The purpose of this writing is to discuss an idea concerning advertising that will be established, as it is, rather dogmatically. Advertising is the most conspicuous ideological expression of the capitalist or 'free' market society. Of the many kinds of ideological apparatuses of this type of society, the educational system, the system of mass communication, etc. the one that more directly and genuinely reflects the values of capitalism is advertising. For advertising shows with little distortion what is really assumed about human beings by the capitalist entrepreneurs. Human beings are conceived as "infinite consumers", in terms of C.B. Macpherson. Thus all the rhetoric about rationality that is developed in the schools, educational writings, editorials of the different news agencies, and so on, is presented unveiled in the images of advertising.

Pauline Lower wrote an article in which advertising is conceived as "fetish of the capital-commodity relationship". (1) I believe that this is the correct way to start characterizing advertising. John Berger says that "publicity neon of the cities of capitalism are the immediate visible sign of the 'The Free World'." (2) I would extend this judgement to the whole of advertising. Furthermore, John Gloag in a book defending advertising says very explicitly that any criticism of advertising is a criticism of the whole free market society. (3) He adds:

Advertising is the favourite target because in whatever form it appears it is the most recognizable of commercial activities. (4)

Therefore, the activity of the ad experts has become essential for the free market society. Ads are the equivalent of commodities and they become fetishes through which social and human characteristics are portrayed as if they were the real actors of human and social life. Ad men have developed the notion that "the product is the hero".

I am going now to open at random any issue of Time
magazine. (5) On page 73 there is an ad for Remy Martin
Champagne Cognac: some glasses and the bottle of cognac
which appears clearly. Human hands hold the glasses;
another hand holds the bottle and this time we can see
the vague and shadowy presence of a man holding it. The
product is the hero. I go on to the next page. A
painting by Cezanne is presented in an article about him.
Opposite page, an ad for Heineken beer, several bottles
in a box and the main character of the ad, a bottle in
the foreground held by a hand. Again, the product is the
hero.

Random opening again, page 61. A woman is smiling to
me in this colourful and attractive ad. She covers almost
all the surface of the picture. Replacement of the hero,
this time? No, in huge characters we read: I AM AMERICAN
AIRLINES. These letters are in the very foreground, and
now I notice that they limit the woman of the ad. The
product is the hero.

The cover page of this issue refers to one of the most
tragic political situations of the world today, the
Middle East. A picture of Carter and Dayan, a juxtaposed
composition really. The point made is, "Pushing toward
Geneva". The topic is a controversy concerning the
rights of the Palestinians to attend the conference. One
is tempted to say that a magazine that presents as the
main news-story of the week such a tragic situation around
which the principal conflict of the world is being devel-
oped, is going to take this absolutely seriously. But
last cover brings in immediate juxtaposition in ad, whims-
sical and amusing, for Smirnoff. Again the product (this
time completely) is the hero.

It is well known that of the four pages of the front
and back cover of Time, three are for ads. Usually the
front cover brings a news-story of a political nature or
another subject of high public concern. This is intended
as "serious". The other three contain the 'joy' and
'relaxation' of the commodity. How is it possible to
combine serious social and human issues with frivolity in
such proportion? The answer can start precisely in what
Pauline Lower describes as the "fetish of the capitalist-
commodity relationship". In fact, the four pages mention-
ed above are about the 'same': they express, in different
ways, the capitalist society. Carter, Dayan, Smirnoff,
Pure Virgin Wool, Premium whisky, are "made" part of the
same society, in being transmuted through Time magazine
into market images. Some of these images correspond to
those who manage the society so that the other images'

Again The Product
Is The Hero
(of enjoyment, great pleasure, fun, high class, success, etc.) can be possible.

Furthermore, I am going to count now the number of pages of this issue and then count the number of full page ads: 100 counting the four of the covers, inside and out. There are 35 full page ads, most of them in colour; that is 35% of the pages are ads. But, there are a number of ads that occupy a fraction (high or low) of several pages: 19%. Adding the pages for advertising, we have 54%. (The ad total does not include a four-page 'extra'-ad for Time-Life books.)

That I find at this moment is that more than 50% of the issue is pure advertising, most of it in colour. These ads can perhaps be considered as "news-stories" together with those stories about the Middle East, Mondale, gas, detente, Soviet Union, Wall Street, and so on. As a matter of fact, an editor of the Chilean newspaper El Mercurio said that the newspaper had transformed ads into news-stories because they give information about things, and also tell people as to where they can find what they need. If this is the case, then I conclude that this issue of Time presents 50% of news-stories about the things that I can buy, in a way or another, so that I can feel happy, disregarding the fact that some other of the news-stories tell me about tragic events in the world, that affect all of us.

The ad men usually explain their job by saying that they provide information about the commodities available in the market. They inform in a creative way and they do it through entertaining as well. Besides, they make the public aware of their needs. This description takes us back to Time magazine. The magazine itself, as expression of editorial policy, has decided to help us all to become aware of our needs. This is done through entertainment and creativity. I was questioning before the seriousness of a magazine which combines serious topics with frivolity in such proportion. But now there is another aspect that comes to the fore. Perhaps, if ads are expression of creativity they can then become meaningful in terms of development of human life. Perhaps I was too hasty in my appreciation of ads as frivolous and as fetishes.

