

THE EFFECTS OF HUMOR IN ADVERTISING

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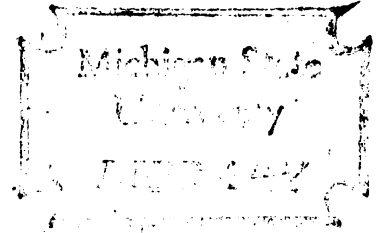
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ABSTRACT



THE EFFECTS OF HUMOR IN ADVERTISING

by Gary D. Styrk

There is a lack of knowledge as to why and how humor can be an effective tool for advertisers attempting to change attitudes. Writers on the subject can point out a "good" humorous ad, and even offer guidelines for the construction of one, but they avoid discussion of the psychological relationships, underlying theory, or even classification of the various humorous techniques used.

Some of the literature on attitude change is reviewed. Basically, the theory of Daniel Katz is used. However, Katz's theory is often supplemented by other writers for greater clarity.

An examination of three theories of humor and their relation to attitude change is presented to determine the possibilities of humor as an aid in this direction. Three theories are discussed because there is no single theory which explains why we laugh. There is not even a commonly agreed upon definition of humor.

Ten specific techniques of humor used in advertising are examined, including tentative explanations of the psychological process involved for the specific type of attitude change in each case.

The writings of professional advertising men on the subject of humor are discussed, along with interviews with others. Their ideas and comments are examined in light of previous findings.

Although this is essentially "library" research of the topic, it is still an important contribution in that it appears to be one of the first steps taken in the study of this area of advertising. The conclusions should stimulate further discussion and research.

Briefly, the conclusions are as follows:

It is possible to change a person's attitudes through the use of a humorous message. But success in this venture depends on other things besides humor. You must first involve the audience in your message. Involvement is probably easiest achieved in an emotional manner; however, emotional involvement must always be followed by cognitive involvement for attitude change to occur.

In order to change attitudes you must create affective and cognitive inconsistency in the old attitude. Both of these inconsistencies must be rectified to achieve success.

Attitudes serving adjustive, knowledge, and value-expressive functions are more amenable to change through humor than those serving an ego-defensive function. Humor involving relief from restraint in a role-playing situation is most effective for ego-defensive attitudes.

All humorous advertising is "adjustive advertising." That is, it is seeking change in attitudes serving an adjustive function.

It appears that no type of product and almost no buying situation is unsuitable for humorous treatment. Of course, the humor must be used tastefully and purposively.

Although the American public is now sophisticated enough to appreciate almost any kind of humor, objective humor (eg. slapstick) appears to be the best type for initiating attitude change, and seems to suffer least from the effects of repetition.

THE EFFECTS OF HUMOR IN ADVERTISING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | <u>PAGE</u> 111 |
| LIST OF FIGURES | v |
| INTRODUCTION | 1. |
| CHAPTERS | |
| I. HUMOR AND ATTITUDE CHANGE | 5 - . |
| II. THREE THEORIES OF HUMOR: THEIR RELATION TO ATTITUDE CHANGE IN ADVERTISING | 27 |
| III. TEN TECHNIQUES OF HUMOR AND HOW THEY ARE USED IN ADVERTISING | 55 |
| IV. HUMOR VIEWED BY ADVERTISING MEN | 73 |
| V. CONCLUSIONS | 87 |
| APPENDICES | |
| I. APPENDIX ONE | 90 |
| II. APPENDIX TWO | 94 |
| III. APPENDIX THREE | 106 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 112 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Figure one: Schematic Conception of Attitudes | <u>page</u> 8 |
| Figure two: Katz's Determinants of Attitude Formation, Arousal, and Change in Relation to Type of Function | 20 |

Introduction

"They're coming. The new generation of young adults. Wise, hip, skeptical -- unlike any audience businesses and advertisers have ever known before. A new breed of sophisticates who have been deluged by advertising since they were three. Bred to new wisdom at television's knee. Able to 'tune out' automatically at the first sign of advertising puffery. Promising advertisers no problem so great as that of sophisticated disbelief."¹

How are advertisers to combat this skepticism, to overcome the ability of the consumer to 'tune out' the advertising message? As the trend in today's advertising shows, humor seems to be the answer. That laughter is pleasant none can deny. That the anticipation of this pleasure is enough to hold attention is also true. People enjoy laughing and enjoy having others share in their pleasure. One of the worst things you can say to anyone is that he doesn't have a sense of humor. People rarely underrate their ability to see humor when it is presented to them.²

"A psychologist, Louise Omwake, conducted a sense-of-humor test on hundreds of college students. The survey

¹Pauline Kael, "Spoofing and Schtik," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 216, December, 1965, p. 84.

²Percy Whiting, How to Speak and Write With Humor, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1959, p. 15.

revealed a tendency on the part of the students to overrate themselves. For example, one person out of four considered himself to have a keen sense of humor, only one out of a hundred rated himself even slightly below par."³ Actually, however, even though the jokes used in the test were all very simple, not a single student understood them all. A majority even rated pointless jokes as being very funny. Almost every one of the students prided himself on his sense of humor.

In changing attitudes advertisers are finding that humor is in many cases succeeding where other approaches have failed. But in most instances the advertiser doesn't really understand why. He may attribute it to a pleasant association, positive emotional involvement with the advertisement, or simply a desire to be happy. But these statements fall short of a valid explanation. Thus, when presented with two humorous campaigns for competing products, one successful and one unsuccessful, it is doubtful whether advertisers could actually explain the real reasons for the difference.

No one, to my knowledge, has analyzed humorous ads concerning their effect upon attitudes. No one has categorized them in terms of the specific techniques used in the ads, or the underlying theory upon which they are based.

³Ibid., p. 15.

Advertising textbooks largely ignore the use of humor, seldom devoting more than five or six pages to the topic. In these, one may find a discussion as to the extent of its occurrence and the listing of some rules of usage. An informal survey of seventeen textbooks revealed that only four devoted more than ten pages to a discussion of humor.

The paucity of published studies makes it difficult to evaluate and determine the actual effect of humor and its techniques as psychological tools in specific advertising situations. Superficial examination is not enough, especially since the use of humor is increasing.

The reasons for the success of humorous advertising in the changing of attitudes goes well beyond simply being funny. They involve the successful matching of the right psychological conditions with the right humorous techniques and wrapping both up in the most persuasive manner. It has been done, but it hasn't been shown or explained. The purpose of this paper is to survey the concept of humor as it relates to the psychology of attitude change, to connect these findings to specific advertising examples, and to examine the advertising industry's stand on the use of humor.

First comes an explanation of what an attitude is, how it is formed, what function it serves, and how it can be changed.

This is necessary so the reader may fully understand the relationships drawn between attitude change and humor. After all, the humorous elements under discussion are being used by advertisers to change attitudes. Therefore, one must first understand what is being changed (including its origins, functions, etc.) before he can reasonably attempt to demonstrate how to change it.

Second, three general theories of humor and their relation to attitude change in advertising are discussed. Although there is a great deal of literature offering personal notions as to the nature of humor, little of this information is conclusive. However, certain insights and ideas turn up repeatedly in a number of theories. Those that appear to be most widely referred to when explaining the concept of humor are used.

Third, a list of ten specific humorous techniques which operate within the three general theories is presented. Short descriptions of each technique and their relation to specific advertising examples are given.

Fourth, a survey of humor as viewed by some people in the advertising profession is discussed; including the conditions they deem necessary for its use, the guidelines they use, and their feelings as to its value.

Lastly, the author presents some conclusions concerning the use of humor in advertising to change attitudes.

CHAPTER I

HUMOR AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

Daniel Katz holds that attitudes as tendencies or dispositions towards objects, persons, or groups are learned rather than inborn. "These attitudes include both the affective, or feeling core of liking or disliking, and the cognitive, or belief elements which describe the object of the attitude, its characteristics, and its relation to other objects."⁴

Five characteristics which authors have made about the nature of attitudes should be considered for additional clarity.⁵ First, an attitude is a state of readiness (tendency or disposition) leading the individual to perceive things and people around him in certain ways; that is, to be more ready with certain categories and interpretations than with others. For example, people are often "ready" to react to certain objects and people in a light-hearted manner as they encounter them, without having to "stop and think" each time. Thus, many people are often surprised or disappointed when they encounter a familiar source of humor which runs counter to their expectations and presents itself in a serious reference.

⁴ Daniel Katz in Theories of Attitude Change, ed. Chester Insko, New York, Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1967, p. 334.

⁵ The following points of discussion are taken from J.D. Halloran in Attitude Formation and Change, Leicester, England, Leicester University press, 1967, p. 14.

To illustrate this situation, let me relate a true story for you. Morey Amsterdam, the comedian, was walking up Sixth Avenue in New York when he met an old friend:

"'Where have you been?' the man asked.

'Sick,' Amsterdam said, 'I've been in bed with a cold.'

His friend looked at him curiously. 'What's so funny about that?' he demanded."⁶

Secondly, attitudes are not innate-- they are learned. They are developed and organized through experience. We are not born knowing what to laugh at and what not to laugh at in every case. We learn which situations are funny and which ones are tragic. We are taught how to draw the line distinguishing the two during the socialization process. The attitudes that emerge are relatively stable, but they are modifiable and subject to change.

Thirdly, attitudes are dynamic. They are not merely latent states of preparedness which await the presentation of an appropriate object for their activation. They have certain motivational qualities and can direct a person to seek or avoid objects about which they are organized. ("An attitude is a product of experience but it enters into subsequent

⁶Whiting, op. cit., p. 12.

experience as a directive factor."⁷ For example, when we are highly involved politically we usually find it very easy to appreciate the humor in a joke aimed at our political opposition, and just as easy to pass the joke on to our political sympathizers. However, when we encounter a joke aimed against ourselves or our beliefs we tend to tune out the humorous message or try to avoid and/or ignore the situation altogether.⁸

In the present campaign, Vice President Humphrey's labeling of the Nixon followers as the "Nixiecrats" drew a hearty laugh from the Northern Democratic liberals who had developed definite attitudes about Nixon conservatism. But the remark was quite unamusing to Republicans and Southern Democrats alike whose attitudes directed them towards anger more than laughter. On the other hand, one of Richard Nixon's campaign phrases, "Dump the Hump", was appreciated by the Republicans and dissident Democrats, but the majority of Democrats had attitudes about Nixon and the Republicans which prevented them from chuckling at this remark.

A fourth, and implicit, characteristic of an attitude should be noted. An attitude is not directly observable. It is "an inferred entity, something which is not measured directly but rather deduced from other observable data."⁹

⁷R.E. Hartley and Clyde Hart, "Attitudes and Opinions," in The Process and Effects of Mass Communications, ed. by W. Schramm, University of Illinois Press, 1961, p. 219.

⁸Whiting, op. cit., p. 8.

