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Advertising

The Risks that Adverts Must Run and an Authoress's Fear of Freedom

The jennyass, Felicity Lawrence, feels that it is a big mistake of the CONDEMS' new Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, to dismiss the recent campaign of Jamie Oliver against obesity. Writing in the totalitarian propaganda sheet, that is so aptly named *The Guardian*, Thursday 8 July 2010, she protests that Lansley is overlooking the fact that it was only the nanny state could have recently saved the UK population from smoking. The Jamie Oliver campaign, backed by the state, has also worked in getting children to eat better at school, she says. Lansley was wrong to think it was all down to individual choice. Has he never heard of the power of marketing? Advertising can be used to get people to consume junk food. Andrew Lansley is not only facile, she says, but he is also clearly wrong headed in thinking that all social ills are down to individual responsibility rather than to the actions of powerful firms and their advertising campaigns.

This authoress wants to say, "Nanny does know best, Andrew Lansley." She begins: "The health secretary's belief that children should be responsible for their own diet choices would be risible were it not so scary" showing, thereby, a naked fear of freedom and responsibility, and a longing for totalitarian security and all

round state protection. She indicates that Lansley is naïve to hold that "the captains of the food industry are decent chaps" who will choose not to sell junk food if only the state stops regulating them. "Lansley's analysis of public health is so facile that it would be risible even in a prep-school debating society", says this exceedingly stupid woman. It is unrealistic, she thinks, to expect schoolchildren to be responsible about their food.

She feels that Lansley has not even bothered to master his brief here "Figures out yesterday show that, far from putting large numbers off school meals as Lansley had claimed, Jamie Oliver's campaign to improve school meals, and all the government work on nutritional standards that followed, has increased uptake of healthy hot meals at lunchtime. It turns out those *in loco parentis*, or to use that pernicious rhetoric of the privileged right, 'nanny', should decide what's best for children. It works" she triumphantly exclaims.

Like so many Romantics, this is a tribal thing for the authoress. She does not seem to know that the pristine right of the French Assembly in 1789 was protectionist, as she is, and that the left was for the free trade, that she is so ardently opposed to. The Fabian Society called some old Tory ideas "socialist" in the 1890s, which was perfectly true, but they also said they were left wing. They did not fit in well with free trade, but this was widely accepted as being apt nevertheless. The dichotomy has been

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somewhat confused in common sense ever since.

Nor is Lansley even aware of the literature that shows that choice is a myth, she continues, as we are all ruled by the unconscious mind. He might begin his homework, she says, by reading up on Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, he who wrote an essay on *The Engineering of Consent*. Advertising is more than just free speech; it is also a way of controlling those it broadcasts to, as the people all have an unconscious mind that any broadcast can enter to manipulate any one amongst the masses listening by using their modern techniques. Bernays was the first to realise that the public could be manipulated "into buying products they did not want or need by targeting their unconscious desires." In the 1920s, he aided the large scale selling to the public of cigarettes and junk food. The state was needed to break the habit of smoking that such advertising had long built up, and it will similarly be needed to break the habit of consuming junk food too, says the authoress. With smoking, the adverts needed to be stopped first. Then the state was needed to put up taxes on the cigarettes and only later to ban smoking in public places. This long strategy alone could "quell the desires that had been so skilfully awakened" by the giant tobacco firms, she says. She writes as if there would be no smoking or eating of junk food at all if it was not for this tremendous manipulation ability of advertisements.

"Why does Lansley think the food industry has fought tooth and nail to avoid restrictions on its marketing to children? It has to catch them young, to form their palates and create their desires" she says. This woman thinks that the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola, was quite right to think that what we learn young enough; we can never quite analyse, or reasonably check out for truth in any way. It is worth

mentioning that Voltaire was the product of such a Jesuit college.

We may hothouse the brain by early education to enlarge the brain by dendritic growth, but we cannot realistically hope to build in a special protection for any particular doctrine by any advantage in early education. And, as the pristine Romantic propagandist, J.J. Rousseau, rightly said, any material will aid brain development such that we will be able to think all the better as a result. Any ideas at all will educate us but none will stop further consideration as to whether they are true or not; quite the contrary, any will aid us to think clearly. Having learned about things – any particular things or things in general – we will be better able to think about fresh ideas than we would had we not been educated. A developed brain will better be able to think critically rather than being merely made loyal to whatever doctrines was used during its development.

