoration, in types of people he can convey much more cogently than any copywriter the kind of company his audience will deal with—or decide to stay away from.

Indeed, I believe the effect is bi-directional—acting on both the customer and the advertiser. In his brilliant and robust *Generation of Vipers*, Philip Wylie discussed the inescapable effect different kinds of hats have upon their wearers. Put a homburg on a man, said Wylie, and he stands a little more erect; put a fireman's hat on him and he becomes a chopping demon; put a fez on him at a shriners' convention and he presses electric buzzers against the *glutei maximi* of young females on street corners. Give an advertiser tasteful treatment of his advertising message and soon he begins to stand a little straighter and feel a little more obligated to conduct himself properly, to accept and dispatch the corporate responsibility of the business he manages.



# 9

## *Advertising and Public Relations*

Traditionally, advertising has been conceived as an extension of the selling arm of the corporate body. In recent years, however, corporate selling activities—including advertising—have been considered part of total marketing, or the sum of the activities undertaken to stimulate the use or consumption of a product. The influence of the Gestalt on corporate thinking is unmistakable. Today's corporate management is generally aware that broad purchase of its product is affected by factors other than advertising and sales effort.

Tradition, however, dies hard. As a result, advertising is still broadly viewed as a "selling instrument." Consequently, when it is prepared—or judged—it is

prepared or judged chiefly and almost exclusively in terms of its so-called "selling effectiveness," meaning how well it argues the case for the product over all other products of a similar nature.

Management admits that other "kinds" of advertising exist—such as "institutional" advertising, or "public service" advertising. These, however, it usually looks upon with the disdain that the practical reserve for pure research, or poetry, or painting, or sculpture—as totally unrelated to the making of a profit.

However, *it is not entirely correct and can, indeed, prove misleading, to think in terms of different "kinds" of advertising.* While it is possible and may even appear appropriate to apply designations such as "product" advertising, "institutional" advertising, "public service" advertising, and so on, to advertising which *seems* to promote chiefly these ends, the total effect on those who see or hear it can be far more extensive than the objectives indicated by the qualifying terms.

For example, "product" advertising, by the manner in which it is addressed to its ultimate reader or auditor, can strongly influence the "image" the public develops of the company behind the product. This, in turn, can affect the public's attitude toward the product itself, the company's stock, its management, its future. When advertising is considered solely in terms of immediate

sales, its other effects tend to be overlooked. So it irritates. So what? So long as it sells, what difference does this make? Ironically, while advertising is only a mechanical or electronic extension of personal visitation, no company would long tolerate a salesman who consistently irritated people on whom he called. Is it not, therefore, not only incorrect but "impractical" (because misleading) to think in terms of "product" advertising? Particularly when the sum of the effects engendered can be so far-reaching?

For example, while the Volkswagen advertising has excited widespread interest in the product whose virtues it proclaims—and has maintained and increased Volkswagen's sales in the face of the flood of compacts from Detroit and the decline in popularity of other European cars—there is little doubt that the simplicity, the forthrightness, the good taste and the complete credibility of the advertising has built in the American people a respect for the company producing the car. It is entirely reasonable to assume that a similar "manufacturer confidence" has resulted from the good taste and restraint of the Hathaway Shirt advertising and the Schweppes advertising, just as the brilliant imagination demonstrated in the Polaroid advertising has undoubtedly engendered a feeling that the company behind it has tremendous creative know-how. Certainly

the spectacular rise of Polaroid stock did not stem from any belief on the part of the public that Polaroid camera and film sales would soon outdistance those of Eastman.

While "institutional" advertising is presumed to have no "practical" use, actually its effects can go far beyond the immediate aim of creating respect for the company. For what the public thinks of a company can affect its behavior at a stockholders' meeting, its purchase of company stock, its very confidence in the company's product. Therefore, the term "institutional" advertising can prove far too limiting, can result in faulty book-keeping and the unseasonable termination of the campaign, can restrict the vision or imagination of the writer entrusted with creating it.

To cite examples in this genre, it has been notable how the consistent "institutional" advertising of the Bell System—humanizing the company with tales of heroism on the part of operators, frank explanations of its postwar difficulties in keeping up with demands for telephone service, etc.—has enabled Americans to double and treble the number of their home phones without feeling they were enriching a "public utility" or helping enlarge a company already one of the world's largest corporations. Consider the institutional advertising of the house of Squibb, including the tale of

Haakim and the "priceless ingredient." In a recent test, it was demonstrated that a fine product, introduced without the Squibb name, did not sell nearly so well as when it was associated *with* the Squibb name. Public opinion research has shown how the character and general appearance of a department store's advertising quite definitely carve out an "image" of the store, attracting particular kinds of people and repelling others. Alexander Adams, Vice President in Charge of Advertising for the Bankers Trust Company of New York, has demonstrated, with color slides of various store fronts, a general audience opinion of the kind of store behind the front from the nature of the window, the display of merchandise in the window and the kinds of signs employed to attract trade. There is little doubt that so-called "institutional" advertising can do considerably more than merely cause people to "feel good" about a company, as naming it "institutional" implies.

"Public service" advertising is also a hazardous misnomer. International Paper, for example, underwrote an advertising campaign on the benefits of reading. While this campaign was undoubtedly in the public interest, reading is an activity allied to the particular business in which International is engaged. But even calling International's campaign "enlightened self-

interest" can prove misleading, since to many people this term has come to mean a disdain for immediate profit in order to demonstrate how civic-minded management has become. If business management through some alchemy should suddenly turn completely unselfish and lose interest in the making of a profit, in a very short time millions of people might be thrown out of work by the ultimate failure of the business. It is possible that by serving one's own interests properly, the public interest is best served. International followed its first campaign with one that directed readers to their local library and suggested particular books to be read. This attempted to stimulate reading through the recommendation of specific books, thus speeding the consumption of paper, which could only be to International's economic benefit. In short, by being more closely tied in with the selfish interests of the company, International's subsequent advertising served the public interest more effectively than its original effort, which, even though well and tastefully done, was largely general in character.

One of the most dramatic examples of a campaign in the public interest, yet designed to serve an important corporate end, was American Locomotive's blunt and outspoken campaign to waken the country to its peril during the lackadaisical early years of World War

II. Even before Pearl Harbor, so-called "product" advertising had given way in large measure to "institutional" advertising—which first thumped the public eardrum with messages about the great defense effort of American industry and then either claimed immense individual contributions to "winning the war" on the part of business or dripped with sentiment about bringing the boys back to Mom's cooking, hot dogs, ice cream and blueberry pie.

In the midst of this exhibitionistic weight lifting on the one hand and sentimental pie baking on the other, American Locomotive's campaign came like a pitcher of ice water poured over the head. Its first ad, in four colors, showed in close-up a hangman's noose against a background of Nazi scaffolds. The headline invited the reader to "Try this for size." A second ad showed a group of Japanese soldiers firing their rifles at the reader and asked "Ever face a firing squad?" Other ads in the series were equally blunt, equally chilling. The campaign, run for sixteen weeks in *Life*, *Collier's* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, received widespread editorial acclaim. Individual ads appeared in barracks next to pin-up girls. The only mention of American Locomotive was in the signature. No reference whatsoever was made to American's war work, which was extensive at the time, including the manufacture of the

M-3 tank destroyer, which helped turn the tide at the crucial battle of El Alamein.

It is possible that if the campaign had not had two "selfish" corporate ends to serve, it might not have been so distinctive and dramatic as it was. When the war began, American was rounding out a full century in the manufacture of steam locomotives, a business tied closely to the cyclical expansion and reinvestment programs of the country's railroads. American was then—in common with other steam producers—at the bottom of a down cycle. To maintain corporate stability, the company had issued a large bloc of preferred stock, which carried a restriction prohibiting dividends on the common until the preferred was retired.

Having been asked to convert its shops to the manufacture of tanks, it seemed wise to American's management to retire the preferred stock and a plan to this end, involving conversion of the preferred to common, was prepared. A sampling of stockholders indicated probable acceptance of the plan but revealed at the same time that American was considered an "old line" company, lacking forward-looking and progressive policies. The campaign, stark and outspoken as it was, both dramatized American's conversion to war production—in a way that mere breast-beating advertising could never have done—and, by its very courage and

forthrightness, pointedly indicated a company whose management was forward-looking and progressive with a grasp of the situation that was hardly "old line" in character.

Unfortunately, advertising is seldom considered an art, the fine art of communication. Instead it is looked upon as the province of almost anyone interested in confronting the public with a commercial message. This is unfortunate, since advertising offers the advantage of complete control by the advertiser, which publicity does not. Advertising appears (sometimes to its disadvantage) exactly as the advertiser wishes it to appear, as well as where he feels it will do him most good. It is not edited and rewritten as publicity releases are. Such editing, however, almost invariably benefits the release—by giving the item the character of the publication in which it appears, thus increasing its credibility. Also, through broad appearance in diverse forms, the material in the release takes on the appearance of general news. Since advertising cannot expect to benefit from an editor's touch, it should have, to begin with, more skillful preparation. And this, because of advertising's commercial tradition, is difficult to come by. Here, too, the problem is largely semantic, for the commercial interests of business are not necessarily best served by blatant claims and so-called "hard

sell," but quite frequently by appearing to be in and actually being in the "public interest."

In short, by looking upon advertising not as "product" or "institutional" or "public service" in nature but as communication affecting the total image and therefore requiring the most expert writing skill, advertisers might better serve both their immediate and their long-term interests. Like the institution of democracy, however, as Jefferson foresaw, such a condition requires education. And, in this respect, it is possible no better source of such education for management exists than a public relations counsel, since he *does* sit at the right hand of management and he *has* been appointed to advise management in matters in which it humbly admits the need for instructed opinion.

# 10

## *Industrial Advertising*

Industrial advertising is a genre of advertising which, in my opinion, gets all too little attention. What attention it does receive, I believe is good attention. I have never heard industrial advertising criticized in the way I have heard consumer advertising criticized. I have heard industrial advertising criticized as being dull, but never irritating; unsophisticated, but never ridiculous.

And yet there are all too few young men and women getting into advertising who find industrial advertising captivating. Most of them want to write consumer advertising—not, I am sure, because it is more challenging and not even because it pays better but quite likely, I am inclined to think, because they feel it

gives them more importance before their colleagues and their friends. In this respect there are many fine industrial names that the average person has never heard of—companies that make an enormous contribution to the economy, greater, perhaps, than many or even most manufacturers of consumer products. But the prospect of creating or handling advertising for companies such as these does not hold the promise of glamor and acclaim that creating copy for a consumer product does. So the neophyte to advertising writes the trade copy assigned him with no enthusiasm, looks upon it as drudgery and dreams of the day he will “graduate” to consumer copy.

I went through such a stage. Long before I was aware of the knowledge and skill required to write effective industrial advertising, I was struggling with it—not because I was sufficiently mature and experienced to write it, but because it was a kind of advertising from which agencies derived little revenue and, consequently, put their lowest-paid writers on it. This meant either inferior experienced writers; or plain inexperienced ones—young and, therefore, also inexpensive. I was one of the latter.

No one explained to me, at the time, that it takes little knowledge—in fact, little more than observation—to know what might be said effectively about a

cereal or a cigarette or a cake of soap, but that a considerable amount of reading, investigation and thought are required to write an industrial ad—which, after all, is not going to be read by another consumer very much like the copywriter himself but quite possibly by the president of a company, who must make a decision, based on what he reads, to spend not a few cents or even a few dollars, not even a few thousand dollars, as might be involved in the purchase of a car, but quite frequently tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of dollars, in construction, or heavy machinery, or processing equipment.

Interestingly enough, it was in the industrial field that the advertiser some years ago became aware that perhaps a fee would obtain for him better service than the 15 per cent commission system. As a consequence, industrial advertisers—not all of them, but many of them—are getting better service and better advertising than they used to.

Not everyone can come to an assignment fully experienced, particularly when he is young. He can, however, come to it with an appreciation of its importance and what is required of him.

What is the industrial advertising writer trying to do? Is his job any different from that of the editors of the magazines in which his copy will eventu-

ally appear? If their job is to communicate new and helpful information about the industry in which the reader makes his living, is the job of the copywriter any different—except that he must confine his information to his client's product or products?

In my opinion, and I think the facts will bear me out, industrial advertising is the most information-packed of all advertising. It cannot afford vagueness or generalities or half-truths. It must, above all, reflect accurate reporting of the product about which it talks. It must relate this information to problems which the reader hopes to solve. It must show how the product can help him solve those problems—whatever they might be—more effectively, more quickly, more positively or more economically. *But it must carry the conviction of accurate reporting.* It should also have the interest of intelligent reporting. It cannot appear as the obvious self-pleading characteristic of so much consumer advertising. For this makes it suspect even when it tells the truth. A reader is quick to spot a slanted editorial piece—he is even quicker to spot an advertisement that is obviously more interested in the advertiser than it is in him.