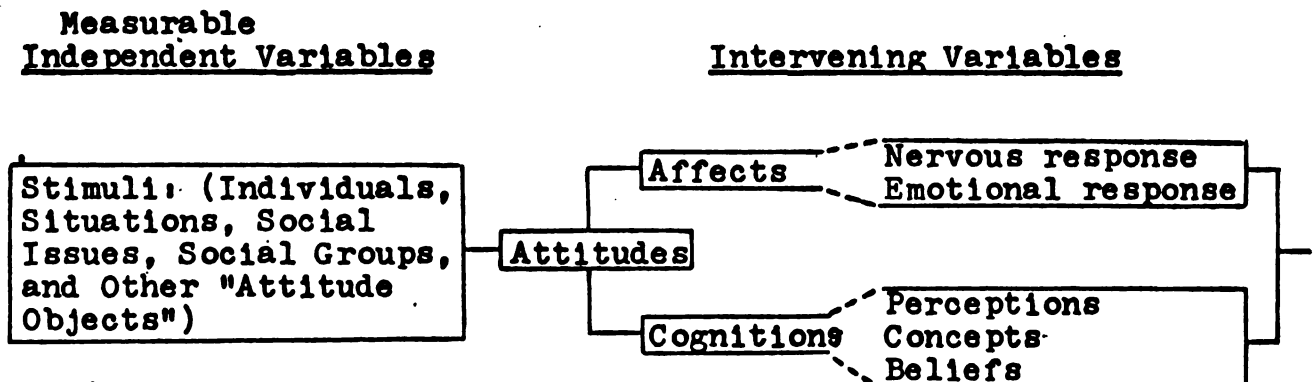
⁹Halloran, op. cit., p. 15.

Thus laughter can be the measurement of a person's attitude toward the subject of a joke or a humorous situation.

Lastly, an attitude is composed of both rational and emotional dimensions, referred to respectively as the cognitive and affective elements. The cognitive elements of an attitude include perceptions, concepts and beliefs about the attitude object which is usually elicited by verbal remarks in printed or oral form. These have to do with the intellect and are descriptive and reasoned. The affective part of an attitude has to do with emotions and values. It represents the person's emotional attachment or involvement with the attitude object.

The distinction between these two elements is important for our later discussion, so it is essential that the reader understand fully how they fit into the concept of attitude. We can better visualize their inclusion if we refer to a variation of a schematic conception given by Rosenberg.¹⁰

Figure one: Schematic Conception of Attitudes



¹⁰ Milton Rosenberg, et. al., Attitude Organization and Change, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1960, p. 3.

Measurable Dependent Variables (continued)

Verbal statement
Overt avoidance
Overt attraction
Overt nervous response
Overt emotional response
Etc.
No behavior change

This scheme demonstrates that when a person comes in contact with a stimulus, his attitude toward that stimulus is activated. The affective and cognitive aspects of his attitude begin to work within the mind, and may or may not result in a behavioral response such as smiling and laughter or fear and avoidance. We can demonstrate this concept with a brief example. Let's say you are walking down the street and a dog approaches from the other direction. Your attitude towards dogs may include such cognitive aspects as animal, useful on farms, meat eaters, and capable of loud sounds; but it may also include such affective aspects as rambunctious, overly friendly, servile, unpleasantly odorous, and a source of filth in cities. Cognitively, your attitude toward dogs squares pretty well with reality. Insofar as reality is physical and testable, you know what a dog is. Affectively, your attitude is filled with subjective judgments and value preferences, you probably do not care for dogs. Your resultant behavioral response may be an increased heart beat, sweating, and

nervousness. You may cross the street or yell at the dog to go away. In any case your strong attitude would direct your behavior to an extent, depending on other variables in the situation.

We have said that attitudes are learned; we must now ask how they are learned and what are the sources. There are three broad classes of determinants underlying attitude formation. Although the names of the classes may vary from text to text, their content is similar. The three classes are described as follows:

Cultural Determinants - "Cultural influences are varied and contradictory. Two people in the same culture have many influences from which to choose. Culture sets the limits for the socialization of each individual. Within these limits our attitudes develop, but there is a great deal of room for individual variation."¹¹

Thus a person's sense of humor can take any of an infinite number of directions during his socialization. The limits to what can be laughed at are set by the culture, but the specifics of what is

¹¹David Krech and Richard Crutchfield, Elements of Psychology, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1958, p. 295.

laughed at (sexual items, family items, slapstick, religion, death, etc.) are determined by other means. For example, in our culture there is a limit to what is publicly acceptable as a humorous jab at religion, but religious jokes are an acceptable part of our society.

Specifically, a man who is highly religious may find no humor at all in this topic and avoid any situation where it is likely to appear. On the other hand, someone else may find jibes at organized religion (without vindictiveness) a major source of laughter. Both states are allowable within the limits of our culture.

Parental and Group Influence - "The most direct and powerful agents of attitude formation are the parents and other members of the family. Studies in racial prejudice, for example, have shown clearly that these attitudes are not present in the very young child, and only gradually develop as the child becomes aware of parental beliefs and subject to more and more parental guidance."¹²

In regards to prejudice, a child does not learn that the principal character in jokes about stupidity and ignorance is always supposed to be Polish, a black man, or a "hillbilly" as the case may be. These

¹²Ibid, p. 295.

things are mentioned repeatedly to him by his parents and members of his reference groups and the respective notions develop accordingly.

Personality - "Parents also have an indirect influence in shaping a child's attitudes through the kinds of child rearing practices in which they engage." The socialization process becomes important here. "The particular structure of the child's emerging personality helps predispose him toward the development of certain attitudes (as to what is and what is not funny)."¹³

The personality which an individual acquires in the process of growing up could provide the clue as to how to appeal to that individual in a humorous manner.

Several studies have been conducted in this area and some relationships have been found between certain personality traits and reactions to specific kinds of humor. Extroverts, for example, prefer jokes based on superiority or the exposure of some unrevealed thought, while the introvert seems to prefer jokes having to do with repressions such as fear or sex.¹⁴

Advertisers may be able to utilize such clues in their messages once they know the personality characteristics of their target audience.

¹³Ibid., p. 296.

¹⁴Harold Burt, Psychology of Advertising, New York, Houghton-Mifflin Company, p. 235.

The particular learning techniques which work within the three classes of attitude formation have been listed as follows by D.T. Campbell:¹⁵

- 1) blind trial and error, 2) perception, 3) perceptual observation of the outcome of another's exploration, 4) verbal instruction about responses to stimuli, 5) verbal instruction about the characteristics of objects.

(The items in Mr. Campbell's list are self-explanatory and need no further elaboration in the context of this paper.)

Attitudes do not exist, develop, and organize themselves to no purpose. They must serve some sort of function for the individual. This includes those attitudes which are related to a person's sense of humor. "Unless we know the psychological need which is met by the holding of an attitude, we are in a poor position to predict when and how it will change."¹⁶

Katz diagnoses two broad approaches to the study of man's attitudes. The first of these assumes an irrational model of man (man with little reason and little ability to discriminate), and the second assumes a rational model of man.

¹⁵D.T. Campbell, "Acquired Behavioral Dispositions," in Vol. 6 of Psychology: A Study of Science, ed. by Sigmund Koch, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1963, pp. 107-110.

¹⁶Daniel Katz, "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes," Public Opinion Quarterly, No. 24, 1960, p. 170.

two kinds of assumption

According to Katz, those who rely on the irrational assumption would have us believe that man is wide open to external forces and makes easy prey for the "hidden persuaders" and clever advertising men who make him smile. On the other hand, those who rely on the rational assumption (our educational system is based on this) emphasize the importance of intelligence, education, knowledge, information, understanding and comprehension in the formation and changing of attitudes.

Katz maintains that the major difficulty with these conflicting approaches is that, first, there is a lack of specification regarding the problems under which men would act according to theory, and secondly, that the rationality/irrationality dimension is not clearly defined.

Katz attempts the reconciliation of these conflicting approaches in his functional theory of attitudes. This theory emphasizes the functions attitudes perform for the personality and deals with their motivational base and with the conditions of change. He has categorized the major functions attitudes perform under four headings.¹⁷

The Instrumental, Adjustive or Utilitarian Function -

This implies that as people try to maximize the rewards and minimize the penalties in their experiences, they develop favorable or unfavorable attitudes in relation to those objects and persons which they associate with

¹⁷Ibid., p. 167 ff., and the brief description of each is taken from Halloran, op. cit., pp. 54-56.

pleasantness and unpleasantness, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, reward and punishment, approval or disapproval. Attitude formation in this context depends upon present or past perceptions of the utility of the attitudinal object for the individual. Clarity, consistency and nearness of rewards or punishments, as they relate to the individual's attitudes and roles, are also important factors in the development of such attitudes. In short, favorable attitudes are developed towards those things in our experience which are associated with satisfaction (perhaps in the form of laughter), and unfavorable attitudes are developed towards those things in our experience which are associated with dissatisfaction.

The Ego-Defensive Function - Here the person protects himself from acknowledging both the unacceptable basic truths about himself, and certain harsh realities in the external world. There are occasions when we need to defend ourselves and many of our attitudes have the function of defending our self-image. These attitudes, as distinct from the utilitarian attitudes, proceed from within the person, from internal conflict and insecurity. The objects and situations (these need not appear relevant on the surface) to which they are attached are merely convenient outlets for their expressions. In the short run, these attitudes can be adaptive, offering the individual some

temporary relief. But in the long run, they may handicap the individual in his social relationships.

They will probably stop him from achieving optimum arrangements and from obtaining maximum satisfaction from the world he lives in.

Projection, displacement and rationalization provide defenses which can be examined in relation to attitudes formed in this manner. All of us employ defense mechanisms, but we differ in respect to the extent of their use. Generally we are unaware of their defensive nature, especially when we are in the act of using them.

All defense mechanisms can be cloaked with humorous elements to facilitate their operation for the individual. However, this process can work in reverse also. That is, we can often utilize humor as a means for showing an individual the folly of his psychological defense and the attitude it protects. We might first use humor to set up a pleasant atmosphere of reception. This would then lead into a demonstration of the ludicrous nature of the defense mechanism and the inadequacy of the attitude it protects, followed by a better solution. The problem is to make the individual aware that he is employing psychological defense mechanisms.

The Value Expressive Function - This function enables the individual to give positive expression to, and an appropriate indication of, his central values. They enable a person to portray himself as the type of person he conceives himself to be. In addition, they help him establish his self-identity and give clarity to his self-image. Clarity and stability of the self-image are extremely important for everyone. The study of the socialization process shows that very early in life a child needs to know who he is, and that the socialization process itself sets the basic outlines for the individual's self-concept during his formative years.

One very important value-expressive attitude is associated with a person's sense of humor as was shown in the study by Omwake (See page 1).

The Knowledge Function - We seek knowledge to provide understanding and give meaning to what would otherwise be a not very meaningful situation. We prefer certainty, consistency and stability to uncertainty, instability and ambiguity. We need standards and frames of reference for understanding our world, and attitudes help supply such standards and frames of reference. The knowledge seeking process often takes the form of acquiring easy,

suitable stereotypes, such as those acquired from derogatory humor. Stereotypes may not be an accurate picture of the world, but they are a picture, or can be a picture, of a possible world we are adapted to. The point is that they serve a purpose and they have to be taken into account in any attempt to change attitudes. New information will not modify old attitudes unless there is some inadequacy, incompleteness, or inconsistency in the existing attitudinal structure. The individual has to be shown that his old information is no longer the best information.

In brief then, according to this functional approach, the reasons at the psychological level for holding attitudes are to be found in the functions the attitudes perform for the individual. Katz also claims that his approach safeguards against over-simplification, particularly that over-simplification which so often has tended to associate one attitude with one source or object.

