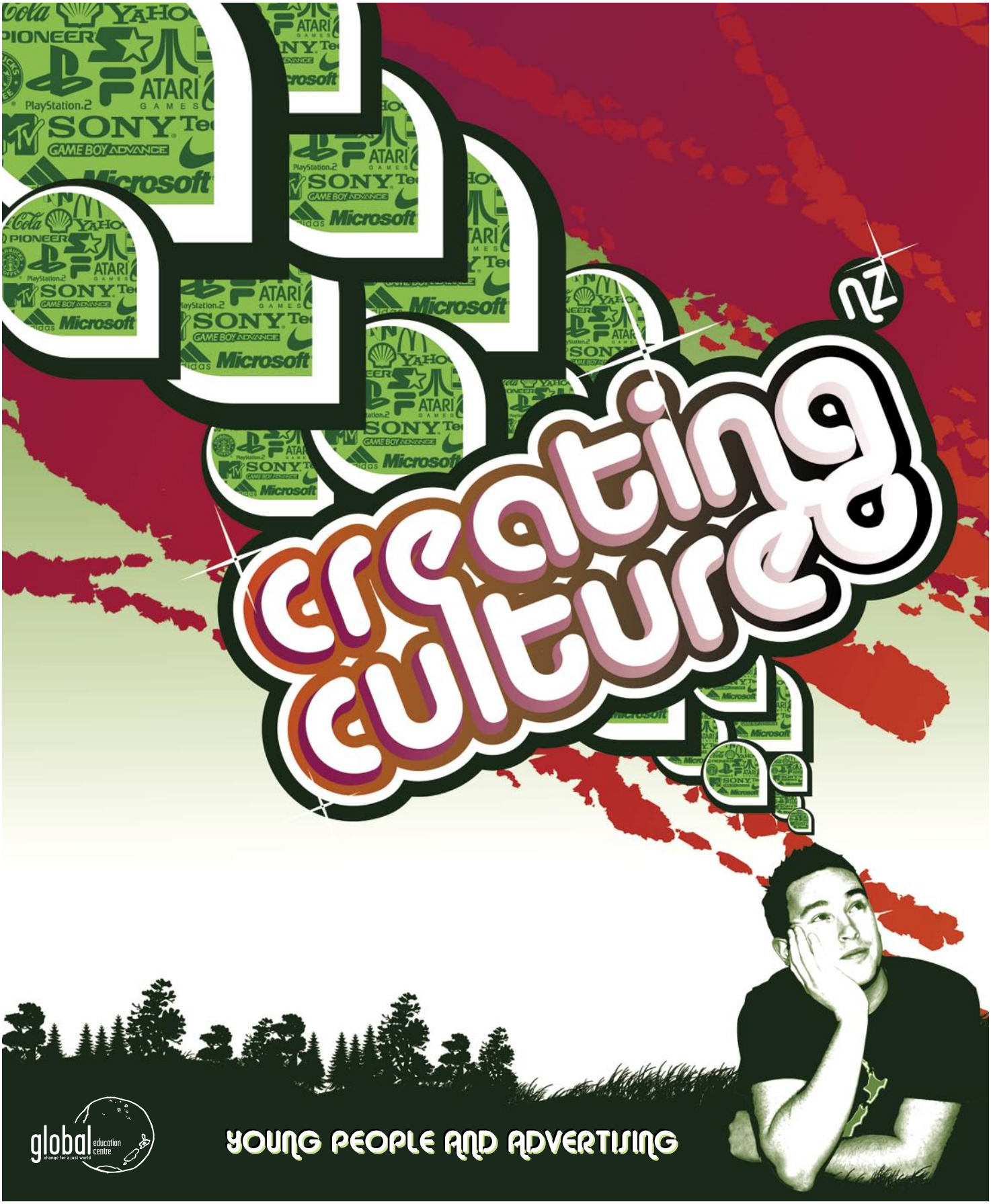
Global Bits

Change for a just world | ISSUE 03 | 2004

ADVERTISING



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About the theme of this issue

The rise in advertising, in particular the marketing of 'lifestyle and culture', has raised many questions about the role that advertising plays in shaping cultural values and attitudes.

The purpose of this issue of Global Bits is to explore the impact that global advertising has on young people around the world.

The reality is that advertising is here to stay. We can't change this fact. However, we can change the way we interact with advertising, and assist young people to become active members of our communities rather than passive recipients of corporate values.

Global Youth Work

- Starts from young people's experiences and encourages their personal, social and political development.
- Works on the principles of informal education and offers opportunities that are educative, participative, empowering and designed to promote equality of opportunity.
- Is based on an agenda that has been negotiated with young people.
- Engages young people in critical analyses of local and global influences on their lives and their communities.
- Raises awareness of globalisation within an historical context, and encourages an understanding and appreciation of diversity locally and globally.
- Encourages an insight into the relationships and links between the personal, the local and the global and ensures that these links are based on equity and justice.
- Insists that the peoples and organisations of the north and south are seen as equal partners for change in an interdependent world.
- Encourages active citizenship by giving young people the opportunity to participate in actions, and build alliances, that seek to bring about change locally and globally.

Global Bits is printed three times a year providing youth workers and educators with information and ideas for exploring global issues and how they impact on youth and their communities. It includes perspectives and suggestions from practising youth workers throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

Global Bits is free to all youth workers and educators.