I have, as I have already stated, written industrial advertising. In writing it, I have always told myself that I was competing for attention with material that

had no axe to grind, that was being printed chiefly for the help it could render the reader. In a consumer magazine, I was competing for attention with fiction and articles—which my advertising could seldom top in interest. But they were generally about other topics, and consumers have come to look upon advertising in magazines addressed to them as a source of shopping information, so that I did not really have to compete with the glitter and excitement of a short story or a travel article. In an industrial publication, however, I did have to compete directly with articles in the same field and frequently on the same subject. My object became, as a result, to make my copy, if possible, more interesting, more informative, more helpful than they. And this was not always too difficult. For, despite the specialized knowledge it takes to write for technical and industrial publications, here a copywriter does not have to compete with acknowledged masters like Somerset Maugham or John P. Marquand or Ernest Hemingway. Hemingways in the industrial field are almost nonexistent. And this is where a writer's great opportunity lies—if he wishes to take advantage of it.

To accomplish this, he must first of all *want* to accomplish it. Then he must want to accomplish it fervently enough never to be satisfied simply with putting one word after another. He must *read* the

Hemingways and the Tom Wolfes and the Steinbecks and absorb their particular techniques of communicating vividly and transfer them to communicating vividly the story *he* has to tell.

Industrial advertising, like industrial reporting, does not have to be dull. It is dull only when its writers are dull. Indeed, the material itself is generally much more exciting than that available to writers of fiction or articles for consumer publications. And certainly the readers have a much more compelling interest in reading about it. This may be why all too many industrial writers do not bother to burnish their writing—they take for granted the interest of the people for whom they write. And this, to some extent, they are justified in doing—except that, when they do it, they overlook the competition for the attention of their readers, which demands the best in writing skill if you are to expect the most in reader reaction.

Many copywriters avoid the industrial field for the consumer field because they feel the latter is, as I have said, more exciting and pays more money. Insofar as the factor of excitement is concerned, no writing task is any more exciting than the writer himself makes it. The excitement comes from within, not from without. Insofar as the economic factor is concerned, I think it cannot be denied that the bigger appropriations and,

therefore, the larger salaries, are to be found in consumer or package goods advertising. But the competition is tougher and the top-paying jobs, I would say, are fewer and riskier. In addition, they are becoming more and more specialized. Agencies with dog food accounts no longer hire competent writers—they look for writers with dog food experience. And not just dog food experience, but *wet* dog food experience or *dry* dog food experience; and, if dry dog food experience, dry *cereal* dog food experience or dry *extruded-type* dog food experience. Obviously in the industrial field, a writer with a chemical background will find more ready acceptance on a chemical company account than one whose experience has been limited, let us say, to steel or electronics or earth-moving equipment. But if he has the least writing skill he stands a far greater chance of breaking out of his bounds in the industrial field than he could hope to in the consumer field—chiefly because of the more pronounced lack of writing skill in the former.

May I point out something else. The importance of heavy industry can cause a man concerned with it to be a little more philosophical. Deep down within himself, the sensitive industrial advertising writer can become overawed at the complexity of the mechanical and electronic civilization which man has brought

about. Industry is capable of so much more good—as well as of so much more evil, in war, for example—than the consumer economy. Wars are not fought with dog foods or sun tan lotions or breakfast cereals. Neither are the backbones of economies built with these highly dispensable items. And when we think of bringing India or Ghana or Kenya or the Congo into our twentieth-century economy, so that the emerging people of those countries can enjoy the comforts and conveniences that we enjoy, we do not begin by making cameras available to them, or brassieres, or eye shadow. *We begin by industrializing them.*

In foreign markets lies much of the hope for our future. We have ceased being a have nation that exports and are becoming increasingly a have-not nation that imports—a nation that cannot produce the values that younger industrialized nations seem able to produce. Our future in the world market will not be decided by the tonnage of breakfast cereals we export, or men's shirts, or cigarettes. It will be decided by the importance or lack of importance of our industrial production in the world market. And in this deciding, advertising—industrial advertising—will exercise a telling influence. At no time in our history have we had so desperate a need for writers, dedicated writers, to tell the story of American industry.

We are going through an industrial phase that other nations, some day, will go through. We have gone through the mechanical revolution. We are now going through the electronics revolution. The mechanical revolution demands plant: factories, buildings, machines. And every dollar spent on equipment usually results in the formation of 3 dollars of gross national product. But now we are spending some 13 billions of dollars in R & D—research and development. And electronic equipment is automating industry and rendering large inventories unnecessary. Industry is revolutionizing our economy. The results of countless R & D programs will be felt years from now—chiefly because things move faster and, because they move faster, we have to plan further ahead. We are in a jet, not a horse and buggy age. And the jet we are in is an industrial jet and advertising, along with R & D, is part of the fuel that helps make it go.



# 11

## *Advertising and Politics*

Of the many millions of American citizens who, every four years, go to the polls to cast their vote for one of the two candidates running for what each solemnly refers to as "the highest office in the land," I am confident only an infinitesimal minority take the trouble to acquaint themselves with Articles II, XX and XXII of the Constitution, which define the powers, the responsibilities and the limitations of the presidency. Even fewer, I am sure, bother to review the sage observations made on the office over the past 170 years by the 34 men who have held it. And fewer than these, I wager, are sufficiently interested to open a book such as Harold Laski's *The American Presidency*, which

Harper's made available some 20 years ago. Instead, citizens who vote for a presidential candidate do so motivated by completely irrational drives—including religious prejudice, racial prejudice, and plain party prejudice. I am not too depressed by this because, as I have mentioned, it opens the possibility of attaining the platonic ideal—of government by philosophers, since the balance of power lies outside party and is wielded neither by confirmed Democrats nor by confirmed Republicans but by thinking independents. I say I am not *too* depressed. I am depressed, nevertheless, by the thought that, even though the independents may wield the balance of power, they do not govern. I am equally depressed by the realization that even the independents, by and large, come to their voting conclusions less through reason than through an emotional process essentially unchanged since their long-forgotten ancestors chose *their* tribal leaders in prehistoric times. They vote, not for a real candidate, but for the "image" they create of the actual candidate.

Let me define, first, what I mean by "image." This is a word bandied broadly and, if not indiscriminately, then carelessly in the general language of communications today. It is a word that crept almost unnoticed into the communications glossary—yet suddenly was upon almost everybody's lips. Overnight, we in adver-

tising were glibly talking about company image, corporate image and product image. Pierre Martineau, of the *Chicago Tribune*, in his book, *Motivation in Advertising*, defines product image as "the total set of attitudes, the halo of psychological meanings, the associations of feeling, the indelibly written esthetic messages over and above the physical qualities." This is a fair definition—by which I do not mean a just definition. It applies particularly, I think, to the emotional attachment voters develop for their party candidates—and certain candidates exhibit characteristics that stimulate image building.

It might be called, as *Time* calls it, *charisma*, from the Greek meaning "gift." I am reminded of the manner in which the King of the Wood, as described in Sir James Frazer's famous book, came to be selected for his high position. He had first to pluck the golden bough from the sacred tree that grew in Aricia. All leaders, somehow, if they are to succeed to high position, must first pluck the golden bough from a sacred tree. This, I admit, is sheer poetry, but occasionally poetic insight explains more cogently than reasoned argument.

During the Kennedy-Nixon campaign, I received in the mail a promotional folder from the firm of industrial designers in New York City known as Lippin-

cott & Margulies. It was what my teen-age children might call a "fun" folder—meaning amusing and not devoted to really serious business. It was entitled *POLITICAL IMAGERY: it ain't what it used to be*. A subtitle described it as "a brief treatise on a vanishing political phenomenon." I am not sure that the phenomenon it described is vanishing or soon will vanish.

Under a series of symbols including a long cigarette holder, a sunflower, a brown derby, a stovepipe hat, a hole in the sole of a shoe, and a log cabin, the following sentiments were expressed:

"If you were asked to think of a symbol that represented Senator John Kennedy, what would you choose? Now try the very same test with Vice President Nixon. Try again with their running mates, Lodge and Johnson. Any clear, unmistakable identifying 'trademark' that pops into your mind. Or is there a song or a slogan you associate instantly with them?

"It is one of the anachronisms of this era of mass communications that in a time when the symbol is universally recognized as having at least as much influence over men's minds as the word...neither of today's candidates has one....

"The truth is," the pamphlet continued, "that virtually the only political symbols the average voter can identify

nowadays are the elephant and the donkey. Good, memorable symbols, it is true, hallowed by tradition and still meaningful. But what happens when the voter arrives at the crucial point of decision: the voting machine?

"Does all this mean," the pamphlet asked in conclusion, "that we are indeed in the era of 'the bland leading the bland?' We prefer to think otherwise. The decline in both party and candidate imagery, we feel, is symptomatic of the transition from the era of simple, clearly-defined issues to an era marked by complex issues, a complex society, a complex world. Today, there is no real argument as to the goals—as a comparison of party platforms will prove. Today, the argument is over ways and means, not personalities."

I remain sadly unconvinced that the electorate votes for a candidate clearly understanding what he stands for. In fact, I am not sure this is ever possible. For the decisions made by a political party, following election, seldom bear any resemblance to the statements of purpose blazoned in the platforms solemnly worked out and adopted after so much compromise at the national conventions. And the subsequent positions of the candidates rarely accord with the avowals made in political speeches.

Why then work out platforms at all? Why engage in the expensive foolishness of a campaign? Not only

are the platforms, out of sheer political expediency, ignored, but the campaign arguments—if any—are either not listened to by the electorate or, if listened to, rarely understood. One of my children said to me he found it curious that so many baseball fans could quote from memory the batting averages of countless players, many not even playing any longer, yet the most ardent Democrat or Republican could not quote, if asked, the voting record of the candidate on whose election he will insist the future of the nation depends.

By and large, political contests provide for the average man the same vicarious experience that prize fights do, or football games, or wrestling matches. In common parlance, those who follow the campaign do so because they want to see the candidate of *their* choice “cream the other guy.” Yet the loyalty to the home team remains. If the home team loses, “we wuz robbed.”

I am not sure that the irrational manner in which we choose our candidates for the highest office in the land is not the most sensible way. I am not sure that a completely rational choice is, first of all, possible or, if it were possible, actually desirable. I am delighted that, in arriving at our choice, we reach down for assurance to levels of reaction as primitive as blood itself—but which, like blood, we share with the entire

race of men, living as well as dead, forgotten as well as remembered, savage as well as civilized, modern as well as prehistoric.

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
Have oft times no connection. Knowledge dwells  
In minds replete with thoughts of other men;  
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
Knowledge, the rude materials with which wisdom  
builds,  
Till smoothed and squared and fitted into place  
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.  
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;  
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

Cowper's words are not entirely appropriate but they come close to explaining the inadequacy of sheer intellectualism in selecting a president. It is perhaps better that you and I make final obeisance before an image, an image of the ideal leader.

This image—because, I believe, of the wisdom that seeps down to us from ages of human experience and lives in our very marrow—is not a constant image. It changes. It changes as our needs and our hopes and our fears change. I doubt that if Roosevelt ran for office today he would be the popular candidate he was in 1932. I doubt that Lincoln would stand a chance, or Wilson, or Washington.

These men—including the fossilized nadir of nothingness we called Coolidge—approximated the image of the presidency which the electorate had *at the time*. It is entirely possible that the worst strategy a presidential candidate can employ is the citation of experience. We live in a constantly changing world, a world to which the past is not even prologue. Increasingly, as present discovery invalidates past assurance, experience becomes the worst teacher.

In most political contests, I confess I feel as I feel at most times—a spectator at a circus arranged for my amusement but in which I shall not myself walk a tightrope or thrust my head into the quite probably halitoxic mouth of a lion. I participate only vicariously—and follow the vague outline of an image that might be my father; or a tribal leader known to a distant ancestor whose dust clings to the walls of my soul. If somehow the image of the presidency in the psyches of all who vote could be determined in advance and the image evoked by the candidates measured against it, I am confident we could predict even more surely than the public opinion polls the headlines that appear in the newspapers following election day.

Since it is presumably the business of advertising to create images—of products, of companies and, since the fifties, of presidential candidates—it is perhaps

pertinent to inquire if Madison Avenue, as advertising has come to be known, should lend its expertise to a political party.

I believe that every individual, regardless of his business, should participate in politics to the limit of his ability to do so. I believe he should not set arbitrary limits on his participation, that if he takes the initial plunge he will find the challenge so stimulating he will make the time.

In the same breath in which I say this I must state my firm conviction that no advertising agency should sell or lend its skills to further the aims of any political party. Madison Avenue, as a business, I believe, should keep out of politics.

Before the 1956 campaign, the head of a large association phoned me. He regarded me, he said, as one of the more courageous and independent thinkers among advertising men and, because of this, felt I would have no questions about taking on the Democratic Party as an agency client. He said, further, that the widespread reluctance of advertising agencies to have anything to do with the Democratic Party was highly embarrassing.

