

Chapter 1 : Book 'Em: My History Comp Odyssey: Ewen - Captains of Consciousness

Captains of Consciousness offers a historical look at the origins of the advertising industry and consumer society at the turn of the twentieth century.

What good is it to produce a billion widgets a day if there is no one to buy them? The result was the creation of the middle class, at least in America and Europe. Globalization is another matter - the growth of a middle class throughout the world is inevitable but lagging. The cultural implications are also interesting. Previously, people in our culture were raised to value craftsmanship, quality, and thrift. These values became unsuitable, and had to be replaced with acceptance of disposability and debt. Tradition was replaced by trends. Also, people had to be made perpetually dissatisfied with themselves and everything around them, so they could be made to buy things which promised fleeting satisfactions. The transformation has been so complete we are almost unaware of it. We take consumer culture so much for granted. Cultures used to have one book or central legend that lasted them for hundreds of years. Now every single day brings a new "Most Viewed" item on YouTube. Movies that lead the box office two weeks in a row are uncommon. A number one bestselling book or album spends only days at the top of the charts. This is clearly no sustainable economy! The acceleration of this process seems almost asymptotic. The most significant event in the future history of the world may not even be perceived by anyone, because it will only last for a fraction of a second. Is it a history book, a social commentary, a philosophical query, a psychological thesis? It is this and much more. This is what excites me - it makes more sense of the universe I am in. It is actually meant to be used academically, but is absolutely readable for the lay person. Persuasion this is called in communications theory. All the distastefulness that one can suspect behind advertising and our "consumer culture" is explained herein. I am crazy about this book. He is brilliant, in my opinion. The insight to the pre-industrial world and the illustration of sprouting consumerism creates a vivid picture of a world can never know. A vital aspect of the study is the way children were targeted in the consumerization process. A very useful read for anybody. It is a real eye-opener with regard to the advertising industry, and how it presented itself as the ideal response to the problems that mass production had generally the lack of market to sell their goods to. Nov 04, Michael Primiani rated it really liked it One of the first academic books to present the origins of consumer culture. Pretty neat that it does not feel dated. Feb 06, William Leight rated it liked it Stuart Ewen is another New Left historian, along with the likes of Gabriel Kolko and David Noble, who made his impact largely by looking up what the surprisingly frank corporate magnates of the late 19th and early 20th century were saying about what they were doing. Asserting that advertising was intended to remold the American people into the kind of consumer that the new mass-production industries needed sounds like a crazy left-wing conspiracy theory, but the quotes that Ewen has found to thi Stuart Ewen is another New Left historian, along with the likes of Gabriel Kolko and David Noble, who made his impact largely by looking up what the surprisingly frank corporate magnates of the late 19th and early 20th century were saying about what they were doing. Asserting that advertising was intended to remold the American people into the kind of consumer that the new mass-production industries needed sounds like a crazy left-wing conspiracy theory, but the quotes that Ewen has found to this effect are from prominent businessmen like Edward Filene or sources such as the advertising trade journal Printers Ink. Ewen is also good on the ways that advertising changed the media business, especially newspapers and especially the foreign-language press , and he draws the obvious connections to political propaganda, especially via Edward Bernays. The final section, on advertising and the family, was also interesting, if slightly less persuasive: In fact, the whole book gives the impression of being a short introduction to a deeper topic, and could probably have been at least half again as long as it is without damage. His most prescient criticism was perhaps of the way that various forms of resistance to the powers that be were already in the mids being appropriated by advertising: In an earlier passage, he writes that in the 50s, advertising was making it unacceptable "[t]o look different, to act different, to think different.

Chapter 2 : Stuart Ewen - Wikipedia

required to teach the worker the "adept performance" of his "operation on assembly work" was a matter of a few hours. 19 This development had significant repercussions both in terms of the way.

A casual reader or biased reader may have trouble distinguishing between the two. The book cover is also a little misleading, with a picture of the store front NikeTown with heavily armed police. The book was written in , no where in the book does it mention the Nike company and book contents does not convey any sense of power struggle thingy going on. If you are not, then you would have no understanding of where the author is coming from or really the conclusion he is making. To sum I would say that is book is really just social commentary from a Marxist. By defining himself and his desires in terms of the good of capitalist production, the worker would implicitly accept the foundations of modern industrial live. By transforming the notion of "class" into "mass", business hoped to create an "individual" who could locate his needs and frustrations in terms of the consumption of goods rather than the quality and content of his life work. If it was industrial capitalism around which crowded cities were being built and which had spawned much of the danger to health, the frustration, the loneliness and the insecurity of modern industrial life, the advertising of the period denied complicity. Rather, the logic of contemporaneous advertising read, one can free oneself from the ills of modern life by embroiling oneself in the maintenance of that life. A ad for Pompeian facial product argued that: Modern living has robbed women of much of their natural color.. Much of American industrial development punctuated by attempts to channel thought and behavior into patterns which fitted the prescribed dimensions of industrial life If you are advertising any product never see the factory in which it was made. Because when you know the truth about anything, the real, inner truth - it is very hard to write the surface fluff which sells it. Speaking of seeming purposelessness of American industrial life itself, this lack of purpose in life has an effect on consumption similar to that of having a narrow life interest, that is, in concentrating human attention on the more superficial things that comprise much of fashionable consumption. The mass-produced goods of the marketplace were conceived of as providing an ideology of "change" neutralized to the extent that it would be unable to effect significant alteration in the relationship between individuals and the corporate structure. The concept of consumption as an alternative to other modes of change proliferates within business literature of the twenties. Given the recent history of anticaptialist sentiments and actions among the working class, the unpleasant possibility of "deeper changes" gave flight to a more pacified notion of social welfare that emanated from consumerization. Recognizing the irreversibility of frustration among those who felt trapped in their surroundings, change would be "the most beneficent medicine in the world to most people", mass consumption is offered as a means of acting out such impulses within a socially controllable context. The woman who is tired of her husband or her home or a job feels some lifting of the weight of life from seeing a straight line change into a bouffant, or a gray pass into beige". The basic issues of industrial capitalism were fractionalized, isolated and reduced to trivialities in her formula. The logic of using consumption and mass leisure as ameliorations for boredom and social entrapment was not merely an underlying trend in advertising Fear in itself is paralyzing; it robs one of the power of action.

Chapter 3 : Captains of Consciousness by Stuart Ewen (, Paperback) | eBay

'Captains of Consciousness, originally published in the mid's but just as relevant today, is an interesting book on the role of advertising in the development of the new world.

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Captains of Consciousness offers a historical look at the origins of the advertising industry and consumer society at the turn of the twentieth century. For this new edition Stuart Ewen, one of our foremost interpreters of popular culture, has written a new preface that considers the continuing influence of advertising and commercialism in contemporary life.

Chapter 7 : Captains Of Consciousness: Advertising And The Social Roots Of The Consumer Culture by S

Captains Of Consciousness is a must read text for all who want and need to know the powerfully influential and controlling power of mass marketing and mass media. Read this book to know how and by who our opinions, thoughts, impulses, and feelings are influenced and shaped.