Thus, the taxi driver's knowledge of London will be as good as an intensive course of philosophy to that end. Both develop dendrites in the brain that basically boost the learner's general ability. In the 1930s the best schools in the world were those run by the Jesuits, but they all, very oddly, confined themselves to Aristotle on physics, owing to their Thomist dogma. But their pupils soon caught up with modern physics as adults. Learning any subject will aid us to learn other subjects. Even if we could all be taught actually true doctrines, anyone might rethink them and fall into adult error, despite the fact that the external world, presumably, gives the truth a lift. Our brains simply do rethink all things. That is why this brainwashing idea is false. It assumes that we can be loyal to ideas indoctrinated but there is no way that we can prevent automatically revising all that we behold.

Richard Dawkins on memes is partly right. One aspect of the meme idea is that we believe, or catch, ideas like we do a virus, much as we catch a cold. But his idea that it is no use reasoning about the ideas that we thus catch, or pick up, any more than it would be to reason about a cold is clearly false, for all ideas are subject to reason not prior to adoption but at any time after they have been adopted. Thus, it is no advantage to get an idea adopted if it can be shed with ease, and false looking ideas can be shed with ease. Our minds automatically search for error and the rejection of anything that looks like error to us is automatic. We can never deliberately err, as Plato rightly said.

Earlier the authoress, Felicity Lawrence, wrote "Free choice isn't healthy for the food industry's menu" *The Guardian*, Wednesday 23 June 2010. She fears the market, loves the state yet also fears that the state has no chance unless it is very careful. I rather think that she is right that the state is not up to much, but she seems to merely imagine her supposed dangers of the market. "Traffic-light labelling was voted down in Europe only last week, scuppered by food industry lobbying of breathtaking determination and expense". European consumer watchdogs have said that up to a billion pounds was spent by giant multinationals to get the members of the European parliament by use of emails and meetings to sway their vote, she tells us. The result is that an industry-sponsored scheme of nutrition labelling that serves only to confuse the customers emerged instead of her hoped for version of state regulation.

The authoress's beloved Food Standards Agency [FSA], that had upset the giant firms in the food industry by successfully naming and shaming manufacturers for use of excess salt in their products, but it may now be abolished in the CONDEMS cuts even before it can fully sort out the big firms. There is simply too much fat

in the foods that the big food companies sell today, says Felicity Lawrence, but the FSA might have put them in their place had the new government not been recently elected. "Plans are well advanced to emasculate it by returning its role in improving public nutrition to the Department of Health, whose past performance on food has been lacklustre" she says. "Another success, then, for the food industry and its lobbyists, who were hard at work in the run up to the election."

The giant firms that produce all this dreadful junk-food for profit will not worry much over the plans that the state is making to control the advertising to children before the 9 pm TV watershed, as it can now use the internet to bypass any such regulations. It can use its adverts to get the children to pester their parents to buy junk food regardless of the planned restrictions. "This is not a world in which individuals make free, fully informed choices about food" she tells us. Rather "it is a world in which children are targeted by junk-food manufacturers from the youngest age. We live in a culture in which adult appetites are shaped by marketing that preys on our insecurities and emotional needs. It is an environment in which understanding the labels on our food practically requires a Ph.D. in food chemistry." So she feels that the state is badly needed to protect the public from being victimised by the big firms that exploit them for profit.

But indoctrination is not as powerful as she thinks, even if we grant the idea that the adverts can indoctrinate; which there seems reason to think is false, as there is not even the time in most cases. The old adage "use it or lose it" seems to be the rule for all ideas, for if we do not use any set of ideas then they will tend to be forgotten. The general development of the brain, the growth of dendrites, will have been achieved by the use of any ideas used in education in the past. Not

so the belief that the ideas in question are true, as that will depend on what the beholder thinks is the case at any one time only; even if, in revising what he thinks, he does not amend the content. The fact is that at any time, he might amend the content if it seems apt to do so. To think is to revise, even if we do not change our minds. And to be alive and in normal health is to think. We think automatically.