The four functions discussed are not mutually exclusive; they may overlap. In most situations, one will be stronger than another. It is this stronger function which we need to prove inadequate before we can change an attitude. We can approach

this function directly or indirectly through another function of the attitude. The important thing is to render the attitude unstable. In other words, we must create dissonance within the attitude which will eventually undermine its reason for being. As will be seen later, humor can be an important tool in this process. The creation of dissonance, the manner of its reduction, and any resultant attitude change depends upon the strength of the functions the attitude serves. Those attitudes which are weak in function and which have a low resistance to change will obviously change first. But how are attitudinal functions affected by attitude change? What works to cause a breakdown in the strength of the four functions? How are these functions actually related to attitude change?

Katz has prepared a chart which briefly summarizes the essential points of his theory in this regard. (See Figure two.) Let us now turn our attention to a discussion of what his chart represents.

Katz maintains that if we wish to change an attitude we must know what particular motive is behind it. Change takes place when the old attitude ceases to fulfill its function and no longer gives any pleasure or satisfaction to its related need state.

Figure two:

**Katz's Determinants of Attitude Formation,
Arousal, and Change in Relation to Type of Function¹⁸**

| <u>Function</u> | <u>Origin and Dynamics</u> | <u>Arousal Conditions</u> | <u>Change Conditions</u> |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| Adjustment | Utility of attitudinal object in need satisfaction. Maximizing external rewards and minimizing punishments. | 1) Activation of needs. 2) Salience of cues associated with need satisfaction. | 1) Need deprivation. 2) Creation of new needs and new levels of aspiration. 3) Shifting reward and punishment. 4) Emphasis on new and better paths for need satisfaction. |
| Ego Defense | Protecting against internal conflicts and external dangers. | 1) Posing of threats. 2) Appeals to hatred and repressed impulses. 3) Rise in frustration. 4) Use of authoritarian suggestion. | 1) Removal of threat. 2) Catharsis. 3) Development of self-insight. |
| Value Expression | Maintaining self-identity; enhancing favorable self-image; self-expression and self-determination. | 1) Salience of cues associated with values. 2) Appeals to individual to reassert self-image. 3) Ambiguities which threaten self-concept. | 1) Some degree of dissatisfaction with self. 2) Greater appropriateness of new attitudes for the self. 3) Control of all environmental supports to undermine old values. |
| Knowledge | Need for understanding; for meaningful cognitive organization; for consistency and clarity. | 1) Reinstatement of cues associated with old problem or of old problem itself. | 1) Ambiguity created by new information or change in environment. 2) More meaningful information about problems. |

¹⁸Katz, op. cit., p. 192.

As far as the utilitarian function is concerned, Katz suggests that change may result if the individual's aspirational level is changed and new needs develop.¹⁹ New needs are constantly developing for an individual in a dynamic society such as ours. The role of advertising, and in fact the whole process of social change, in relation to both the superseding of old means of need satisfaction and the development of new needs offers a large area for future study.

It is often suggested that the mass media are not as powerful as personal and direct experience in changing attitudes. However, it would be a mistake to play down the potential of the mass media. In many circumstances, particularly where strong dissatisfaction exists, the media can offer suggestions about solutions to problems. Also, where personal knowledge is lacking in a field, say international affairs, the media may become of primary importance. They can fill in gaps when there are gaps to be filled and offer new and often better paths to need satisfaction.

Changes in attitudes that serve the knowledge function are connected with factors which point out inadequacies in existing attitudes. These

¹⁹The following discussion of the workings of attitude change within Katz's four functions is taken from Halloran, pp. 84-90.

inadequacies stem from a failure to deal with new and changing knowledge situations. New information (perhaps coming from the media) about issues, objects, people, and events may produce conflict in entrenched attitudes which are then perceived as inadequate. A person needs to impose structure and meaning on his environment, thus any situation which can be perceived as ambiguous is a possible source of attitude change. The importance of consistency is made even more clear in this case.

Referring to our example about the jokes based on prejudice, the individual who hears jokes from his parents and reference groups about the isolated stupidity of people of black ancestry may begin to believe that this is reality. But suppose he meets a black teacher whom he begins to admire very much because of his knowledge and his manner of conducting himself. The individual will then experience ambiguity in his original attitude and seek to adjust it in a manner which will create greater clarity and consistency in his knowledge.

The advertiser often faces the same task. He must overcome prejudicial stereotypes and incorrect knowledge in order to sell his product. Many times a humorous approach to the problem is the best answer.

Changes of attitudes serving the value-expressive function are likely to occur when a person becomes dissatisfied with his self-concept and its associated values. In this situation there is a realization that old attitudes are no longer appropriate to the individual's central values. This can happen because of contact with new people, changing circumstances, introduction of new ideas, and as a result of other social changes. Numerous forces and pressures (often in the form of a humorous attack) may impinge upon the individual, forcing a realization that his ways of expressing his values are no longer appropriate. Attitudes serving the value-expressive function can be changed by presenting information which suggests suitable means for the individual to confirm his self-concept and give more accurate expression to his central values.

"In a rapidly changing, pluralistic society such as ours, there is no shortage of forces which suggest to the individual that new attitudes are essential if values which are already held are to be adequately expressed. Advertising provides a case in point, for central values indicated by 'top people,' 'thinking people,' 'attractive people,' 'virile men,' 'thoughtful wives,' 'mothers who care,' 'with-it teenagers,' are frequently associated with

appropriate forms of attitudes and behavior in the hope that the new behavior (usually involving a purchase) will be adopted in order to give adequate expression to the central value."²⁰

The ego-defensive attitudes are those which help the individual protect himself from internal anxieties and external dangers. They can be elicited by any form of threat to the ego, by social support, by appeal to authority, or by the building up over time of inhibited drives within the individual.

Since these attitudes are not formed on the surface, it is unlikely that they will be easily changed.

Thus a humorous approach is not usually the best way to attempt to change such attitudes. Even if the individual laughs at the message, there is little lasting effect. These attitudes are deeply rooted and heavily defended. With such attitudes it is necessary to understand the origins, the related needs, and the underlying motivational patterns. Because this knowledge is seldom available, a situation exists where the use of humor attempting to change such attitudes actually reinforces them because the individual fails to see the irony or satire of the humor and accepts the intentionally funny message as fact. (We will

²⁰Halloran, op. cit., p. 84.

encounter just such a situation later when we discuss a series of cartoons about a "Mr. Biggot.") Most of the conventional procedures for changing attitudes and behavior have little success at the ego-defensive level. The mere provision of information or the offering of rewards and incentives have little effect.

As far as ego-defensive attitude change is concerned, the following factors must be taken into account:

- 1) "The removal of the threat - this is a necessary but not sufficient cause, and in this connection a permissive or supportive atmosphere may help;
- 2) "Catharsis and ventilation of feelings - providing opportunities for blowing off steam;
- 3) "The acquiring of insight ... where a defense is not too deeply rooted, insight is more effective and lasting than mere information giving. Neither approach is particularly effective when a high degree of defensiveness is present."²¹

²¹Ibid., p. 85.

Humor is not usually the best means of providing the above-mentioned conditions for changing ego-defensive attitudes. The reasons are examined in a later chapter where the discussion will be clearer in the light of other information.

CHAPTER II

THREE THEORIES OF HUMOR: THEIR RELATION TO ATTITUDE CHANGE IN ADVERTISING

The process of attitude change must be related to the basic properties of humor in order to draw some implications for advertising.

There is no commonly agreed upon definition of humor, nor even a universally accepted set of characteristics. This is quite understandable since people do not always laugh at the same things, nor do things that make them laugh in one situation necessarily make them laugh in another. To put a new twist on an old quotation: "You can make all of the people laugh some of the time, and you can make some of the people laugh all of the time, but you can't make all of the people laugh all of the time."

While there is no sole theory of humor that can explain why we laugh, three theories of humor can help explain why some humorous advertising campaigns have been successful while others have not. They may also help supply some notions as to how to use humor effectively when attempting to change an attitude through advertising.

In this section the tenets of three humorous theories are briefly described along with their relevance to attitude change.

The first theory of humor is generally referred to as the Incongruity Theory of humor, according to D.H. Monroe,

Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Otago in New Zealand, in his book Argument of Laughter.²²

The first man to probe the possibilities of incongruity as it relates to humor was the great nineteenth century philosopher Immanuel Kant.²³ Humor, according to Kant, depends upon the abrupt transformation of some expected happening into something else. The mind is supposedly wound up and ready to proceed in a definite direction, then it is suddenly wrenched off its path and turned in a different direction.

Kant, however, did not develop this idea fully. That was left to a later nineteenth century philosopher named Arthur Schopenhauer. His insights provide the clearest explanation of the Incongruity Theory. In his book, The World As Will and Idea, Schopenhauer states that humor depends on the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept (attitude) and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation (attitude objects), and that laughter itself is the expression of this incongruity.²⁴

There is a certain amount of research to support this claim. One woman researcher had her subjects keep laughter diaries of what made them laugh. The mental inferiority of

²²D.H. Monro, Argument of Laughter, Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1963.

²³Immanuel Kant, Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, Tr. J.C. Meredith, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911, pp. 196-203.

²⁴Arthur Schopenhauer, The World As Will and Idea, Tr. by R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp, London, Kegan Paul, 1891, p. 76.

another person ranked first and the incongruity of a situation ranked second. However, another experimenter conducted a similar experiment and got the same results, but in the opposite order.²⁵ In any case, the importance of incongruity was upheld.

Schopenhauer goes on to say that humor consists essentially in the incongruity between the "abstract and the concrete objects of perception."²⁶ In other words, it must always be possible to show a thing or event (attitude object) which can be associated with a certain concept (attitude). Then, it must be shown that this thing or event, in another and more predominating aspect, does not belong to the concept at all but is strikingly different from the true nature of that concept. When this is achieved, the result is laughter.

Of course, Schopenhauer adds the disclaimer of most scholars in the field, that is, that the above result will occur provided there are no overriding negative emotions such as fear, anger, or pity associated with the situation.

When dealing with products or services as we do in advertising, it is unlikely that such overriding negative emotions will be present. Our attitudes in this area are not usually as strong or as well entrenched as those, say, concerning religion, politics, or prejudice.

²⁵Harold Burt, Psychology of Advertising, New York, Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1938, p. 234.

²⁶Schopenhauer, op. cit., Vol. 11, p. 270.

Incongruity Theory places a large amount of stress on the logic of humor. Kant and Schopenhauer explain humor as an intellectual affair wholly.²⁷ The perception of illogical connections is the basis of humor for them. This is probably due to their immersement in nineteenth century philosophy, at which time the traditional logic was the law of thinking. We can see how carried away Schopenhauer became with his theory by examining one example of what he termed humor. "If," he says, "we contemplate the tangent of a circle, we are faced with the incongruity between our abstract conviction of the impossibility of an angle between the circumference of a circle and its tangent, and the fact that such an angle lies visibly before us on paper. This will easily excite a smile."²⁸

Very few normal people would find amusement in the contemplation of this or any similar mathematical concept. Being preoccupied with the traditional logic of his time, he was ignoring his common sense for the sake of his theory.

The cognitive side of an attitude also has a very important emotional aspect; hence, any attempt to change an attitude would have to take the strength of this element into account also. If the affective part of an attitude were closely tied with strong ego-defensive and value-expressive functions, no amount of logical humor could be effective in changing the attitude.

