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-- Overlook On Life --
 By WARREN S. REEVE
 The idea of "Overlook" is taken from the Overlooks provided for viewing panoramas along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The study of psychology and psychiatry during the last few decades has given us new understanding of the workings of the human mind and of the complex relationships that together make up the human consciousness. We have read and heard much about the "subconscious", "repression", and "neurotic" — terms which are suggestive of a whole new vocabulary that has become current just within the span of a generation or so.

The professional psychologists and psychiatrists have no doubt attained a deeper and more precise understanding of human psychology than most people of former generations had; and even we who are "laymen" in this field have learned a great deal about it.

Thoughtful people who are familiar with these achievements cannot but be grateful for this new "science" and for the utilization of it for the alleviation of many nervous, emotional and mental disorders.

For a long time, however, I have been gravely apprehensive over the misuse some practitioners and some professional groups have put these skills to.

Among psychologists and psychiatrists there are those, I think, who are not competent. They succeed in skillfully dissecting the tangled web of drives and fixations, etc., but they are not able to effect a wholesome synthesis of personality afterwards.

The group, however, whose procedures alarm me still more are those in the employ of large advertising and industrial concerns who by very subtle and clever psychological devices are to control the mind of the public.

I have a suspicion that if we could get an accurate picture of the prevailing state of mind of the American people and compare it with a similar picture of the minds of the Russian and Chinese people, we could find that we are just about as much enslaved in our thinking as they are, though in a different way, perhaps. We are all of us being "duped" right along, I consider

by high-powered advertising techniques that enslave us mentally just as the "party-line" in Russia dominates the thinking of masses of the people there. The aim of advertisers is to make people think the way they want them to think. How do they want the public to think? They want them to think they need, and to think they desire the particular goods they are selling. I wonder, how many people there are who at first said to themselves they didn't need and didn't want this particular article who in the end changed their minds and bought it.

As I listen to some commercials, I am astonished at the ridiculousness of some of the arguments that are presented. And I am saddened to think that there are people who do not see through the fallaciousness of the logic employed. I think, for example, of a firm that argues that because the medicine they put on the market is a compound of several ingredients, therefore it is necessarily superior. A compound of multiple drugs might in some cases be better and might in some cases be worse. The advertiser of that article uses atrocious logic because it has a plausible sound; and his aim is not to be logical but to be persuasive. He wants to exercise a measure of control over the thinking of people with respect to the particular article that he offers for sale. The pathetic thing is that hundreds and thousands of people have their thinking established for them by powerful advertising media. Constant repetition, day after day, is just an American version of "brainwashing" that we often reproach the Russians or the Chinese for using.

An even more sinister technique is coming into use, and most people have no inkling that they are being "worked on" by the craftiest kind of mind-controllers. I refer to the device of directing appeals to the subliminal consciousness. "Subliminal" means "below the floor level" — "floor level," here, meaning our

conscious thought. Down in the "cellar" of our minds, all kinds of ideas seethe around without our knowing anything about them. Secretly also they sneak up to the "first floor", and insinuate themselves into our conscious thinking, without our realizing where they have come from. Clever psychologists in the employ of rich and powerful corporations, have devised ways of controlling some of the thoughts in the "subliminal" part of our minds, that is, in the "cellars" of our minds. For example, they contrive to bring it about that in our subconscious mind, we are saying over and over to ourselves, "Oh, I want a drink of such-and-such a soft drink. Oh, I am so thirsty. Oh, I must have a bottle of 'such-and-such' a drink". That thought whirls around in our cellar like a mad animal, and finally slips "upstairs", and we find ourselves saying consciously, "Oh, I must have a drink of 'such-and-such'", and we immediately go and get a bottle of it. The great and powerful corporation that bottles that particular drink has accomplished what it wanted to do. It shoved us around into thinking what it wanted us to think, which was that we should have a bottle of their drink without any delay. In that way, you or I are just one of thousands and perhaps of millions who have let our thoughts get shoved around by these clever manipulators. The big corporation makes enormous profits. It pays the advertising agency a large sum, and, in turn, the advertising agency pays the psychological expert that it employed a large amount, with perhaps a fat bonus added on.

Tomorrow is the Fourth of July, Independence Day, when Freedom in this land of ours is lauded. It is profitable that on this occasion we should ask ourselves how much real freedom we have. It appears to me that the general public is being subjected to a species of "brainwashing" that, if not so demoralizing is perhaps all the more pathetic than any brainwashing carried on by the communists.

It is a small matter, perhaps, whether we succumb to the advertising that persuades us to buy this particular soft drink rather than that. It is not a small matter if we are induced to start drinking or increase our drinking of alcoholic beverages. It is even more serious if a philosophy of life, entirely materialistic, gets established in our minds. And that is precisely the kind of a philosophy that underlies the advertising of many ar-

ticles. We are made to think that having things, and buying things, is the most abundant life. There is no doubt, I think, that powerful interests, are using all possible media of mind-education to create that kind of a "climate of public opinion" in which everybody feels that life isn't worth living if they can't have this and

if they can't have that, and if they can't have the newest and most up-to-date model and style. We are encouraged to buy more things whether we can afford them or not. A vast amount of the advertising appeals made both to our conscious minds and subliminally are an effort to create an unthinking, uncritical

mental attitude. Thus, this potentially wonderful human science of skill psychology, is being diverted into a demonic service. On this eve of the remembrance of our classic American document of Freedom, I would urge therefore that, figuratively speaking, we rise in arms, like the Minute Men of '78 and resist the

subtle and ceaseless bombarding of our minds by devices calculated to make us slaves mentally to those who for their own selfish advancement desire to subjugate the minds of the public and make us no better than the dumb animals in our response to their goadings.

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