I told him I would not think of taking on either the Democratic or the Republican Party as a client. First, industry groups and associations were difficult enough

to get agreement from—what might happen with a political party as a client I was loath even to contemplate. Second, I had worked at various times on accounts associated with governmental agencies on the local, the state and the national level; the dealing was seldom direct and the payments were occasionally late. Third, I preferred accounts one could build from year to year. Fourth, if advertisers objected to an agency's handling a competitive account, they would certainly consider most objectionable an agency's serving a political party with which they found themselves completely out of sympathy and in active opposition. I admitted that, in this respect, the difficulties involved would be fewer taking on the Republican Party than they would be taking on the Democratic Party. Most captains of industry seemed to be Republican. With the Democratic Party, I contended, an agency could only lose. If its client won the election, every Republican account might promptly walk out. If its client lost, even the Republican clients could only look upon the agency as incompetent.

Because I believe political participation should be on an individual basis, I suggested that a much more workable plan would be to assemble a task force for each party—selecting from among only the top writers, artists, TV and radio people, marketers and researchers

and media analysts those with a confirmed political bias. In this way, not only would an advertising agency be relieved of the costly confusion and hopelessness of a political account but the political parties would be assured of teams of outstanding craftsmen, each motivated by his belief in the party's principles and his messianic urge to see them prevail. The result, I said, would be a mission—not just a commercial assignment.

I still believe this the soundest solution—if Madison Avenue and its skills are to become involved at all in the quadrennial political circus. I know the voice was the voice of Franklin Delano Roosevelt; I also know that the words were the words of Robert E. Sherwood and Judge Samuel Rosenman. But these words helped defeat Wendell Willkie as much as Willkie's lack of professionalism and his steadfast refusal to take professional advice. This was the beginning of ghosting by communications specialists; their contribution to political campaigns is now more widely known. I found it difficult to watch Eisenhower lift off his spectacles during a television speech without suspecting that I was observing a piece of business suggested by Robert Montgomery.

I have expressed my belief that advertising should be viewed and practiced as a form of communication *which prepares the reader for the actual experience he*

*will have when he uses the product.* I find reprehensible advertising that promises more than the product can deliver. I find unthinkable any participation in politics by an advertising man, even as an individual, that results in the public's being presented with a candidate or with candidates who are made to appear to be more than they really are.

I find myself very much in sympathy with a statement in Charles Ferguson's book, *Say It With Words*. Ferguson says that good writing should have the ring of good glass and echo what is within the man who writes it. He says, further, that "...these qualities are in the last analysis qualities that exist in the character of the writer.... What he writes will be the better for what he learns about the writing craft. But the postulates of the craft, for all their practical help, will not make up for the lack of a patient love of truth."

For this and the other reasons I have cited, I do not believe that Madison Avenue should ever empty into Pennsylvania Avenue. Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World Revisited* makes a far better case than I, summing up, "What is demonstrably good in the sphere of economics may be far from good for men and women as voters...." The facts are that political aspirants to office are not offered, as cereals or soaps are, for public consumption but to act intelligently on

behalf of the people who elect them. Because of the momentous responsibilities involved, I believe candidates for political office should be compelled to make officeholders or fools of themselves by themselves.

I would make only one exception to this—and I have myself observed the exception. An advertising man, a public relations man, anyone experienced in the art of communication, should lend himself to a political campaign only when he feels enlisted in the cause behind the campaign. There must, of course, *be* a cause—not simply an ambition on the part of a political candidate to attain public office. I could wish, in this respect, that our political system were so constituted as to attract candidates for public office who might be able to afford to be dedicated to a cause rather than to a consequence.



# 12

## *The Money-Thinkers*

Reading the address of Marya Mannes at the National Book Awards in New York on March 14, I was touched to learn of the concern of this woman for maintaining, uncorrupted, the purity of man's soul. Unlike Miss Mannes, I see the soul of man neither as pure nor as corrupted, *when* corrupted, solely by those of the commercial-minded to whom she refers as "the money-thinkers." The soul of man, I fear, is corrupted as much by the sound of words as by the clink of coins; and, in her address, Miss Mannes was not above verbal bribery.

For example, she spoke in her opening paragraph of "the American consumer worm" and of her feeling

that it is time this “worm” were turning. Never in all history, I would think, has a population been so opulently catered to as that of the United States of America in this mid-twentieth century and, as a consequence, been less of a “worm” at the hands of those who enjoy temporary economic power. I say temporary economic power, since the power the titans of business do exercise is theirs only so long as Miss Mannes’s worm is willing to permit it. The most powerful, perhaps, in Detroit, did a turn themselves when they shifted from the chromium-festooned behemoth to the plain, modest compact car. And Detroit shifted for only one reason—a vast number of consumers would no longer buy the kind of cars the money-thinkers wanted to sell them.

Miss Mannes says that the money-thinkers “. . . are an army with banners, and on each banner is written ‘But will it sell?’ ” This is an amusing and confusing metaphor and may be closer to the truth than Miss Mannes suspects. For, if accurate, this is an army that goes into conflict armed not with a conviction but with a question. And this may, of course, be the best way to win not just the war but the peace that follows any war.

Miss Mannes insists that the money-thinkers—the entrepreneurs, they used to be called—come between the writer and his novel, causing him to ask such

questions as, "Is there enough sex in it? Could it make a movie? How much profanity can I get away with?" She claims they come between the publisher and the manuscript, causing *him* to opine, "This is badly written, but it is shocking and violent and people will read it." She says they come between the reviewer and the book, causing him to muse, "I don't like this, but a friend wrote it and I mustn't offend him."

To take last things first, I cannot imagine a book reviewer—or a movie or a play reviewer—displaying such Christian charity over the tender, pulsating object delivered to his mercies. And if one *should* have such a musing overtake him and write his review accordingly, wouldn't the money-thinker have at him for sacrificing commercial acerbity for compassionate pap? I understand more than a dozen publishers turned down the manuscript of *Peyton Place* as being unfit to print before one accepted it for its commercial possibilities. The decision to use the ploy of sex or to write for movie acceptance is invariably made by the writer—who is free to write for broad acceptance or simply his own amusement, for *The Saturday Evening Post* or *The Reporter*. There is a plenitude of sex and violence and profanity in Shakespeare—and it was put there primarily to help swell the box office of Elizabethan

times. In brief, *is* it the money-thinkers who cause so much repulsive sex and violence and profanity in modern novels and plays? Or is it the inability of modern writers to treat these subjects with the significance a Shakespeare could give them *the very while he wrote for the money-thinkers?*

Miss Mannes has the money-thinkers come between the motion picture producer and his movie, causing him to say, "Never mind if the girl in the script isn't like her, we need that star for box office." But the influence of the money-thinkers in Hollywood finally caused most of the producing companies to terminate the contract system, under which a studio *was* tempted to use a star it was paying several hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in as many pictures as possible in order to justify its investment in him—a system which brought Hollywood to the brink of bankruptcy.

Day and night, according to Miss Mannes, the money-thinkers in television whisper, "Cost per thousand." But, if they do, not everybody listens. Those who finance TV spectacles certainly don't. Or those who sponsor shows like *CBS Reports*, *Eyewitness to History*, *Concert Hall*, *The Nation's Future*, NBC's *White Paper*, *Meet the Press*, *Open Mind*. These shows attract particular kinds of people—and *not* in large numbers, simply because there aren't large numbers of

them. An advertiser who manufactures a product usable by masses of people would be out of his mind to use a TV program other than one attracting people in the mass. Is this necessarily evil? And would it be any less evil—to his stockholders and employees, for example—if he tried to buy such a show at the highest rather than at the lowest cost per thousand?

Miss Mannes deplores the intrusion of commercials on shows she likes. She says this sometimes is so stiff a price of admission, "it may well force us into an alternative system where the money-thinkers and money-takers are not in control." Obviously she is referring to Pay TV. But if Pay TV ever gets into operation, will it be because the Ford Foundation decides to back it, or because money-thinkers and money-takers think they can profit from it? And because of this, won't Pay TV itself inevitably reflect the tastes of *those willing to pay to look at it*? Who else?

Deploring the intrusion of ads in magazines, Miss Mannes says that advertising "vitiates editorial matter." She uses as an example the placing of an advertisement showing a freckled boy eating Campbell Soup opposite a "handsome black and white photograph, say, of a cathedral." Has Miss Mannes been to Rome? The architectural wonders there suffer little from juxtaposition with less noble aspects of the Roman scene.

And what evidence does she have that advertising “vitiates” editorial matter? For many years, the advertisements in *Fortune* received better reading than the editorial matter. And many a newspaper has seen its circulation drop when, for one reason or another, local advertisers boycotted it. Is Miss Mannes being realistic—or merely entertaining? Do people, as she asserts *she* does, really object to having stories and articles continued on the back pages of the magazines they read? And *should* they? And if they did, wouldn’t the money-thinkers who publish the magazines see to it that runovers were dropped?

Warming to her subject, Miss Mannes says the money-thinkers “have come between us and the natural world.... They have polluted our waters with industrial wastes, they have cut down forests to build motels and parking lots, they are claiming the last bird sanctuaries for their grubby ventures in real estate. What child,” she asks, “can now walk from his suburban home to a country hillside or clean brook? Where can the ordinary man now go, without great expense, where the money-thinkers haven’t piled their car-dumps or strewn their beer-cans?” This is sheer rhetoric and nonsense. One doesn’t have to wipe out a whole forest to build a motel or a parking lot—and, in fact, many

motels and parking lots have been built so that more people could more conveniently and inexpensively visit and see our great national forests. Has Miss Mannes heard of the reclamation projects of the Weyerhaeusers and the Rockefellers? And is it the money-thinkers who strew the highway with beer cans? Or is it the nature lovers before whose eyes the money-lenders are presumably tearing down our forests?

Miss Mannes states that, "unless we pay dearly for special kinds, we have the worst bread in the world." Actually, there is, today, only a few pennies difference in price between the soft commercial breads and breads like Arnold or Pepperidge or Brownberry Ovens. Unfortunately for Miss Mannes's theories, most people like tasteless bread and see softness as an indication of freshness. If everybody wanted Arnold Bread, the money-thinkers would be certain to copy it on a broader scale than they now do.

Miss Mannes is plugging for a world that *she* would like to live in—and excoriates people she calls money-thinkers for failing to provide it full-scale now. One of these days the money-thinkers quite likely *will* provide it, full-scale—when there are more Marya Manneses than there are now to appreciate it. And pay for it. There is an ancient proverb about calling the tune and

paying the piper. And insofar as the Manneses are concerned, from Angel Records and Arnold Bread to hi-fi and stereo and fine French wines, the money-thinkers are doing a pretty good job of providing for their particular whims and wants. I doubt that they could have it quite so good anywhere else. Not that it could not—and will not—be better.

# 13

## *Advertising and Individualism*

In its issue of April 8, 1960, *Printers' Ink* published excerpts from two sermons delivered by the Reverend Robert J. McCracken of New York City's Riverside Church. *Printers' Ink*, even though occasionally called the "bible" of advertising, does not customarily report on or reprint Sunday sermons. It culled and printed items from these because the Reverend McCracken had devoted them to deploring the kind of influence he believes advertising has on the people of America, causing widespread conformity on the one hand and vulgarizing manners and morals on the other.

In one of his sermons, for example, the Reverend McCracken stated that "the rugged individualism

which played such a decisive part in the making and building up of the nation is fast disappearing. The self-made man has been displaced by the organization man. The individual counts for less and less and the group for more and more."

I hesitate to call the Reverend McCracken a "critic" of advertising because a critic is, by definition, "one who expresses a reasoned opinion...one skilled in judging." I find neither good reasoning nor sound judgment in these particular statements. The term "rugged individualism" was first introduced into our language by Herbert Hoover in a campaign speech on October 2, 1928. Hoover said in that speech that the American people were challenged "with a peace-time choice between the American system of rugged individualism and a European philosophy of diametrically opposed doctrines—doctrines of paternalism and state socialism."

I think it is interesting to note that this particular speech was delivered during a time of unprecedented prosperity in our country. A little over a month later Mr. Hoover was elected in a landslide of votes and the stock market immediately experienced a "victory boom," some of the leading shares increasing in value from 5 to 15 points. On November 16 a record 6,641,250 shares of stock changed hands in a wave of optimistic

buying. Less than a year later, however, on October 24, 1929, 12,894,650 shares changed hands—on the first of the days of panic which were to culminate in the period known as the Great Crash. Three years later, the American people—with another landslide of votes—ushered in the New Deal, casting into the discard the rugged individualism of Rockefeller and Astor and Vanderbilt which had built the country, sometimes ruthlessly but always with the objective of personal gain, regardless of consequences.

I strongly doubt that the Reverend McCracken would care to turn back the clock of history to make possible again the kind of irresponsible, swashbuckling enterprise meant by the term “rugged individualism.” Such individualism is generally characteristic of the early growth period of a society and actually applies to—and benefits—distressingly few individuals.

The Reverend McCracken cited *The Organization Man*, *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Hidden Persuaders* as books that “illustrate the change that is taking place in the American character. . . . It is,” he said, “becoming increasingly difficult to maintain independence and individuality because of social compulsion. The temptation is to take the line of least resistance, to settle into the customary grooves, to abide by established rules and patterns. . . . The trend to conformity is pro-

nounced—in literature, films, town planning, the suburbs, the activities of the churches.”