²⁷Monro, op. cit., p. 153.

²⁸Schopenhauer, op. cit., p. 279.

A spectacular example of this is shown by the series of "Mr. Biggot" cartoons of the 1940's. At this time "an organization dedicated to the lessening of prejudice and the improvement of race relations launched a campaign of cartoons to try to point out to people how silly some of their race prejudices are. They had topnotch artists draw what they thought were funny and effectively satirical cartoons built around a fictional character named Mr. Biggot. The campaign was an utter and complete failure. There was no attitude change. The organization had the good sense to conduct some research to find out what had gone wrong. The answer somewhat surprised them. Unprejudiced people had read the cartoons, chuckled, and, of course, held to their unprejudiced views. But people who already held strong race prejudices had completely misread the cartoons. They had taken them seriously! For example, when an aristocrat about to undergo a blood transfusion demanded that the hospital give him blue blood, a certain number of the prejudiced people thought that was a reasonable precaution. So the really prejudiced individuals, instead of being laughed out of their viewpoints, read a meaning into the cartoons that would actually strengthen them in their extreme views!"²⁹

It seems that the Incongruity Theory of humor is most valuable in providing advertisers with insights into changing

²⁹C.H. Sandage and Vernon Fryburger, The Role of Advertising, Homewood, Illinois, Richard Irwin, Inc., 1960, pp. 211-212.

attitudes based on the knowledge function and probably the adjustment and value-expressive functions. (When we encounter cues to arouse the knowledge function and are suddenly confronted with an incongruous situation, we may laugh (provided strong ego-defensive and value-expressive overtones do not exist as shown above). Our previous cognitions, upon which our attitude is based, become immersed in ambiguity and the attitude is weakened. If the humor is followed by meaningful information which provides a clearer understanding of the situation or object in question, then an attitude change will likely take place.)

An example using humor in this manner is given to us by Draper Daniels, vice president and creative director of The Leo Burnett Company. It is associated with the Beech-Nut Gum commercials that appeared on radio some time ago. Beech-Nut, at the time, wanted to convince people that its flavor did last a long time. Here is how they did it in a way that makes you remember the Beech-Nut story with an approving chuckle:

"Officer: Give the order to fire, General, they're starting up Bunker Hill.

Prescott: I'm not talking while the flavor lasts.


Officer: What are you chewing?

Prescott: Beech-Nut Gum.

Officer: We'll be seeing the whites of their eyes by then."³⁰

³⁰Draper Daniels, "Humorous Advertising," in The Copywriter's Guide, ed. by Elbrun French, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1958, pp. 141-142.

This is an excellent example of the use of the incongruity type of humor aimed at changing an attitude of the knowledge function, and probably an adjustment function, since a person will see he gets a better reward by chewing Beech-Nut Gum.

 In attempting to change an attitude based upon an adjustment function, the incongruity humor in the ad must first point out the inadequacy of a need-satisfaction situation to which we are accustomed, or the amount of effort as opposed to a reward object, etc. The ad must then provide an answer as to new needs, new and better paths to satisfaction, new reward relationships, and so on. With the qualifications mentioned before, and with a minimum of affective involvement (the same effect also being produced with an overriding cognitive involvement), the attitude could be changed.

An example of this type of situation is exemplified by the current advertising campaign for Tareyton cigarettes (see Appendix One, p. 91). The campaign centers around the slogan "If you could put Tareyton's charcoal filter on your cigarette, you'd have a better cigarette." They show all manner of attempts to do this. It is highly incongruous that we would cut off Tareyton filters and try to put them on our cigarettes by means of tapes, tiny sweaters, or whatever. The suggestion of someone actually doing this strikes us as funny. But the point is made that Tareyton's filter is the best available and that if you want the benefits

of an activated charcoal filter to trap tars and nicotine, then you must adjust your attitude towards cigarettes and buy Tareytons.

Attitudes serving a value-expressive function may be changed through the use of Incongruity Theory also. The humor must be presented in such a way as to show a person that his attitude is inappropriate to his self-image or the expression of that self-image. However, this goal can be missed if the humor tends to make fun of the self-image. The self-image is highly charged with emotions that are easily aroused when a threat is presented. In attacking the self-image you may arouse strong ego-defensive functions which may reinforce the old value-expressive function and thus steel it further against new, and perceived to be threatening, ideas. This is undoubtedly what happened to a number of people who read the Mr. Biggot cartoons. Any humor attempting to change an attitude of a value-expressive nature must take care to direct the humor only to the mode of expression or the inadequacy of the environmental supports of the self-image in question. Nobody likes to be laughed at because of what he is or wants to be, but he usually will not mind being shown a better way to express these things.

An example demonstrating change of a value-expressive nature is also given by Draper Daniels in The Copywriter's Guide. He documents a radio campaign run for Dodge cars in

the 1950's. "a typical spot tells the story of a man who has removed the seats from his new car and is sitting on the floor. Asked why, he explains that he wants to be close to the road the way you are in a new Dodge. When it is pointed out to him that he can't see through the windshield, he admits that this is a disadvantage and that it would be nicer if he had purchased a Dodge, except that by doing so he would have missed the bargain he got by buying this boxy, old-fashioned new car. When the announcer finally makes him see that he paid for a new car and didn't get one, he wants to know where the nearest Dodge dealer is. At this point there is a crash and the announcer says: 'You're in luck. We just ran into one.'"³¹

This is a good example of incongruity humor aimed at a value-expressive function in that the person went through many unnecessary efforts to get a car that fit his ideal and self-image, but he could have gotten the things he desired if he had purchased a Dodge.

It appears that attitudes having an ego-defensive base have an affective element so large that ads using the logical Incongruity Theory of humor would not be effective. In fact, the "Biggot" cartoons demonstrate this fact. (This is true because the strong affective element of the attitude can color the perceptions being received. And, as Halloran tells us, it is how the individual perceives things which is important to attitude change, not how they actually are.)³² The humor

³¹Ibid., p. 142.

³²Halloran, op. cit., pp. 61-63.

and the message can be repressed or distorted to conform with the existing attitude so as not to expose the individual to the frightening conflict or danger. Logic has no effect on these attitudes since the supposedly incongruous connections will not be perceived as incongruous. When presented as such, the individual only perceives the danger or conflict laid at his feet and raises his defenses.

The effort involved in changing an ego-defensive attitude is very large. It is much easier to merely retain the old attitude and repress the new message. The Incongruity Theory of humor does not allow the individual to express the often violent emotions of catharsis that Katz says is necessary for attitude change. It involves the rational use of the mind to perceive illogical connections, but the strong affective nature of an ego-defensive attitude does not permit logic to proceed without the coloring effect of emotion.

The second theory may be called the Superiority Theory of humor. The first major exponent of this theory was the seventeenth century philosopher Thomas Hobbes.³³ Humor, according to him, depends on the perception of a "sudden glory" which somehow enhances the individual's self esteem. We see something as humorous when we are able to "thank God" that we are in a better position than someone else. He also said we can laugh at our own mistakes, provided they

³³Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, 1651. In English Works of Thomas Hobbes, ed. Molesworth, Vol. 3, London, Bohn 1839.

are in the past and we are conscious of having surmounted them. This is only a variant of the first type in that our past selves are taking the place of other people in the enhancing of our self esteem.

Henri Bergson, the great French philosopher of the turn of the century added several refinements to this theory that give it greater clarity. First of all, says Bergson, humor of this type requires the complete absence of feeling.³⁴ He says humor requires the "momentary anesthesia of the heart." For "its appeal is to the intelligence, pure and simple."³⁵ In this sense he has added an implication to the statement of Hobbes. That is, we would not be able to laugh at someone in a lower or more uncomfortable position if we were hampered by emotions like pity or anger. We need to be divorced of emotions to appreciate the humor of our sudden uplifting of esteem at another's expense.

Bergson asserts another facet of the Superiority Theory when he outlines its social nature. He says that society is not satisfied with obtaining obedience from its members only in the serious matters of life, but also demands such obedience in minor matters. In order to do this, it has to prevent members from being content to conform in serious matters while giving way to the easy automation of "bad"

³⁴Henri Bergson, Laughter, Tr. Cloudesly Brerton and F. Rothwell, London, Macmillan, 1911, p. 3.

³⁵Ibid., p. 3.

habits and unflinching eccentricity in the minor details of conduct. Society therefore becomes concerned over any rigidity of character, mind, or even of body. To any such separatist gesture, society replies with the social gestures of humor and laughter, which aim at correcting the rigidity.

Society continually fears that the individual will cease to aim at the increasingly delicate adjustment of wills necessary if men are to live together without friction. Any individual is comic who goes his own way without troubling himself to get into touch with the rest of his fellow beings. Laughter is used to reprove his absent-mindedness and wake him out of his dream.

Here we have another point of Superiority Theory: absence of mind, in one form or other, is one of the chief causes of laughter. It is perhaps the clearest case of failure to adjust oneself to the constant flux of life. The individual pre-occupied with his own obsessions fails to adjust himself to the society in which he lives. This leads to some of the most richly comic types. Don Quixote, for example, is adjusting himself, not to the world he sees around him, but to the romances of chivalry in which he is steeped.

It is a person's rigidity which is at the core of Superiority Theory. Indeed, Bergson sets forth the general law that the essential element in humor is "something mechanical encrusted on the living."³⁶ Thus clothes are

³⁶Ibid., p. 37.

laughable because they represent a certain rigidity applied to the mobility of life, although we do not laugh at current fashions because we are accustomed to them and regard them as part of their wearer. However, if we see some person wearing an old-fashioned garment, our attention is immediately directed to the clothes (inanimate) as opposed to the individual (living), and we laugh.

On similar principles Bergson affirms that the ceremonial side of social life must on account of its rigidity include a certain latent humorous element which, however, is not appreciated because we identify it with a serious object (i.e., society) with which custom associates it.³⁷

Humor is essentially derision in the Superiority Theory. It serves the purpose of castigating rigid anti-social behavior. But, going back to Hobbes, we can see that we can use humor to castigate our own behavior when we know we have overcome our mistake. This has important implications for advertisers since it means the Superiority Theory can be used in advertising if you offer better, more acceptable solutions while deriding the old ones. However, some indication of societal support would greatly help your cause according to this theory.

How does the Superiority Theory of humor fit into attitude change? It relies heavily on the cognitive elements in its approach to laughter and humor. Indeed, it contends that the absence of feeling is a necessary condition for

³⁷Ibid., p. 45.

laughter. This may well be true as we have seen from the "Mr. Biggot" series. The people the cartoons were aimed at had too many emotions involved to find the cartoons funny. Whereas people who were not negatively involved found them funny because of their predispositions or neutrality. In such a case the absence of strong affective prejudice would facilitate the changing of an individual's attitude based on a knowledge or adjustment function, but have little effect on the ego-defensive or value expressive functions.

The most important part of Superiority Theory, as far as attitude change is concerned, is the discussion of the social nature of laughter. Bergson maintains that laughter is society's check against nonconformity.³⁸ Briefly, it works like this. When a person violates the societal system, or what is expected of him, he is chastized through laughter. Thus, a person who wishes to break society's code may do so by asserting a non-conforming value-expressive attitude. The members of society, including advertisers, then react with laughter which expresses their own value-expressive attitude along with an ego-defensive aspect. The individual in question then reacts by shifting some of his attitude's value-expressive function to an ego-defensive function, or by shifting his attitude (and behavior) in an adjustive direction, which is what society (and the advertiser) would like.

