

ABSTRACT

On the Integration of Art and Marketing:
How Popular Culture Transforms and Corrupts High Art in the Cause of
Advertising

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The purpose of this work is to explore the relationship between high art and the world of marketing by analyzing the way popular culture co-opts high art in the cause of advertising. As the utilization of high art in marketing increases, our increasingly commercialized society develops a growing disintegration of the integrity of taste due to the blurring of the lines separating art for art's sake and art for marketing's sake, which dulls our ability to distinguish between the intrinsic and instrumental value of high art. Through the analysis of the history of art in advertising, Pop art's contribution to the materialization and the increasing prevalence of the use of art in promotion, this work seeks to discover the causes of the increasing commercialization of high art and the evolution of the public's perception of art and its role in society.

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ON THE INTEGRATION OF ART AND MARKETING:
HOW POPULAR CULTURE TRANSFORMS AND CORRUPTS HIGH ART IN THE
CAUSE OF ADVERTISING

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DEDICATION

For all those who helped turn this work into a reality.

CHAPTER ONE

On Art, Marketing and Perspective: An Introduction

I begin this discussion on the integration of art and marketing with the concern of their positions and effects on our culture. Throughout my study of marketing, I have frequently noticed works of art integrated into promotions aimed to sell a product. Both in my academic and my everyday life, I encountered this crossover time and time again. Equipped with knowledge of art and from a seminar course and the drive to seek resolutions to numerous questions left unanswered even at the semester's end, I began to delve into the relationship between the world of art and the world of marketing.

An issue I immediately encountered was the narrow-minded and shallow approach much of our culture exhibits toward art. A personal experience from a few years back serves as a worthy example. As a Houston native, one of my most favorite things about my hometown is the plethora of museums, galleries and private showrooms through which one can indulge even the most specific of artistic tastes. I have frequented such an establishment for almost a decade: William Reaves Fine Art is a gallery in the heart of midtown specializing in Texas-themed art. Established in 2007, the gallery has grown from its humble beginnings to a hot spot for locals seeking pieces by true Texans for true Texans. One slow afternoon, I was wandering through the halls with my mother taking in the delicate depictions of artfully crafted Texas bluebonnets gracing the gallery walls. The gallery owner, a longtime family friend, was deep in conversation with a couple regarding the sale of a piece. Five large canvases which had emerged one by one from the back storage room lined the wall; Mr. Reaves discussed the pieces with a

reverence and grace for the artists who had created them as the couple looked on, making quiet remarks to each other. As he excused himself to the storage room once more, presumably to retrieve yet another piece, I overheard the woman lean over to her husband and in an exasperated tone verbalize her hope that this piece they were about to see will better match their sofa and living room décor than the works they were previously shown. Her comment stopped me cold. Was our society actually at that point at which its presumably educated members – we do not perceive laymen as frequent gallery goers – were judging works of art based on their compatibility with La-Z-Boy furniture? I had not realized the significance of art's commercialization until precisely that moment. Though I had read numerous critiques and personal accounts, this was my first experience with a judgment of art's value gone quite horribly wrong.

It was not until I began composing this work that I understood the significance of that experience. As a culture, our perception of the value of art has degraded greatly. Rather than striving to seek the aesthetic value present in the works of art we encounter, we analyze them based on functional instrumental values. This lack of incentive to appreciate works of art for their true value has significantly impacted the overall taste our culture exhibits. Thus, as it is reduced to mere functionality, art is incorporated into advertising as an image employed by skilled marketers to create a particular advertisement. Prompted by this trend, I began to delve into the societal perceptions of the previous decades and their effects on the culture we observe today.

The purpose of this work is to explore the relationship between high art and the world of marketing by analyzing the way popular culture co-opts high art in the cause of advertising. As the utilization of high art in marketing increases, our increasingly

commercialized society develops a growing disintegration of the integrity of taste due to the blurring of the lines separating art for art's sake and art for marketing's sake, which dulls our ability to distinguish between the intrinsic and instrumental value of high art. Through the analysis of the history of art in advertising, Pop art's contribution to the materialization and the increasing prevalence of the use of art in promotion, this work seeks to discover the causes of the increasing commercialization of high art and the evolution of the public's perception of art and its role in society.

CHAPTER TWO

On History, the NEA, and the Onset of Pop Art

Art historians write on how the arts came about and why they must be preserved; marketers on how they can be utilized to create a profit. Personally, I am caught somewhere in the middle. Never fully understanding the transitions from discord to harmony of art and advertising, I sought to discover the historical context in which advertisers began to seize the opportunity to utilize art for commercial purposes. Let us begin by discussing one of the pivotal points in American society as it pertains to the arts: the establishment and growth of the NEA, the National Endowment for the Arts.

When the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts was proposed, one of the key hopes was that “government funding would help halt a deteriorating culture.”¹ As such a hefty undertaking for a young establishment, I grew curious as to whether the task was accomplished. Ironically, aiding the development of government funded arts programs was the Cold War. In a contest of cultural superiority, America sought to surpass its Russian foes in all aspects of life. However, trumping the Russian art scene was difficult without funding; thus the NEA found a solid argument for the necessity of a government funded arts program. The agency experienced a great success and immense growth as it funded and developed various artists that came to propel the American arts scene forward.

¹ Smith, David A. *Money for Art: The Tangled Web of Art and Politics in American Democracy*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008.

Dr. David A. Smith comments that:

The history of the NEA and of the broader question of the government's proper role in the arts lays open the cultural, intellectual, and political impulses of a nation torn between elitism and populism, between refined and skilled professionalism and earnest democratic amateurism, between the egalitarian interpretation of personal expression and the drive for excellence and between the desire for art to which the people can relate and art that challenges the people to follow².

Upon the agency's creation, there existed a "common assumption that the arts [held] great promise for a community" and "[offered] society a unique and distinctive capability".³ As the NEA began to thrive, the arts community developed with it. Artists grew more eager to create and show their work, tempted with the potential of receiving funding for their works. Thus, the market was flooded with works by professional and amateur artists and effectively increased the cultural appreciation for the arts in America.

With aid from Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon and the numerous employees of the NEA's various departments, the agency began to gain authority on the subject of the arts. Thus, even with the intended benevolence and good faith of the NEA, rifts appeared almost immediately between the elite and popular perspectives.

It quickly became clear that most professional artists, and their allies in the nations intellectual community, believed that government help should be designed to protect the nation's art from mass culture, prevent a decline into mediocrity (a word used by many at the time), and ensure that elite fine art and the serious professionals who created it would

² Smith, David A. *Money for Art: The Tangled Web of Art and Politics in American Democracy*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008.