I think a careful analysis of what is happening in our society will establish that there is greater opportunity for more people to realize and express their individuality today than ever before in our history. More widespread education and wealth make it possible for more people to question and even defy social compulsion. When the Reverend McCracken claims the trend to conformity is marked in literature, films, town planning, the suburbs and the activities of our churches, I can only wonder if he has looked about him: seldom has any of these activities demonstrated so much seething rebellion. Nevertheless, the Reverend McCracken calls ours “the generation of conformity,” and he says that when we think of the many factors that have made us conformists, “one stands out—the advertising agencies. In our day they are the major wielders of social control. There are,” he insists, “no tastemakers so powerful. More than any other influence at work in contemporary life, they are pushing Americans toward the mediocrity that results from conformity. They are dictating the content of radio and television programs. By means of those media they are bombarding all of us, are bombarding children from the moment they can listen and just barely read.”

I cannot find this generation—and I have contributed seven members to it—notable for conformity. It has worn bobby socks and blue jeans and toreador pants. But our generation, as rambunctious as it was, wore yellow slickers and flapping galoshes and raccoon coats and drove jalopies and drank bathtub gin. *And advertising had little to do with causing any of these fads.*

As for no other tastemakers being so powerful as the advertising agencies, I find it curious that the man who popularized the term, Russell Lynes, in his book *The Tastemakers*, devotes precious few of his 347 pages to advertising and of the forty books listed in his bibliography none has to do with advertising. When Lynes does get around to advertising (page 300,) he defines it as a disturbing function, creating “desire where no basic need exists.” Six of his pages (293–298) he devotes to describing the successful manner in which advertisers like DeBeers Diamonds, Dole Pineapple, Upjohn Pharmaceutical and Pepsi-Cola have employed fine art in their advertising.

As for TV, in its brief hour upon the stage of history, this medium has undergone more changes and upheavals than many religions have experienced in their much longer history. It did not take too long for quiz and giveaway shows to give way to westerns and who-

dunits. And it won't take long for these to give way to some other category—as the public's tendency to tire of too much of any one thing impels it to demand something new and different.

Without in any way meaning to be sacrilegious, I can think of few institutions that not only exert so powerful an influence for conformity but demand it to so great a degree as western religious institutions—some even considering deviation from their tenets and dogma sufficient to consign the deviant to eternal hell-fire.

I have been influenced by and have benefitted from the magnificent panoply of Roman Catholicism and Episcopalianism as well as from the gentle simplicity of Methodism and the Society of Friends. Yet from none have I heard advice so bold and courageous—and enlightening—as that of Buddhism. As pointed out by G. P. Malalasekara in an issue of *Main Currents of Modern Thought*:

The Buddha's teaching invites investigation; it is not something to be accepted and believed on faith or authority. Rather, the seeker is asked to examine the teaching for himself, to consider it in all its details, and then accept it or reject it. Acceptance by the individual is predicated only upon his own conviction that the teaching is meaningful and valid for him.

This is the proper basis for acceptance. Once a group of men told the Buddha, "There are many wise men who try to convert us to their points of view, which are often contradictory and in conflict with one another. What are we to do in such cases?" The Buddha said, "The only thing you can do is examine what each man says and accept what you think is reasonable and correct. But when you feel you cannot accept something, do not condemn it outright. Never say, I do not accept this, and therefore it cannot be right. That is not the path of wisdom. Put it by saying, I do not understand this thing and therefore it is not for me, but perhaps I shall come back to it later. In this way no idea is rejected arbitrarily."

The Reverend McCracken insists that in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, goods of every description—beer, cigarettes, automobiles, jewelry—are urged on us as "absolutely indispensable." But nothing in all history, with the possible exception of loyalty to a banner, has been urged as being so indispensable to present peace of mind and future salvation as the big brand-name religions. It is insufficient for a man or a woman simply to live according to Christian principles. He must hurry to his nearest corner church and there demand the particular religious brand that is being dispensed, accepting it without question as being better than and superior to all others.

I have yet to hear a member of the sacerdotal fraternity speak with half the humility of the scientist—or even the advertising man—to admit that he is not the possessor of all-revealed truth. Or, in a moment of honest doubt, wonder if his competitor may not have a better-performing product. Reiteration, exaggeration, stimulation of many kinds as well as appeals to vanity and envy are not by any means confined to advertising.

Still on the subject of advertising, the Reverend McCracken in one of his sermons found it “frightening in the extent to which it is making passive conformists of us. It is using psychiatry and the social sciences to get inside the subconscious for the ‘psychological hook’ that will impel consumers by the millions to buy what is advertised. . . . Why will American housewives pay \$1.50 for a jar of skin cream but only 25 cents for a bar of soap?”

Again the assumption that advertising makes conformists of us—when, as must be obvious, through its promotion of the newest, the latest, the improved, advertising stimulates change and nonconformity in the highest degree.

The Reverend McCracken of all people should not have to ask in mock surprise why American housewives will pay \$1.50 for a jar of skin cream but only

25 cents for a bar of soap. He is himself a purveyor of the insubstantial, and the crowning proof of man's derivation from something higher than the animals is his readiness to prefer shadow to substance, to pay dearly for what he believes in—from \$1.50 for a jar of skin cream at the local drug store to martyrdom in the arena. Both are bound up in the same pattern of behavior.

The Reverend McCracken tells a story about a Syrian and an American sitting together in the salon of a Mediterranean liner when the ship's orchestra began to play *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*. The Syrian gravely and courteously rose and stood at attention. Puzzled, according to the Reverend McCracken, the American asked why he was standing and the Syrian answered, "I thought it was your national anthem."

"Is it, in point of fact," the Reverend McCracken asked his congregation, "a sort of national anthem? To what degree are we free in the sense of being able to direct our own lives? Are social pressures flattening out independence and individuality, the qualities so characteristic of American character and life in the past? ... Is the typical student today a conformist, preoccupied with material values—security, a lucrative post, a comfortable family life? For a great number of Amer-

icans is their church an appendix to their politics or to that vague generalization, the American way of life?"

The Reverend McCracken asks if social pressures are flattening out independence and individualism. He asks this when more of us have more of the means to be independent and individual than, say, during the Depression years. But none of us, I think most of us hope, will ever again have the independence to gain so vast a degree of economic control over the lives of millions of Americans as once was possible. The Christian principle of brotherhood, I think, is more widespread in American life and American business today than ever in the past.

If a student wishes for security, a lucrative post and a comfortable family life, fine—I see nothing sinful or destructive of character in this. In fact, I should be concerned if a majority of students preferred insecurity, had no desire for advancement and found little worthwhile in a comfortable family life.

I do not believe that a "great number" of Americans look upon their church as an appendix to their politics—if only because politicians do not as yet outnumber voters in our society. Americans, of course, may very well consider their religion part of that vague generalization, the American way of life. But isn't this the

way those rugged individualists, our Founding Fathers, hoped it might be and did their best to make possible? And if religion is the moral force I believe it to be, then I can only hope that this is indeed so—and hope, at the same time, that the McCrackens will multiply, to stimulate more people to do their own thinking, listen to their own conscience, utter their own convictions and stand on their own feet. I hope, too, of course, that the McCrackens will insist their own pronouncements be questioned and subjected to analysis. It is the only way to promote and maintain individualism.



# 14

## *Advertising as Communication*

Despite the fact that it is a multi-billion dollar business, advertising—unlike engineering or architecture or medicine—is not a profession with rigid scholastic requirements.

If you contemplated a career in engineering, you would give yourself an initial grounding in mathematics and physics. To qualify for medical training, you would learn the rudiments of chemistry and physiology. (If you were genuinely conscientious, you would probably also take a course in illegible penmanship in order to be able to write prescriptions.) But what basic courses should you take if you aspire to a career in advertising? Psychology? Sociology? Economics? All three would be helpful. And what other subjects

might be required with them? English? History? Business Administration?

I believe courses appropriate to a career in advertising could be determined only after a suitable definition of advertising had been evolved. What *is* advertising? What is its purpose? How does it accomplish its end?

It is always helpful, I think, to simplify, to get down to basics. And I submit that considering advertising as communication is defining it in the most fundamental terms. Essentially, advertising is a means whereby—through printers' ink and the magic of electronics—a manufacturer creates an image of his product and its benefits before people who are prospective users of the product. I say printers' ink and the magic of electronics. I should mention, before these, language and pictorial illustration. For it is because advertising exists through language and pictorial illustration that it is, before all else, communication. It is a substitute for personal presentation.

I believe it is vital to consider advertising as communication because unless it is thought of in this way it is all too easy to obtain a false and misleading impression—the kind of impression that accounts for much of the bad press that advertising has received and the cynical books written about it. It is when advertising is considered as a means of bringing about

the purchase of a product that it not only is written as an incantation but actually builds resistance to itself. It is when advertising is considered as a means of manipulating the minds of people for the achievement of selfish ends that a copywriter tends to practise word-magic—let us be frank, deception; and if not deception, then sly seduction of the reader or listener whom he now looks upon as an intended victim.

I say this with some misgiving—as if I were questioning the wisdom of loyalty to the flag or the sanctity of motherhood. Advertising agencies solicit new accounts and advertisers select new agencies on a promise of improved sales. Expressions such as “getting more sell into the message,” and “using hard sell instead of soft sell,” are common in advertising. Yet I wonder if those who use such expressions really understand the fundamental problem which they are hopeful of solving. For while a business can exist and prosper only as it sells the product it manufactures or the service it is set up to perform, and while advertising is employed to foster that sale, I submit that essentially advertising can do no more than present as realistically as possible the product or the service offered for consumption or use. There is no doubt that advertising can bring about a purchase by overstating its case, but it can do this only once, and doing things only once is an expensive

way of doing them and completely contrary to the American conception of mass production and consumption.

Advertising is not a means of "hypnotizing" people into a state of purchase. Our entire business history stands as a massive refutation of this theory. If advertising were as persuasive as many of its users consider it, and as writers such as Vance Packard have depicted it, the demise of once successful products would not be as great or as consistent as it is. Many of today's most successful products were not in existence ten years ago—and may not be in existence ten years from now. Advertising was powerless to sustain soap powders when detergents came in. Try writing a campaign to sell cigarettes wrapped in wax paper against cigarettes wrapped in cellophane. Advertising can't sell last year's car. Or yesterday's newspaper. The product sells itself through what is built or designed into it, and all advertising can do is to communicate the product *as it is* to people who are logical prospects for it. No matter how powerful you consider advertising, it can't sell Cadillacs to families earning \$2,000 a year. As a matter of fact, if it were not for Mr. Raskob's conception of the time-purchase plan, back in the twenties, advertising could not contribute to the sale, as it does today, of five and more million automobiles a year.

In saying this, I in no way wish to discount the effectiveness of advertising in stimulating purchases. But advertising stimulates purchases most successfully when it has a desirable product to proclaim and when it proclaims the existence of this product to people able to purchase it.

In the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1957, Vance Packard had an article entitled "The Growing Power of Admen," which contained the following paragraphs:

America's advertising industry is moving into a commanding role in our society. Its executives are becoming masters of our economic destiny, the engineers behind some of our most successful political campaigns, major patrons of our social scientists, dictators of the content of most of the radio and television programs we hear, judges with life-and-death power over most of our mass-circulation magazines. Also, they have become our most powerful taste makers. In 1957 they made millions of Americans suddenly feel somehow inadequate because they did not own high-tailed automobiles.

Some of the techniques used to probe consumer motives, have been borrowed straight from psychiatric clinics and sociological laboratories: the depth interview (a miniature psychoanalysis without the couch), projective picture and word association tests, galvanometers (lie detectors), hypnosis, and social-layer analysis. When our motives are fathomed the experts

then shape and bait psychological hooks which will bring us flopping into their corporate boats.

It was just about a year after the appearance of this article that the automobile industry—despite its production of cars with even higher tails than in 1957—found itself inexplicably unable to sell its full output, despite the best efforts of admen and a greater accumulation of data on automobile buying motives than had ever before been available to them. Somehow, in seeming contempt of all the research findings and of the tempting bait which admen put on their psychological hooks, the public did not come flopping into dealers' showrooms. The only exception lay in the field of the small car, to the sudden popularity of which motivation research had given no clues whatsoever. And, of course, none of the small cars, to use Mr. Packard's description, was high-tailed. Only one small car *had* been high-tailed. That was the *Henry J*, which had died the death some years before.

What had gone awry? If advertising were as powerful as Mr. Packard had pictured it, how could this have happened?

It is interesting to compare new car sales with automobile advertising expenditures as reported by *Advertising Age* for the years 1950 to 1957. They reveal not too much of a pattern. Certainly nothing to suggest a

close relationship of sales volume to advertising volume. More than 6,300,000 cars were sold in 1950 with an advertising expenditure of roughly \$78,000,000—while in 1953, 1954, 1956 and 1957, fewer than 6,000,000 cars were sold for advertising expenditures of approximately \$100,000,000, \$112,000,000, \$189,000,000 and \$177,000,000. It is true that in the year 1952 when the industry hit its lowest volume, it also spent least on advertising—and in the year 1955 when it reached its greatest volume it spent most on its advertising. But in 1955 sales were 72 per cent greater than in 1952, while the 1955 advertising expenditure was 172 per cent greater than in 1952!

