

fuse, and hence harder to evade," and because it infects us in a sneaky way "largely through its association with leisure." Sponsors of old-fashioned propaganda at least had the courage to identify themselves and risk being ignored or turned off, but that was the social-control version of propaganda which sought to rouse us to specified courses of action; propaganda associated with convergent selectivity is more subtle.

Interesting as Rowan's views may be, there is room to doubt that they would be embraced by Stephenson, who regarded advertising, entertainment, fads, and other forms of convergent selectivity as truly liberating, or at least potentially so, and not as just another manifestation of social control. A woman in a bath may feel soft and feminine with her Dove soap, just as her showering husband may feel rugged and manly with Irish Spring or Lava. Both are clean (as society's social controls demand), and whereas guilty intellectuals may accuse the two of having succumbed to superficial advertising--of having "offered his throat to the knife of propaganda" (Ellul)--the selves at issue may have been ludenically enhanced by the experience with no fanfare or folderol, and this is a remarkable cultural achievement.

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