However, Felicity Lawrence has the daft idea that there is something called the “unconscious mind” that is the irrational enemy within us all. It will ensure that we are unhappy. That seems to be its main aim. So it urges us to do things that are bad for us. So we all need the guardianship of the state, which is, presumably, manned by politicians that lack this unconscious mind. How otherwise could they know what is best? But the idea that politicians are special in this way seems to be rather far-fetched. More realistic is the idea that there is no such unconscious mind, or any other means of manipulation through adverts.

Moreover, almost any history of psychoanalysis will show a falling off of this idea of the unconscious mind within the very movement that gave rise to it: within psychoanalysis. Any history of the movement will tell the reader about how the unconscious was abandoned by many, if not most, of the followers of Freud. . J.A.C. Brown, in *Freud and the Post-Freudians* (1964), for example, tells his readers that first Alfred Adler, and then many others, the majority, indeed, of the therapist followers of Freud, after a time, dumped this ‘unconscious’ meme as irrelevant to anything they thought was real. I think they were right to do so.

Similarly, the Jesuit colleges have exactly no chance of making a Catholic for life, given the first seven years. If ever such a successful former pupil is later willing to debate at any time, then all the Catholic doctrines learnt earlier

will thereby run the risk of being discredited. This would be so even if the doctrines were true. If any opponents of the fondly indoctrinated Catholic ideas can get the pupil to debate then they do have a chance of wiping out any beliefs in the Jesuit creed that he was indoctrinated in. The Jesuits have no chance at all with Christianity in open debate, as Catholicism is, objectively, such a silly creed. But even if it were true it would still risk being abandoned on being criticised. Brainwashing is a mere myth, like mental illness, or irrationality, or socialism [as an alternative economy to the price system for the mass urban society] or the idea of God.

Even though all those bogus ideas – mental illness, irrationality and socialism – do give fools lots of pleasure, no one can actually believe as they wish, so anyone who discusses those bogus ideas thereby risks either being disillusioned, or even understanding an actual refutation in some cases. Bias cannot crowd out criticism, even though many fools feel utterly certain that it can. We are free to say what we like, but never to believe as we like. The one thing that Freud got right was “the reality principle”. We may not want to re-think, but we do re-think all the time; indeed we rethink any time that we do think, even if this is usually only superficially done. Any attempt to manipulate people will need to stand up to the normal test of reason or normal thinking that we all automatically do. It is not foolproof but it is a test.

In any case, the giant firms would need to compete with all the others in their adverts, even if we granted the bogus manipulation theory *via* the unconscious mind; but that theory looks lame so there is no need to grant it. Yet if we did, it would not be easy manipulation. Competition would ensure that.

Peter Watson in *Ideas* (2005) writes that the German historian of science, Theodor Gomperz said, "Nearly our entire intellectual education originates from the Greeks. A thorough knowledge of their origin is the indisputable prerequisite for freeing ourselves from their overwhelming influence" (p148) . But this is mere hyperbole, in both sentences, but complete folly in the second cited sentence, as ideas cannot gaul us in any way at all. Influence tends to push us out rather than to suck us in, thus the wider educated mind is usually the more independent mind and a man with a degree in Greek is not likely to be limited to ancient Greece in his outlook.

That we often deliberately make assumptions obfuscates the fact that we often make many tacit assumptions automatically too. Indeed, the latter assumptions are the norm. To repeat, the biologist, Richard Dawkins with his meme idea has the merit of getting the fact that we adopt ideas automatically, rather like we pick up a virus, correctly but he errs, and he errs very badly, when he says that what we automatically assume is thereby immune from criticism. *E contra*, we will automatically drop any assumption as soon as we see it as bogus, even if we are not right in it actually being bogus. As Plato rightly said, no one can deliberately err.

Indeed, few will think that this current common sense idea of irrationality, at least in the buying of what they do not want as result of advertising, applies to themselves. It only pertains to others; only to the masses. People may foolishly grant that they are irrational in other ways. But only the gullible masses seem open to being duped by advertising; but the masses are only an abstraction. We all feel we are better than others. It is the sort of value that we need to have, as it is, maybe, basic to survival; or at least it will have been so for our ancestors prior to the rise of civilisation. We realise that

most adverts fall on barren ground as far as we are concerned. Few males want to wear the widely advertised female underwear, for example. But adverts must affect the masses, we think; even though we can also see that most people are not affected by adverts for wares that are made for the opposite sex or for products that are otherwise not suitable to most people who see or hear the advert. But why not, if they can manipulate any of us at will? Because we think about them, and in doing so we realise that the broadcast is not even aimed at us, of course. But if we do think in this way, then why should we ever grant the manipulation theory that Felicity Lawrence thinks is so silly of Lansley to ignore?