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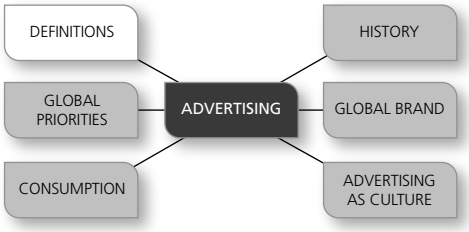
What are "advertising" and "consumerism"?



In order to understand the impact that advertising and consumerism have on the lives and choices available to people, we first need to have a common language and understanding about what each of these mean.

Advertising

Here are two different slants on defining advertising. One legitimises advertising as a crucial business tool, the other questions its function in defining and shaping culture.

(1) The activity of attracting public attention to a product, business or concept, as by paid announcements in the print, broadcast or electronic media, so as to increase sales. Definition taken from dictionary.com

(2) "(a) The fine art of lying to consumers about what is actually being sold. (b) A notable amendment of capitalist theory, whereby the market comes to favour, not the producers who sell the best product, but those who sell the best image. (c) A substantial misallocation of economic resources, whereby a tremendous portion of the economy which could do something useful, is wasted. (This misfortune has the additional demerit of providing a substantial competitive edge to those who use it.) For example, for each packet of mixed vegetables sold at the supermarket, more money is spent to place a colored picture on the packet than actually goes to the farmer..."

jonathanscorner.com/writings/hud/hud.html

Consumerism

"Consumerism is the tendency of people to identify strongly with products or services they consume, especially those with commercial brand names and obvious status-enhancing appeal. For example, an expensive automobile or piece of jewellery.

To those who accept the idea of consumerism, these products are not seen as valuable in themselves, but rather as social signals or a reducer of anxiety about belonging".

http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/consumerism

History of Advertising

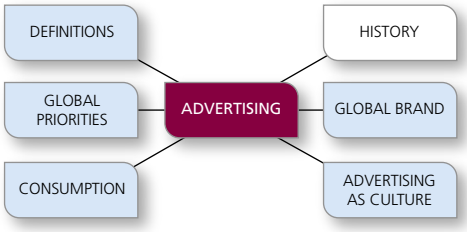
For the majority of people, exposure to advertising is as normal as breathing, eating or sleeping. It is a bit like living near a main road, eventually you learn to block out the noise. The same applies to advertising, except that it is not only noise, but a constant visual reminder of how we should look, feel and live. For example, we are now exposed to an estimated 3500 advertising images a day. We tend to block out the majority of images because they become background noise – but they still have an impact on us.

So where did advertising come from, and how has it evolved over time to become such a powerful influence in shaping (young) people's lives?

"In preparing young people to move ahead in a consumer driven world, we first need to give them the tools to liberate themselves from the unrelenting images and values of the powerful advertising masters, and then give them a vision of what is real and human."

– Anonymous

Timeline



3000 BC

Babylonians introduce the first known forms of advertising – store signs and street barkers.

1525 AD

First printed and publicly distributed ad (mass media) appears in a German news pamphlet.

1840s: The emergence of style

The Industrial Revolution: mass urbanisation in Europe and North America as people moved from rural areas to fast growing cities, where mass production required a large labour force.

"People began to learn not only that 'others' were strangers, but that they themselves were often seen as 'strangers'…. There was a shift from the importance of 'character' (intrinsic self) to the importance of 'personality' (a mouldable extrinsic self)." Managing Our Dreams: Stuart Ewen. New Internationalist 146, April 1985

Crucial to this new 'personality' was a sense of style. As style entered the popular imagination, it was not merely reflected in people's lives. It entered their language. It was used and altered by people. And so the businesses built on this growing sense of style as advertising increasingly focused on depicting entire lifestyles built around a personality or new sense of style.

1930s: Fashion

The idea of fashion emerged and helped in the "stirring up of anxieties and restlessness over the possession of things that were not "new" or "up-to-date". Fashion pressured people to buy not out of need but for style – from a desire to conform to what others defined as "fashionable".

1980s: Brands and hyper-consumption

Major designer brand companies, formerly targeting exclusively to elites, now started producing for the high street and for ordinary people.

Brand loyalty became a hot selling device. Companies such as Nike, Microsoft, Intel and Tommy Hilfiger became synonymous, not with manufacturing of goods, but rather with the creation of values and promises of desirable lifestyle advantages associated with loyalty to their product. Under these 'Brand companies', production of actual goods could be contracted out to generic manufacturers, predominantly in developing countries where labour laws are less restrictive. This period of time saw a dramatic rise in the exploitation of workers in the developing world, and the demise of longstanding textile industries in developed nations.

Naomi Klein (2000) No Logo

Free trade deals opened non-traditional markets and increased access to an enormous variety of products and services not previously available.

Hyper-consumption became a norm as advances in technology, the speed of change, and the increasing spread and number of global brand campaigns, shaped consumer spending patterns.

1990s – present day: Buy now, pay later

Consumer spending rose in the 90s. Technology such as mobile phones became the number one seller. In just less than a decade the market for mobile phones was saturated. For the phone industry to survive, consumers today need to buy phones more often than their grandparents did the car.

Sped up obsolescence emerges as a key marketing tool; the speed at which things become obsolete is so quick that consumers are forced to replace goods to continue feeling good about themselves. This is most evident in the creation of the "teen craze" where being cool changes from week to week, rather than from year to year.

Hire purchase becomes a popular service available to those wishing to purchase goods priced beyond their saving ability. Access to finance and debt for low income families increases, as young people apply pressure on already stretched incomes, in the struggle to be accepted and benefit from a consumer-driven society.