³⁸Ibid., p. 136.

Daniels again provides a good example of advertising humor used in this situation. He tells us of the Young & Rubicam campaign for the Sanforized-Shrunk process between 1935-1940. "Consumer advertising showed cute young Bundy matrons popping out of shrunken dresses and engaging young Bundy married men strangling in shrunken shirts. Neither the humor of the art nor the flip language of the copy obscured the sharply made point that clothes which shrank in washing were both unattractive and expensive and that therefore it was wise to insist on cottons that were Sanforized-Shrunk."³⁹

This is a good example of the Superiority Theory of humor in that it represents Bergson's "mechanical encrusted on the living" (with clothing), and also the social nature of laughter (derision). This campaign was aimed especially at changing attitudes of a value-expressive nature, since no one wants to see himself as unattractive. However, some people may have changed their attitude towards Sanforized-Shrunk in a knowledge function. Others may have bought them to save on special washing of cottons thus bringing in an adjustment change also.

A current campaign that is very much like the one for Sanforized Shrunk is now being run by Van Heusen shirts (see Appendix One, p. 92). It represents people without Van Heusen shirts as being as rigid as statues and calls them a "bunch of

stiffs." But the man in the Van Huesen shirt is portrayed as both comfortable and good-looking. Thus, if a person sees himself as wanting these qualities, he is good-naturedly persuaded to buy Van Heusen shirts.

The process described above could also work for attitudes serving an adjustment or knowledge function. Humorous advertising aimed at an attitude of adjustment function could point out the inadequacy of said attitude and likely result in change if the individual is given a new and better path of need satisfaction. We can draw an example of this situation from Bergson's discussion of the laughability of certain clothing. For instance, a businessman from Austin, Texas, dislikes wearing a cowboy hat and a western tie to work, but dressing in this manner will aid him in his business. If he dresses differently, he is made the butt of many jokes. However, once the utility of the hat and tie are pointed out to him (maybe by an advertiser), he will probably begin dressing in the manner which will most reward him, other things being equal.

Changing attitudes of a knowledge function can be facilitated through the use of the Superiority Theory of humor. If a person is misinformed or uninformed about something, he can be the butt of humor, for "the absence of mind, in one form or other, is one of the chief causes of laughter."⁴⁰ If a humorous ad can provide the individual

⁴⁰ Monro, op. cit., p. 113.

with correct information and lead him to more meaningful cognitive organization, it will likely change his attitude. For example, a man who thinks all Plymouths are gas hogs might be made to change this attitude through the presentation of correct factual information or demonstration which may first humorously deride a person who held the same attitude.

American Express presently has an advertising campaign which fits within this portion of our study. The campaign centers around the troubles one encounters when fumbling through a "fat wallet" to find a credit card appropriate for the situation (see Appendix One, p. 93). In the advertisements, we can easily see the inadequacy of the subject's attitudes. The humorous predicaments he gets in to as a result of his unadaptability to his ever increasing credit requirements are a cause of embarrassment. However, American Express explains to him that he doesn't need all those credit cards or all that cash because he can satisfy most of his requirements with one card. (An appeal to the knowledge function.) By using this card he avoids all the embarrassing situations associated with the "fat wallet." The individual is then persuaded to adjust his attitude towards the use of credit cards in a way that will benefit American Express.

Consequently, the Superiority Theory would imply that humor of a derisive nature is effective in changing attitudes serving an adjustive function, a value-expressive function,

attribution
change is clear

or a knowledge function. But again, the attitude which serves a strong ego-defensive function would seem to be beyond the reach of such humor and would probably have the opposite effect.

Katz lists one of the three conditions for changing an ego-defensive function as "the removal of threat." However, the nature of the Superiority Theory of humor (derisive in quality) would preclude its having any effect on an attitude serving an ego-defensive function. Inelasticity, or rigidity, is an essential factor for humor according to the Superiority Theory. Humorous advertising aimed at an attitude protecting an individual against internal conflicts and external dangers would arouse ego-defensive elements. The psychological defenses of the human mind are numerous, intricate and hard to reverse. Poking fun at the roots of these defenses is not the best, nor easiest, way to change them.

We should mention, as Bergson does, that humor allows us to give expression to our own attitudes in a positive manner. Such things as the comic in character, discussed by Bergson, allow us to express our own vanity, our superiority over another. The derisive quality in our laughter often reflects our contempt for past beliefs that have been corrected through socialization. Thus laughter, humor, and humorous advertising may play an important part in shaping attitudes serving the knowledge and adjustment functions. They may also

help direct value-expressive functions and are very useful in strengthening a person's ego-defensive attitudes when they follow the guidelines society has laid down. As Bergson says, they can build the "esprit de corps."

The last theory I have chosen to relate is called Relief From Restraint. Its originator and chief spokesman is Sigmund Freud. Freud set forth his theory of humor in the book Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious, which appeared around the time of World War I.

I ask the reader to note that although Freud continuously uses the word "wit" in his discussion, we may, for our purposes, consider this term synonymous with the word "humor" as we are using it. The two terms will be used interchangeably.⁴¹

Freud begins his discussion of the Relief Theory by dividing wit into two main types, tendency wit which is purposive, and harmless wit which is "wit for its own sake and serves no other particular purpose."⁴² In the latter case the pleasure evoked by the humor arises simply from its technique (techniques will be discussed in the next chapter), the essential element being an economy of psychic energy.

⁴¹Freud actually makes a distinction towards the end of his book between wit, comic, and humor. However, the distinction is tedious and vague and need not concern us in this paper.

⁴²Sigmund Freud, Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious, Tr. A.A. Brill, London, Kegan Paul, 1916, p. 128.

Tendency wit also involves this economy, but here we see "an economy in the expenditure of inhibitions or suppressions."⁴³

Relief Theory holds that all humor bears a close analogy to play. Freud says that during childhood we tend to play with words and thoughts, but this tendency is soon restrained by the criticism of reason. In humor, however, we have a justification for a return to this playful infantile state of mind.⁴⁴ This gives pleasure, even where no ulterior purpose is served, by guarding the activity of the playful impulse against the inhibiting effect of reason.

Harmless wit consists simply of exploiting this childish play pleasure. Release from inhibition occurs only in the special form of pleasure relating to nonsense. This is basic and remains in all examples of humor, but in most humor it is tremendously reinforced by relief from other inhibitions. Harmless wit develops into tendency wit when the humor is used to afford satisfaction for some impulse which would otherwise be denied satisfaction either by inner or outer inhibitions. Thus, says Freud, witty invective enables us to give vent to feelings of hostility which we could not otherwise satisfy, while obscene wit allows a certain sexual excitement which would otherwise be inhibited. In these cases the pleasure resulting from the satisfaction of the "tendency" combines with the pleasure excited by the witticism to produce a very much greater satisfaction.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., p. 180.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 197-201.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 205.

All this depends heavily upon Freud's assumption that the origins of the adult condition are found in a primitive state within children. The laughter of the child is the uninhibited laughter of "pure pleasure."⁴⁶ The aim of humor is actually to try to regain this childish play-state.⁴⁷

Freud says that children enjoy playing with words and thoughts, but they are gradually compelled, by parents and teachers, to develop along adult lines of thinking and to separate reality from fiction. The child is checked by the growing strength of a factor called reason. Reason says in effect: "Don't be silly!", and the desire to conform to this critic results in a movement away from nonsense to a more subtle form of humor. However, Freud concludes that we are in actuality trying to regain the infantile laugh of "pure pleasure" through the use of humor as a means of breaking down inhibitions.

He says that the enjoyment of wit depends heavily on the particular technique used to escape the censor in our mind. Added to this is a content that is a further source of pleasure. In Relief Theory, this pleasure becomes the real crux of the joke. It sees the witty technique as a humorous 'cover-up' enabling us to wallow guiltily in the tendency of the joke.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 363.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 365.

⁴⁸Monro, op. cit., p. 189.

Freud's discussion has several important implications for us. His division of humor into two main types, tendency wit and harmless wit, can be broken down in another way. Since harmless wit evokes pleasure simply from its technique, we may safely divorce it from our discussion of attitude change. It is only concerned with the manipulation of cognitions. Tendency wit, on the other hand, is wit with a purpose. Such wit involves not only cognitions, but emotions also. This parallels our division of attitudes and should be our main concern.

It is tendency wit which can be used by advertisers as the instrument of attitude change. But this process is not a one way street. Tendency wit also allows individuals a chance to give vent to their established attitudes in an indirect manner, even when these attitudes are unacceptable to society. So, in this respect, humor becomes a stumbling block which can support an attitude we desire to change. An attitude which is given positive expression under such a cloak would appear to be almost impossible to change through humor. In other words, we would have to approach it chiefly from the cognitive side, and any help coming through affective appeals would involve emotions other than those aroused by humor. This applies chiefly to ego-defensive attitudes.

Freud's Relief Theory rests heavily upon the postulation of the unconscious processes and the economy of psychic

energy. His theory can point out something of value along these lines. We have learned that attitudes involve internal motivations that are learned rather than inborn. Freud would concur with this, and the postulation that it is easier to adopt stereotypes and to hold on to established attitudes than to adopt new attitudes (barring any drastic change in the environment, of course). It becomes the advertiser's problem to point out to the individual that he is actually expending more psychic energy than is necessary in holding his old attitude and that it is not really fulfilling his needs to his best interest. The advertiser must demonstrate to him how out of line his attitude, and its resultant expenditure of psychic energy, is in relation to its function or goal. This demonstration should contain humorous overtones, according to Freud, and point out the inadequacy of the individual's stand, thus setting the stage for a suggestion of attitude change. Assuming the attitude is not deeply rooted in an ego-defensive manner (which could distort any such message), the advertiser has a good chance of being successful.

This brings us to a major premise of Relief Theory-- that laughter is sought as a "relief from restraint." This is an important point for attitudes serving all four functions. If an individual holds an attitude which is restraining him, either consciously or unconsciously, from achieving a higher goal or a better need satisfaction, we may be able to bring about an attitude change through the use of humorous

advertising. First of all, the humor should be such that it plays upon the restraining attitude so as to make the individual "drop his guard." Secondly, the inadequacy of the attitude should be pointed out along with the new solution.

The important point to remember is that the humor should be such that it provides release from the restraining attitude. It should provide the means to escape the conscious reasoning part of the attitude for a moment and allow escape into the uncluttered, uncommitted childhood play state that Freud says we desire to attain. In this arena we have a chance to rebuild the attitude in question. This is the manner with which an advertiser can change an ego-defensive attitude. He must remove the threat for the individual, allow him to vicariously give vent to his feelings in the childhood play state, and then offer him the insight needed for a new attitude. Admittedly, this is not a simple thing to do, and the author has no simple answer as to how to accomplish this feat. I can only provide an indication of what is known about children's humor, the primitive play state we would like to escape to.

The evidence gathered in one study indicates that children between seven and ten years, when asked to describe the funniest thing they knew of, gave mostly situations involving physical calamity of some sort. This same type was also characteristic of pre-school children, but jokes of a derisive nature ranked even higher.⁴⁹ Perhaps this evidence will provide some sort

⁴⁹Burt, op. cit., p. 236.

of clue as to how to approach ego-defensive attitudes. I could uncover no concrete examples of humorous advertising aimed at this function.