Time itself provides an occasion for analyzing this point. I will remind the reader that a moment ago we discover a picture of Cezanne in a page opposite to a Heineken ad. Why not compare the two? A painting by Cezanne is usually conceived as highly creative. Is this
Heineken ad which is juxtaposed to the Cezanne painting as creative? As a visual image, is it of the same creative quality?

The first thing to say here is that both are visual images, done in different historical periods and with different means, but essentially they both appear as artistic images. Cezanne's reproduction is the last landscape he did of Mont Ste-Victoire a subject that he highly valued and that he painted several times. The article refers to a show entitled "Cezanne: The Late Work" opened at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The painting is discussed in some detail in the article and is indeed made central in the commentaries.

What was Cezanne trying to achieve with painting? The most common assumption is that he "wanted to penetrate appearances to a more fundamental reality." (6) In this pursuit he rejected, as did the Impressionists, the classical tradition of reproducing reality as it is by creating the illusion of a third dimension on a two-dimensional surface. He then discovered the reality of the canvas which imposes its own conditions to the painter through, essentially, the determination of geometrical figures. Not that the painter does not express reality but he has to do it through the conditions of the canvas. One of the means elaborated by Cezanne to overcome the problem of representation of nature avoiding the illusion of mathematical perspective is the so-called "passage". This is described in the article when discussing the meaning of this painting but a good and short explanation of it, is the following:

In a late landscape of Mont Sainte-Victoire it is impossible to separate modelling, drawing, colour, tone and composition. Painting has been reduced to the coloured brushmark: this is the all-important common denominator of everything that happens on the canvas. Colour dominates, destroying the more solid forms and linear constructions of Cezanne's earlier work, alone giving spatial definition to the picture. As Cezanne told a visitor at the end of his life, 'The main thing in a picture is to achieve distance: I try to render perspective solely by means of colour'. (7)

Cezanne wanted to express the richness of vision on a canvas and he realized that in the artist's attempt to impose himself on the natural world, there is "a heroic struggle to create the picture . (8)

Finally, I would like to synthetize this short inter-
interpretation of Cezanne's creative work, by quoting Bowness again:

Only now do we begin to understand Cezanne's striving after a representation of some kind of symbolic union between desire and reality, between actual and ideal life. Like some ancient seer, the old Cezanne seems to be on the edge of an understanding of mysteries normally veiled. And he has achieved this state through his chosen medium as a painter — colour. Cezanne wanted to penetrate beneath appearances and his colour somehow comes to express the depths of nature, the roots of the world. The entire picture is alive and caught up in some universal rhythm: it seems to be aglow with an inner illumination. (9)

The explanation given here seems prima facie to be far removed from anything that is contained in the Heineken ad. Nothing in Cezanne's work is related to the production and consumption of commodities. The painting does not say "to take Mont Ste-Victoire home" neither that this mountain "is a matter of taste". It seems that the work of this painter, the creative work I mean, is related to a deep experience of understanding and expressing the world and human nature. However a closer look takes us to notice that Cezanne wanted to attain "some kind of symbolic union between desire and reality, between actual and ideal life."

Is not this precisely the purpose of advertising? Does not the Heineken ad want to do this same symbolic union? If I grant this to the ad I could still say that they way in which both, painting and ad, attain that union makes a tremendous difference. Cezanne has spent a life of pure creativity whereas the ad man (or men) receives the task of producing fast and overwhelming persuasion. Now this task limits the ad man's creativity: creativity has to be sacrificed for persuasive purposes. The ad man can answer that advertising is applied art, he has to learn art (and usually he likes it very much) but he uses the means and techniques of pure art for the purpose of achieving market persuasion.

I have reached a level in which I discover that the painting and the ad do show a significant amount of difference as creative expressions: it is however a quantitative difference. Besides, perhaps not Cezanne, but the history of art shows a good number of artists who did commercial work of one kind or another. Art has been for the enhancement of the classes that paid for it and works of art have been exhibited for persuasive purposes. Includ-
ing this show itself in a museum whose links with the upper powers of the multinational corporations are so evident. Who knows whether this show is one more piece of propaganda for the economic powers? In a way it certainly is.

Therefore some essential connections appear between art and advertising. The Heineken ad then can be sided with Cezanne's painting in that both belong to the same ideological space: the capitalist society that transforms everything that touches into gold, "a golden fetish."

Time magazine, apart from any political bias of its editorial board in the purely political news does the job of catalyst of market images. All the many varied and different aspects of the society and the world are reduced to the same kind of reality: fetishes of the capital-commodity relationship.

FOOTNOTES

4. Ibid.
7. Ibid. p.37
8. Ibid. p.37
9. Ibid. p.38 (Bowness is commenting here on another painting by Cezanne, however I find this comment most pertinent for a general characterization of the painter and certainly for Mont Ste-Victoire.

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