

# A PHILOSOPHIC DEFENSE OF ADVERTISING\*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents a non-traditional defense of advertising against its so-called social criticisms. It is non-traditional because the defense does not rest on the premise that advertising contributes to the welfare of society, but rather on the premise that it is morally right and good to pursue one's own selfish interests. That is, it is right and good for egoistic producers to use persuasive advertising to appeal to the self-interest of consumers for their own (the producers') selfish gain. Further, the author argues that the charges against advertising of manipulative deception, persuasive coercion, and tasteless offensiveness result from a hostility toward capitalism and egoism and that these charges rest on the untenable philosophic doctrines of elitism, intrinsicism and determinism.

## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is not well respected. To say otherwise would be ludicrous understatement. For example, the historian, Arnold Toynbee, said that he "cannot think of any circumstances in which advertising would not be an evil" (23:149). Not to be outdone, a professor at the New School For Social Research in New York City reportedly said: "Advertising is a profoundly subversive force in American life. It is intellectual and moral pollution. It trivializes, manipulates, is insincere and vulgarizes. It is undermining our faith in our nation and in ourselves" (24:206). By comparison, John Kenneth Galbraith seems tame. He only accuses advertising of creating desires that otherwise would not exist and of manipulating consumers into buying unneeded new brands of breakfast cereal and laundry detergent (11:124-26).

The list of sins committed by advertising is limited only by the creativity of its critics. Advertising has been accused of everything from media rape to the cheapening of newspapers and television. Advertising, these critics say, raises the prices of products without adding corresponding value; it encourages monopoly; it corrupts editors; it foists inferior products on the unwittingly helpless consumer; it makes people buy products they don't need; it promotes dangerous products and encourages harmful behavior; it is deceptive and manipulative; it is intrusive, irritating, offensive, tasteless, insulting, degrading, sexist,

racist; it is loud, obnoxious, strident and repetitive to the point of torture; it is a pack of lies; it is a vulgar bore.

What is the source of these criticisms of advertising? Why are the attacks so virulent? What are advertising's redeeming virtues, if any? And what can be said in answer to these charges? These are the questions that this paper seeks to address.

## CAPITALISM AND EGOISM

In essence, the motivation of the attacks on advertising is hostility toward capitalism and egoism. Advertising is the most visible manifestation of capitalism—the "point man," so to speak, as the leader of an army infantry patrol is frequently called.

From its earliest days, capitalism has been attacked for its dependence on the profit motive and its appeals to self-interest. Advertising, in effect, is the capitalist's tool of selfishness because advertising blatantly appeals to the self-interest of the consumer for the selfish gain of the producer. In a world culture that is based on a morality of altruism and self-sacrifice, it is amazing that advertising has lasted as long as it has. Its growth, of course, was stunted in Great Britain and Ireland for 141 years because of a tax on newspapers and newspaper advertising (25:74-84).

The recent deregulation of professional advertising (i.e., advertising by doctors, dentists and lawyers) has brought out of the closet some of these professionals' more pointed attitudes about

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advertising. A psychiatrist, for example, who by advertising on television doubled the number of patients treated by his psychiatry-neurology group in Michigan recently tried to shake hands with a medical doctor. The doctor replied: "Take your dirty, filthy, advertising hands off me" (7:57).

A recent history of the last 100 years of American advertising, however, captures the root of the motivation of those who criticize advertising. The book is *The Mirror Makers* by Stephen Fox. On the last two pages of this otherwise well-written, well-researched and impartial book, the author states:

Thus the favorite metaphor of the industry: advertising as a mirror that reflects society back on itself. Granted that this mirror too often shows our least lovely qualities of materialism, sexual insecurity, jealousy, and greed. The image in the advertising mirror has seldom revealed the best aspects of American life. But advertising must take human nature as it is found. We all would like to think we act from admirable motives. The obdurate, damning fact is that most of us, most of the time, are moved by more selfish, practical considerations. Advertising inevitably tries to tap these stronger, darker strains (9:329-30).

If selfishness is the original sin of man, according to the Judeo-Christian morality, then advertising is surely the original sin of capitalism. Actually, advertising is the serpent that encourages man to pursue selfish gain and, in subtler form, to disobey authority. In contemporary economics, pure and perfect competition is the Garden of Eden in which the lion lies down beside the lamb and this "dirty, filthy" advertising is entirely absent—because consumers allegedly have perfect information. Small wonder that advertising does not have a good press.