³ Ibid.

continue to be America's cultural glory. Speaking for the populist impulse were the growing ranks of amateur artists and those who believed that government aid should make art more accessible to the millions of Americans who had never been able to appreciate or take part in the higher culture.⁴

Particularly evident in the sixties was the public's reliance on experts for interpretation: some became "almost as well-known as the artists they championed. The reason was simple: more so even than most of the modernism of the twentieth century, art in the 1960s needed to be explained, in part to make sense of the image, sometimes even to be identified as art."⁵ In terms of art, the sixties were revolutionary: people relied on experts to synthesize art and provide explanations based on an obscure judging criteria seemingly known only to the elites. However, as things shifted within the NEA and the upper classes of the art crowd, public perception of the arts began to change. With scandal after scandal breaking out regarding the types of artists and subject matters the NEA chose to fund, the agency began to resemble a large scale corporation in the midst of a public relations debacle. Thus, the experts previously held as the ultimate authority in the public eye, relinquished their power to determine what was good and bad art. The uncertainty of the judging criteria for art fostered an ideal environment for fostering the growth of the Pop Art era.

⁴ Smith, David A. *Money for Art: The Tangled Web of Art and Politics in American Democracy*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008.

⁵ Ibid

The Influence of Pop

Andy Warhol's works were themselves a commentary on the materialism prevalent in society. Moreover, it was their "popularity that recommended them to the Pop artists, which gave a kind of political edge to their promotion as art to be taken seriously."⁶ People were viewing these works and interacting with them, because for the first time, an artist created pieces accessible to the public and aligned with its materialistic behavior. However, that mentality effectively cheapened the overall perception of art as a whole. Arthur Danto comments that more than any of his works, Andy Warhol's *Soup Cans* "raised the question of what was art in a way that could not be resisted."⁷ Challenging the traditional perspective of what museum quality works look like, or rather are *supposed* to look like, Warhol's silkscreens were an enigma to their audiences. The question rose again and again: are viewers to see greater meaning in Warhol's images than simply a can of soup?

However, even among the chaos caused in the world of art by Warhol's *Soup Cans*, few things drew notice to the absurd mockery of society by Pop art than his work *129 Die*. Henry Geldzahler, curator of contemporary art at the Metropolitan Museum, suggested to Warhol that he create a series of works based on a traumatic photograph of a jet crash, commenting "It's enough life. It's time for a little death". According to Danto, Geldzahler "wanted Warhol to change from the celebrator of consumption to something deeper and more serious."⁸ Unfortunately, therein lies the root problem: once

⁶ Danto, Arthur C. *Andy Warhol*. Yale University Press, 2010.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

commercialized, works do not return to the pure realm of the aesthetic. They begin to be viewed merely as images which in turn, could be manipulated to serve a variety of functions. Therefore, works are effectively stripped of their aesthetic value and are reduced to mere functionality. The irony of Pop art was that while its form and content openly mimicked the advertising world which encouraged a functional rather than an aesthetic approach to art, it soon was being presented to the public as high art; therefore, it became baffling and misleading. Audiences searched for deeper meanings within silkscreens of soup cans that by the definition of the artist, had no message other than to communicate the consumer driven purchasing behavior of society. *Soup Cans* sold, and they sold cheap. And the very essence of their existence somehow cheapened the view of art. Silkscreens, not even paintings, Warhol's works were mass produced sometimes by the artists hand, sometimes by the hand of one of his factory workers.

Thus, Pop art had a Duchamp-like effect before Warhol even knew it: his creations openly mocked art for selling out and becoming commercialized by using mass produced techniques. Like Marcel Duchamp, who turned a urinal sideways, signed it, and proclaimed to be art as a means of mocking the loose judgment criteria for pieces to qualify not specifically as good or bad quality art but as art at all. With regard to the mass produced work of his Factory, Warhol himself said that what makes something art is that it was created by an artist and the more popular the artist, the more significant the work; while he giggled at his silkscreens, society was deeming them works of high art. It is no wonder viewers lost their ability to discern between high and low art. Silkscreens of soup cans were being pressed upon them with nearly the same level of prestige as the *Mona Lisa*. And it is no shock that advertisers smelled the blood and fell upon the prey of a

market of art with little classification guidelines and thus ripe and ready to be assimilated into any advertisement that needed bold imagery or universal public appeal. Before Pop art, some hoped that government funding for the arts would be a saving grace to arrest a deteriorating culture; however, the commercial quality of mass produced Pop art works only gave marketers greater accessibility to utilize them.

Today, influences of Pop shine in some of the most robust corporately funded campaigns. A case in point is Pepsi's 2013 collaboration with pop queen Beyoncé in anticipation of her performance at the Super Bowl halftime show: a fifty million dollar deal for a thirty minute performance in the middle of a football game watched by millions. It just does not get any more American or more consumer-based than that.



Figure 1: Pepsi Max Super Bowl 2013 Advertisement

The artwork was featured on Pepsi Max cans in over fifty countries during the month of February in preparation for the Super Bowl. Chief Design Officer Mauro

Porcini said at the unveiling that “it was a joy to discover Beyoncé's current passion for Pop art, and together make it come alive in a very contemporary way.”⁹ There really is something to be said for Pop art’s influence on the American society if decades later, its techniques are not only being used, but are being used successfully in multimillion dollar promotional campaigns. If that does not qualify an artist for a legacy, nothing will.

⁹ “Beyoncé Features in New Pop Art Advertising Campaign for Pepsi Max.” *Capital*. Web. 02 Apr. 2015.

CHAPTER THREE

On Value, the Evolution of Taste, and the Influence of the Digital Age

For decades, the MGM lion has roared under the slogan “Ars gratia artis,” or “Art for art’s sake.” On Madison Avenue, executives have been busily thumbing through their Latin dictionaries to figure out how to say “Art for marketing’s sake.”¹⁰ So, if the perceived purpose of art has shifted, it is likely because perceptions of value have altered within the American society.



Figure 2: The MGM Lion

Value: Instrumental v. Intrinsic

After the almost personally traumatic experience at my favorite gallery, I began to worry that what Alexis de Tocqueville said during his visit to the United States rang far more true than I anticipated: he observed that in comparison to his home country there seemed

¹⁰ Elliott, Stuart. “In Marketing, Art’s the Thing.” The New York Times. 2 Dec. 2013. NYTimes.com. Web. 12 Apr. 2015.

to be a dearth of fine arts. He credited the shortage to American democracy. “Democratic nations,” he explained, “cultivate the arts that serve to render life convenient in preference to those whose object is to embellish it; they will habitually prefer the useful to the beautiful”¹¹. de Tocqueville may have been on to something occurring now when he observed our society decades ago. Noting democratic nations’ obsession with egalitarianism, he successfully foresaw the descent into materialism. And the downward spiral has managed to encompass a variety of societal branches including government, literature, music, and, of course, the arts. Because as a society, we lack the discipline and, in many cases, the education to explore the intrinsic value of a work, its aesthetics, its message and purpose, we turn to the more accessible methodology of observation and delve only into the instrumental, the functional and concrete aspect of a work. The lack of initiative to analyze the intrinsic purpose of a work significantly impairs the overall perception of value present in our society.