Attitudes serving a value-expressive function can also be approached using the Relief Theory of humor. Any humorous advertisement aimed at this function should utilize its humor as a means for removing the inhibitions which prevent self-expression. Once the individual experiences the pleasure of giving expression to a certain aspect of his desired self-image, the ad should suggest a method whereby he can continually express this aspect, even though it may only be symbolical.

The current television commercials for Hai Karate after-shave lotion would appear to fit here. The commercials show a mild little man with thick glasses who becomes absolutely devastating to beautiful women when he uses Hai Karate. In fact, they become so violent in their attachment that the company has to include instructions on self-defense with each package. Many men who desire themselves in this position may be tempted to buy Hai Karate to enhance their self-image. Their inhibitions are perceived to be of no consequence since it is always the woman who takes the initiative when he wears Hai Karate.

Heads Up hairdressing recently had a humorous television campaign in this same vein. Men were shown putting a little Heads Up in their hair. The women became so enamored with

rubbing their fingers through it that they did it time and time again, each time accompanied by a barrage of kisses. Whenever the man combed his hair he was attacked. Again the man's inhibitions don't matter because the woman finds him irresistible and takes the initiative.

In regards to the adjustment function, Relief Theory would apply when the humor is able to point out an attitude is restraining an individual from achieving a need satisfaction or some desired reward. The advertiser must activate the need or the desire, point out the restraining qualities of the old attitude (which should give him the basis for his humor and create a pleasurable atmosphere), provide a means of removing the restraints, and satisfy the need.

An example of this can be taken from a recent cough syrup commercial which appeared on television. It shows an Oriental man coming home from work with a bad cough. He feels so bad and his cough is so violent that he begins breaking up the furniture with Karate chops each time he coughs. His wife sees the mess he is making and brings him some Vick's 44 cough syrup which relieves his suffering.

In this commercial the advertiser is reminding the viewer of any discomfort he has or has had. He humorously relieves the restraints which hold back the viewer's hostility toward the situation by allowing him to watch another man break up his house. The discomfort of coughing probably makes

the viewer feel like doing this at times, except that he can't because it's childish. After the hostility is shown, the commercial presents its solution to the discomfort. This should result in an adjustment change of attitude. The viewer will buy Vick's 44 cough syrup to satisfy his need for comfort.

Many times a person may lack knowledge which might help him understand and order his world to his best interests, or he may have old knowledge which hampers him although he may not realize it. When using Relief Theory, the advertiser must first remove these restraints. The restraints themselves should provide him with clues about how to formulate his humor. In the removal of the restraint (the humor of the ad) the individual will experience pleasure. The advertiser must then provide the individual with more meaningful information.

American Motors ran a campaign in 1967 which contained a television commercial based on this particular device. The commercial began by showing a Ford Mustang and stating that it was a good car. Then the announcer asked if it was possible for another company to improve on it. Well, an American Motors crew went to work busting, tearing, and blowing up the Mustang and adding new and better features to the automobile until it was the Javelin.

It was assumed that the audience did not know about these better features of the Javelin. The mutilating of the

Mustang represented what a lot of people would like to do to their car but they have too many things holding them back. The physical violence and the humorous presentation allowed them to destroy all the bugs in their car vicariously. Psychologically, this was a pleasant experience. Then the commercial presented them with information as to better alternatives of which they were probably not aware. This resulted in a change in the knowledge function of attitudes toward AMC cars.

The important, yet simple formula for using the Relief Theory of humor in advertising, then, is as follows: The restraining attitude provides the clue as to the humor the ad should contain; the removal of restraint provides pleasure and an atmosphere conducive to acceptance; this must be followed by the presentation of a more suitable and more rewarding attitude for the individual.

Any one of these three theories can be utilized when formulating an advertising campaign. Which one is best depends upon the attitude you want changed, the number and strength of the functions associated with the attitude, the attitude objects themselves, and the new solution you are offering. The decision regarding these factors can only result in success if the attitudes are well researched regarding origins, strength, functions, incidence of occurrence, and so on. Also, the new attitude must truly be perceived as better.

Person of cult

TEN TECHNIQUES OF HUMOR AND HOW THEY ARE USED IN ADVERTISING

Given the general propositions concerning the three theories of humor, what are the specific techniques which they employ? Answering this question requires the identification of the idea or situation toward which the humor is directed.

Monro has come up with a list of ten techniques which he has synthesized from his survey of the literature on humor. These techniques can be associated with one or more of the three theories we have discussed. Below is a list of each of the ten techniques and Monro's indication of which theory(ies) it is easiest associated with:⁵⁰

- 1) Any breach of the usual order of events (Incongruity)
- 2) Any forbidden breach of the usual order of events (Incongruity and Relief)
- 3) Indecency (Relief)
- 4) Importing into one situation what belongs to another (Incongruity)
- 5) Anything masquerading as something it is not (Incongruity and Superiority)
- 6) Word-play (Incongruity and Relief)
- 7) Nonsense (Incongruity)
- 8) Small misfortunes (Superiority and Relief)
- 9) Want of knowledge or skill (Superiority)
- 10) Veiled insults (Superiority and Relief)

⁵⁰ Monro, op. cit., p. 189.

These techniques are not always mutually exclusive. They can be combined in the same advertisement to add to the overall humorous effect. Let us now consider each of these techniques in turn, with examples. (The application of examples is generally restricted to one technique for the sake of clarity.)

1. Any breach of the usual order of events.

"Anything that is novel or unusual is almost enough in itself to cause a laugh. If you are used to eating with a knife and fork, you laugh the first time you see someone eat with chopsticks. If you are used to chopsticks you laugh the first time you see the knife and fork in use. Unusual dress is another simple example. The costume of any period looks funny to people of any other period."⁵¹ Someone who proceeds about a task in an unorthodox manner may also be said to be funny. "Bodily deformities are probably a special case of this technique. If you have grown used to noses having a given shape, or ears of a certain maximum size, a crooked nose or an over-large ear may make you laugh."⁵²

An example of this technique can be found in the Dentine Gum commercials of the mid-1960's. They always depicted a person brushing his teeth in very inappropriate places, such as a restaurant, a drug store, or on an airplane. The point is made that this is good dental hygiene but that it is completely unnecessary. The commercials go on to say that these situations can be avoided, and that your teeth can be kept clean, if you chew Dentine Gum.

⁵¹Ibid.; pp. 40-41.

⁵²Ibid., p. 41.

This is incongruity humor aimed at an adjustive attitude. That is, in order to satisfy the desire to keep your teeth clean when you are away from home you can chew Dentine Gum rather than brush.

Another example of this technique is found in the current television commercial for Rinso Bleach. It shows a man, in humorous garb, testing the brightening power of two bleaches by sticking his over-sized, striped socks into two tubs of solution. One sock goes in each tub, but they are still on his feet! The point of the commercial is that Rinso Bleach gets your clothes brighter.

This is again incongruity humor (in that no one bleaches clothes this way) aimed primarily at an attitude serving a knowledge function, but having adjustive and value-expressive changes as possible side-effects. People like to be neat and clean, and brighter clothes will help your appearance. Appearance, in turn, can help in your impressions and dealings with other people.

2. Any forbidden breach of the usual order of events.

Oddity takes on a special flavor when it is not merely strange, but wrong. Although we do not usually think of vice as being comic, stage comedy has long utilized vice as an important part of its stock-in-trade. The drunkard, the glutton, the hypocrite, the miser, are all stock figures of fun. But all stage villains are not funny. Why? "The

answer seems to be that we laugh only if our attention is not focused on the possible tragic consequences of the forbidden act, either to its possessor or others. Nor must we, as we might in a pathological study, consider too closely the causes of vice. We must not concern ourselves with the way this irregular behavior fits in with other features of personality, or with other lives."⁵³ We must regard it simply as a departure from a given norm of conduct and accept it in the humorous way in which it is offered.

We can find an example of this technique in a past campaign for G.E. Lightbulbs. The ads utilized cartoons featuring two bungling burglars. (See Appendix Two, p. 95.) The two men were found robbing places, but when the big, dumb one tried to take the G.E. Lightbulbs his partner told him not to do it because it would only encourage bulb-snatching.

The humor arises from the incongruous idea that any burglar would steal lightbulbs in the first place. But even if they were out to steal everything they could get their hands on, it is incongruous that they would stop at lightbulbs. Especially to prevent someone else from bulb-snatching because, as one put it, "Bulb-snatching is wrong."

This ad appears to be aimed at an adjustment attitude. It is saying other bulbs might burn out and cause a delay in some need satisfaction due to darkness, but G.E. Lightbulbs are both dependable and inexpensive.

⁵³Ibid., p. 42.

Another good example of this same technique is given in a recent campaign for United Air Lines. A television commercial shows an elderly lady on the airline. She is, very conspicuously, stealing everything she can get her hands on--silverware, towels, pillows, and finally even the plane. This again is Incongruity Theory, and probably some Relief Theory in that most of us have been tempted at some time to take some elegant or comfortable things from places when we are traveling. Our inhibitions usually hold us back, but we can vicariously take pleasure in watching this old woman go hog wild in her stealing.

The commercial is aimed at an attitude which is value-expressive in nature (the airline is for people who like to travel in elegance, with the best service, and who enjoy friendly people), and also adjustive (fly United because it has everything you desire in meeting your flying needs).

3. Indecency.

"Indecency is a special case of a forbidden breach of the usual order. It is treated here as a separate class because it appears to be different, at least to the immediate perceptions of laughter. Our laughter at a smutty story has quite a different flavor from our laughter at the sight of a fat man over-eating. One reason for this is almost certainly that the smutty story allows us to give rein to thoughts that are normally inhibited."⁵⁴ However, in order to do this, the

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 43.

indelicate reference must be smuggled in as neatly and as unobtrusively as possible. This type of humor is an attempt to observe the conventions of society while enjoying the thrill of flouting them.

I could discover no clear-cut and obvious examples of an advertiser attempting to use humor in this way. The closest approximation to the use of this technique, that I could find, is the recent campaign for Tiparillo Cigars (see Appendix Two, p. 96). The campaign involves a series of ads featuring women in revealing garb, with their busts almost exposed. They also have unusual jobs. The copy is asking, "Should a gentleman offer a Tiparillo to a (whatever the job may be)," which is completely ridiculous in a situation like that. It appears that the girls are really waiting for a proposition.

This appears to be the Relief Theory of humor (with aspects of Incongruity) since the man's inhibitions are forgotten for a moment when he sees these women partially undressed. The ads are aimed at the value-expressive functions of an attitude (Tiparillos are for men who are sexy and virile), and at the adjustive function ("If I smoke Tiparillos I will enhance my chances for a need-satisfaction involving women").