Even road-sweepers, or men selling newspapers, realise adverts have never persuaded them to buy what they do not want, though they still often feel that the adverts must work this way on the masses. The fact is that adverts persuade none. They do aid distribution by merely calling the attention of the people who already want the wares on offer to wares that they already want. That is enough to boost sales. No persuasion is needed.

Most adult people will admit that they have long forgotten most of whatever they learnt at school. I myself remember learning nothing at school on the normal day. I was very pleased never to be asked what I learnt on getting home for I would have usually had nothing to say. Most pupils seem to learn nothing on most days at school today too. That is why most nominal Catholics, sometimes even enthusiastic ones, know next to nothing about their creed, despite all those years of RI lessons at school. Most people do credit the schools with learning them to read and write, but they would have, most likely, picked these skills up as they grew up in the mass urban society. As Stephen Berry says, schools are mainly providing a child minding service. There has been no real building up of doctrine

at school, let alone by the giant firms through adverts for smoking and junk food on the media. Mass indoctrination is greatly exaggerated.

Felicity Lawrence feels Lansley overlooks that the various firms have no social responsibility, beyond doing well for their shareholders. Why should they not want to sell more junk food? Bigger sales means more profits. She here overlooks that the firms have no interest in selling junk food, any more than any other food, and that firms actually sell only what is selected by the individual members of the public whenever such an individual chooses to become a customer. In each case, there is the money that the individual will need to pay whenever one wants to buy what is for sale, and that is a built-in disincentive to buy any particular good. Does the ware match up to whatever else the customer can obtain with money elsewhere? Our alternative uses of money have far more impact than any advert could ever have in ensuring that we only buy what we want, even if there was some sort of manipulation. We all do want money so we need to want any good that we actually do buy a bit more than the money that we pay for it and any manipulation, even if we grant it as real, will need to be strong to counter that. But Felicity Lawrence does not seem to realise that fact. However, she will have experienced it whenever she has to pay for whatever she buys. By contrast, she will not have experienced the power of manipulation from the adverts, for it is not real at all. But she might think that, as this influence occurs unconsciously, she need never expect to have any experience of it. This does not seem to be a very realistic line of thought; but neither do the main ideas she accuses Lansley of ignoring look one iota realistic either.

In any case, if the adverts can get the unconscious mind to buy anything, then why not get them to buy healthy food?

Presumably, anything the public buys will yield a profit. Or does it all depend on the unconscious desires, as most accounts of it seem to suggest? If so, it does not even claim to get people to do as it wants but instead it simply depends on what is wanted by the unconscious mind already. Things are not looking so good for the big firms after all. They are going to need entrepreneurship with its risk of getting what the customers buy wrong, and thus making losses rather than profits. In this line of argument, it looks as if the firms do not have the alternative of handy manipulation by advertising to dodge the risk of losses after all.

Many amongst the UK public have feared greatly, just lately, that the law on product placement within TV programmes is about to be relaxed and they see this as sinister. Like Felicity Lawrence, they fear that advertisements will manipulate them through their unconscious mind by the use of modern techniques of persuasion. I recall a class in which the teacher put a case against adverts as a sort of running joke to lighten up the lesson [it was a mathematics night school class]. Towards the end of the class, he came near the end of his case against the Guinness adverts.: “Then it is on your mind that you might buy a pint of Guinness!” he exclaimed. He was a Guinness drinker and so was I. About seven of us went for a drink after the class each week. “And then you recall that you do not like Guinness!” I retorted. The class laughed. Just getting the message over will never be enough to sell a good. The good, or service advertised, will need to be wanted beforehand.

The authoress knows, or she thinks she knows, that social class rather than individual responsibility decides those things. Class is still a major determinant of how healthy a person is, says Felicity Lawrence. Inequality is the big factor

that causes a lot of bad health by sales of cigarettes and junk food. The fact that the crass ideal of equality is impossible, in any case, is, presumably, not realised by the authoress. She goes on about how salt is bad for our blood pressure. But any reader might think that her silly articles are not the best recommended reading for dodging high blood pressure, nor is a daily reading of that rag, *The Guardian*. It may help its readers if they take their daily reading of it with a small pinch of salt.