Thus, here plays in the question of intrinsic and instrumental value: what exactly are they and what is the true difference between them? Intrinsic values, according to Roger Scruton, are aesthetic values. They cannot be measured by price¹². He goes on to say that components of our culture like art, literature and music create a “frame of reference which permits us to communicate our state of mind. They offer consolation, amusement, enjoyment and emotional stimulation thousand ways. But we do not judge them by measuring those good effects. On the contrary, we judge them on their intrinsic merits. The question before the critic is not: ‘does this have good or bad effects?’ but ‘is

¹¹ de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*, trans. and ed. by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, 439.

¹² Scruton, Roger. *Culture Counts : Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged*. New York, NY, USA: Encounter Books, 2007, 103. 05 Apr. 2015.

this a proper object of interest?’”¹³ With regard to instrumental value, Scruton draws a vivid parallel utilizing the example of friendship: he comments that “only someone who sees other people as having intrinsic value can make friends. This does not mean that his friends will not be of instrumental value. But their instrumental value depends upon the refusal to pursue it. The use of friends is available only to those who do not seek it. Those who collect friends for utility’s sake are not collecting friends: they are manipulating people.”¹⁴ Interpreting his commentary in terms of art, we find that exact ideology: only those individuals seeking true aesthetic or intrinsic value in art can fully appreciate it. This does not mean that the work in question does not have viable instrumental qualities: no, it can have appealing colors, a pleasant image, and a quality frame. But those qualities pale in comparison to the intrinsic qualities such as intricacies of the piece itself or the artist’s purpose in creating it. Thus, collecting art, like collecting friends for the sake of intrinsic value, is true appreciation while collecting for the sake of instrumental value is simply a manipulation of the works. This vivid comparison illustrates in most simple terms the stark difference between intrinsic and instrumental value and nods to the position that it bode well for our culture to begin to intentionally apply these principles when judging the value of a work.

Instrumental and Intrinsic Value in the Marketplace

Now, the artist and the market often have differing perceptions of the scale upon which a work should be judged, whether the work is a “proper object of interest”. The

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Scruton, Roger. *Culture Counts : Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged*. New York, NY, USA: Encounter Books, 2007, 103. 05 Apr. 2015.

circulation of works in the marketplace and the pricing methodology may be one of the greatest challenges to the education of the appropriate perception of value. Michelle

Gaugy, gallery owner, art consultant and author comments the following:

Money is a medium of exchange. We exchange it for something we either need or want. We have to give it up in amounts based on “values” that are set by a multitude of factors. Although there are those who assert that art may have “intrinsic value,” I’m not certain there is anything in this world today that is priced at its “intrinsic value.” What would that be? Construction materials plus some preset labor cost plus an agreed-upon “fair” profit margin? Everything I can think of is priced based on supply and demand. And that is also true of art. With art that was created by dead guys (not so many dead gals), scarcity is a real factor. There aren’t too many Vermeers running around, so this dramatically affects pricing. He won’t be making any more.¹⁵

Essentially, Gaugy deduces that when deliberating the inherent value of a work, the instrumental value is more explicitly stated than intrinsic. After all, the intrinsic kind of value is arbitrary and therefore not a quantifiable measure. Gaugy makes the point that art is like any other item: items are priced in relation to each other and value is largely determined by the marketplace. But what of the task to distinguish between intrinsic and instrumental value in a marketplace as ruthless as the one we encounter today? Moreover, what of the trends that lead consumers to judge a work of art by one criteria instead of the other? Jacques Barzun makes a rather poignant comment on the matter: “nowadays,” he says, “anything put up for seeing or hearing is only meant to be taken in casually. If it holds your eye and focuses your wits for even a minute, it justifies itself and there’s an end of it.” “[If] modern man’s most sophisticated relation to art is to be casual and humorous, is to resemble the attitude of the vacationer at the fair grounds, then the conception of Art as an all-important institution, as a supreme activity of man, is quite

¹⁵ “Why Is Art So Expensive?” *The Huffington Post*. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.

destroyed”¹⁶ What Mr. Barzun so eloquently states is society’s tendency to value instrumental value over the intrinsic very well may destroy the sanctity of art as a whole. He also comments on the persona I have personally had the acute displeasure of encountering at an artistic event: the social patron who promotes him or herself as an art lover and supporter for the sole motivation of self-promotion. Mr. Barzun notes that “potent was the pressure of advertising, which not only cast its usual glamour over the idea of being ‘cultured,’ but what is more important, adapted and exploited the painting and literature of the preceding century in its own display”.¹⁷ For the individuals who chose to merely market themselves as advocates for art while maintaining a personal judging criteria based solely on instrumental values of compatibility with furniture or the potential esteem in the eyes of friends or colleagues, I am forced to agree with Mr. Scruton and declare those individuals to be manipulating the people who surround them, the works of art they interact with and societal perceptions themselves.

The Shifts in Taste

Like value, taste is one of the pesky cultural terms that have about as many interpretations as there are individuals who possess it. It is a concept which, according to Clement Greenberg, one of the most prominent art critics of the twentieth century, became compromised during the 19th century when it was worn down into something having to do with food, clothes, decorations and the like, declining from the

¹⁶ Barzun, Jacques. *Use and Abuse of Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974.

¹⁷ Ibid.

representation of a faculty you exerted in experiencing art and experiencing anything aesthetically.¹⁸

Greenberg may have had it right when he said taste is intuitive and nobody yet knows what goes on in intuition. However, his comment does beg the question of how we justify the evolution, or more to the point, the devolution of tastes in American society. He comments that “one of the afflictions of art and of taste is the untruth you may tell yourself about the operations of your taste, or let's say, the results of your taste and the untruth you may tell to others. You're told that Raphael was a great painter and you can't see it yourself, but since you've been told it, you've read it everywhere and so forth, you look at a Raphael and you may look at a failed one and say, "well, it's got to be good because Raphael is so famous, the authorities say he's so good." That's one of the worst ways in which to begin or to continue looking at art.”¹⁹ Mr. Greenberg's poignant comment alludes precisely to the phenomenon that led to Pop art's explosive popularity: society was told that Pop was good, it continued viewing Warhol's silkscreens of soup cans and John's American flags and if there were to be a “bad” piece among them, the lack of quality would go unnoticed as the public was already conditioned to identify Warhols and Johns as “quality” art.