### **THE MORAL BASIS OF CAPITALISM AND EGOISM**

Many writers have noted that the criticisms made against advertising are actually criticisms against capitalism (1, 3, 4, 5, 33). Most defenses of advertising, however, are based on a standard of social welfare; the "common good" or "advertising's contribution to society" are standards frequently used to evaluate advertising. Borden explicitly states his research question on these terms: "Does advertising contribute to, or does it interfere with, the successful functioning of

a dynamic, free, capitalistic economy, the aim of which is a high material welfare for the whole social group?" (5:6). Indeed, the defense and justification of free-market capitalism by many economists is based on this same premise (10,21).

Rand, on the other hand, rejects the traditional defense of capitalism that refers to a standard of the social or common good. Instead, she holds that "the moral justification of capitalism lies in the fact that it is the only system consonant with man's rational nature, that it protects man's survival *qua* man, and that its ruling principle is: *justice*" (29:20; emphasis in original, as are all subsequent emphases in quotes from Rand).

According to Rand: "Man's mind is his basic means of survival—his only means of gaining knowledge" (29:16). This means that thinking and the acquisition of knowledge are required for human beings to survive. Our simplest needs cannot be met without thought and knowledge (our own or someone else's, such as our parents when we were children). But thought and the acquisition of knowledge are not automatic. Thinking and the exercise of our rational faculty must be initiated by each individual. Thinking, in other words, is volitional. Rand states:

A process of thought is an enormously complex process of identification and integration, which only an individual mind can perform. There is no such thing as a collective brain (29:16).

...

Since knowledge, thinking, and rational action are properties of the individual, since the choice to exercise his rational faculty or not depends on the individual, man's survival requires that those who think be free of the interference of those who don't. Since men are neither omniscient nor infallible, they must be free to agree or disagree, to cooperate or to pursue their own independent course, each according to his own rational judgment. Freedom is the fundamental requirement of man's mind (29:17).

Freedom is the absence of the initiation of physical force by others, especially the government, against the individual. Individual rights, especially property rights, are the means by which individuals are protected within a social system. When a government is restrained from violating individual rights, as by a constitution, and is held liable for encroaching upon the rights of its citizens, that government is set up to protect a system of free-market, *laissez-faire* capitalism.

Any other system (e.g., mixed economy, socialism) would have to be inimical to and destructive of man's rational nature (27, 28).

Rand's ethics "advocates and upholds *rational selfishness* . . . [it] holds that the *human* good does not require human sacrifices and cannot be achieved by the sacrifice of anyone to anyone." Since people are rational beings, their survival requires that they initiate the process of thought (thinking is, indeed, selfish) in order to choose their own values and then to pursue those values, but neither sacrificing themselves to others, nor sacrificing others to themselves. "The principle of *trade* is the only rational ethical principle for all human relationships, personal and social, private and public, spiritual and material. It is the principle of *justice*" (26:31).

Capitalism, consequently, is the only *moral* social system because it recognizes the conditions of man's survival as a rational being, and, specifically, because it recognizes individual rights by banning the initiation of physical force. Rand, therefore, defends capitalism precisely because it rests on theories of individualism and egoism. Implicitly, then, advertising would have to be a morally good institution, not because it contributes to society's well-being, but because it appeals to the self-interest of individual consumers for the selfish gain of individual producers.

Rand states that "the *moral* justification of capitalism does not lie in the altruist claim that it represents the best way to achieve 'the common good.' It is true that capitalism does—if that catchphrase has any meaning—but this is merely a secondary consequence" (29:20). So also, the moral justification of advertising cannot and does not lie in the claim that it provides for the "common good." It is true that advertising does contribute to the betterment of every individual's life, as Borden and many others have pointed out in exhaustive studies, but this, too, is merely a secondary consequence. The moral justification of advertising is that it represents the implementation of an ethics of egoism—the communication of one rational being to another rational being for the egoistic benefit of both.

With the moral basis of capitalism and egoism explained, the specific charges against advertising can now be examined.

## THE "SOCIAL" CRITICISMS OF ADVERTISING

The criticisms of advertising, as indicated above, are extensive and entail many variations. But, in essence, there are two "social" criticisms of

advertising. Overall, both charges attribute to advertising the power of physical force—that is, the power to force consumers against their wills to buy products they don't need or want.