4. Importing into one situation what belongs to another.

We have seen that humorous stories often depend on the intrusion into one sphere of an incident or attitude of

mind that is appropriate only to an utterly different sphere. For example: An Indian rajah spreads his costly silks before the king with all the courtly ceremony which accompanies Oriental gifts. And the king, instead of replying with similar courtliness, is represented as exclaiming: 'Ow much for the lot?'⁵⁵

"We are all creatures of habit, and this applies to thought as well as to action. We put kings in one mental compartment, and costers in another. We surround each of them with different associations, and we respond to each with a particular attitude. Each of these structures is largely artificial: it is built up out of carefully selected materials. We leave out of account those facts about kings which would be more appropriate to our attitude toward costers, and vice versa."⁵⁶ This is a technique of humor which consists in shattering mental structures by obtruding the inconvenient, inappropriate fact.⁵⁷

An example of this technique can be found in the current television commercials for Dupont Lucite paints. They depict tournaments and championship matches for painting honors. One commercial consists of interviewing the coach of the "Baltimore Buckets," a professional painting team looking forward to the coming season much like a baseball team would. This is obviously an incongruous situation. But the commercials back up their humor. They all explain how easy Lucite

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 46.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 46.

is to use, how little mess there is, how quickly it dries, how good it looks, and how long it lasts.

This is the application of Incongruity Theory in an attempt to change an attitude serving a knowledge function (Lucite has many good qualities paints never had before), and one serving an adjustment function. (If you use Lucite you won't have to work as hard, or paint as often, and you can relax more.)

Another ad which demonstrates this technique is one for Parker International Ball Point Pen (see Appendix Two, p. 97). This ad plays upon the famous magazine format of several weight-reducing and body-building products. The humor resides in the incongruity of a ball point pen being presented in this highly traditional, human advertisement. But, the ad makes the point that the pen has the same large ink supply that it used to, even though it is a slimmed-down version. The ad is aimed primarily at changing an attitude serving a knowledge function (you get a bigger ink supply for your writing needs), and possibly a value-expressive function (the pen is slim, sleek, and elegant).

5. Anything masquerading as something it is not.

This technique includes mimicry (which is a fruitful source of laughter), the whole field of impromptu acting, conscious fooling, and simple playfulness. There is a certain direct pleasure to be obtained from masquerade, simply in

itself. This is so because we can make fun of things while not actually being seriously involved with them. It can probably be laid down as a general principle that anything which masquerades as another thing is ipso facto laughable.⁵⁸

A good example of this technique is given in a recent Frigidaire Dishwasher ad (see Appendix Two, p. 98). The appliance is presented under the guise of a fancy sports car. The copy carries on the gag by continuously presenting the dishwasher's benefits in terms traditionally associated with automobile advertising.

This is the application of the Incongruity Theory of humor. It is aimed at changing attitudes of a knowledge function (the dishwasher has these qualities you never had before for washing dishes), and also some of an adjustive nature (the dishwasher is easy to use and will increase your leisure time).

6. Word-play.

Playing with words is a familiar type of humor and one which children delight in at a very early age. Almost any distortion of words can be amusing. The simplest forms of this technique are misspelling and mispronunciation. Much of the pleasure in word-play is probably due to the mere delight of exploration: of finding out the possibilities in words. We can find delight in merely noticing that a form of words meant to have one meaning can also have an entirely different one.⁵⁹ "But word play shades off into playing with ideas

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 42.

and cannot always be distinguished from it. It is even possible to play, in much the same way, with figures: mathematical puzzles and problems are not essentially different in their appeal."⁶⁰

An example of this technique is given in an ad for Wright Arch Preserver Shoes (see Appendix Two, p. 99). The headline reads: "Style? Wright!" The play on words is obvious. It is difficult to say for sure whether the smile elicited from this ad is the result of the incongruity of the language structure or the supposed connection such word play has with our desire to return to the childhood play state (Relief Theory). It is probably a combination of both.

The ad is primarily aimed at influencing attitudes of value-expressive, adjustment, and knowledge functions. We can include the value-expressive function because of the ad's emphasis on the stylish qualities of the shoe. We can include the knowledge function because of the ad's explanation of the shoe's four comfort features. And an adjustment function would appear since the person may realize the shoe will satisfy his need for foot comfort and go out and buy it.

7. Nonsense.

The appeal of nonsense is largely rooted in fantasy. "Humor always provides us with a release from the too familiar pattern of everyday events. What is distinctive about nonsense, at least in its extreme form, is that it does nothing else.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 48.

It does not merely twist events into a slightly different pattern: it breaks the pattern altogether."⁶¹ The job of the advertiser in this technique is to break the pattern and then mend it again with ideas that will benefit him.

Avis Rent-a-Car has a campaign out that plays upon this nonsensical technique of humor. Their ads (see Appendix Two, p. 100-102) depict a series of non-existent bugs who do all sorts of harmful things to cars. Avis is claiming to be getting rid of these bugs from their cars so their customers won't have to be inconvenienced by them. Of course, these bugs don't exist. They're simply nonsensical representations of some of the irritations that plague rent-a-car drivers.

Avis is using these incongruous insects to change an adjustive function in a person's attitude. They want the person to see that he can get a better running, and better looking car at Avis than he can anywhere else. They want him to feel his driving needs are better served at Avis. There may also be a change in a knowledge function associated with this campaign.

Another good example of the nonsensical technique is given in an ad by the California Raisin Advisory Board. (See Appendix Two, p. 103.) The ad presents a classical drawing of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, with a completely incongruous line of dialogue concerning the attributes of raisins. This use of incongruity was meant to add humor to

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 49-50.

the ad. The ad itself was designed to change an attitude serving an adjustive function. That is, raisins are presented as a sweet tasting, neat little fruit that satisfies a person's need in this regard.

8. Small misfortunes.

"This is a very familiar source of laughter. The banana skin, the custard pie, the thumb beneath the hammer, are among the first things we laugh at in childhood. They are the standby of the hoariest vaudeville act, and they continue to be good box-office in the newest and shiniest of movie theatres. There may be argument about whether a particular joke belongs in this class or not. Is the hen-pecked husband, for instance, just a man in a jam, or is he something more subtle, an example of the reversal of what is (in theory, if not in fact) the normal order? But there can be no doubt that, all refinements aside, misfortunes are funny, simply in themselves."⁶²

A good example of this technique can be taken from a television commercial for a local paint store. The commercial shows a man trying to paint the outside of his house. His thin, watery paint drips in his face and down his arm as he works. The bristles on his paint brush fall off as he paints. And to top off these troubles, his old, worn-out ladder collapses causing him to fall and splatter paint all around. He finally ends up kicking his old equipment around the yard.

⁶²Ibid., p. 50.

An off-screen announcer sympathizes with him and suggests he go to the local paint store and get all the equipment he needs to do a good job. The commercial then shows the man nearly finished with a beautiful paint job and smiling happily as the announcer compliments him.

This is the usage of Relief Theory because it arouses cues of hostility within us (we all have had these painting problems) and allows us to vicariously enjoy in the mutilation of the troublesome equipment.

The ad is aimed primarily at changing attitudes of an adjustment function in that the person is told how he can achieve his goal with less effort and less mess.

Another example of the small misfortunes technique comes from a current television commercial for Bactine Antiseptic Spray. The commercial is an animated take-off on the story of Little Red Riding Hood. The wolf knows he is going to get hit, so he is carrying a bottle of Bactine with him. When Red and the Woodsman find him, the wolf gets hit on the head. He then sprays Bactine on the wound and lets loose a sigh of relief.

This commercial demonstrates the use of Superiority Theory because we can laugh derisively at the inability of the wolf to adapt to his situation by avoiding the woodsman. However, the introduction of Bactine gives an alternative way of adapting that everyone could adopt in this situation. The

commercial is really telling us that we are supposed to buy Bactine as the best means of relieving our minor hurts.

9. Want of Knowledge or Skill.

"Simple ignorance is generally good for a laugh. We would certainly be amused if we heard someone declare, in all good faith, that New York was the capital of England. We would probably not even smile if he said that New York was the capital of the state of New York. The ignorance then, must be gross and obvious. This suggests that something other than pride in our own knowledge is involved. If that were all, we would laugh loudest at the more pardonable mistakes because then our pride at detecting them would be the greater. There is certainly some tinge of superiority in our laughter at the mistakes of others" ⁶³

The lack of skill in any endeavor is also a good source of humor. A good example here is the clumsy attempt of the circus clown to imitate the agility of the acrobat. Any similar exhibition of ineptitude -- the golfer who misses a shot, the marksman whose bullet misses the target altogether, the paper-hanger who gets covered with paste and tangled in his own paper-- may make us laugh. In each case, the butt demonstrates that he is setting out to do something for which he is not fitted. ⁶⁴

An ad for United States Steel (see Appendix Two, p. 104) is probably a good demonstration of the use of "want of knowledge"

⁶³Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 51.

as a humorous technique. Two men are standing at the Brooklyn Bridge and talking. One man is trying to sell it to the other. At first we are laughing at the man who wants to buy the bridge, and Times Square also. Later, our laughter switches to the second man when he is talked into keeping the bridge.

This is use of the Superiority Theory of humor. We are obviously laughing at gross ignorance (at first sight) in two different settings. First at the man who is buying, then at the man who is keeping.

The ad is aimed at changing an attitude's knowledge function about the value of steel. A change in an attitude's adjustment function is also desired in that the United States Steel Co. wants manufacturers to buy steel to meet their needs instead of some other metal.

A good example of the use of "want of skill" as a humorous device is given us in an ad by Jockey Life Hosiery (see Appendix Two, p. 105). The ad shows a man's feet after he has fainted because he missed a four-inch putt. This is an allusion to a great lack of skill. We feel laughably superior to this show of ineptitude. However, the ad ties in clearly with the selling point that Jockey Life Socks come in plenty of different colors. It does this by showing a bright red pair of socks on the man's feet and saying, "When you blow a four-inch putt, isn't it nice to know your socks match your shirt."

This ad is aimed at a knowledge function (the variety of colors available), and an adjustment function with value-expressive overtones (you can get socks that match your clothes and you look much better because of this).

A similar example of this is given in a television commercial for Hanes underwear. A man is shown in a variety of activities that he cannot do well because his underwear are too tight. Then the man is shown confidently walking down the street and doing a series of acrobatic feats, after which he reveals he is wearing Hanes underwear.

This again is usage of the Superiority Theory of humor. We laugh at the man because of his ineptitude and his undue rigidity. It is a perfect example of Bergson's "mechanical encrusted on the living."

This ad is aimed at changing attitudes serving an adjustment and a value-expressive function. The adjustment because underwear that fit good allow him to better pursue his goals. And the value-expressive because there is a suggestion that the man will look better, be able to do more things, and be more confident in Hanes.

10. Veiled insults.

"Among children it is considered screamingly funny to shout: 'You're a jackass!' Adults continue to be amused at this type of humor, provided that it is wrapped up a little. Freud quotes a gibe at a retiring politician: 'Like Cincinnatus, he has now returned to his place before the plow,' which is just another way of saying the same thing."⁶⁵

⁶⁵Ibid. pp. 51-52

Veiled insults give vent to many ideas we have that are normally repressed. They allow us to avoid the brunt of society's rebuttal when we wish to express hostile emotions. The cloak of humor gives added subtlety and satisfaction to the relief of this hostility. It also allows others to vicariously relieve their feelings and enjoy the derision.

Currently, there is a very good television commercial that contains a veiled insult. It is done for Chiffon Margarine. It shows a family eating breakfast. The father begins riding his son about his long hair, his beads, and other teenage fads of the day. His intolerance itself is somewhat amusing, but the veiled insult, and the real crux of the humor, comes later. As both father and son reach for the Chiffon, the boy is amazed and asks, "Gee, Dad, do you dig Chiffon?" Whereupon the father with a stupid grin says, "Sure, I do it like this," and he gouges a bit out with his knife. The mother and son look at each other in dismay.