There is something to be said for artists who deliberately create aesthetically unappealing work and the means by which they influence the taste of a society. Paralleling advertisers who create promotions based solely on shock value, fear appeals

¹⁸ Greenberg, Clement. “Taste.” Lecture Series. Western Michigan University. 18 Jan. 1983. <http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/taste.html>

¹⁹ Ibid.

are only as effective as the resolutions advertisers provide. Much in the same way, artists who create deliberately ugly works receive recognition not for their aesthetic contributions but for the shock value, the “I can put something obscene in front of you and you will have to accept it because it is art” factor, as mentioned by Dr. Marjorie Cooper. Greenberg mentions that the artists who seek to shock succeed on a certain level: if their purpose is primitive and they achieve it, they have succeeded in claiming their title as most new or most radical painter; however, that is solely a measure of instrumental value as such works do not seek to connect with the audience, rather they merely intend to shock. The trend of shock value is widespread both in art and advertising and characterizes an era in our culture that fosters shallow perceptions relying solely on fear, ugliness or repulsion. Thus, these unpleasant presentations only further drive the taste of the culture into one bent on the accessible rather than the aesthetic and in turn fosters the growing materialism of an uneducated market.

Analyzing the disintegration of taste, we see how contemporary consumerism changed the way in which we interact with things visually; now, it is the same issue plaguing both marketing in art: each must cut through the clutter to remain prominent. And while, unfortunately, many prominent artists and marketers are turning to shock value for that prominence, the appeals of fear and horror are but temporary holds on the audience’s or consumers’ attention. Instead, artists and advertisers must seek to connect with their viewers on the premise of common ground, as Dr. Marjorie Cooper puts it, a common human element. But that element cannot be fear she says. Rather, it is the desire of creating something beautiful to promote a more hopeful, open society. She and art critic Clement Greenberg share a common mentality regarding taste and intuition: we tend to

recognize beauty as well as ugliness when we encounter them, both in our works of art and our advertisements.

CHAPTER FOUR

On Expert Opinion and the Trends for the Future

As I near the end of this work, I have grown all too familiar with my own opinions. To me, the means to rise above society's perception of millennials as self-absorbed and poorly contributing citizens is the expansion of our spheres of communication, achievable through discourse with those of varying worldviews and greater experience. Thus, in attempts to diversify my own perceptions, I sought the consult of experts on the subjects in question: on art, marketing and trends for the future of both. Throughout my research, I discovered a plethora of information as I tapped into a variety of sources; yet, I felt that the thoughts of contemporary experts in the subject of my work would provide invaluable insight to my research. As it is commonly argued that society cannot seek to understand its future without discovering its past, I delved into it and through various works by critics like Danto, Greenberg, and the like, I have mapped what, in my eyes, is the evolution of art, advertising and the societal perceptions which have shaped our contemporary culture. From the flood of Pop art on the market to the disintegration of perceptions of value, I was curious to discover the effects these past trends would ultimately have on the future of our society and culture.

The following are two extensive interviews conducted with academics specializing in the field of marketing. The professors interviewed brought with them unique perspectives on the subjects of art and advertising with regards to their current states in society as well as projections for the future. Dr. Marjorie Cooper is a professor

of advertising within the marketing department and Dr. Chris Pullig is an associate professor of marketing and chair of the department. These are their thoughts.

Dr. Marjorie Cooper, Professor of Advertising, Baylor University

What trends do you notice in the fields of art and advertising?

Graphically, there is a lot more clutter. There are a lot more bolded fonts, bolded typefaces, large scale images. There is little white space and therefore lots of clutter in print styles. I feel that it is kind of like our society. Something is going off at all times, either your phone or email or something else that is making noise. We experience sensory overload on a daily basis.

In terms of visuals, we're looking at advertisements that are essentially opposite of the famed Bernbach "Think Small" Volkswagen campaign. Those were all white space with one small image; now, it's reversed. With advertisements, I see more creativity in foreign ads. There is more imagination and a stronger creative execution. We do have some good ones by US agencies but I find more creative work coming out of other places. And that may be because I pick and choose the best of France, Italy and others while I live in America and see all the advertisements produced, both good and bad. There's a lot of really boring stuff out there. And part of it is, let's be realistic; an agency has to create something to sell the product. There is an immense amount of pressure there to produce content.

So we talk a lot about clutter. How do you think advertisers must adapt to our over saturated society?

To break through the noise and be heard and be distinguished for your brand, advertisements and the agencies that produce them have to approach things differently.

Creating the same ads as everyone else and attempting to make more or put them in more places is much more difficult and takes a lot of money to accomplish essentially the same thing as everyone else. Lots of brands want to yell louder instead of targeting and tailoring their content to make truly engaging ads. As advertisers say, any idiot can spend money. More shouting means more advertising, not better advertising. I do try to look for things that are good examples of good advertising behavior but that is becoming rarer.

I have noticed that many advertisers and, furthermore, many artists attempt to use shock value as a way to differentiate themselves from the crowd. What is your perspective on that?

I think shock value is a cheap way of getting attention. You can always find a way to offend people, that isn't difficult, especially now. We see so much ugliness in both art and advertising and from a Christian point of view, if we believe that God is the author of beauty, why do we celebrate ugly? I think society has a warped perspective of what is good and true when ugliness is celebrated instead of beauty, we're in trouble. We have to promote things that are uplifting and edifying. Not in the sappy sentimental kind of way because we are all realists and understand the way our world works. I mean in a way that makes people want to do better for society. I don't think advertising or art, for that matter, is individual; it always comes out of society, it reflects the way people think. The artist operates under a worldview and his or her work is an expression of the cultural milieu. And if it is consistently negative, ugly and demeaning, that is a poor reflection on the state of the society.

I think some of shock value's appeal is the mindset of "look how dishonorable I can be to your face and you will accept it because it is art". As Christians though, we

want to be representative of beauty and Christian artists must seek to be redemptive in their art as well as everything else. I have a friend who is an artist and sees the purpose of art as portraying God's truth and beauty. How a culture views its values comes out in the way it does its art. We have to judge by some criteria, unless the artist wants to admit he is incoherent and has no purpose to his work. But if he or she is trying to convey something, we have to say what it is.

So what, in your opinion, is part of those judging criteria?