The first criticism says that advertising changes the consumer's tastes by forcing consumers to conform to the desires of producers, rather than the other way around, as free-market advocates have always argued. This charge consists of two forms.

One form, the more serious one, says that advertising inherently, by its nature, deceives and manipulates consumers into buying products they don't need or want; it does this through subliminal advertising.

The other form states that advertising is "merely" coercive—that it creates needs and wants that otherwise would not come into existence without the advertising. That is, highly emotional, persuasive, combative advertising, as opposed to rational, informative, constructive advertising, is said to be a kind of physical force that destroys the consumer sovereignty of the free market. (The charge of manipulation and deception in the first form of this criticism is more serious because manipulation is more devious; a manipulator can make a consumer buy something that the consumer thinks is for his or her own good, when in fact it isn't. The charge of coercion in the second form of the first criticism says that advertising is just brute force.)

The second criticism says that advertising offends the consumer's tastes by producing ads that are insulting and degrading to the consumer's intelligence, by promoting morally offensive products, and by encouraging harmful and immoral behavior. In short, according to this charge, advertising is immoral.

In the textbooks, these criticisms are referred to as "social" criticisms. But at their roots, they are philosophic. It is by reference to philosophic principles that answers to the charges may be made.

## ANSWERS TO THE CRITICISMS

### Elitism, Intrinsicism and Determinism

The philosophic roots of these criticisms are the doctrines of elitism, intrinsicism and determinism.

First, consider elitism—the twentieth century version of *noblesse oblige*. The mere assertion that there are products that the consumer does not need or want is an admission by the asserters that they are members of that "noble class" of intellectuals, the elite class, who know what is

best for the lower classes. It is their alleged moral and cultural superiority that gives these modern aristocrats a feeling of self-righteousness when discussing good taste and advertising in the same breath (22:8). The authoritarian implications should be obvious. What the elitists mean is that there are products that *they* think the consumer should not need or want.

Why do the elitists think this way? Enter the doctrine of intrinsicism. Intrinsicism "holds that the [morally] good is inherent in certain things or actions as such, regardless of their context and consequences, regardless of any benefit or injury they may cause to the actors and subjects involved. It is a theory that divorces the concept of 'good' from beneficiaries, and the concept of 'value' from valuer and purpose—claiming that the good is good in, by, and of itself" (29:21).

Intrinsicism underlies the problem of the "paradox of value" that plagued the classical economists; it is the doctrine that the neoclassical and Austrian economists rejected in formulating the theory of marginal utility (30:207-08). It also underlies the medieval notion of the "just price" (6, 13:64). If certain products possess value "in, by, and of themselves," and if certain people know which products are intrinsically valuable, then these people, the elitists, will insist that there are certain products that the consumer should not need or want. (It should be noted here that Rand does not consider market values, or moral values, to be subjective, as do the neoclassical and Austrian economists. According to Rand, market values and moral values are neither intrinsic nor subjective, but rather objective. Space, however, prevents further discussion of this trichotomy.)

What underlies elitism and intrinsicism, however, is the doctrine of determinism. "This doctrine asserts that man can make no genuine choices; that his thinking, values, premises, and actions are beyond his power to regulate . . . [consequently,] man is a passive responder to internal or external stimuli" (19:11). Elitists, of course, are determined to believe what they do and to prefer the products they do through no choice of their own. They have acquired their cultural and moral superiority by virtue of their noble birth, special education, or other privileged status that has revealed to them which ones are the intrinsically valuable products.

Thus the doctrines of elitism, intrinsicism and determinism underlie the social criticisms of advertising. Determinism, in particular, is the major theme of the first philosophic charge;

intrinsicism is the major theme of the second philosophic charge. Elitism underscores both.

### Advertising Changes Tastes

The first form of the first philosophic criticism says that advertising manipulates and deceives consumers through subliminal advertising. The second form says that advertising creates needs and wants by using techniques of persuasion, which the critics say is essentially the same as coercion. Both of these forms assert that man is determined to act the way he does without resort to conscious control. They assert that advertising bypasses the conscious mind and causes consumers to change their tastes. The critics assert that advertising *forces* consumers to act in ways they would not act if there were no advertising. The psychological basis of the first form is psychoanalysis; the psychological basis of the second form is behaviorism.