In commenting on the supposed “power” of admen, Packard wrote, “In 1940 they [meaning admen] had at their disposal \$2 billion to conduct campaigns of persuasion. Today they have \$10 billion.... Approximately \$60 is now being spent each year on *each* man, woman and child in America solely to coax him or her to use products the admen are promoting.” But if the power of admen is to be judged by the amount of money they have available for their campaigns of persuasion, then how account for the fact that automobile sales dropped 20 per cent below the volume of the previous year for both 1951 and 1952 while advertising expenditures dropped 5 per cent and 3 per cent

respectively—while sales for 1954 increased 12 per cent over 1953 *even though Detroit's advertising expenditure declined 3 per cent?* And let us not forget that it was during those very years that the research techniques which Mr. Packard views so balefully were being improved and put to ever wider use.

Automobiles, of course, are "high ticket items." They involve the expenditure of a considerable amount of money and their purchase is therefore subject to many influences, not the least of which is the state of the national economy. They represent what the Fuller & Smith & Ross agency has called a "considered purchase"—as opposed to candy bars, cigarettes or, for that matter, whiskey or gin, which would come under the marketing category of "impulse items." Certainly these products evoke much less deliberation before purchase.

Insofar as the last-named is concerned, one would hardly suppose that much advertising would be required to induce consumption. Indeed, that is exactly why liquor advertising is hedged around with so many legal restrictions.

Despite these restrictions—maybe because of them—the distilled spirits industry is a lavish user of advertising space. In 1957, it spent almost \$100,000,000 in measurable advertising media. However, despite the expenditure of almost \$1 billion in advertising since

Repeal, the per capita consumption of distilled spirits during the past quarter century has been 27 per cent less than it was during the years from 1850 to 1919.

Department of Commerce figures show a per capita consumption of 2.24 gallons for the year 1850, 2.86 gallons for the year 1860, 2.07 gallons for the year 1870. Sociologists may be able to explain why per capita consumption fell to 1.39 gallons between 1871 and 1880, rose to 1.43 gallons between 1906 and 1910, zoomed to 1.51 gallons in 1913 and 1.62 gallons in 1917. Despite the millions of dollars spent by the distilling industry since Repeal, in only three years since then has per capita consumption come close to equalling these early figures. In 1942 it hit 1.42 gallons; in 1945, 1.44 gallons; in 1946, 1.65 gallons. During all other years since Repeal, consumption has averaged a little over a gallon per capita. If the years 1934, 1935 and 1936 are excluded—the three years immediately after Repeal when, because of a lack of production, consumption averaged only  $\frac{7}{10}$  of a gallon per capita—the average for the remaining years is still only 1.17 gallons.

The average for 1956 was 22 per cent below the 1946 average, yet during the intervening years the industry had spent \$518,360,000 in advertising. This was twice as much as was spent during the 10-year period between 1936 and 1946. Apparently the increase, as large as it

was, did not succeed in coaxing people to imbibe a drop more than they felt inclined to.

Is this what Mr. Packard calls the "growing" power of admen? If admen enjoyed a power that increased with more effective research techniques and larger advertising appropriations, it seems illogical that the industry had to spend 15 cents in advertising to sell a gallon of spirits in 1937, 21 cents in 1947, and 44 cents in 1957. To put it another way, even with a 32 per cent increase in population, the distilling industry finds it necessary to spend three times as much in advertising as it did 20 years ago to sell the same size gallon!

Here, too, as in the automobile industry, there appears to be little relationship between the amount of money spent in advertising and the volume of merchandise sold. Between 1938 and 1939, for example, the industry pumped almost \$8 million more into its advertising to sell some 1.4 million fewer gallons. In 1951, the industry stepped up its advertising by some \$14 million over its 1950 expenditure and boosted its sales by fewer than 4 million gallons. In 1954, it spent \$5 million more than it had in 1953 and sold 5 million *fewer* gallons. In 1955, it boosted its appropriation \$4 million and saw sales rise by 10 million gallons. In 1956, it increased its appropriation \$8 million and saw sales rise by 16 million gallons. In 1957, it boosted its appro-

priation another \$6 million—and saw sales *decline* by 3 million gallons!

It was around 1950 that vodka appeared on the horizon. Despite vodka's present great popularity, it would be incorrect to say that it "burst" upon the scene. Actually, it was introduced with little fanfare on the west coast—in a drink called the Moscow Mule, consisting of vodka and ginger beer. From 1950 to 1953, vodka sales skyrocketed from 386,447 gallons to 14,823,443 gallons.

Now, as you can easily determine by inspecting the label, vodka is simply grain neutral spirits—an alcohol distilled just below the point of being chemically pure, which takes on the characteristics of almost anything blended with it. If you will inspect the label on the back of a bottle of so-called "blended whiskey" you will see "grain neutral spirits." It will appear in a few lines of type disclosing the age of the straight whiskies in the product plus the percentage of straight whiskey and the percentage of grain neutral spirits with which the straight whiskey has been blended.

For some unaccountable reason, the nation's drinkers took a scunner against this type of whiskey. One of the country's major distillers—most of whose whiskies have been spirit blends—advertised the preferability of this type of whiskey for many years, apparently to

little avail. During the years since the war, spirit blends have steadily lost ground to straight whiskies. Between 1956 and 1957, whiskies containing grain neutral spirits fell from 58 per cent of total output to 51.5 per cent, while sales of vodka—which is entirely grain neutral spirits—rose 27 per cent.

Teen-agers—and parents of teen-agers—know the fantastic popularity of record clubs today. Few of the parents, however, will probably recall several attempts—notably by RCA—to establish record clubs, through the power of advertising, back in the forties. There was nothing wrong with the idea or with the advertising. The time simply was not ripe. Hi-fi had not yet come along. *To a very great extent, advertising is most effective when the public has an already active interest in its subject matter.*

Mr. Packard, in his article, stated that one of the problems facing marketers in moving their goods into our homes is that of “making us discontented with what we already have, since most of us already own perfectly serviceable automobiles, washing machines, refrigerators, and clothing. . . . America’s 3300 advertising agencies have come to constitute ‘a great sociological battering ram,’ to use a phrase current with admen. Individually, advertising men have become ‘merchants of discontent.’” Aside from the fact that

I have never heard advertising men refer to advertising as "a great sociological battering ram," I strongly question the ability of advertising to make us discontented with what we already have in the way of automobiles, washing machines, refrigerators and so on unless it calls attention to new models with desirable new features and improvements and does this at a time when we have some reason for feeling the particular model we own needs replacing. It is also helped by the feeling on the part of potential purchasers that they can afford a new model. During the thirties, for example, advertising fell upon ears economically plugged against all siren songs. And during the recession of 1958 it seemed powerless to move certain types of merchandise—notably appliances and automobiles. Even when it got on its knees and echoed the President's plea to "buy now," advertising was largely ignored.

Speaking before the annual meeting of the Grocery Manufacturers of America in New York on November 11, 1958, J. O. Peckham, Executive Vice President of the A. C. Nielsen Company, reported on a study made to determine the basic factors behind the sales gains of 53 different grocery product brands. Far and away the most important, overshadowing all other factors, was "a new or improved product." Among products showing sales gains despite a lack of newness or im-

provement, "materially increased advertising" and "fundamental change in advertising appeal" ranked *fifth* and *seventh* respectively as causative factors.

I cite these facts and figures with obvious design—to shake and unsettle those groundless charges that advertising has, of itself, an innate, an inherent, an intrinsic thaumaturgy. There are many things before which advertising is powerless. Economic inadequacy. Philosophical indifference. Material abundance. Advertising appears to be at its most effective in an expanding economy, among people who are rising both socially and economically, who are interested in accumulating. It is to these people that advertising has most to communicate.

Now let us clarify this matter of communication. Communication implies the existence of two entities—one of which gives out and one of which takes in. If you yell alone in the desert, no matter how loudly you yell, or how logically, or how lyrically, you do not communicate. You do not communicate until somebody not only hears you but listens, absorbs and makes what you have expressed part of himself, accepts your suggestion or your idea as his own, takes into himself part of you—and he does this only willingly, only by finding what you have to say interesting, worthwhile, and helpful. Genuine communication results, on the

part of the person communicated to, in a new awareness, a new interest, a new point of view, a new "something" that did not exist before.

Quite frequently, in seeking to communicate, an advertising man—in struggling to establish a relationship between his client and the person who will read or hear his message—is able to contribute important suggestions for product improvements and so help create more effective communication.

While an advertisement accomplishes its end only as it communicates, there are *degrees* of communication. And advertisements, in this respect, are not unlike people. Many of them—I think I can safely say *most* of them, and I mean advertisements—are bores. They stir nothing. They do not stimulate. (And this, significantly, is true of many products as well.) The genuinely communicative advertisement, on the other hand, stirs, stimulates, brings into being a relationship between the reader and the product advertised that did not previously exist.

How, you have every right to ask, are boring advertisements to be avoided? And how are stirring, stimulating, genuinely creative advertisements to be achieved—with a reasonable degree of assurance? What distinguishes a stimulating ad from one that bores? How can an advertising man improve his ability to produce

advertisements that communicate as effectively as if one sympathetic person were talking with another?

I believe that an advertisement communicates as much by how it says what it has to say as by what it actually says—and I am of the opinion that many times this part is the more important. Many an inarticulate person condemns himself to disappointment and frustration simply because of his inarticulateness—not because of his lack of information; he simply cannot convey his information properly or interestingly or clearly. An advertisement is no different.

In fact, an advertisement—to a large extent—reflects the character, the tastes, the very attitudes and philosophy of the man or the woman who creates it—or of anyone in any way involved with its development. There is no escaping this. The essential characteristics of the written message will inescapably reflect the nature of the individual who conceives and writes the message. If he is impeccably honest, that will be reflected in how he writes. If he is enthusiastic, interesting, sympathetic, his writing will reflect this. If he has no convictions, no philosophy, if he is lacking in taste and discernment, he will not be able to hide this in his writing. For the writing is largely the man himself.

This is as it should be. For communication takes place among human beings. It is one human being

transmitting his thoughts or feelings to another. The more warm and human the writing, the more vivid and successful the communication. And the more successful the communication, the more effectively a new awareness, a new consciousness is brought into being.

I cannot emphasize often enough or strongly enough that communication exists to the degree that what is said, what is transmitted, becomes a part, a new part, of the person addressed. This means that what is said must be understandable—not in the sense that the words must be words already in the reader's or listener's vocabulary, but in the sense that they convey to the reader or listener vividly that the proposition made will enlarge him as a human being.

Neither does it mean that—in order to be “human”—it must be written in language as ordinary as that employed in conversation. Some of the most moving thoughts of all time have been written in language far removed from that which we use when conversing—I mean the language of Shakespeare, of the King James Version, of many poets, essayists and novelists. The important thing is that whatever is transmitted is recognized as something worth taking into one's own life and experience.

The aim of advertising is to bring into being a producer-consumer relationship between an advertiser and

his logical market. By this I mean that in our highly complex and growingly impersonal marketing operations we must—through skillful and vivid communication—recreate the person-to-person relationship that once existed between producer and consumer, when each bartered, when each traded his particular product for the product of the other. This in no way implies retrogression, a going-back to the days of barter and exchange. What I mean to imply is the importance of establishing a rapport between producer and consumer, a rapport that can exist emotionally only between two human beings, not between so abstract an entity as “a producer” and “a consumer.” When we who are delegated to bring into being the communication without which the entire marketing process is like a body without blood, we do so more successfully when we envision our task as involving two human beings rather than when we conceive of arranging a transaction between two abstract economic or marketing entities. When we fail to see the face of our prospective reader, when we fail to hear him breathe or feel his warmth or think in terms of his hopes and aspirations and disappointments, of his bitter as well as his fond memories, then we incline to content ourselves with clichés, with lifeless expressions. We use again the tired

phrases that have been used for years and are so lacking in vitality. We fail to communicate.

Even though we are paid for our toil by the advertiser, we must never write in terms pleasing chiefly to him but lifeless to the people with whom he wishes to do business. And we must address these people in the warmest, clearest, friendliest and most human terms. We must ourselves first learn what is humanity, what is human-ness. For, as writers, we are both performer and instrument. No matter how broad our repertoire, we cannot make music if our piano is out of tune.

Whether we write copy, create point-of-sale displays, assemble sales meetings, write speeches for the client, turn out publicity releases, conceive of a package for our client's product—in whatever we do, we communicate; and communication is fundamentally one human being trying to attain sympathetic contact with another. And where human beings are involved, it is not enough just to be heard or read—*one must be understood*. This is the heart and soul of the marketing process—no matter how scientific we attempt to make it.

I wonder if courses in Advertising Principles and Practice and Advertising Copy, Layout and Production are adequate preparation for a career in advertising.

