

tion to an expanding consumer market to “captains of consciousness” who sought to extend their control into all areas of social behavior. Business became infused and confused with religion and patriotism. A new “philosophy of life advertising” was developed which greeted abundant consumption as a mark of civilization and freedom. In its admitted infiltration of family, school, church and union, advertising worked for a reorientation of the consciousness of the masses away from past traditions and towards a packaged and marketable future. Advertising performed the social service of nullifying the “customs of ages. . . break[ing] down the barriers of individual habits.” Traditions, particularly those of the many immigrants who made up the early industrial work force, had to be Americanized. Industry first had to train mass production workers to accept the system of wages and mechanical time on which the factory system depends; then these same frugal and diligent workers had to be transformed into mass consumers. Advertising pledged itself to “superimpose new conceptions of individual attainment and community desire” on the masses in order to fight what businessmen called “puritanism in consumption.” The consumer was promised a future in which his dissatisfactions and failures within the industrial society would be remedied by commercial products, and industry was assured of a consumer market which could be channeled to fluctuate with the changing demands of the market economy.

A curious romanticism in early advertisers led them to describe the social manipulation practiced by their industry in organic, spiritual and even mythic terms, “at once the destroyer and creator in the process of the ever-evolving new.” Comparing itself to the grandiose movement of nature or of some vast dialectic, advertising in the twenties saw how it could become the prime moving force in the shaping of contemporary history.

In his essay, which consists of a detailed explication of a Sunkist orange juice ad, Leo Spitzer does not chart the history of advertising or the effects of advertising on history. His masterful hermeneutic analysis does reveal, however, the fabrication in a specific advertising text of an artificial history in which the realities of industrial production are replaced by fanciful