Felicity Lawrence finds the idea of individual responsibility, that she calls a Tory idea, to be “truly frightening”. This idea “which casts everything as personal responsibility – social injustice, like obesity, is indeed a moral failure, but only on the part of those who suffer it” she writes. But, if we look at it historically, if we go back to what Tory and Whig meant up to the 1840s, or what Tory and Liberal meant in the 1850s and 60s, then she is, basically, a one nation Tory *par excellence*. What is more, she writes for a pristine Tory warmongering rag that campaigned against Cobden and Bright for opposing the Crimean War, and helped to get both of them thrown out of the House of Commons for opposition to that war. However, she seems to lack the historical knowledge to realise all that.

My guess is that she will be very confused as to what is social injustice. It will be linked to the rather arbitrary ideal of equality in her mind, as in the mind of anyone who writes for *The Guardian*, but justice bears no relation to that crass ideal in reality. There are many things that we are not responsible for – how the way the moon affects the tides or, less obviously, the earth daily. But it is plainly true that we are responsible for how fat we are at any one time. It is also up to each of us whether we smoke cigarettes, or not. Being a member of the proletariat does not mean that I have to smoke cigarettes and eat beef-burgers.

Many such classified people do not follow the norm in that respect, if it is a norm. It will only happen in my case if I want to do those things. My social class has exactly no actual bearing on my choice there; none whatsoever. Ditto for everyone else. But Felicity Lawrence prefers to personify mere social class; for she writes as if she feels that a mere academic abstraction can refute a plain reality, the reality of personal choice. She is hardly alone in that folly. But only actual agents can be responsible [i.e. to be able to respond to blame] and those mere abstractions are clearly not agents. So it is merely futile to blame them. This is, basically, what Mrs Thatcher was saying when they cited her on there being no such thing as society, for when it comes to blame, society is not an agent [and it is not actually a thing either, but mere social interaction]. It does not make sense to blame society, as it cannot do anything at all. Similarly, social class does not decide who smokes or eats junk food. Abstractions simply cannot be responsible in that they cannot respond.

I do not think that there is much of worth in any plea that Lansley has in mind to make to the food industry. It would be better for him to do nothing at all. The less state regulation there is, the better. Regulation is going to be dysfunctional. This is because the state is bound to victimise some when it taxes and to corrupt others when it favours people with handouts too. It is going to be negative sum on the whole transaction, as there will not only be the funds transferred from OY to McX, but bureaucrats will also need to be paid for the administration costs that will be involved.

Felicity Lawrence tells us that Edward Bernays had his main influence in the 1920s but the essay she recommends Lansley to read dates from 1947. Bernays brought out a book he called *Propaganda* (1928). It adopts the absurd idea that we have an unconscious mind.

The plain reality is that what is unconscious is not of the mind, *ipso facto*. To be unconscious is exactly to be not of the mind.

Many people who champion the idea of an unconscious mind credit the fact that things can often become clearer if only we sleep on it. To let the action of the unconscious mind work on the problem for us (for example, on a new bit of mathematics) overnight. This time, contrary to the normal idea that it is the enemy within, the unconscious mind is held to be a friend who helps us with our homework. But what has most likely actually happened is that fresh brain development has taken place overnight, in that new dendrites have emerged in the brain. This will be unconscious, but not really to do with the mind, any more than muscle development that can, similarly, occur overnight. This is not of the mind at all but of the body. Either may be owing to a decision made to exercise the mind, or the body, but the development will be physical in each case rather than being mental.

Bernays had the very widespread idea that people are irrational and he thought that this explained why they bought things that he, when considering them with his advanced theories, thought they did not really need, or even want. As we do not need most things, the former idea of Bernays looks realistic. But with the second idea, that the customer does not even want whatever is purchased, there is the built-in disincentive of parting with some money that, in each case, tends to refute the idea that we never want what we buy. Indeed, that the customer parted with scarce money for whatever was bought suggests that the customer wanted whatever was bought even more than the money that they had to pay for it, even if they did not need what they paid for. Many of Bernays epigones in marketing thought that firms made things and then got the customers to buy them by secret methods involving the

unconscious mind. But that looks a little nebulous if we but think about it.