I think they are helpful. But I also think a thorough grounding in the humanities is essential—plus a philosophical conviction that man does not live by bread alone, either selling it or consuming it and, in the daily intercourse of our lives and the ensuing communication, the destiny of businesses, nations and civilization itself improves as each of us attempts to better not just his own lot but that of his fellow man, and to treat with him honestly and in full respect for his dignity as an individual and human being. This is probably the *sine qua non* of effective communication, for advertising conceived in this spirit will open the door of the mind and the soul while that which only brags and boasts will lock it only more securely against an unpleasant disturbance.

# 15

## *The Present Perspective*

No one knows better than the author the inadequacy of the present perspective for any sort of lasting judgment.

This is from *The Crisis of the Old Order*, by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., a remarkable re-creation of the Roosevelt era.

Mr. Schlesinger, from time to time, has questioned whether our society, as presently constituted, *is* the best of all possible societies. He has, for example, expressed himself as somewhat disappointed that we spend so much on consumption and so little on education. Those who replied to Mr. Schlesinger stated emphatically (as Vance Packard has also maintained) that

ours is essentially a consumption economy and that advertising contributes to the rate of consumption. They maintained that only by keeping consumption high can we produce enough capital to build all the schools we need. But they went further; they stated we already have more schools than any other nation in the world—overlooking the fact that even these have proved not quite adequate. I do not think these people are entirely wrong, just as I do not think Mr. Schlesinger is entirely right. But I do believe that only by exchanging and debating points of view can we improve what we have. And I am not yet ready to proclaim that what we have does not admit of improvement. I am not yet ready to concede that we should eschew any attempts to improve what we have on the assumption that, in doing so, we might just possibly lose it. I have lived through too many attempts at improvement—and too many unfulfilled prophecies of the dire consequences of the proposed improvement. What I like about our system is that it was *designed* for improvement—constant and unending improvement. I find it somewhat ironic that the Founding Fathers, who “planned it that way,” are revered and pointed to so much more frequently by the conservative faction of our economy than by the liberal and progressive factions.

*Printers' Ink* palpitated slightly over Mr. Schlesinger's having been appointed a full-time special assistant to Mr. Kennedy. Its editors quoted from a letter Mr. Schlesinger wrote on August 11, 1959. He wrote it in reply to a request for his view on the functions of advertising. Mr. Schlesinger apparently decided to write about his *attitudes* toward advertising—and he said they were well summed up by John Ruskin in a speech he made to a gathering of manufacturers in Bradford nearly a century ago. Mr. Schlesinger quoted Ruskin:

Whatever happens to you, this, at least, is certain, that the whole of your life will have been spent in corrupting public taste and encouraging public extravagance. Every preference you have won by gaudiness must have been based on the purchaser's vanity; every demand you have created by novelty has fostered in the consumer a habit of discontent; and when you retire into inactive life, you may, as a subject for your declining years, reflect that precisely according to the extent of your past operations, your life has been successful in retarding the arts, tarnishing the virtues, and confusing the manners of your country.

I don't know when Ruskin addressed the manufacturers of Bradford. I do know he died 33 years before Korzybski published *Science and Sanity*, to establish what is now known as general semantics. Mr. Schlesinger was approximately 18 when Korzybski

delivered himself of that tome. I cannot believe he hasn't at least dipped into it, or read Hayakawa, or Lee, or Johnson. A critic, obviously, he cannot possibly take Ruskin or his vague, overblown generalities uncritically. For Ruskin is the man who also wrote in his *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*:

It is chiefly by private, not by public effort that your city must be adorned.

This is a part of Ruskin I have not heard Mr. Schlesinger quote. Nor have I heard him quote from Ruskin's *Unto This Last*:

That country is richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his professions, over the lives of others.

In Aubrey Menen's *Rome for Ourselves*—a book which, in language and picture, takes me vividly back to the most comfortable city in the world—Menen, writing of modern Rome, says, "It is not the Caesars or the Pontiffs who have shaped Rome today. It is Henry Ford." Yet Menen proceeds to demonstrate that, whether it is public or private capital, civic and national improvement come about, less because of the

source of the capital involved, than because of a desire, an urge, a willingness to change and better what has been. Rome, I think, may be considered a shining example of—by and large—good judgment. The best of the old, as anyone who has been there can attest, has been preserved; the worst has been removed and replaced. “For the visitor who comes to the city to see only its ancient monuments,” writes Menen, “I know that new Rome is an intrusion and a disappointment. But he should see it: he will gain a better comprehension of why the men who built the older city built as they did. It should be remembered that the romantically beautiful Spanish Steps were a piece of development. They were put up to replace a patch of wasteland surrounded by hovels that had persisted through the centuries. The Piazzo del Popolo was deliberately designed to make a grand finale to one of the roads that lead into Rome, precisely as the architects of today have designed the Piazza of the Navigators. The Imperial Forums, whose vast ruins are still noble, replaced the slums of a place called, in classical times, the Suburra. The sweeping colonnades of Bernini before St. Peter’s were a piece of town-planning... the Via Giulia, the street in Rome most evocative of the past, was in fact a piece of planned urban development by a pope who detested the crooked streets and airless

buildings of the city which he ruled. Some part of Rome has always been new." I hope some part of advertising will always be new. I hope there will always be a fresh supply of Ogilvy's and Bernbach's to renew it. And I hope there will always be a Kintner or a Schlesinger to stick a hot poker up its otherwise fat and unfeeling fundament.

Whether you agree or disagree with Mr. Schlesinger's views, I do not think it can be denied that they are considerably more stimulating than the views of those who make an idol of the status quo and bow obsequiously before it.

Hanging over some bookshelves in my living room I have a holograph dated the thirtieth of May, 1933. It was written by the Irish poet and mystic, Æ (George Russell)—whose son is my literary agent. In his patient handwriting, Æ wrote out for me the eulogy he was to deliver over the consigning of the ashes of the once-famed Irish writer, George Moore, in Lake Carra. "Whatever may be the fate of his spirit," Æ had written about his dead friend, "it will not be the fate of the Laodicean, he who was always hot or cold. For one who always acted from his own will and his own center, there could be no fitting burial in cemeteries where the faithful to convention lie side by side.... He loved the land even if he did not love the nation.

Yet his enmities even made his nation to be admired and loved as the praises of its patriots. . . . Many would condemn him for creed of theirs he had assailed; let them be certain first that they labored for their ideals as faithfully as he did for his."

A profession benefits as much as a nation, as much as a government, as much as a political party from sincere, intelligent criticism—even from occasionally misguided criticism. I have been more fortunate than many; I have received an exceptional amount of recognition for work I have done during the years in which I have busily gathered grapes in the advertising vineyard. This has been pleasing, even gratifying, but it has taught me little—except that self-satisfaction is the chiefest evil against which to guard if one wishes to grow and improve. In this respect criticism is much more welcome, because much more helpful, than praise. Criticism stimulates the nerve ends; praise merely lards with cholesterol the mental arteries.

If advertising were not a vital, burgeoning, vulgar, imperfect, sprawling, intrusive, exciting, noisy, lively, colorful, inescapable business, it would not exercise the influence it does upon each and every one of us who constitutes the American economy; it would not require such careful watching, or criticism or even, in some areas, legal restriction. In my opinion, we in advertis-

ing should be more concerned with those in our profession, or outside it, who lack the interest to criticize, who lack the urge to improve; who see advertising chiefly in terms of what they derive from it, rather than in terms of what *it* derives from *them*. Advertising will suffer more in their hands than at the hands of the hell-raising gentlemen who call it into question. I think the best contribution we can make to the profession that supports us is to stimulate criticism of it—to cause those who practice it to ponder how they may make advertising even more productive to our culture than it is today. For when activities, like people, cease to contribute, they cease to matter and are forgotten.

This, let us not forget, is one of the rules we apply to the creation of a successful advertising theme or headline. Let us not neglect to apply it to the conduct of our own business.

# 16

## *The Client Contribution*

During the summer of 1962, Bernard Gallagher in the *Gallagher Report*, Peter Bart in his column on advertising in the *New York Times*, and an editorial in *Sales Management* called attention to the rash of advertiser-agency changes that had taken place. I am not sure that a new record was set. However, there must have been more than the expected number of account shifts to elicit comment from more than one critical observer.

During this same period I met a retired advertising director whose major contribution to his company during his tenure of office had been to forge strong and persisting relationships with the several agencies to which his company's business had been entrusted; and

I was startled, during our conversation, to have him say to me that, if he were starting on a career today, he doubted that he would go into advertising. I asked if he had developed this feeling as a result of the widespread criticism to which advertising and advertising people had been subjected. He assured me his feeling had nothing to do with this. "What disturbs me most about advertising as a profession today," he said, "is its insecurity."

His comment disturbed me. I had heard that the desire for security afflicted chiefly the young, and differentiated today's youth from the youth of my own day and my father's and grandfather's day, when risk was looked upon as the touchstone to accomplishment. However, what I now heard made me realize that the problem of improving advertising was not so simple as to be solved through the advertising man alone.

For advertising is not—as poetry is, for example—a self-initiating force. All my advertising life I have written to order—and *in* order to help solve a particular marketing problem. This is the very essence of advertising: one doesn't just write an advertisement; he writes an advertisement after he determines the nature of the problem the message is intended to help solve. The problem may be building preference for one brand of baked beans over another or all others. It may be in-

ducing consumers to prefer products packed in glass to those packed in metal. It may be educating people away from carelessness in order to keep forest fires from happening. But it has an end-objective—and unless the writer happens also to be the advertiser, the end-objective is never determined either by him or by the agency preparing the advertisement. It is dictated by the advertiser—the client. And I mean dictated—because the advertiser, the client, is in the position of being the employer. He has retained the agency and the writer to help him accomplish something he wants accomplished. He, therefore, is the dominating member in the relationship, and what results from the relationship he chiefly determines—not only by what he dictates or by what he approves, but by the manner in which he establishes and carries on the relationship, whether in a way that encourages the agency to contribute its best thinking, based on a careful study of the problem, or forces it—through fear of losing the business—to concentrate on coming up with what it thinks will please him. This is a not uncommon situation and, when it occurs, it is seldom because the agency wanted it that way. “And yet,” a friend once said to me, “what can you do? When a client threatens you with the loss of his account, whatever independence of spirit you try to maintain must be tempered by

the thought of all the people whose jobs depend on your retaining the business. And it's not easy," he observed, "being courageous with other people's mortgages." Up to 70 per cent of an agency's cost of doing business lies in its payroll, and when a major account transfers its allegiance, the agency seldom can cut the rent. It must make economies in its major area of costs: employees.

Not a few people on the client's side of the desk have become aware of this and its inevitable effect on advertising—the kind of people attracted to it and the way they conduct themselves. If tomorrow the relationship dies, why not eat, drink and be merry today? Al Brown, Vice President-Advertising Director of the Best Foods Division of Corn Products, has instituted a policy under which, if he believes an agency is not rendering the quality of service he feels his company should have, he *asks for a change of team within the agency*. Any agency, knowing it has such a fair-minded client, can only be encouraged to do its best.

There are advertisers, of course, who feel otherwise—who feel that the really smart way to get the most out of an agency is to keep it in fear of losing their account. No policy, in my opinion, could be more short-sighted. For this kind of thinking engenders the very kind of attitude that causes an agency out of sheer

desperation to bring to the client what it thinks he wants rather than what, out of a careful analysis and weighing of the marketing situation, he may actually need. In addition, if an agency fears it may lose the client's business at any time, it hesitates to make an investment in the very kind of manpower required to do the type of job the client hopes to get. Stimulating fear of loss, I protest, is a self-defeating policy, and advertisers who practice it deservedly obtain, in my opinion, the inferior brand of advertising in which such a policy can only result.

The most important thread existing between an advertiser and his agency is the thread of communication—since, if the agency is to help solve the advertiser's marketing problems, it must first understand them—at least as thoroughly as the advertiser and, if possible, with less bias—and to arrive at such understanding demands, first of all, questioning; and questioning necessarily implies the existence of non-knowledge; and if an agency fears a client it will generally attempt to avoid revealing the least degree of ignorance concerning his business and its problems; and it is elementary that knowledge results only from overcoming ignorance, not from failing to acknowledge it, for whatever reason.

Some advertisers, growing restive, call in other agen-

cies—but at the same time, out of what they consider “fairness,” afford their current agency the opportunity to “re-solicit” their business. And while this may seem an act of consideration on the part of the advertiser, actually it is not—for, again, the vital thread of communication is of necessity broken, since the agency of record can no longer ask pertinent questions—except to its own detriment. Under such circumstances, communication between client and agency generally grows more and more strained and difficult and, instead of the advertiser’s receiving a studied and properly buttressed investigation of his situation, all too frequently he sees simply a desperate attempt to retain his account. If the practice is justified at all, it is justified by recognizing that the current agency knows its client’s business better than any new agency, the advertiser has an investment in this knowledge worth protecting and, what is more, each by this time knows the other’s faults and can anticipate or compensate for them. Of a new relationship, only the reverse of these conditions is certain, and the shortcomings bound to exist in any human relationship lie unknown, bound to arise at some time and meanwhile to remain completely un-anticipatable.