That's a very loaded question. Of course it depends on a lot of things. It depends on who you are. Art critics have divorced themselves from mainstream perceptions; it is a very elitist point of view. The corollary is that art is only for the elite but that's not true. As with any other skill, the technical skills must be displayed but the artist's interpretation of a subject is what makes a work unique. That is why I don't think shock and extreme fear appeals are effective. Both in art and advertising, such an approach may get attention but remains without a meaningful strategic message. Without solutions to problems, people will tune out and their perceptual screens will come down. I find a similarity in music. Pieces are unique because of the way composers created them but too much discord in a piece makes it ugly. It's hard, if not impossible, to set down criteria for beauty but we are built to recognize ugly when we see it. When a piece communicates a clearly destructive message, it's bad art. It's funny, Christians should create the best art but nowadays, it's usually the worst! It's unrealistic and portrays sweetness and sappiness and that is just not the world we live in. We must tell the truth about the world, say that it is fallen and at the same time, portray the hope there is in

God. We must portray it how it really is, not how we wish it could be and that can be done through various subject matter, even abstraction.

So how do we judge it? We want to tell the truth. As far as criteria goes, it reflects your individual worldview. The NEA wasn't able to reach a consensus because they had different worldviews and to set a standard based on individual worldviews without infringing upon others rights to hold other views (even if they're wrong) is almost impossible. Basically it's a crap shoot in terms of what is considered good. It boils down to who has the biggest mouth and who can shout louder, in advertising in terms of dollars, than everyone else. Art and advertising are like every other market: highly segmented and the kind of work that appeals to one group won't appeal to another. But it is almost guaranteed that if an artist is true to what he is and true to what God is and creates beautiful work, he will find appreciation within society. An artist who conveys that will not be successful with large groups because that point of view of beauty is rejected, but niche markets have the potential to bring success and appreciation.

What trends do you see for the future of both art and advertising?

Unfortunately, I see more shock. I see more ugly values taking over the world. I'll give an example. During my youth, people weren't profane in public. They weren't rude or blatantly disrespectful to your face. Nice people didn't do stuff like that. Now, it's everywhere! And that vileness is pouring out and polluting our social interaction and our public voice. And our art and advertising will undoubtedly reflect that. I think this is a great opportunity for Christians to speak in and say what is responsive, not denying that we are damaged but offering hoping and beauty. It's a very delicate balance. And it's hard to achieve because nowadays, we question if we even believe in the things we hear

in ads. It used to be that if advertisers lied the FCC was going to pounce and everyone knew it. Now, there is so much more slack and cover up and alibis stating the government had no way of knowing what had gone on. Everybody is suspect of ads now because if money is involved, people will do advertising a certain way and future generations will grow up thinking that's how it's always been. I want to see a world of kindness and beauty and caring with people standing up for what's right and not abusing each other.

In your perception of the future, what effect does the digital age have on the social responsibility and general trends in advertising?

Content is more designed to engage and get people to respond than ever before. It's not just a one way flow of information, now we can hear from consumers with much greater ease. It is interesting, the pace of change. There are assignments in my class that are now difficult for students to accomplish because the media previously used for those workshops have become more outdated. Personally, I think that we as humans weren't designed for this much change because we cannot effectively process the magnitude. We even see it in the evolution of our education. Your bachelor's is worth almost as much as a high school diploma was a few decades ago and everyone feeling the pressure to get a masters or even PhD. And programs are getting really competitive.

What do you think is the effect of that increase in competition on society and the ads it produces?

There is franticness about our approach to media and the way we design our ads. Let's go back to the concept of clutter we discussed. The layout looks frantic: we have a visual portrayal of key ideas but it's everywhere and it's all over the place.

How do you think the competition affects agencies and the creators of our ads?

People think advertising is much more glamorous than it actually is. The margins for ad agencies are razor thin and both advertisers and clients are brutal in terms of budget. Agencies used to run on pure commission but now, prices are dropping, businesses are moving their advertising in house (most recently Apple) and we are shifting to digital which makes it significantly more difficult for agencies to turn a profit. There is also no media commission and commissions from traditional media are not enough to survive.

The bulk of advertising is still being done in television and print (billboards, newspapers and magazines) but that will change eventually. Because media has consolidated, buying agencies are struggling because it is becoming harder to get rates. People aren't willing to share that information anymore. And partially it's a lack of education on the part of the public and it's not easy to solve. This sounds elitist but the great unwashed is not a good place to go to set standards of excellence and that is probably why artists and advertisers have learned to be very loud in the marketplace. There is, in all fairness to the artist, a tremendous pressure to produce something mediocre that meets expectations rather than risk a commission or client relationship and going after something more risky or avant garde and making something creatively different than what has been done before. And it is so common because it's safe; it allows artists to feed their families. Going back to our discussion of music, I feel that the music field really exhibits the safety of mediocrity. I quit listening to pop music around 1990 because everything just sounds alike. And Christian music is even worse! I'm sure there are good artists and good songs but if you are not willing to take the time to search,

you won't access the quality content. So people get discouraged and they quit. And that really applies to advertising as well. The client is not trained to recognize what is good and what isn't because he isn't an expert. However, the clients have the money so they will drive the decisions. And often the clients are smart and they will be accommodating of those with expertise and be mindful of expert recommendations. However, there are those that will declare "it's my money, I do with it what I want" and that makes for some bad advertising. We live in a world now that is so hell bent on egalitarianism that even an uninformed opinion is supposed to be given equal weight to an expert opinion. But one person's opinion isn't as good as someone else's and you could even argue further that some two people aren't equally entitled to hold opinions. And that's where we have to start questioning credibility.

As far as advertising goes, I teach that no matter how beautiful it is, if it doesn't sell the product, it's bad advertising. From a client's point of view, the profit is the mission.

*Dr. Chris Pullig, Associate Professor
and Chair of Marketing, Baylor University*

What trends do you see within the marketing industry?

One of the things that is interesting about advertising in general and marketing in general, really, is that we are entering a period of time in which traditional demographic information is becoming less and less useful and it is really difficult for marketers to use observable demographics to actually segment their markets. In many ways, if you think about it, there is really an opportunity for art to play a bigger role because it is such an abstract concept because the meaning is ascribed by the viewer. Each individual can see

something in art that is unique to him or herself. And when you think about today's climate, each individual consumer is very much unique and really difficult to put these general labels upon because we are becoming much more multicultural and much more connected. So I don't really think people see themselves as Southern middle class persons anymore. Traditional geographical, ethnicity, age group, income level, things we might use historically are just not as useful. I think one of the current trends we see today in marketing in general, but especially in advertising too, is that instead of developing an ad that is targeted toward specific segments, there is more of an attempt to basically communicate something that is really the brand's essence, and knowing that each individual is going to see that brand's essence as related to him or her in a unique way and understanding that it's perfectly fine and acceptable. So it's this idea of instead of segmenting, companies are essentially trying to appeal to the entire market. They are letting people find value in that brand that suits them. Take Apple or any brand of smartphone, people are really connected to the brand and they are connected in a way that makes sense to them. So instead of segmenting the marketplace so that each of these features appeals to a particular segment, companies are essentially creating something that will appeal across a variety of segments. Some people will use the product in one way, other people will use it in another way but it's who the company is and what it offers and people will see value in their own individual ways. So it is this total market concept instead of a segmented market concept.