Felicity Lawrence, too, seems to think that the choice was made for people by the firms before the customers buy anything. This is quite true as far as it goes and it is simply the great risk of ordinary entrepreneurship, but Felicity Lawrence and the literature she so admires, usually written by silly psychologists and marketing experts, did not mean that the firms risked a loss in guessing what could sell. Rather that the firms might be able to cut out the risk altogether by simply manipulating what people want towards whatever they found it easiest to produce, that they might cut out the risk of making unwanted losses with the aid of Bernays' advanced theories. They thought that the whole of the risk of guessing what the customers might buy, what they wanted enough to pay for, could be bypassed by modern techniques of persuasion. It seems clear that they did not do much conscious thinking on this unconscious idea.

Oddly, the followers of Bernays usually also thought that making a study of people was needed, to see how the customers felt. If one understood what those "unconscious desires" were, then one could use this to the firm's advantage. It could be used to sell products the giant firms had already decided to produce, to greatly increase sales of well-established goods. One example was where they found that many housewives felt a bit guilty, in their unconscious mind, that they were having it way too easy in the home by making a cake from a popular cake mixture, so the firm recommended, on the packet, that adding an egg would be needed. That made the housewife feel that the end result was a bit more of her own work, thereby easing the guilt by quite a bit and greatly increasing sales of the product as a result.

This cake mixture example is given in a few internet accounts of those hidden powers of manipulation that I finally resorted to in an effort to find out whatever it could be that Felicity Lawrence was referring to. Yet this much repeated example is odd in at least two senses:

1) Why did the guilt need to ever be unconscious and, if it was such, how was it ever found out by the researchers? Clearly, the unconscious meme was only included as it was a beloved false idol, or a mere fad. That is its attraction for the likes of Felicity Lawrence, Edward Bernays and all the others who adopt it. It is actually a counter productive idea in the story they tell of the housewives guilt. Their love of the paradox leads them to overlook the absurdity involved.

2) Why was research, such as this on housewife guilt, ever needed when they claimed to have the advanced means that could be used to sell her anything in any case? We have been told and retold, that what is needed, or even wanted, by the mere individual housewife does not matter but that theoretical abstractions, like the unconscious mind or social class, decides whatever she does. So why all this research into what it is that she desires? If sales are to be achieved by manipulating desires on the unconscious level, why not just get on with it then? That the masters of the advanced techniques seemed to think that some research was needed suggests that they did not consciously believe in the power of their own advanced means of manipulation.

Many who dislike the market ironically greatly over-estimate the power of money. They think that state services always would work, if only more money was supplied to them, for example. They also think that adverts simply must have a great effect merely owing to the money that goes into them. If the adverts did not persuade people then lots of money

would never be spent on them, it is claimed. But adverts aid distribution even when they do not begin to persuade people of anything. It is enough that they remind people of what they advertise.

Most people who reject the market do so on the idea that it is about greed and selfishness, but the market is, ironically, where the workers are all institutionally geared to serving others. This is so clearly the case that it might be far more aptly labelled as institutionalised altruism. Profit is a sign that wide sections of the public have been served by the firm who reaps the profit. By contrast, I fear that the state invariably mucks society up. It is always a negative sum activity, which is intrinsically uneconomic and thus dysfunctional and wasteful. So the CONDEMS seem to be on the right track in their aim of replacing the state sector with private sector jobs.

Some people feel that adverts are propaganda, and that is indeed the case, but they think that propaganda is all lies, *ipso facto*. The state used what it called propaganda against other states whom it was at war with in 1914 and 1939, but this wartime use of words by the state was indeed a war of words, rather than an attempt to recruit or propagate, so it might have been more aptly called polemics than propaganda. Propaganda sets out to persuade rather than to alienate or to discourage or to demoralise. It is out of place in war. So “wartime propaganda” is something of a misnomer.