Sources of information:

http://www.commando.com/History/HISTORY.html

http://www.mediahistory.umn.edu/time/alltime.html#1940

New Internationalist 146 April 1985

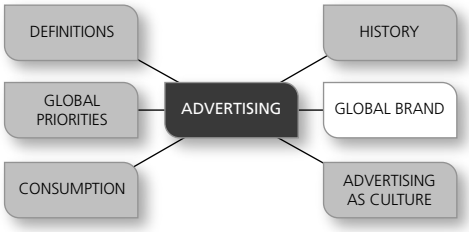
Targeting youth and the emergence of the global brand

KEY CONCEPTS:

Targeted selling to young people

The 'power' of TV advertising

Corporate Colonisation



Branding youth

Branding acquires its power because the right brand can surpass the actual product as a company's central asset. Smart firms pour most of their money into improving their brands, focusing more on the values and emotions that customers attach to them than on the quality of the products themselves. Since markets are flooded with indistinguishable, mass-produced items, firms have tried to individualise their goods by associating them with an "attitude brand," pushing a particular lifestyle or image rather than simply a T-shirt, soft drink, or shoe. In today's secular age, the brand has become a form of surrogate religion. The British management consultant Peter York has even argued that Nike's "swooshffitick logo means precisely what the crucifix meant to an earlier generation in ghettos — it promises redemption, vindication and a way out."

Young people have more money than ever before. This is a fact not lost on the advertisers:

- The average child views 20,000 TV ads per year
- Brand loyalty can begin to be established at age two
- Young children can't distinguish between ads and TV programmes
- In New Zealand four hours of programming can contain up to 120 ads
- In 1985 US teenagers aged 12 to 17 spent US$48 billion. In 2000, US$155 billion. They spent it on clothing, video games, snacks, cosmetics and CDs
- Six month old babies can form mental images of corporate logos and mascots. Many children's first recognised letter is the 'M' of the golden arches
- Cradle to grave strategies are extremely profitable and a lifetime customer may be worth US$100,000

Kids are targeted through:

- Children's magazines
- Promotional toys that tie into cartoons, TV shows and movies
- Cartoon characters on all kinds of products
- Brand websites with kid's games and sites
- Brands in schools
- Sports and brands
- Giveaway promotions e.g. Happy Meals

As holders of the latest technological knowledge, kids also influence the purchase of big budget products like computers and TVs.

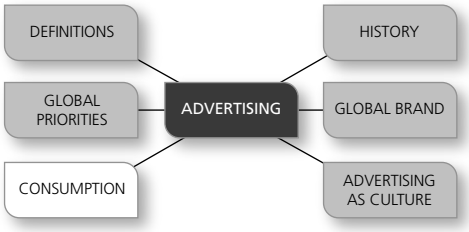
Source: Business Week, 1997

"In much the same way that the British Empire tried to take over Africa and profit from its wealth, corporations look at [teens] like this massive empire they are colonising and their weapons are films, music, books, CDs, Internet access, clothing, amusement parks, sports teams."

– Robert McChesney

"Images of affluent 'western' lifestyles flood film and television in developing countries. Nepal is ranked second only to Ethiopia as one of the poorest nations. The level of imports of cosmetics, soft drinks and cameras into Nepal belies the severity of the poverty of its people. The imports of cosmetic goods increased from USD227 thousand in 1992/93 to USD1.5 million in 1997/98, while the imports of cameras increased from USD223 thousand to USD1.3 million during the same period. Soft drink concentrates accounted for USD202 thousand in 1992/93 and rose to USD823 thousand in 1997/98."

www.panasia.org.sg/nepalnet/economics/fncci_stat99/imports_other_than_india.htm.)



"By the year 2050 there will be an estimated 9 billion people, who will require between 1.8 and 2.2 Earth-sized planets in order to sustain their consumption of crops, meat, fish, and wood, and to hold CO2 levels constant in the atmosphere."

WWF – Living Planet Report – 2002

However, the pressure placed on the resources is not equal across countries.

Here is some food for thought:

One child born in New York City, Paris or London will consume, waste andpollute more in a lifetime than as many as 50 children born in the average developing country.

Inequalities in consumption are stark. Globally, the 20% of the world's people in the highest-income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditure – the poorest 20% a minuscule 1.3%.

More specifically, the richest fifth: use 58% of the world's energy and consume 45% of all meat and fish. They own 87% of the world's vehicles and have access to 74% of all telephone lines.

In 1986 a survey showed that Americans believed they needed at least US$50,000 a year to "fulfil their dreams". By 1994 the figure had doubled.

The average person in North America uses more than twice as much electricity as someone in the European Union and 14 times more energy than someone in the developing world.

In 1997 the world spent US$435 billion on advertising, mostly in Europe, North America and Japan. [Development Choices Magazine 2001]

"I can imagine it, therefore I want it. I want it, therefore I should have it. Because I should have it, I need it. Because I need it, I deserve it. Because I deserve it, I will do anything necessary to get it."

– Anonymous

Buy now pay later: credit makes the world go round

Advertising and consumerism go hand in hand. Since the late 1980s global political thinking has been dominated by the ideology that a country's economic success is largely related to its citizen's ability to consume. The reality however is quite different.

The high levels of consumption in western countries has become less a reflection of wealth, and more an indicator of individual debt. Advertising and consumption are largely dependent on an individual's desire to own things at any cost. For the majority, this means taking on debt. In fact, increasingly, trends in consumer debt over the last 30 years indicate that taking on debt has become a normal, accepted part of New Zealand society.

So what does this mean for New Zealand, in particular for young people?