It's interesting how you mentioned that people connect to brands in a way that makes sense to them. That perception is actually very similar, in my opinion, to the way we respond to art. No two people are going to think the same thing or see the same thing about the piece. You will hear various kinds of discussions, some very shallow, some more in depth particularly by the people who seek to understand the work in front of them and I think that is very similar in a way to consumer react to products in the comparison

between intrinsic and instrumental value, like when two people go to purchase a car and one is focused on technical specificities and the other on the color and comfort level.

Exactly, and the thing that I think is changing is that brand managers and marketing managers are starting to understand that and worry less about the differences.

So what happens now that, as you mentioned, we are taking a more global approach to marketing? Is discovering tribes less important? Our first question in a marketing campaign is always what is your target market so how is that approach restructured now that we are utilizing a different strategy?

Well I think the target market is just defined differently, so it may be broader but I think it is more defined in terms of the value proposition. A lot of products are positioned as products that offer a specific kind of value to a group of consumers and the idea is instead of offering a product to a specific kind of demographic category the company offers the product in such a way that is seen as valuable to a variety of people. And that is just the reality we are faced with today; it's that the products we offer need to have a universal value. And what you're seeing with advertising is ads with less of an emphasis on a specific kind of person in an ad. It's more of someone who is hard to put into a category. If you observe you'll find that sometimes, yes, there are some very specific kind of people in ads but a lot of times it's someone whose ethnicity, whose age range are uncertain so it's interesting to see the kind of imagery that is used inside of ads. Less of it is about a specific stereotype of a single target market but rather presents a persona who could theoretically be any of the members of the target audience. So I think it's interesting when you think about the way art might play a role as something that is beautiful. Whether it be an image, or music, it is going to appeal to a lot of people. In many ways, it's similar to this idea of using someone in an ad that could represent and connect to any given member of the target market. I think the same thing that applies to

art: it's something that immerses. For instance, you see hip hop used in very traditional product categories which, when you stop and think about it, seems odd but I think part of that is companies don't want to be pigeon holed into being only for one segment; they would rather have people see a broader appeal and integrating artistic elements is an effective manner of creating that overarching message.

You said that beauty appeals to everyone but the marketing industry we frequently discuss shock value and the prevalence of fear appeals. If beauty is so much more enticing, what is the appeal of shock or fear based advertisements?

Honestly, I think those kinds of ads are losing their steam. The other thing that has really changed is that consumers today do not like to be persuaded or feel like they are being persuaded. There is this immediate reaction against anything that appears to be attempting to manipulate us. So what you see is a trend toward more of a transparent and honest appeal. And you are starting to see this universally that brands are portrayed in a much more "here is who we are, here is what we do, here is what we offer" viewpoint and less of a "we're better than anyone else". And when they do attempt to persuade, it's generally a softer sale, often paired with humor, so they will jokingly make the "we're better than anyone else" statement. Samsung did the humor ads playing off people standing in line to get the new iPhone but it wasn't a "knock you over the head" type thing. So I think what you'll find is any fear appeal or any sort of an appeal that tries to startle or compare is going to be done in a much softer way.

I think it's an interesting time: Baby Boomers and Gen Y-ers control the marketplace to a large extent but in the next ten years, it's going to be the Millennials. And so many things are different about Millennials. Ethnicity wise, they are much more diverse; experience wise, they're much more diverse. They are technology natives.

They've had technology as part of their everyday experience all their lives. And it's not so much your generation, you're kind of at the edge, as the one behind you, and there is a big bubble of them coming too. So it's going to be interesting to see how companies and brands adjust but as consumers, the Millennials are going to expect there to be value in everything they get, they will expect it to be easy to figure out, they will expect it to be very intuitive, they will expect technology to be interwoven into everything they do and every experience they have so it dramatically changes advertising.

On that note actually, I devoted most of an entire chapter of the work to the shifting taste of the American consumer society. I noticed that as art and marketing become increasingly more integrated our ability to judge the quality of art is impaired. If, like you mentioned, these upcoming generations of consumers are expecting everything to be simpler and more intuitive, how do you think that affects our ability to discern good and bad advertising and good and bad art?

Well for customers, it's going to be a simple question of "is it going to provide me value"? With regards to art, I think a lot of it in the future is going to be a matter of whether it brings some sense of pleasure.

I discuss the gap between instrumental and intrinsic value and with the growing expectations for simplification and accessibility, we are no longer willing to seek that intrinsic value in certain things because we judge based on instrumental value. I encountered a woman at an art gallery I frequent with my family who was judging a piece of art explicitly on the basis of whether it matched her furniture. And I have been around art since I can remember and was always taught that art is valued for its aesthetic value. I find that even more interesting now as a marketing major because we are taught that at the end of the day, the good ads are the ones that sell the product. So we are given a very instrumental approach to interpreting advertising and therefore the art used to create many ads.

Honestly, I think that Millennials and your generation and younger are more interested in the intrinsic value than say my generation, or the generation behind me. I think you as consumers are much more interested in value that is not tangible and not instrumental. So I think that is one of the trends you are going to see with these

Millennials is that they are less materialistic, and more interested in value that has societal benefit. They are much more interested in social causes and companies that are doing good work. I would suspect that these upcoming generations will become more interested in the intrinsic value of art. When you look at what is popular in media today there is this interest in entertainment that provides some intrinsic value, that communicates a message. A lot of the more popular media has that really sincere message whether it be family values, acceptance. Take Parks and Rec for example: that is all about acceptance and tolerance and the appreciation of the simpler things in life and that is what that story is about. And younger generations are much more accepting of that.

So with regards to the future, since you are seeing more value driven messages and a tendency toward transparency and ethics, how is the deviation from the traditional marketing strategy created by agencies to more equity based promotions going to affect the way marketing operates? For instance, Apple fired an advertising agency they had worked with for years and currently do all their advertising in house. What are your thoughts on these changes?