*Subliminal Advertising Deceives and Manipulates.* This first form assumes that we are motivated by unconscious urges and instincts that we possess innately; we are determined to act the way we do because of internal stimuli. According to Freud, the id is our warehouse of primitive and impulsive drives, such as the drives for thirst, hunger and sex. Advertising, the critics say, taps or triggers these impulsive drives in ways of which we are unaware. Advertising, consequently, deceives, defrauds and manipulates unwitting consumers into changing their tastes to conform to the desires of the greedy, selfish producers.

This manipulation is achieved subliminally. Subliminal perception refers to an alleged ability to acquire an awareness of something that is below our threshold of awareness (20:99). In a movie theater in 1958, the words "eat popcorn" and "drink Coca-Cola" were flashed on the screen at a speed that no one could perceive. During intermission, the sales of popcorn increased 58 percent and the sales of Coke 28 percent (32:6-7).

The 1970s' version of the subliminal advertising charge comes from Key's book *Subliminal Seduction* (15). The author saw the word "sex" embedded in the ice cubes of a gin glass used in an advertisement for Gilbey's gin. He has since seen many other such "subliminal embeds" in advertising and subsequently has written two more books and is currently working on a fourth (32).

Taken literally, the notion of subliminal perception—namely, that it is possible to perceive something that is below our threshold of perception—is a self-contradiction. If the concept

means anything, it is a very low level of awareness or an awareness that occurs despite focused attention on something else (20:99-100). Well-controlled experiments to test the plausibility of subliminal influence on behavior have failed to produce evidence of its power (12,14). Advertisers have enough trouble getting consumers to pay attention to ads that are blatantly explicit, let alone to messages that are three-thousandths of a second long or unrecognizably embedded in ice cubes.

Indeed, the charge that advertisers consciously and willfully use subliminal embeds in advertisements carries no more weight of evidence than the assertion that clouds contain sexual symbolism. The charge is an arbitrary assertion in the form of the classic fallacy *argumentum ad ignorantiam* (31:141). No one can prove that gremlins do not exist, nor does anyone have the obligation to do so. No one can prove a negative. Advertisers do not have to rebut the charges of overly active imaginations, because there is no evidence that advertisers are so motivated. The burden of proof is on the asserter of the positive.

The popularity of the subliminal advertising charge, as well as the popularity of Freudian psychology, stems, in this writer's opinion, from the inability of many people to identify the causes of their emotions and behavior. If people do not know what emotions they feel or why they feel certain emotions, or do not know why they act the way they do, such people will find it easy to believe that there are mysterious forces at work in the world that can manipulate and control them. Recent work in cognitive psychology demonstrates that the source of these so-called inexplicable, internal urges—which advertising allegedly taps—is one's thoughts (2, 26:27-30).

*Persuasive Advertising Creates Needs and Wants.* The Freudian critics say that advertising taps the consumer's internal urges that control the consumer's life. The behaviorist asserts that advertising, as an element of the consumer's environment (i.e., as an *external* stimulus) directly causes the consumer to act. It is persuasive, emotional advertising, in particular, that these critics say changes the consumer's tastes and creates needs and wants that the consumer would otherwise not have.

Persuasion here is equated with coercion. These critics do not deny the value of advertising. They deny only the value of persuasive advertising. Their kind of advertising is called "informative." Their model of informative advertising is the price advertising of retail stores. They usually even tolerate most newspaper and magazine advertising.

Informative advertising, the critics say, is "rational."

What the critics cannot tolerate, however, is television advertising, especially competitive advertising of basically homogeneous products (such as bathroom tissue, liquid laundry detergent, shaving cream) and the so-called "reminder" advertising that contains little copy content. They especially despise the Mr. Whipple, "ring around the collar," and Noxzema take-it-all-off commercials. Emotional advertising is persuasive and, therefore, irrational.

The distinction, however, between informative advertising and persuasive advertising is a false dichotomy, stemming from the centuries-old dichotomy in philosophy between reason and emotion.

In fact, all advertising is informative; so also is it all persuasive. For example, a sign on a hot summer day that says: "lemonade—5¢" is informative, but if you are walking down the street where that sign happens to be and if you are dying of thirst, that simple informative message can very quickly become persuasive. On the other hand, an ad that has no copy in it at all, only, say, a photograph of the product, is informing consumers that the product exists (or still exists, assuming that this type of advertising is providing the consumer with a "reminder").