To answer this let's look at the relationship between advertising, consumption, and poverty:

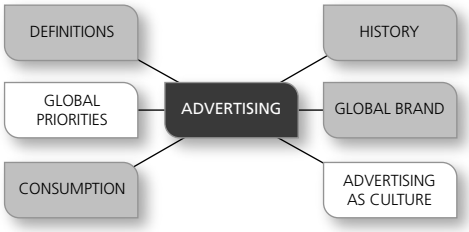
- How many young people focus more on 'luxury or non essential' products as opposed to essential "basics"?
- What messages do young people receive about debt? Are the messages in magazines, ads etc. the same as those being emphasised by the community?
- How many of the social issues facing young people, can be traced back to advertising messages, in particular, impossible ideals about style, coolness, universal wealth, and consuming equals feeling good and being happy?

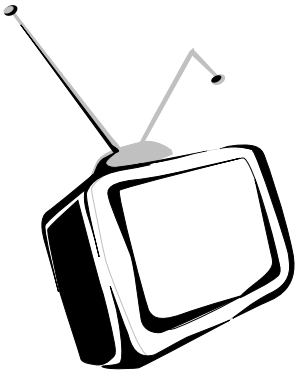
KEY CONCEPTS:

The inequity of consumption

'Want' not 'need'

The American Dream





Living the American Dream

The impact of living the American dream not only dramatically affects those living in America, but has far reaching effects across the planet.

Ever wondered what impact global advertising is having on your community? To understand the impact on the local, we first need to understand how it affects countries where western consumer patterns are just beginning to emerge. This piece looks at the role of the media, of which advertising is a major form of cultural transmission.

"As with other markets, the players [advertisers] of the cultural market place are unevenly matched. Global media is increasingly in the hands of a few, large, powerful organizations, as is the production of music and film. For example, by 1997, the MTV television station was available to 280 million households in over 70 countries. Fearing a loss of viewers, local television stations in many African countries have filled their transmissions with cost effective Western produced shows, superficial news broadcasts, quiz shows and, of course, advertisements. Consequently, TV programs all over the world resemble each other more and more and so do the products in the field of music, film and publishing companies.

The common aspect of globalized culture is that it pursues the same "one size fits all" ideal: the archetypal middle-class family according to the American model in which consumerism is the norm. The result of this cultural process of homogenization is that a large section of the world's population dreams of living like Cosby & Co. or like the characters in any other stereotypical American soap opera. In addition, the dream of living a better life causes thousands of people to move to already overcrowded cities like Lagos, Nigeria's sprawling commercial capital; this city has grown from a population of 18,000 in 1901 to over 12 million in 2001.

The majority of these new immigrants end up in slum quarters leading to poverty, pollution and misery.

Such a radical undermining of people's existing values and cultures has a corrosive impact on their sense of who they are, what they want and what they respect. It attacks spiritual values and faith traditions. The cumulative effect in Africa is a crisis of cultural confidence, combined with the increased economic uncertainty and crime which global integration often brings. This creates real problems for social solidarity, whether it is at the level of nation, community or family. While it offers shiny new goods as compared to old faded ones, the market offers no replacement for such community solidarity."

Excerpt taken from:

The Drawbacks of Cultural Globalization, by Wole Akande
Yellow Times November 10, 2002

Global Priorities

Take a deep breath and ponder these stats.

- In 1993 the total calculated expenditure for global advertising was US$362.6 Billion. For the same year approximately US$68.5 Billion was spent on aid to poorer developing countries.
- To provide basic education for everyone in the world will cost U.S$6 billion; Water and sanitation for everyone in the world US $9 billion; reproductive health for all women in the world US$12 billion; and basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world US$13 billion.

Examples of countries with GDP lower than annual amount spent on advertising globally

Country	Population (million)	GDP US$ billion
Turkey	65.5	164.8
Norway	4.4	145.9
South Africa	40.5	136
Poland	38.7	117.7
Malaysia	21.8	85.3
Philippines	74.4	74.2

Sources:

FIPP Magazine World, issue 41

Global priorities in spending in 1998.

www.globalissues.org

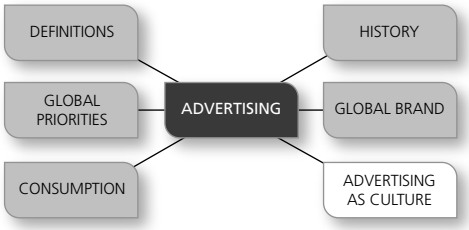
UGI 97/11, p3

From reflecting culture to becoming culture

KEY CONCEPTS:

Advertising as a Cultural Threat

Controlling values



Advertising has literally colonized western culture because it takes up more and more space and has become the dominant voice. In the 1980s, studies showed the average person was exposed to 1,500 commercial impressions each day. By the late 1990s the average was 3,600 per day.

"Advertising has been called a CULTURAL THREAT, to the extent that it pushes us toward material things and away from social relationships — and pushes us down the road to increased economic production that is driving us toward economic catastrophe, to the extent it focuses on individuals and puts aside the collective interests (and usually from a male viewpoint because of the male dominance of advertising).

Culture allows society to tell stories about itself, where values are articulated and experienced, where notions of good and evil, of morality and value are defined. In western culture, the story of advertising dominates and shapes our narratives about self and identity."

Source: Advertising and the End of the World, 1998

Young people and sense of self

For many young people, finding their place in the world is often a painful and confused journey.