I don't really know that it will be a tremendous change. I do think that larger companies will really have much more of a vision about their brand so with the case of your example, it makes sense that Apple doesn't have anyone else working with their brand image. But I think you will see people really focus more on brand itself. Though that focus, it becomes more about the harmonization of all these different aspects that represent the brand, as opposed to a product or a specific pitch so you wind up with these different campaigns. So you will see some transition within agencies or even companies themselves, whoever is doing the work, towards a more holistic brand-focused perspective. And it's out of necessity because that is just the way people view the marketplace today: it's through the lens of these brands. That is really where you build

value. It doesn't do a company much good to build value on a product; they need to be building value on a brand. I think you will see some transitions away from the typical single product campaign and that may hurt some agencies because if they are not on board with that change, they will get left behind. However, the benefit of agencies is that they have no real true assets other than their people so it is much easier for them to adapt, morph, restructure in response to market alterations, so those things are easier for them. So I don't think you will see a significant amount of shift back to large companies, but they may take more things in house just to maintain or increase their control. With agencies, those that see and communicate the vision of the brand more clearly, those will become successful. They will be the ones that understand that while there is advertising, there is social, there is company communications, all those things are basically designed to support the brand.

So they definitely need to have the brand equity pyramid hanging in the boardroom.

Definitely, and it is a lot of what we talked about in our branding class. That is where the future is, in my mind.

So with this holistic focus on brand rather than product and keeping in mind the growing saturation of our market, what in your mind defines a good ad? In terms of the sheer volume of the brands in the marketplace, what are your thoughts on how to display that brand equity in a way that communicates one brand's value better than its competitor?

Well I think it starts with the view of the brand itself as being very sincere in terms of what the brand can offer. And the other thing it has to have is something that is valuable to people in the marketplace. The way to really cut through is to develop those brand evangelists. If I can get people to really love my brand, that makes everything work. I can't just broadcast out "we're a good brand, you should love us, come buy us" if

people don't react to that or have a way that they can share with others whatever it is they love about the brand. That's another reason why everything has to be interconnected and centered on the brand itself, all your social, all your events, everything you do to speak about it has to be harmonized around the brand's essence.

In terms of the execution, what approaches to promotion would be beneficial? And furthermore, with the growing prevalence of digital marketing and taking in what you said about the tech expectations of future generations of consumers, how do you think digital is shifting the way we market our brands and products?

To answer the first part, shock, if it's increasing, that's a mistake. That's number one. I think the most effective advertising is going to be something that has universal values. The new Coca Cola ads, for instance, promote sharing happiness and overall communicate a very positive strategy.

The new McDonald's commercials are doing that as well. They encourage viewers to share the love and currently the company has a campaign that in twenty four hours, there will be various entertainment events held in cities throughout the world. Though I think it's interesting that the new campaign didn't make me have a more favorable view of the products, I did experience an improvement in my perception of the brand.

Exactly, and that's what they are looking for. They seek a shift in the esteem you have of the brand. Those are the kinds of ads I see as more effective: I show you that my product has the ability to offer this universal, higher value. At the same time, you still know it will fulfill these utilitarian aspects, like McDonald's will still fill you up at a cheap price. But that isn't the focus anymore; now it's on how to change our audiences see companies. It's this idea that they don't want to be persuaded so companies must communicate on a higher level of value. We will also see ads just for the purpose of awareness and those will continue to achieve some of those basic advertising purposes brands seek to fulfill.

Now when it comes to how digital is integrated within all of that, let's use your example of McDonald's. They are having these events; the events are all connected digitally. They're shared, people talk about them, and that is really where digital becomes a player in terms of its ability for people to share the brand's message. But the brand must give consumers a reason to share and the only reason people share things is that there is added value in doing so. Digital is going to become more integrated even at point of sale and so when people go shop, there will be consistent points of contact that the consumers may have with that reinforce the message of the brand.

So based on what you've said about integrating the elements are brands now competing on the premise of equity as opposed to superiority of product? Is it just a matter of finding a message that better speaks to our customers?

When you think about the message, that really is the thing that has to somehow break through the clutter and appeal to the customers. It can be funny or exotic or whatever it needs to be for audiences to give it attention. At the end of the day, whatever the company offers has to be valuable. Also, the company and its audience must really connect somehow. A popular ad right now is the Most Interesting Man in the world. It's different because it's hilarious and people find themselves watching those advertisements because each new one attracts attention. That kind of an ad breaks through the clutter because it's entertaining but also it's so relatable that we see people going out and repeating it. So you have to be sincere and likeable, that's the key really. Even with Progressive, who doesn't like Flo? She is a pop culture icon right now. They have broken through the clutter with uniqueness, consistency and entertainment value but more so, likeability. That's the key in advertising: as a brand, I have to somehow connect with you. A lot of things you think about that are advertised today, there is something about

those personas that has that overarching relationship to a segmented market; other examples are Farmers and the Geico gecko. True, those advertisements are informative but they break through the clutter simply by being entertaining and watchable, and we connect with these messages primarily because they're fun to watch. We process the information but the main thing is there is entertainment value within those promotions. There is something very human and personable in that connection and the brand really does want to have a personality because it wants its customers to relate to it, to feel something about the personality of the brand itself. Those connections foster relationships and encourage a trust between the brand and its consumers. And if like in the case of Flo or Jake from State Farm, people connect so far as to integrate those brand personalities into popular culture, well, those are really good ads.

Then we begin to see these connections enter into the realm of art. Campbell's soup cans, for example, fostered those same connections between audiences and the creators of these pieces. I would also argue that advertising is becoming more interpretable. So in some ways it is becoming more similar to art in the way that each individual viewer interprets a piece differently. There is so much imagery used in advertising today that wasn't used twenty years ago or even ten years ago, and if you note the television ads we see, there is a lot of really interesting imagery that is interpretive in terms of what the brand is communicating. There is a lot of metaphorical, imagery based appeals inside of advertising and brands are expecting some viewers to get them and other not to and that is okay.

We talk quite a bit about interpretation and connectivity. In a market like ours that contains so many brands vying for consumers' attention, what do you think is the role that the brand's credibility plays in fostering those connections?

It's significant. You cannot be successful if people are questioning if what you are saying is true. That is one of the reasons you see people getting away from the ads that claim a company is superior to its competitors on certain premises, there are less and less of those ads. We do a lot less comparative advertising now because the general response is "yeah, right". People don't trust those kinds of advertisements. We used to. But it's a generational thing, yours and younger are very distrusting of advertising. Any sort of explicit claim in an ad is bound to raise some concerns, so what you are going to see is smart brands won't do comparative because it won't make sense. Unless of course you can clearly and definitively support those claims and have evidence you can present. But even then, it seems petty so you won't see it very often. People don't want that. They essentially want "if you're good, tell us". It's less of a competitive edge. The other thing in the marketplace today is people expect to be able to return purchases; if a product doesn't work to their satisfaction, they will bring it back. There is a lot of power in the consumer that wasn't there ten or fifteen years ago. People are distrusting of ads, and that's why you see ad space and ad revenue flattening and even going down. I think you'll actually begin to see less and less clutter.