Marion Harper, of Interpublic, recommended that, if an advertiser for one reason or another leaves an

agency, he give the agency at least 180 days' notice. The customary notification time is 60 to 90 days, depending on the original agreement—and how eager the agency was at the time to get the account. While I understand completely Mr. Harper's logic in urging a termination period of six months, I am not sure that advertiser-logic supports it even though agency-logic may. I was told, for example, that during the past year, when a multimillion-dollar account was transferred from one agency to another, the agency that lost the account had to dismiss so many employees a barber in the building in which the agency was situated went out of business.

However, an advertiser faces the question, *How dedicated and enthusiastic can an agency be once it is notified that an account is to be moved?* The agency must necessarily discount the billing involved in its future. It is well aware that, whatever it does, the account is still scheduled to leave. Therefore, unless its management and the account group have the highest professional standards of conduct, the question must be asked: will they devote their best skills and efforts to the account—or, instead, turn those skills and efforts to soliciting a replacement account? If this sorry situation points up anything, of course, it points up, in my opinion, the advisability of the advertiser's deter-

mining first of all just what he gains by appointing a new agency—and then weighing this against what he may lose in discarding his present agency.

It is possible that account change is as frequent as it is because advertisers, even though they currently spend in excess of \$12 billion in advertising, are not sure of, and are aware of no way of measuring, the actual contribution advertising makes to their total marketing operation. An advertiser tells himself he appropriates what monies he does for advertising in order to maintain and increase the sale of his product or products, and he sees this consequently as not only the reason for but the purpose of his advertising. Inevitably, therefore, if sales dip, he is inclined to put the blame on his advertising—and, in turn, on his agency, which prepared the advertising. And since the advertising—in his view—lit no fire under his sales, he forthwith fires his agency.

It was John Wanamaker who said he was confident half of every advertising dollar he spent was wasted, but he could never be sure just which half—a tacit admission that, while it is apparent that advertising does contribute to sales, it is difficult to determine just how. A remarkable step in this direction was taken by the Association of National Advertisers in its study, *Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Re-*

*sults*. The ANA study wisely suggests the establishment of realizable objectives in advance even of the preparation of the advertising. To this end it cautions against the setting of general aims. A corporate aim, for example, might be "to increase profits"; a marketing aim, "to sell goods"; an advertising aim, "to create brand preference." But aims so general as these cannot be obtained alone through advertising or any other single activity. Instead, the ANA study suggests the setting of *goals* that have been made specific as to time and degree. For example:

|                  |                                                                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Corporate goal   | to earn 10% on invested capital in 196x                                     |
| Marketing goal   | to achieve 12% of total industry sales in 196x                              |
| Advertising goal | to establish 20% preference for brand A among Y million housewives in 196x. |

Each is a specific goal and it is realizable through advertising. Now there is something to measure and something for the accomplishment of which advertising *can* be held responsible.

Because of the lack of understanding of the actual place of advertising in the total marketing picture, all too many agencies are unnecessarily and unjustly fired and the advertisers who fire them cheated and de-

prived, thereby, of practiced skills and experience which they trade hopefully for an undefined improvement. Actually, when an advertiser changes agencies, what he principally accomplishes is to have his account placed in the hands of a new and fresh group of people. And this kind of change could quite possibly have been achieved through the candid presentation of his wishes to the management of the agency of record. He might, of course, first ask himself what he hopes to accomplish through the acquisition of a new and fresh account group.

If I may assume the role of the devil's advocate, I must in all fairness admit that a change in agency address does occasionally result in a change of advertising as well as of service philosophy, *but in all too few instances*. And, in this respect, I would say that the most important question an advertiser can ask of an agency—and probably the most embarrassing—is the most fundamental question of all: *What is your philosophy of advertising? What do you believe? What are your guiding principles?* I am amazed that so few of us ever think to ask this of the very people we hire to work for us. Yet what an agency or a person does and how he does it and how well he does it are governed and controlled primarily *by what he believes*.

Not all marriages are perfect, and neither are all

client-agency relationships. But too often, divorce represents an admission of failure to try other, less drastic and probably more successful means of resolving a conflict or difficulty.

I once attempted to study what happened to sales among major advertisers who had changed agencies during the preceding five years. The study turned out to be an enormously complex undertaking, since it is almost impossible to obtain sales figures except from publicly owned companies, and these are usually given in dollars. Also, as I have mentioned, since so many factors in addition to advertising affect sales, it would be unrealistic to judge the value of switching agencies on sales figures alone—except that this is the usual reason given by advertisers for changing. I found that, generally, where there had been an upward trend in sales, the trend had continued; and where the trend had been downward, a change in agency had not always reversed it. From what I know of the companies studied, I would say that where the change in agency had been part of a general reappraisal and shaking up of the company's marketing activities, the sales curve tended to rise—and the rise was dramatic or undramatic depending largely on the gravity of the situation that brought about the reappraisal as well as on the extent of product, pricing, packaging and other changes

resulting. Despite the lack of a clear-cut pattern, where sales did rise following a decline, the change in agency and advertising did not appear to be the main contributing factor.

I have also investigated the record of companies that have remained with their agencies over many, many years. Here, too, I find it difficult to arrive at anything conclusive—again, because there are so many factors in addition to advertising that contribute to a company's health and growth. However, I do think it can be said that most of these companies have not suffered from inferior advertising. Indeed, I think for many of them it can be said that they have obtained from their particular agencies work the equal of that obtained by many advertisers who left those same agencies for new and presumably greener fields. And yet it is impossible to generalize, for some of the advertisers did do better. Here, too, no hard-and-fast conclusion can be drawn.

Few companies, however, have done better than the Bell System, which has been at N. W. Ayer & Son since 1908. Sunkist also, I think, has hardly lost by remaining 55 years with the same agency. Green Giant, after 27 years with Leo Burnett, is doing quite well—as is Oldsmobile after 28 years with D. P. Brother, General Mills after 38 years with Dancer-Fitzgerald, Dow Chemical and Pontiac after 31 years with McManus,

John & Adams, R. J. Reynolds after 26 years with Esty, and S. C. Johnson after 33 years with Needham, Louis & Brorby.

Good advertising requires a client eager to provide the conditions under which it can be produced as well as an agency capable of producing it. And if an advertiser takes to a newly appointed agency the very attitude that stifled creativity in the dismissed agency, little improvement—it need hardly be pointed out—can be expected.

There can be little doubt that there *is* a difference among advertising agencies—as well as among advertising people in the same agency. But there is also little doubt that there is no corner on imagination or good people. And when sales turn down, the solution is seldom so simple as switching agencies. Indeed, this is the time when trusted people with a vested interest in the account and experience not only with the product but with the advertiser and his particular idiosyncracies may be more desirable than the uncertainty which invariably accompanies change—despite the bright promise with which wishful thinking imbues it.

While the criticism of advertising has been directed largely at Madison Avenue, there can be little doubt that advertising is not, as I said originally, a self-initiating force. It comes into being on order. It is pro-

duced to meet a situation, and that situation generally includes the wishes and the attitude of the advertiser. Because of the position of the agency in the client-agency relationship, the advertiser necessarily exercises a powerful voice in the kind and nature of the advertising produced. I believe it is to the advertiser's advantage to improve the relationship and I believe that, until the relationship *is* improved, advertising itself will not suddenly or broadly show improvement. This is not to imply that improvement in the client-agency relationship can alone change the face of advertising. For just as advertising alone cannot be held responsible for sales, so the advertiser cannot alone be held responsible for the present state of advertising. But it cannot be denied that he does exert significant influence.

# 17

## *The Academic Contribution*

Through questioning, those who champion advertising because of what they believe it is able to accomplish as well as those who condemn it because of what they consider its unwholesome influence over the mind of man can both, perhaps, come to a more realistic appraisal. If, as I have pointed out, one takes the trouble to contrast Detroit's annual advertising expenditures with its sales records, he will find a remarkable lack of correlation.

In the early thirties, for example, a brilliant campaign was done for a small car called the American *Austin*. Certainly the time was ripe for economy, yet the campaign failed completely to establish the *Austin* as part of the American scene. However, during the

most prosperous years in our history, the small, economical European car—initially without benefit of advertising—sneaked into the American market and quickly accounted for 10 per cent of total automobile sales. The Nash *Rambler* was advertised for many years before American drivers suddenly decided they wanted a compact car—and while so-called compact cars by 1960 accounted for 30 per cent of all cars sold, a widely heralded compact car just ten years previously, the *Henry J*, failed to make the grade—as did the Hudson *Jet*. Streamlining, given so much emphasis in current automobile advertising, grew to popularity at enormous cost to the automobile industry. The first two genuinely streamlined cars, introduced more than a quarter century ago, proved far from trend-setters. One became known as the “pregnant” Buick; the other, the Chrysler *Airflow*, was considered so radical the company was forced to design models that followed more conventional lines.

In short, there exists ample evidence that those who look upon advertising as the Hercules of our economy as well as those who frown upon it as the Circe of our culture see something that actually does not exist. And if this is true, then I think it is most important to define what we mean by advertising and to subject our definition to the most searching test.

The issue of *Editor & Publisher* for August 20, 1960, featured part of an address by Hobart Franks, advertising director of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* before the Baton Rouge Advertising Club. In his address, Mr. Franks confessed that he had followed the two national political conventions with great interest because he had found it "thrilling to see the heart and mind and body of America at work." Reading this, I found myself questioning the condition of Mr. Franks's vision, because I had watched the same conventions and I had observed much evidence of the body of America at work, but little else. Nevertheless, Mr. Franks said he had detected a jarring note "out of tune with the American way." He quoted Senator Church as stating in his keynote speech that annually we are spending three times as much on advertising as we are on education, and as "leaving the inference that if advertising were limited and marketing curbed, education would triple and our country would be healthy and safe." Now first of all, Mr. Franks should have said that Senator Church left an *implication* rather than an *inference*, something the listener interprets from what *he* hears. Although, in that sense, Mr. Franks may have unconsciously been speaking more correctly than his etymology would lead one to believe. Nowhere in Senator Church's keynote speech, as reprinted in full in the

*New York Times* for Tuesday, July 12, do I find any such statement. The closest reference I find to it is in paragraph 28, in which the following appears: "Private dissipation flourishes while public education flounders. The schoolroom shortage has not been met and we continue to spend more money on liquor and on alcohol than on public schools."

Later, Mr. Franks correctly quoted from a booklet written by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and released by the Democratic Advisory Council, in which Professor Schlesinger wrote, "During the decade of the fifties, Americans spent three times as much money on advertising as they did on higher education." Quite clearly and correctly Professor Schlesinger mentions *higher* education, since the facts are that education at all levels, during 1960, represented a \$22 billion a year business as compared to advertising's \$10 billion.

I cite these facts because I sincerely believe that not only in saying what we do but all too frequently in thinking as we do we question too little and assume too much; we make clear neither what other people have said nor what we really mean. For example, in the same issue of *Editor & Publisher*, on page 18, in his column, *AD-lines*, Robert B. McIntyre delivered himself of the following: "The fact that advertising and public relations people, whose job is to sell the public on buying a

product, service, or idea, are held in low esteem is because they seldom get (or take advantage of) a chance to publicly refute erroneous charges that they are all insincere and interested only in the spurious buck without concern for good taste or the public welfare."

I do not believe advertising people are held in low esteem because "they seldom get . . . a chance to publicly refute erroneous charges that they are all insincere and interested only in the spurious buck without concern for good taste or the public welfare." I think the truth is that if advertising people are all too readily accepted as "hucksters" and "hidden persuaders" and "waste-makers," it is because a portion of the advertising for which they are responsible *is* in questionable taste and occasionally *does* show little concern for the public welfare. This is not true of all advertising or even of most advertising, but it is true of enough of it to permit ready acceptance by the public of the application of such epithets to advertising people.

In *Printers' Ink*, in a guest editorial, I said that "When Senator Church . . . flung into existence the term 'pitch-man prosperity' he created a phrase . . . likely to haunt—and hurt—advertising for some time to come. The phrase," I argued, "does not denigrate the good times we are enjoying so much as it calls into question the means by which they were presumably

achieved. In fact," I maintained, "most of the epithets hurled at advertising implicitly question not the ends it seeks but the means it employs—and, more importantly, the manner in which it employs those means."

I said further that "communication is necessary to the sale of merchandise, on even a small scale—people must be notified of its availability as well as acquainted with its desirability. But it cannot be maintained that it is also necessary to preserve whatever opportunity exists for making misleading or exaggerated claims, even on the basis of freedom of expression. Any right or freedom or opportunity in a democracy is retainable only so long as it is exercised with responsibility and respect for all affected by its exercise."

I said that among the public I had "found few who question the legitimate and useful function of advertising in the production-consumption process" but that I had encountered "all too many who object to the *kind* of advertising to which they are all too frequently exposed."

My conclusion was that "the economic effects of advertising are inextricably bound up with its acceptance as communication" and that "as suspicion of its message accrues, its efficiency as an economic force is necessarily diminished and its cost, in relation to results achieved, inevitably increased." I said I was not too sure that

“advertising itself understands either itself or its problems” and that there is great need “for prompt action and clear definition.”