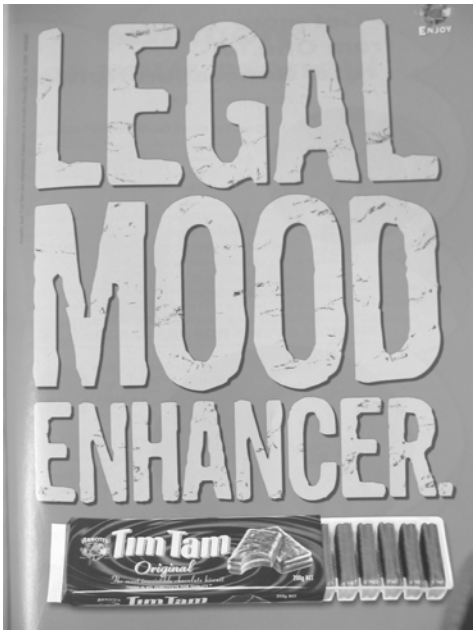
In fact there are very few people who can say that the transition to 'adulthood' was a smooth and painless ride. There are many factors that influence and shape identity, such as family, culture, religion, and social networks. One area that is often overlooked is advertising.

Everyday, young people are bombarded with images and sounds, telling them what is cool, how to act, what is important and how to be happy. For many, the messages of 'global advertising' do not match the realities facing young people in society.

Contrary to popular advertising myths, 'money does not grow on trees' and owning a pair of Nike trainers does not 'make you be the best that you can be', using Lynx antiperspirant doesn't 'make you irresistible to the opposite sex', and wearing Lee Jeans will not 'make you thin'.

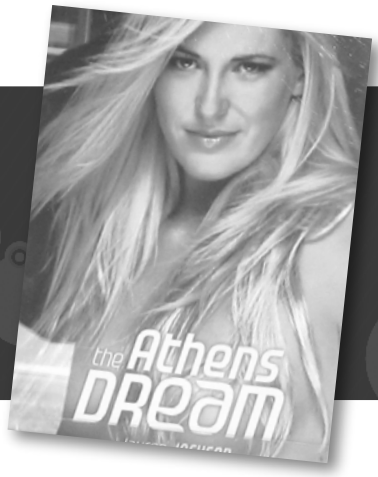
Who controls our stories

- If anthropologists from Mars looked at us, they'd conclude this society was dominated by a belief in magic.
- Scholar Raymond Williams has called advertising a "magic system" where material things have immense power of transformation.
- Advertising replaces cultural stories by replacing them with myth. They can bring instant gratification. They can promise a world of desire.



- The problem of capitalism is not one of production — but instead is one of consumption. It invented the institution of advertising in the last part of the 1900s to solve this problem.
- Advertising has changed from sponsoring culture to becoming culture (e.g. Sprite sponsoring a concert as opposed to Sprite becoming a component of hip hop culture). What's the difference? What happens to culture when its purpose is sales rather than expression?
- Distinguished scholar George Gerbner has asserted that those who control a society's stories have the power to shape that society's values.

Source: Advertising and the end of the world, 1998



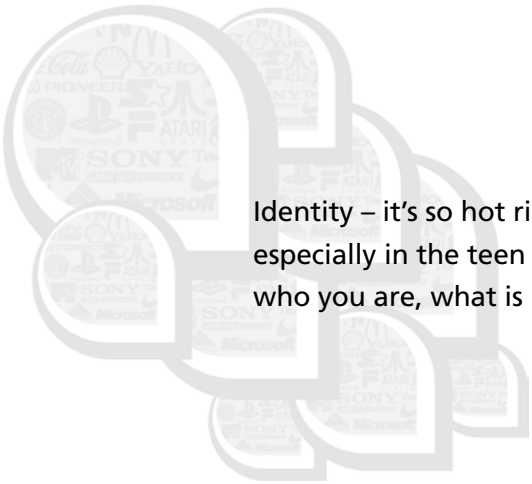
"Everyday, young people are bombarded with images and sounds, telling them what is cool, how to act, what is important and how to be happy."

Some questions to reflect on:

- Who has control over your stories?
- How does commercial control (i.e. control by those who are primarily of media) influence the kind of stories our society hears?
- How can our stories be heard over the noise of advertising?

Identity and advertising

By EVA LAWRENCE



Identity – it's so hot right now! No, but really, it's huge, especially in the teen years as you develop a sense of who you are, what is important and where you belong.

But what is identity?

Identity is what makes you the fabulous unique person that you are! It's the combination of lots of influences like: cultural and national identity, friends and whanau, values and religion, discrimination and stereotyping; gender and sexual preference and the influences of society, the media and advertising.

Most of these influences make sense, but one that we don't often think about is how the media and advertising influence 'global youth culture'.

Branded Identity

While situations for young people around the world are very different, there is one dominant youth culture. That culture is created, presented and sold to us every day. It's the one you see in ads, music clips and in heaps of images.

This is a culture presented by marketers. It is inaccurate, it is often negative and it keeps changing. You need to keep your finger on the pulse, keep doing new things and buying new things to keep up with it.

Ponder these stats:

US teens spend US$100B a year, and their parents spend another US$50B a year on them.

The average young person in Aotearoa New Zealand sees 20,000 TV ads a year!

That means youth markets are worth big bucks and companies need to be able to see to you. But that's hard! You are so damn cool and what is cool changes all the time.

An effective technique used by advertisers is to combine products with image so you are not just buying a drink or phone, you're buying an identity.

"Boost understands that brands are an integral part of today's youth identity. Boost customers purchase more than pay-as-you-go mobile phones and services; they buy an experience. Everything we do is purposeful, meaningful and consistent with the aspirations of young people." – from Boost Mobile site:

Brands are mentioned by artists in heaps of songs – to show wealth or poverty or just to express the things that are part of people's everyday reality or desires.