But the doctrine of determinism obliterates the "distinction between force and persuasion, between physical threats and incentives. If men lacked volition, then persuasion would have the same coercive power as direct physical force: 'persuasion' and force would represent *two different methods* of manipulating others" (19:12-13; emphasis added). Persuasion, then, according to the critic of advertising, is just another form of physical force, perhaps only a little less direct than pointing a gun at the consumer.

But determinism is a self-contradiction, because the advocates of determinism presumably are also determined, either by internal or external stimuli. They *must* believe what they do because they "could not help it." The determinists, in other words, are determined to believe in determinism; their claims to truth, therefore, are no more valid than anyone else's. It is "a doctrine which is incompatible with its own content and which would make all assertions of knowledge and truth meaningless" (16:204, 8, 17, 18).

Man is a being of volitional consciousness. (For an exposition of the theory of volition, see 26:18-22.) If you cannot get inside other people's heads to make them think or focus their minds,

then advertising cannot get inside the minds of consumers to force them to run out and buy Noxzema shaving cream because of a sexy model.

This means, speaking precisely and technically, that advertising cannot change tastes, create needs or wants, or even create demand. Advertising can make consumers aware of needs, it can stimulate their wants, it can stimulate demand, and it can make it possible for consumers to enjoy a greater and wider range of tastes. But tastes, needs, wants and demand all originate within the consumer. Advertising is just the sign that says "lemonade—5¢." Or, to put it in the language of causality, advertising can be the necessary condition for the existence of specific wants, but not the sufficient condition.

The problem with this criticism is that the terms "need" and "necessity" are seldom carefully defined. Critics usually take "need" to mean bare physical subsistence. At that point, they acknowledge that consumers need food, but they deny that consumers need Big Macs, T-bone steaks or caviar. A more proper definition of need would be the requirements for the survival and happiness of a rational being. In this sense, man will always have need for greater and wider varieties of food, for faster and more comfortable ways to travel, for objects of ornamentation and contemplation—that is, for jewelry and art—etc. Man's needs, in other words, are limitless. The job of advertising is to persuade consumers to prefer or want the marketer's specific brand that meets one of these generic needs.

But, the critics go on, has not advertising turned microwave ovens and videocassette recorders into necessities that not long ago were considered luxuries? Has not advertising created a necessity that would not have existed otherwise? The answer is no, at least in the deterministic sense that the critics mean, because it is *consumers* who have turned these products into necessities. A luxury is a product that only a few people can afford to own and, consequently, choose to own. A necessity, when contrasted with a luxury, is a product that most people can afford to own and, consequently, do choose to do so.

The need for faster, more convenient methods of cooking has always been present, as well as the need for entertainment available at one's convenience. The producers and marketers of today's microwave ovens and VCR's, to be sure, have made it possible for consumers to meet these needs in a better and cheaper way, and advertising certainly has contributed to this process—this is the necessary condition. But as prices for these products have declined over time, and as

consumers' incomes have risen, it is the attitudes of consumers—their value judgments—toward the products that have changed. It is their freely determined evaluations that no longer declare the products to be luxuries, but more and more to be necessities — this is the sufficient condition. Far from being passive receptacles that respond in knee-jerk fashion to advertising, consumers' minds actively perceive the changing facts of the marketplace and then evaluate them. Over time, luxuries become necessities.

In any event, the critic here is usually a thinly disguised elitist who cannot tolerate the fact that advertising, marketing, and capitalism very rapidly make it possible for the expensive toys of the select few to become the everyday comforts of the masses. Luxuries, in other words, in a progressing, capitalistic economy, rapidly become necessities.

### Advertising Offends Tastes

This charge says that advertising is offensive to good taste. But what is taste? Literally, it is the sensation one experiences when something comes into contact with the tongue. More generally, taste is a personal preference or inclination. An ancient maxim states that "tastes are not disputable," meaning that they can be neither right nor wrong, good nor bad. They just are. Hence, I like peanut butter, you like apple butter; I like strong sex appeals in my television commercials, you like PBS pledge breaks. The appropriate answer to the charge that advertising is offensive is "I'm sorry you feel that way, but you have your tastes and I have my tastes." And we each go about our own business.

Unfortunately, the critics do not stop there. To them, tastes *are* disputable, because of their entrenched intrinsicism and elitism. Consequently, the charge quickly mushrooms. Now, advertising is offensive because it promotes immoral products and encourages immoral or harmful behavior.