I believe that if John Kenneth Galbraith and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. find advertising wide open to censure, other, less well-known but in the aggregate no less influential professors do advertising an even greater disservice in teaching it by failing to understand its actual place and function in our free society and so neglecting to develop for it a philosophy, an ethic. Instead, they incline to accept all too blindly what the practitioners of advertising assume and state its purpose to be.

As a matter of fact, I believe that if the academic world had questioned more deeply than it has its own particular concept of advertising, it might look with less disdain than it does on advertising. And certainly it might send into the business world students not just better trained but more likely to practice advertising which earns the respect I believe it could merit—as well as to realize its full promise.

In an issue of *The Executive*, from the Baker Library of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, I came upon the following paragraph in a review of *The Meaning of Modern Business* by Richard Eells:

The search for a philosophy of business is a search for workable principles in the business world that will maintain the necessary autonomy of the entrepreneurial unit in accordance with classical concepts of economic theory and pay prudent attention to the necessary and sufficient social conditions for guarding this autonomy. High-minded regard for the basic rights of one's fellow human being is also a necessary ingredient.

I believe it can be demonstrated that advertising—as communication—is not only a highly effective but essential arm of economics. The as yet unanswered question is: How can advertising be kept from defeating itself—through practices that offend public taste and sensibility and even occasionally flout the indispensability of accuracy and adherence to fact in human communications?

Advertising is essentially one person talking to another, and consequently can never be any more reliable or dependable than the person doing the talking. But this person comes to advertising fairly innocent. He develops his attitude toward advertising from the sources and people chiefly responsible for his learning his craft. Eventually, as he becomes familiar with his craft, if he has the least intelligence, he arrives at his own particular philosophy. And in this philosophy, if he arrives at it at all—and all too few people in our

profession do—he is perhaps most strongly influenced by those he encountered during his formative period.

I think advertising could be noticeably improved through a difference in attitude regarding it on the part of those who profess to teach it in our colleges. From conversations I have had and correspondence I have maintained with academic friends and acquaintances, I am all too regretfully led to the conclusion that these people teach advertising without having arrived at a fundamental philosophy concerning it—or even a belief in its basic value as communication. I believe they reflect the attitude of a considerable portion of our population about advertising—that its essential purpose is to “trick” as many people as possible into preferring and purchasing a particular brand above all others, regardless of the actual value of that brand or its actual desirability. These people, after all, teach from textbooks written about advertising which concern themselves chiefly with so-called techniques of persuasion—not with the essential function of advertising in the production-consumption process. I find it completely inexplicable that I have heard little demand for advertising improvement from academic circles and highly regrettable that I have witnessed no program for advertising improvement from these circles. I have heard condemnation of current adver-

tising practises from a number of academic sources, including John Kenneth Galbraith. But I have not heard, even from John Kenneth Galbraith, one word of constructive criticism. I have spoken at a number of colleges. What has disturbed me more than anything has been the astonishment on the part of the students I have addressed that I, an advertising man, believe and express my belief that advertising, as currently practised, is faulty and open to improvement—and, in order to enjoy improvement, must be subjected to constant and unremitting questioning.

Perhaps the major contributions academic circles could make to advertising would be: first, to teach it as a form of communication, exactly as journalism is taught as a form of communication; second, to encourage in students a desire to develop a philosophy of advertising; and, third, to consider the academic source one of the most important sources from which a general improvement in advertising can originate.

# 18

## *The Contribution of Heresy*

It is difficult for a writer to conceal in his style the style of those writers who have most influenced him. This is a condition affecting also the painter, the musician and the sculptor and might well result from an inner need to acknowledge indebtedness to mentors unaware they were being used as a source of instruction.

One's style derives from many sources; however, if a writer has at any time become particularly enamored of an author with a marked style, he will inevitably adopt those elements which help him express himself as he would like to express himself. Thus at different times he may find himself reflecting different writers.

Although G. K. Chesterton was writing at the turn

of this century, he did not come to my attention until the late twenties. When he did, I fell upon him with the same enthusiasm I had previously fallen upon Poe and Cabell and, later, Moore and Maugham. From Chesterton I learned and borrowed the "not only . . . but" construction and, of course, the stratagem of paradox, which chiefly fascinated me. (I almost found myself writing, "From Chesterton I learned and borrowed *not only* the "not only . . . but" construction *but* the stratagem of paradox"—so strong does a writer's influence remain!)

One of the first of Chesterton's books to fascinate me was the slim volume *Heretics*—with its introductory remarks on the importance of orthodoxy. In writing this chapter I sought out that volume on my shelves, looking for it as one would draw his hand over a picket fence. For it suddenly occurred to me it was in *Heretics* that I first became aware of the far from Aristotelian relationship of heresy and orthodoxy.

As the stylistic influence of early models wanes, so does the power of their theories and convictions. I have always read with a pencil and, coming upon passages I had marked in *Heretics*, I could only wonder, rereading them, why I had found them so unassailable. "When everything about a people," Chesterton had written in one of the pencilled passages, "is for the time growing weak and ineffective, it begins to talk about

efficiency. So it is that when a man's body is a wreck he begins, for the first time, to talk about health." *Not only* is the latter statement unrelated to the former statement *but* neither statement is universally true. People with wrecked bodies do not necessarily talk about health, and weak and ineffective people do not necessarily talk about efficiency. Other passages I had pencilled that I found still valid: "The object of philanthropy is to do good; the object of religion is to be good. . . . The aim of the sculptor is to convince us that he is a sculptor; the aim of the orator is to convince us that he is not an orator." These contained the particular magic of Chesterton—which was to stimulate questioning of accepted beliefs. Chesterton wrote, of course, as a defender of the faith—to stimulate questioning of the wisdom of questioning accepted beliefs and dogmas.

Justice consists in finding out a certain thing due to a certain man and giving it to him. Temperance consists in finding out the proper limit of a particular indulgence and adhering to that. But charity means pardoning what is unpardonable, or it is no virtue at all. And faith means believing the incredible, or it is no virtue at all.

Chesterton had an emphatic style, and all too frequently the strength of that style blinded one to the weakness of the argument. Chesterton saw heresy as

pulling down a lamp post for the wrong reasons and orthodoxy as a grey-clad monk, the spirit of the Middle Ages, saying to the unruly multitude, "Let us first of all consider, my brethren, the value of Light." He had the monk knocked down and some of the people tear down the lamp post because they wanted the electric light, others because they wanted old iron, and some because they wanted darkness "because their deeds were evil;" some because they thought it not too much of a lamp post anyway, some because they wanted to smash municipal machinery, and some because they just wanted to smash something. He concluded, "And there is war in the night, no man knowing whom he strikes. So, gradually and inevitably, to-day, to-morrow, or the next day, there comes back the conviction that the monk was right after all, and that all depends on what is the philosophy of Light. Only what we might have discussed under the gas-lamp, we must now discuss in the dark."

A dramatic and overpowering climax, but drawing its strength primarily from the vividness of its metaphor. Chesterton was overpowering as many a preacher is overpowering—through his forensic ability to overpower genuine thought.

I have called this book *Truth in Advertising . . . and other heresies* first of all to cause anyone interested in

advertising to ask himself if the defense of truth in advertising today *is* heresy; and, second, in so doing to dwell on the advisability either of throwing truth to the winds or of carefully preserving it, like a candle flame, from the opportunistic winds of short-sighted business thinking. The choice may not seem so simple; it may appear multi-faceted. Scientific method and the attack upon two-valued thinking (good and bad, up and down, hot and cold) may suggest that there are *degrees* of truthfulness—depending on the circumstances. It is argued that there are degrees of truthfulness only when truth is related to a system that has no basis in reality—such as a religious system, in which truth is sought in either the divinity or the authority of the person stating the “truth,” not in the stone wall which Mark Twain suggested be kicked hard by anyone accepting the doctrine that matter is insubstantial.

While I find the so-called “science” of general semantics far from infallible, nevertheless I believe Korzybski demonstrated a keen insight into the human condition when he insisted our mistaking the map for the territory, words for the things they only represent, is perhaps the chief cause of our communication difficulties, of our nervous disorders and our world problems. (I have stated elsewhere the areas in which I take exception to some of the tenets of general semantics.)

It is because orthodoxy is so frequently based on verbal rather than actual foundations that I find heresy so invaluable a corrective to our thinking. For whether heresy be right or wrong, or only partly right or partly wrong, marked departure from accepted thinking does stimulate questioning. And whether the questioning, ultimately, invalidates the heresy or supports it, it can only contribute to bringing orthodox thinking more in line with scientific reality. In this way, not infrequently today's heresy becomes tomorrow's orthodoxy, inviting further heresy.

It is possible the stones in Mr. Clemens's wall *are* insubstantial—and if all matter is essentially energy, then they may well be. Meanwhile, of course, *something* is faulty if, in kicking, our foot cannot pass through them. However, our foot, being matter, must be energy, too, and it may be that what we experience when we fail to penetrate the wall is energy repelling energy. It is likely that *neither* Mary Baker Eddy nor Mark Twain was entirely correct. It is likely *not only* that the truth may lie somewhere between *but* that it can be comprehended neither by our senses nor by our verbal conceptions. Meanwhile, it behooves us to accept and attempt to reconcile what seems most reasonable in both views.

It was not my intention to have this final chapter appear to weigh the value of religious "truth" against

scientific “reality”—although the modes of thinking involved in each are involved in the arrival at a working philosophy of advertising. It is significant, I think, that—within the limited confines of our current stage of development as human beings—the habit of behavior resulting from the acceptance of moral codes so closely approximates the habit of behavior resulting from the acceptance of the findings of such sciences as psychology and sociology. It is important that the practice of advertising be related to one or the other—to the moral code of religion or to the acceptance of the reality of science (or, for that matter, to both). Until it is, it can accord neither with the experience of the human race nor with the findings of scientific method; and nowhere outside of these insights can the ultimate—whether we call it truth or reality—be even approached. Business is too engrossed with what is current and passing to be able to judge, in its own terms, what is most beneficial for it—and this I am aware, is heresy insofar as many high priests of business are concerned but, as heresy, I believe helpful. Which leads to the observation that QED and COD may be more closely related than many of us have taken the time or given the thought to realize.



## L'Envoi

*A young copywriter who had the opportunity to read this book in galley form sat down to his typewriter immediately on finishing it and dashed off what he considered would be a proper introduction. He submitted it to the author, who sent it on to us. While we had already commissioned Woodrow Wirsig to write an introduction, we nevertheless were so impressed with what the young ad-man had done that we decided to run his comment as a sort of l'envoi. What he wrote, we felt, had even greater significance when looked upon in the light of his having long known the author in one of the most important of all relationships—that of his son.*

THE EDITORS

“The title of this book is misleading” was my first comment after having read the galleys.

“But what would you call it?” was the author’s answer.

I did not then—and do not now—have a response. I only know that this book has to do with so much more than “truth in advertising.” What it so profoundly expresses—even in specific terms of advertising—is applicable to life in general.

In my opinion, this book will never be a success in terms of sales. It will never command the attention of a *Hidden Persuaders* or *The Hucksters* or even *Reality in Advertising*. It is, in inadequate terms, a “religious” book—a book desperately concerned with the long-considered beliefs of its author. Many of its readers will not understand it. Some of them will even be bored. If it achieves any “greatness,” it will do so because it will captivate—and seriously influence—the few who read it carefully and who will find in it so many of the beliefs they have always felt but somehow were never able to express.

Innumerable people (primarily copywriters) have said that “writing advertisements is a lonely business.” It is. But I, who am faced daily with copy assignments, can contemplate nothing lonelier than writing a book. When one writes an advertisement, he has—at least—some kind of direction. Either the account executive or the client has explained the problem and (too often) suggested some kind of creative solution. An author, however, has no direction whatsoever—except that

which comes from within. He does not know what his audience wants. He can only guess at where he should start.

Walter Weir starts with a controversial point of view. He admits the increasing criticism of advertising. He attempts to prove it justified. He deplores those who, knowing that it comes from a minority, consider it "unrealistic." He, in fact, embraces that criticism as ultimately beneficial to advertising—and therefore to our society as well. As the second son in the author's seven-child family, I grew up with a rather reverent opinion of advertising. I quite naturally assumed that my father was wholly good and that his business accordingly was too. I defended it to my friends—and, in college, to my professors, almost all of whom believed I was prostituting what talent they thought I had to enter such a base business.

I would—and will—urge them all to read this book.

I have now been in advertising sufficiently long to recognize its faults, which are numerous. But I have been in advertising sufficiently long to recognize its merits also.

If you have anything to do with advertising, it will pay you to read this book—because the arguments it advances will definitely challenge and stimulate your thinking processes. If you have nothing to do with ad-

vertising, you may be surprised to discover that the author—for thirty-three years an advertising man—actually finds fault with the business and, to a large extent, agrees with many of your criticisms of it.

A book of this sort can hardly make the author a popular figure among many advertising people. It *might* make him a respected figure. I am confident the book was written for neither purpose. Reviews may excoriate, and possibly applaud, the author. But nothing, to him, will be as gratifying as to have stated what he believes may benefit the business he looks upon as—and tries through his contribution to it to make—his profession.

*Anthony Weir*

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