According to US company American Brandstand there has been a rise in the mention of not only clothing labels but cars, soft drinks and weapons.

The winner of most brand-dropping in 2004 was Kayne West, who mentioned 19 brands in his 4 singles of 2004. He beat 2003 winner 50 CENT.

Record labels often charge to have brands appear in Music Clips but up 'til now artists haven't been paid when they mention a product in the lyrics of their songs. That has changed though.

In 2005, McDonalds offered to pay MCs between US$1-$5 each time a song which mentions Big Macs is on the radio!

Seagrams Gin got put into 5 raps in 2004 the same way. This included Petey Pablo's "Freek-a-leek" with the lyrics: "Now I got to give a shout out to Seagram's Gin/Cause I'm drinkin' it and they payin' me for it."

So, what impact does it have?

Scary but true: brands and advertising help to define us. While it's not the only thing that affects us, it does affect us all.

Advertising is based on the desire to be something you are not and something that is probably not real. These false images can cause:

- Low self esteem
- Eating disorders
- Extreme stereotypes
- Confused images of people in different countries
- Spending cash you just don't have!
- Being defined by someone else!

What Can I do?

We have a responsibility to look critically and redefine ourselves.

You don't have to reject everything that is cool and buy everything from the op-shop to fight against this influence.

You can start by being aware: of what is being pushed and of your own consumption. See the image of youth that is being packaged and sold to you and choose for yourself how you define your identity: individually, as a community and globally...

Find out more:

Websites

Adbusters
http://www.adbusters.org/

Media Watch
http://www.mediawatch.com/

Merchants of Cool (online doco)
ttp://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/

Books held in the GEC library

No Logo – Naomi Klein

Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers – Alissa Quart

Source: This article was originally published in Jet Magazine's World View column and is published here with their permission.

LABEL BASHERS: When wardrobes Malfunction

By JENAH SHAW

Hoodies or miniskirts, ugg boots or sport shoes – whatever your wardrobe looks like, there's no denying that we carry a sense of self-expression in our clothes, something to give the world a sense of "us".

If you're searching for that defining look you can find it in any number of retail clothing shops, and in the world of branded clothing.

Brands and labels are no longer just a name to accompany a purchase, but are an integral part of identity. Which ones you associate with (or don't for the non-conformists out there), which are the trendiest as of five minutes ago, and the kind of status they represent – it's all part of the image.

It can seem somewhat fake to just ride the trends – to buy pre-ripped clothes for that vintage look, or to dress punk with no understanding of the culture or music – but in a generation dominated by image and appearance, imitating what is seen in magazines and on TV has become second nature.

With so much importance placed on looks and style, it's hardly surprising corporations and their market researchers have latched onto the connection between image and identity—and are milking it for all it's worth.

"Yeah, but is it 'me'?"

Today's marketers and retailers are selling ideas, subcultures and attitudes as much as they are selling products.

The reality is: these subcultures, ideas and attitudes are invented or re-packaged in boardrooms. And once created, we'll happily pay huge prices to become part of them.

We aren't so naive that we don't know this, but we still buy into it. Why? It might be to flaunt how much we can afford to pay for a single item of clothing, but much more likely is the comfort of associating with a brand, and what's essentially a pre-packaged identity.

They're identities which have been created by marketers, who, through various advertising techniques, try to capture that identity people will want to buy into.

Anti-cool is the new cool

Slogans and brand identities capture feelings and attitudes, wants and desires – the sort of thing (they hope) will be desirable among their target audiences. The fact is, in many cases, the target audience in the crosshairs is us – that 12-19 year old consumer group with all the disposable cash.

Glassons has "Wear It Your Way", suggesting control is with the buyer, who thus creates their own identity and gains self-empowerment – with a little help from their friends at the local Glassons outlet that is (who, by the by, are happily making the profit).

Nike has "Just Do It", encouraging ideas of independence and spontaneity, and Adidas's "All Day I Dream about Sport" is about passion and athleticism.

Then there's the suburban princess of darkness Emily Strange, whose character has spawned a line of clothing and merchandise ranging from t-shirts to Thin Lizzy dolls. She is "anti-cool," her website claims, "a subculture of one, and a follower of no-one but herself. She is the anti-hero for the Do It Yourself movement!"

Yeah, and you can be a part of it by buying one of a million or so mass-produced t-shirts.

Every slogan and brand identity – with the help of advertising and merchandising – creates a look and attitude that we're encouraged to be part of.

Take your Mum's advice – be yourself.

So much more is being sold than just a product, and brands of increasing expense (although not necessarily quality) come with increasing exclusiveness and reputation.

It's easy to see how brands and labels can become status symbols for whoever wears them, indicators of wealth and style – something, society tells us, we all want.

So they're attractive, these carefully planned and strategised illusions, but real identity is much, much more. Whatever feeling is created, the important thing to remember is brands are in it for the money.

Besides, style is not what you wear, but how you wear it.

Source: This article was written as part of the *Global Focus* a collaborative project of *Tearaway* magazine and the Global Education Centre. It was first published in *Tearaway* magazine and is reprinted here with their permission.

Consumption and the Environment

By Kate Thompson

We don't need to shop every weekend for the new 'it' product – but we do. What drives us to consume?

Consume: v. destroy, use up, eat or drink; waste away; be exhausted.

From the beginning of time people have used the environment for materials, energy and food.

But now we've become a consumer society, buying without need and over-consuming without a purpose.