The root of this charge is intrinsicism. For the moral intrinsicist, value judgments are self-evident. Purpose and context are irrelevant. Specific objects and specific actions by their nature are either moral or immoral. And the intrinsicist knows which ones are which. Depending on which intrinsicist one talks to, cigarettes and cigarette advertising are immoral; liquor and liquor advertising cause drunken driving and are, therefore, immoral; the use of women, blacks, children, men, whites, Hispanics, Orientals, et al., *ad infinitum*, all at various times and in various advertisements have been attacked

as immoral exploitation. The critics contradict one another over which ads are immoral, because they each have their own set of intrinsic values about which goods are the "just goods" and which ads are the "just ads." The critics also, of course, do not stop at calling these immoral; they obliterate the meaning of individual rights, attribute the power of physical force to advertising, and proceed to advocate the passage of legislation to regulate such immoral activities.

The issue of what is moral and what is immoral is too complex to consider in this article (see 26). The critics, nevertheless, want to regulate or make illegal what they consider to be immoral. The question here, however, is what constitutes an illegal act? At what point should one draw the line between the legal and the illegal?

According to Rand, an illegal act is one that violates individual rights, and rights are violated only by *initiating* the use of physical force against others. The proper function of government is to protect individual rights. "The government acts as the agent of man's right of self-defense, and may use force only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its use" (29:19). Thus, taking money from another person without that person's consent is the initiation of the use of physical force; prosecuting and imprisoning the thief is the government's legitimate, retaliatory use of force. The legal, consequently, is the voluntary, the contractual; the illegal is the involuntary, the coerced.

As discussed above in the answers to the two forms of the first criticism, advertising is not coercive. Consequently, non-fraudulent advertising (Rand considers fraud—in the common-law sense—to be an indirect form of initiating the use of physical force), including persuasive advertising, appeals to the reason and volition of consumers in order to obtain their voluntary consent to buy the producer's products. The use of persuasive advertising is just that: an appeal for the voluntary cooperation of consumers to join together with producers to engage in contractual relationships. An advertisement, indeed, in most cases, is an *invitation* to the consumer to make an offer to buy the seller's product. Since advertising is not inherently or intrinsically a form of coercion and since it cannot get inside the heads of consumers to force them to act against their wills, advertising cannot and does not violate the rights of consumers. The relationship between advertisers and consumers is strictly voluntary. (Fraudulent advertising, this writer submits, is rare in today's markets, but a discussion of this point—and the activities of the

Federal Trade Commission—would require a separate, detailed article.)

The critics, on the other hand, are the ones who initiate the use of physical force, in the form of a law, against consumers by telling consumers what products they can or cannot buy and on what conditions they can or cannot buy the products. And the critics also initiate the use of physical force, in the form of a law, against producers by telling them what products they can or cannot advertise and on what conditions they can or cannot advertise the products. Such a law is a violation of individual rights. It does not matter whether the law prohibits or regulates the advertising of cigarettes, distilled liquor, pre-sweetened cereals, or pornographic literature. If advertising is not a form of coercion, it cannot be held liable for infringing anyone's rights. On the contrary, it is the advertiser's rights and the consumer's rights that are infringed by legislation that prohibits or regulates advertising.

## CONCLUSION

This paper argued that the motivation for the vehement hostility toward advertising is a deep-seated hostility toward capitalism and egoism. Because advertising is the most visible symbol of capitalism and the most blatant institution of egoism, advertising seems to be viewed by its critics as the Biblical serpent that tempts man with the forbidden fruit and, consequently, encourages original sin. It is as if advertising itself were the original sin of capitalism because, to its critics, advertising can do no right; it was born condemned.

The so-called social criticisms of advertising seem to arise as rationalizations to cover up the deeper hostility toward capitalism and egoism. Far from being the cause of manipulative deception, persuasive coercion, and tastelessly offensive advertising, capitalism and egoism are the source and cause of the unprecedented progress we have experienced over the past 200 years. To the contrary, the cause of the "social" criticisms of advertising is philosophy. The cause is the doctrines of elitism, intrinsicism and determinism. It is to these doctrines that researchers should turn their attention when seeking to examine the criticisms of advertising. It is these philosophic doctrines, this writer submits, that should be questioned and, ultimately, rejected.

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