However, it is not the case that propaganda has to persuade. There simply is not the time to persuade in most adverts, though there is the occasional lengthy advert in magazines, which may be mistaken for an article, and may be of a similar length. It might have an opportunity to break this advertising norm by successful persuasion. However, most adverts are

merely drawing attention to the item advertised. The notice of the Libertarian Alliance [LA] monthly meetings is an example. They draw attention to the meetings in the hope that those who see the advert will already want to come along to such meetings. Adverts rely on people wanting the ware, the good or the service that they set out to promote beforehand. The LA adverts are part of the distribution in the making of those LA meetings. They act merely like the ringing a big bell, but ringing a big bell only works in the wake of the achievement of any needed persuasion. They work only on the idea that what they call attention to is already desired. The persuasion needs to have been, long since, done before any advert can have an effect. Entrepreneurship in general also does not set out to persuade but rather to guess what people will, or might, want. It similarly conforms to what is out there already, or to what might soon emerge out there, rather than attempting to get people to buy what is simply easy for the giant firms to produce. Entrepreneurship embraces the unavoidable risk of error, but the likes of the late J.K. Galbraith, or nowadays his son James, tend to feel, with Felicity Lawrence and *The Guardian* readers, that this risk can be taken away by the sheer power of advanced modern advertising techniques. It is merely naïve to think otherwise, we are told. However, the reality is that if the ware being advertised is not wanted beforehand then the adverts will merely be barren. Thus the adverts for junk food will be lost on those that think it is aptly named, that the food being advertised really is junk. Adverts do not usually have the time to persuade, even if such rejecters of junk food could be persuaded, and entrepreneurship is not about persuasion anyway. Rather it is about guessing correctly the likely desires of potential customers. The adverts merely seek to draw attention to the product they set out to promote. They can only help to distribute what the customers already want.

Adverts are propaganda, but they are usually also post-persuasion phenomena. They only work on the already persuaded. They are wasted on the people that do not already like the ware, or service, advertised. They aid sales greatly, but only by calling attention to wares that people already want. Recent adverts have been less widely broadcast, but rather more like narrow-casts, thus they are better aimed at the target people who are more likely to already want the product promoted. This is simply to cut out the realised barrenness of the older wider broadcasts. Why would firms bother with all this if they had known how to get anyone to buy anything, as the authoress, Felicity Lawrence, and many others seems to hold?

The facts concerning the wares or services on offer do not usually even matter to adverts, apart from occasionally the facts of access, as to where and when they are on offer; i.e. merely the facts saying “it is here!”

Adverts really are still, in effect, rather like the pristine adverts in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, that did actually ring a big bell to call the attention of people to the goods on sale. The whole aim, then and now, was simply to draw attention to what was on offer. That is why they so often use women, those masters of drawing attention to themselves, and they will use them in advertising any ware at all. It is the ability to draw attention to themselves, mastered by women, that the advertisers seek to use. It does not matter one whit that the ware being promoted has nothing to do with women. It is not sex, but the arts of attraction that women have mastered, and that makes them so very useful in all sorts of adverts. They draw attention not only from men; for females are even better noticed by other women who, presumably, have no sexual interest in them at all [though the PC crew might

object to that; how they still love Freud, who held by dogma that we were all polymorphous perverts.] Adverts are there merely to draw attention: nothing more. But that is enough. It is all that an advert ever seeks to do and it is all it needs to do. It is not about persuasion. Still less is it about any manipulation. It does not even need to be agreeable. It only needs to draw attention to the ware, or service, that it seeks to promote. Maybe to rub people up the wrong way will draw their attention even more successfully than to be agreeable. That is a point for any advertising firm to seriously consider. They will need to think about the risk of failure, for advertising can never remove that risk.

However, we liberal propagandists need to realise that it is best to inform people if we are to persuade them. We do need to win the public over to seeing that the state is a big mistake and that taxation is anti-social rather than a sign of welfare. But adverts do not need to persuade. They do not need to tell the public much about the wares being promoted, but there may well be a need to state the time and the place where access to the wares promoted may be had, though with many, or even most wares, this might be well known already. So most adverts will need only to draw attention to what is being advertised.

This theory of adverts as unconscious manipulation, as advanced techniques of persuasion that can get people to part with needed money to buy anything that the giant firms can easily produce is not very persuasive. But this is what the authoress, Felicity Lawrence, rather stupidly and unrealistically, thinks is so very realistic and she is brazen enough to say that Lansley is facile to ignore it. The very idea of it is absurd, as there can be no unconscious mind, *ipso facto*. Similarly, there are no means that the giant firms have to get people to pay for things that they do not even want. So the whole line of thought is a mere *brutum*

fulmen. There is no reason at all for this authoress to fear freedom.

DAVID McDONAGH