And in this age of disposables and throwaways, consumer nations like ours have the biggest impact on the environment. An average person in a developed country produces 20 times more pollutants than an average person from a poorer country.

Consumers are not born – they're made. We are constantly bombarded with advertising specifically designed to influence our choices.

Most advertisers use techniques learnt from psychology, sociology and economics to shape their markets. S we're no longer being informed about products, we're being persuaded to buy them.

Mass media generation

Young people who grow up watching TV are most likely to be affected by advertising.

In Britain, the average eight-year old is more likely to recognise a Pokemon character than a real plant or animal.

The average American ten-year old knows 300-400 brands!

TAKE ACTION

SHOP WISELY:

Support companies that are enviro-friendly, buy goods with the least amount of packaging and always ask yourself, 'Do I really need it? What makes me want to buy it?' Make your own stuff!

RAISE AWARENESS:

Talk to your mates or whanau about environmental issues. Organise an awareness-raising event or campaign – maybe a concert, public talk or demonstration.

JOIN OTHERS:

Volunteer with organisations like Greenpeace, or join a global network of concerned and active young people

GO FOR IT!

Learn more about the issues, and realise that you can do plenty. Every little bit helps!

Source: This article was written as part of the *Global Focus* a collaborative project of *Tearaway* magazine and the Global Education Centre. It was first published in *Tearaway* magazine and is reprinted here with their permission. Illustrations: Gavin Mouldey

Shopping
bigger than religion

These statistics, taken in America, provide insight into consumer patterns in similar western countries such as Aotearoa NZ. Ask a young person what their number one past time is, and see whether buying, or wanting to buy, are near the top of their list.

- Percentage of American teenage girls who report store-hopping as favourite activity: 93%
- Average time spent shopping per week: 6 hours
- Time spent playing with children per week: 40 minutes
- About 53% of grocery and 47% of hardware store purchases are spur of the moment.
- Percentage of shoppers surveyed across the country who were shopping for a specific item: only 25%

Stats taken from:

http://www.ecofuture.org/pk/pkar9506.html

Statistics, compiled by the New Road Map Foundation, describing USA consumption patterns and their effects on personal lives and the environment.

The exercise that follows is a fun way for young people to think about who puts together a advertisement message and why.

Ask young people to choose an ad campaign message, such as Nike-Just do it, or Coke-refreshing taste of life.

Then answer the following questions about it. Television commercials are easy to practise with because they are short and often contain powerful words, images, and music. You could also pick a video game, the packaging for a children's toy, or a music video. The choices are endless.

1. Describe the kinds of people involved in creating the message. These can include writers, photographers, designers, special effects people, or stunt people.

2. Depending on the media message you choose, talk about the visual effects that were used (lighting, camera angles, computer-generated images, etc).

Also discuss the sound (the words that are spoken, who says them, music, special effects, and other sounds). How do these different things affect the power and meaning of the message?

3. Discuss the purpose of the message. Are the people who made the message trying to give you information? Do they want you to do something (such as buy a product)? Or is the message just to entertain you? Many times the true meaning of a message is hidden below the surface and is not always stated in the message. As children gain more experience questioning how messages are put together, they will be able to get at the true meaning of any message.

4. What do young people think about the message?

Do they agree with it or disagree with it, and why? One reason to accept or reject a message could be to decide whether it is realistic or agrees with their values.

Over the last few years "buy now pay later" deals have made instant gratification possible for those previously excluded because of income or credit ratings. Everything from electronics, household items, to travel can be taken advantage of now, with no payments for 12, 24, and 36 months.

A thought… if everything can be deferred for 36 months, how many additional purchases does the average person make during that 36 months using other credit deals?

ACTIVITY

Companies appeal to consumers in many different ways to persuade them to buy their products. As individuals, or in small groups, list television, magazine or newspaper advertisements that use each of the techniques described below. Make a list of specific products and describe how they use the techniques.

Advertising Techniques

avant garde: the suggestion that using this product puts the user ahead of the times e.g. a toy manufacturer encourages kids to be the first on their block to have a new toy

bandwagon: the suggestion that everybody is using the product and that you should too in order to be part of the group e.g. a credit card company quotes the number of millions of people who use their card

facts and figures: statistics and objective factual information is used to prove the superiority of the product e.g. a car manufacturer quotes the amount of time it takes their car to get from 0 to 100 k.p.h.

glittering generalities: "weasel words" are used to suggest a positive meaning without actually really making any guarantee e.g. a famous sports personality says that a diet product might help you to lose weight the way it helped him to lose weight

hidden fears: the suggestion that this product will protect the user from some danger e.g. a laundry detergent manufacturer suggests that you will be embarrassed when strangers see "ring around the collar" of your shirts or blouses

magic ingredients: the suggestion that some almost miraculous discovery makes the product exceptionally effective e.g. a pharmaceutical manufacturer describes a special coating that makes their pain reliever less irritating to the stomach than a competitor's

ordinary people: the suggestion that the product is a practical product of good value for ordinary people e.g. a cereal manufacturer shows an ordinary family sitting down to breakfast and enjoying their product

snob appeal: the suggestion that the use of the product makes the customer part of an elite group with a luxurious and glamorous life style e.g. a coffee manufacturer shows people dressed in formal gowns and tuxedos drinking their brand at an art gallery

transfer: words and ideas with positive connotations are used to suggest that the positive qualities should be associated with the product and the user e.g. a textile manufacturer wanting people to wear their product to stay cool during the summer shows people wearing fashions made from their cloth at a sunny seaside setting where there is a cool breeze

testimonial: a famous personality is used to endorse the product e.g. a basket ball player recommends a particular brand of sneaker, or popular band recommending a brand of soft drink

wit and humour: customers are attracted to products that divert the audience by giving viewers a reason to laugh or to be entertained by clever use of visuals or language

(based on Tressler and Lewis, Mastering Effective English (Third Edition), pp.470-472)

REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

- Get young people to think about what their lives might be like on $5 a day – what would they do/buy…?
- Research international Buy Nothing Day, come up with something they could do on this day (**www.buynothingday.co.uk**)

Websites

Media Awareness Network

www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm

Resources and support for everyone interested in media and information literacy for young people. The Media Awareness Network promotes critical thinking in young people about the media.