EPILOGUE

What is to be Done

After examining our history and observing our contemporary society, I have arrived at a key conclusion: culture must be taught, and it must be taught ubiquitously. The education of our society is not merely the responsibility of schoolteachers and college professors. Rather, the need to dedicate resources to this cause encompasses all individuals from academics to businesspeople. In fact, marketers and the corporations they work for have perhaps the greatest amount of leverage to influence the culture of our society. America does thrive on its consumerism and as it remains simpler to follow trends than attempt to persuade the public to alter its behavior, businesses can contribute to the cultural education through the products their customers already consume. This is the premise of corporate responsibility. Because our culture is quite materialistic, businesses can influence the means by which customers make purchase decisions by altering their products. For example, consumer packaged goods is an industry in which it is immensely difficult for brands to differentiate themselves. However, a California based company had the idea to appeal to customers by not only creating an entirely green line of cleaning products, but also by donating large parts of proceeds to institutions dedicated to the protection of our earth and water. Thus, Method was born and grew into a prominent player in the CPG industry. Another embodiment of corporate responsibility Yoplait's dedication to the Susan G. Komen Foundation: as part of this campaign, funds is donated each time a purchase of specially marked yogurt is made. The list of companies investing in cause related marketing is growing and for good reason:

dedication to worthy causes attracts more customers. So why not make education a cause worthy of investment? There is a plethora of ways in which companies could contribute, from donating funds to arts education programs to volunteering with individual institutions, the list goes on. For large companies, a heavier emphasis on corporate responsibility has immense potential to increase brand equity.

The concept of corporate responsibility is growing more prevalent than ever. As Dr. Chris Pullig mentioned, the millennials who will be driving the market in less than a decade are cause driven; they want more than a good advertisement to convince them to buy a product; they need a connection. The market is in prime for an educational program to be implemented. Dr. Pullig commented that the previous generations, much more so than the current ones, were driven more by instrumental values than intrinsic ones. However, new consumers entering the market are seeking something more than function; they want connection. And if companies capitalize on that desire, they stand to not only create long standing customer relationships but dramatically increase their profits. Thus, the issue of corporate responsibility must become an even greater topic of conversation around boardroom tables across America. Many companies have already grasped the concept: consumers do not merely want a pleasant smelling dish soap that cleans silverware with ease; they seek the instrumental benefit of clean dishes while also looking for labels boasting “green” ingredients or partnerships with wildlife conservation programs. Dr. Pullig notes that marketers can no longer segregate the market based on the demographic profiles of their customers; instead, they must orient themselves based on ideologies and values: environmental activists, rifle enthusiasts, extreme sports junkies and the like. By seeking those connections, brands elevate their image and develop the

brand personality into a more favorable institution fostering education and relationships with its consumers. Thus, it is clear that an educated society cannot be the desire of a few niche groups of patrons of the arts and academics. No, it must rise to the forefront of priorities for all individuals, particularly the companies who run our economy. Because in addition to the aforementioned discussion of corporate responsibility, businesses may reap another key benefit of cultural education: a more discerning market fosters the potential for greater profits.

Take the average consumer. As Americans, we are accustomed to the mindset that we deserve the best and make our purchase decisions based on our qualifications of companies' attributes that offer us what we perceive to be the highest value of product or service. Thus, the companies who have created advertisements based on ego appeals are already ahead of the curve. Dr. Brad Owens creates an incredible visual of this approach which transcends all industries, as it applies not to general specifications but the consumer's perception.

I imagine company musing on the ideal promotions campaign for a new product. For the uneducated amateur consumer, advertise the product as blue and it will suffice; but for a professional, for a connoisseur, blue simply will not do. Rather, it must be presented as teal, cobalt, sapphire. Because an educated consumer will have the capability to discern blue from teal, the brand makes a deeper connection with its customer on the premise of a value proposition. And that is the key: the more educated a market, the more touch points and the more value propositions the brand may present in order to foster that connection. With the increasing connections, consumers form a more positive perspective of the brand personality which in turn fosters loyal buying behavior.

For companies, that is the key benefit of contributing to cultural education: discerning customers are keenly aware of the differences between blue and teal - the same concept lies behind the reasoning of a customer's choice to purchase a luxury vehicle instead of a standard sedan. Those who understand and seek the differences between the products will readily pay a premium for teal over blue. The companies who invest in the education of the market have the potential for a grand return on their investment. True it may be easier to dumb down our market and oversimplify our advertising thereby making marketers' jobs dull and uniform, but if we invest the time and financial resources into creating an educated consumer, those consumers will utilize their newfound knowledge in their purchase decisions and will opt for the teal, gladly paying the price premium that elevates it above blue.

It is clear that cultural education presents an immense amount of benefits for consumers and companies alike. As we create more discerning customers, we aid the development of our culture because, as we have come to notice, marketing, like artistic expression, is never done on accident. Rather, it is a reflection, as Dr. Marjorie Cooper aptly noted, it is an individual commentary. It always comes out of society and reflects the way people think. Thus, the artist and the marketer operate under a worldview and their work is an expression of the cultural milieu. Under these conditions, we observe marketing and artistic expression grow more integrated in their purpose and influence upon the culture in which they exist. Herein we find solid ground for the establishment of a cultural education program because whether we hail from the realm of art or the realm of marketing, it is our common goal to further our society and develop our culture.

Though the proposition of cultural education is a grand undertaking, the pursuit of this resolution has been an extraordinary endeavor. I will boldly borrow a few words from Clement Greenberg in his response to a question at a lecture during which he recommended one of his listeners to delve further into Kant and Croce: “you'll see far better minds than mine wrestle with these questions and come up with no good answers”²⁰. For me personally, it is the drive to seek those answers, the pursuit of the understanding of the cultural shifts behind the evolutions of our society, those are struggles worthy of our time. In the formulation of my work, I have, true to Mr. Greenberg's advice, had the honor and privilege to interact with historical greats and contemporary academics; I complete this thesis empowered by the knowledge that while I may never discover the ultimate answers to my initial inquiries, my desire for knowledge and a discerning and observant eye continue to drive me to be an educated member of a rapidly developing society.

²⁰ Greenberg, Clement. “Taste.” Lecture Series. Western Michigan University. 18 Jan. 1983. <http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/taste.html>

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