Adbusters

www.adbusters.org

A global network of artists, activists, writers, pranksters, students, educators and entrepreneurs who want to advance the new social activist movement of the information age. Their aim is to

topple existing power structures and forge a major shift in the way we will live in the 21st century.

Popular culture

http://www.popcultures.com/

If you are wanting to explore how global culture impacts on local culture, or learn more about popular youth culture, this site offers a variety of perspectives.

Movie analysis

www.chumlimited.com/mediaed/studyguides.asp

This website may help you intelligently discuss movies with young people.

Cultural Survival

http://www.cs.org/cshome.html

This web site is dedicated to providing current information about human rights and indigenous populations. Cultural Survival includes a list of action alerts and information about various efforts to preserve cultural identity and awareness that are taking place around the world.

Other Resources

These resources and more are held in our GEC library.

Membership is free. To register, or search the catalogue, visit the library section of our website: **www.globaled.org.nz/library.html**

Please contact us if you would like to receive a comprehensive listing of our youth worker and other resources.

Social inclusion T-kit (Training Kit)
Council of Europe 2003

How do youth workers and youth organisations go about being inclusive? This T-Kit aims to provide both conceptual and practical tools from which to begin to explore and approach this question. Excluded young people are difficult to reach. Making contact is not enough. We need to engage and work with them. The manual contains practical exercises and methods to work on issues.

GEC has a lending copy, or you can access the manual online at:

http://www.training-youth.net/site/publications/tkits/tkits.htm#pol_8

Development Education Tool Box.
Just Business UK 2002

This resource provides a variety of transferable methods and activities that can be used in the classroom or youth work settings to incorporate ideas of co-operative learning and respecting the values of others while raising awareness of issues related to global justice and inequality.

Videos:

Culture jam: hijacking commercial culture (2001)
Right To Jam Productions Inc

Culturejam: Hijacking Commercial Culture delivers a fascinating rap on the 20th Century movement called Culture Jamming. Pranksters and subversive artists are causing a bit of brand damage to corporate mindshare. Jammers, cultural commentators, a billboard advertiser and a constitutional lawyer take us on a wild roller coaster ride through the back streets of our mental environment.

Killing us softly 3: advertising's image of women (2000)
Media Education Foundation

A look at gender stereotyping in advertising. Includes examples of ads and discussions with leading commentators. Covers topics such as, image; eating disorders; feminism; men; sex; media; consumerism; corporate control; and society.

Advertising & the End of the World (1997)
Media Education Foundation

Focuses directly on the world of commercial images, asking some basic questions about the cultural messages emanating from this market-based view of the world: Do our present arrangements deliver what they claim-- happiness and satisfaction? Can we think about our collective as well as our private interests? And, can we think long-term as well as short-term?

Books:

No Logo (2000)
by Naomi Klein

This book is a must for anybody wanting to understanding the impact that brands have on young people.

"If the world really is just one big global village, then the logo is its common language understood by, if not accessible to, everyone."

Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers (2003)
by Alissa Quart

This book provides an in depth look at the role global brands play in the formation of youth identity.

"Branded offers a chilling portrait of the commodification of youth and the innovative ways that kids resist. Quart's analysis of the intrusion, co-optation and commercialisation of young people is a must-read for parents, youth activists, educators and teenagers alike."

About the Global Education Centre

Global Bits is produced by the community youth arm of the Global Education Centre (GEC), a programme of the Development Resource Centre (DRC) – a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation governed by a charitable trust. We are core funded by NZAID Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti (The New Zealand Agency for International Development). The DRC's vision statement is *change for a just world and its mission is informing and educating to empower people to take action to create a just world.*

The Global Education Centre (GEC) provides services to the formal and informal education sectors, and the youth and community sectors on global education through its Schools and Community Youth programmes. GEC provides training and resources to teachers, teacher trainees, students, youth workers and community groups. Services include workshops, youth advocacy, Global Issues magazine, teaching resources, a website including fact sheets and links, and a free lending library.

GEC's sister programme at the Development Resource Centre is Dev-Zone, a resource centre focused on international development and global issues. They operate a free library, manage a comprehensive website, and publish a magazine Just Change. Services include answering quick enquiries, email updates, information projects, and literature searches on a variety of development topics. Dev-Zone works with the development and human rights sector, as well as students and the general public.

The Global Education Centre is core funded by NZAID – Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti

JUST FOCUS

Just Focus is a project for young people, by young people, focusing on issues that affect us in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific, and globally. The goals of the project are responsible global citizenship and change for a just world.

The **Just Focus website** supports an online community of young people as a way to:

- Connect with others around NZ, the Pacific and globally
- Gain information about issues
- Express themselves through the forum, articles or art.

For more information, email: **info@justfocus.org.nz** or visit the website at: **www.justfocus.org.nz**