This is humor of the Superiority Theory. We are amused at the intolerance and the inability of the father to understand his son, his rigid adherence to the past. The looks that pass between mother and son show us they are dismayed and embarrassed by this rigidity. Their obvious attempts to ignore his statements and their tuning out of his ignorant demonstration are a veiled insult to him and others like him. Publicly exposing this rigidity allows us to chuckle derisively at such people.

The ad is aimed primarily at attitudes of a value-expressive nature. That is, Chiffon is up with the times, so those that use Chiffon are also. An adjustment function is also brought into this situation in that the commercial implies that in order to fulfill your need to be up with the times you need to adopt Chiffon.

The mere utilization of one of these ten techniques in an advertising campaign will not guarantee success. Sometimes the techniques can be used with side-splitting results, but fail to sell the product. Indeed, of the examples the author has given, some were highly successful, some only slightly successful, and some as yet undetermined.

It is not yet possible to draw any general conclusions as to which specific technique best suits the advertising of a particular product. The decision rests upon a number of factors: the nature of the product itself, the customers desired, the benefits offered, the medium used, the goals of the campaign, and so on.

The presentation of these techniques and the discussion of their past utilization is intended to show the wide range of application humor has in advertising. But each advertiser must plan his campaign in light of his specific situation. One way to do this is to consider all the aspects of your product and your goals and to apply this knowledge in conjunction with a review of other humorous campaigns. This being done in light of such notions as I have used in this study.

CHAPTER IV

HUMOR VIEWED BY ADVERTISING MEN

What do people in the advertising industry have to say about humor and its use?

The range of opinion on the value of humor is extreme. Claude Hopkins, at one time a \$185,000 a year copywriter, stated flatly that "humor has no place in advertising."⁶⁶ On the other hand, Ron Walker, once a key man on Stan Freberg's staff, says the only thing humor can't help sell is death.⁶⁷

The majority of opinions in the advertising business today would probably be somewhere nearer the center, although just a casual glance at the ads being produced today will show that copywriters are moving more and more in the direction of Mr. Walker.

Most books which attempt to explain the art of copywriting contain a list of rules and cautions to use in connection with humor and usually advise the beginner to avoid its use completely. For as Wales, Gentry, and Wales state in their book Advertising Copy, Layout, and Typography, "Good humor is hard to create, and it is scarcely a matter of degree, for the humorous ad that fails is a cousin to the joke that no one considers funny."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Daniels, op. cit., p. 137.

⁶⁷ Mr. Walker is presently on the creative staff at D.P. Brother & Co., Detroit. He recently joined them after working for Mr. Freberg for two years. His remarks were obtained in a personal interview, Sept. 3, 1968.

⁶⁸ Wales, Gentry, and Wales, Advertising Copy, Layout, and Typography, p. 137.

Draper Daniels, vice president and creative director of the Leo Burnett Company, has compiled a list of rules to follow and pitfalls to avoid that seem to succinctly cover the statements given in most books on copywriting.

1. "Humor may be directed at the salesman of the product, the user or nonuser of the product, or at the foibles of human nature and society. It must never be directed at the product."⁶⁹

This seems to be a valid assumption. If we are pointing out a laughable shortcoming in a certain attitude and making this the butt of our humor, it makes no sense to deride the solution we are offering as replacement. The customer will simply discount the value of the product we offer. Why should he accept another laughable solution for the one he already has? Using Freud's principle of psychic economy, it is easier for a person to retain his old attitude than to expend the energy necessary to adopt a new attitude (or product) which offers no better benefit.

2. "Humor needs to be genuinely funny. A touch of humor is better than pure hilarity. Irony, satire, and subtlety are likely to miss with a mass audience."⁷⁰

This statement contains much truth, but we cannot wholly accept it. True, the humor used needs to be genuinely funny. But, in some cases pure hilarity may be the best answer as we have seen from our discussion of Freud and the example of the slapstick paint store commercial. Freud proposed that we all desire to return to the childhood play state and its

⁶⁹Daniels, op. cit., p. 140.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 140.

uninhibited comedy. Indeed, pure hilarity of this type seems to be our only access to changing attitudes serving a strong ego-defensive function.

As far as irony, satire, and subtlety missing with the mass audience, this seems to be a bit outdated. The American public is becoming more and more sophisticated each year, and, as a mass, are able to appreciate many more subtleties of communication than they could ten years ago. As Ron Walker said, "It is my feeling, and I think that of Stan Freberg, that most agencies and clients underestimate the ability of the public to understand the joke in a humorous advertisement. It no longer has to be spelled out for them as was thought in the past."⁷¹ We can see the truth in this when we look at some of our earlier examples and the success they had with the public.

3. "Humor in advertising should be functional. Its purpose can be to put over the sales story, to add believability by humanizing the advertiser, the salesman, or the product. It should never be used purely to amuse either the customer or the copywriter."⁷²

We can accept this statement as being correct. The humor in an ad should be functional in regards to destroying the internal consistency of the old attitude, and in supplying the groundwork for a new solution. Presented in this manner it can add believability to your message by playing on the human shortcomings you are trying to change. If you can make the connection quite patent, the humor will humanize your message. Stan Freberg does this in his humor. For example, his television

⁷¹Walker, personal interview, Detroit, Sept. 3, 1968.

⁷²Daniels, op. cit., p. 140.

commercial for prunes plays upon the very human reaction to their wrinkled, dry appearance. He humorously presents a man in a dentist's chair who acts like he is about to undergo torture when asked to eat prunes. When the man finally does get one down, he admits they taste good but that he still dislikes their wrinkles, whereupon a man representing the prune company says they are working on that. The humor in this ad is tied to an audience misconception, and the tie-in is very clear. The advertisement leads towards a change in an attitude serving a knowledge function by utilizing the Incongruity Theory and the technique of imparting to one situation what belongs to another.

4. "When humor fails it is usually because it tries too hard and becomes too forced to be funny, makes the mistake of making fun of the product, or diverts attention from the sales story rather than emphasizing it."⁷³

We can agree with this statement. If a humorous device is employed to attract attention, that device should lead naturally to a consideration of the product and to some definite selling point. "A supposedly comic character was used at one time in promoting a breakfast cereal. His antics were effective from the standpoint of catching attention and his optimism was supposed to have been derived from the breakfast food. However, the tie-up was not very patent, and many readers remembered the character and not the cereal. A campaign for brass pipe, on the other hand, was centered around the predicaments of the family whose plumbing developed embarrassing leaks. The predicaments were amusing to the reader but also tied in clearly

⁷³Ibid., p. 140.

with the solution, and left brass pipe in the memory of the prospects."⁷⁴

From our discussion of attitudes we have seen that in order to initiate change we must first create conditions which will elicit the cues necessary to arouse the attitude. We must then prove that the old attitude is inadequate and provide a new solution. But creating the right conditions to arouse the attitude, and to hold interest long enough to prove it wrong, is important. The conditions of presentation must create involvement on the part of the individual in order to accomplish the goal of the advertisement.

How do we get individual involvement in the ad? Hanley Norins, a highly successful copywriter and the author of The Compleat Copywriter, lists several methods of obtaining this involvement or participation.⁷⁵ The first method he mentions is role-playing. On this subject he quotes Professor John Lanzetta from his speech "Changing Men's Minds."

"If you want people to change their attitudes toward a particular practice, you might not try to convince them or force them, but simply....set up a situation in which role-playing of the new procedure takes place....In the process of playing the new role, change can be effected."⁷⁶

In the role-playing situation the person's emotions tend to be more lenient towards the new attitude since it occurs in a pleasant play atmosphere. He thus becomes more receptive.

⁷⁴Burt, op. cit., p. 140.

⁷⁵Hanley Norins, The Compleat Copywriter, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 31 ff.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 31.

The cognitive side of his old attitude, although present, is not as far in the forefront of his mind since he must concern himself with the arguments of the new attitude. If this can be done effectively, we may initiate a process of attitude change. This technique may work for attitudes serving all four functions.

A person may certainly gain new and meaningful information when put in a position in which he has to utilize it and defend it. Thus, an attitude serving a knowledge function can be changed in this manner. Those attitudes of an adjustive nature can be changed by allowing the individual to portray a new role and observe how it facilitates his needs and reward opportunities. When allowing an individual to assert himself as he would like, and to portray a personality he admires, we can inject our attitude into the situation as a focal point in the development of the role playing image. Thus, value-expressive attitudes can also be changed in this manner.

However, role-playing is most important because, when we look at humor, we can see that Relief Theory provides the only solid means by which we can change an attitude of an ego-defensive nature. In a role-playing situation a person can be allowed to go back to a facsimile of a childhood play state where his ego arousing threat is reduced or eliminated. In this state he has an excuse to give vent to his true feelings. Then, if planned right, the role can also provide him with the elements needed to develop a new and better attitude.

Another way to involve the reader is to have a provocative message deliberately open ended. When done humorously this

supposedly does not threaten or arouse the affective element of the old attitude (nor the cognitive, beyond a point) and leaves pleasant connotations for the new one. The ad should, however, point out some inadequacies of the old attitude. Since the ad is an open-ended message which does arouse the cognitions of the old attitude, the individual may be motivated to search out new information. This approach would appear to be very useful for attitudes serving a knowledge function, and possibly those of an adjustment function. Those of a value-expressive or ego-defensive nature would be hard to overcome in this manner since the individual would ignore the true point of the message rather than question his self-concept or admit the weaknesses he has.

The third method Norins gives to encourage participation is to tell a story. People like to involve themselves in a good story as we can see from the popularity of novels, television drama, and movies. This situation involves a certain amount of role-playing and allows the person to become involved affectively and cognitively with the story. Although less effective than actual role-playing, it may work quite well in initiating change in a knowledge or adjustive functioning attitude. Involvement in a story, even a humorous one, can generate new knowledge through the flow of information in the story. It can also offer new means of need satisfaction by relating events which lead to the goals in the story. Value-expressive functions may be changed if the values and self-image the individual desires are presented and the greater

appropriateness of the new attitude is shown. Since storytelling does not admit of a genuine removal of threat or allow the individual to give vent to his true feelings, except very indirectly, the ego-defensive attitudes would be very difficult to approach in this manner.

A fourth method of involvement is demonstration or sampling. If there is a strong attitude against the product, it is important that a device such as humor be used to present it in a pleasant context. The direct input of meaningful information that results, and the increase in need satisfaction and reward, could lead to a significant change in attitudes serving the knowledge and adjustment functions. A change in a value-expressive attitude may be facilitated through the addition of a testimonial, but again attitudes of an ego-defensive nature would probably result in an avoidance of the demonstration or sample.

Referring back to the section on attitude change, it can be clearly seen that the four methods of involvement are closely related to the six methods of learning attitudes given by D.T. Campbell. (See page 13.)

Norins' four methods of involvement can be used in any combination with the ten techniques of humor we have discussed. There is no simple formula for matching these up, or to determine which type of product elements of the two classifications are best suited. In every case it will depend on the product, the audience, and the goals of the campaign.

In his advice to the advertising copywriter, Norins has also suggested five items every humorous ad should include if it is to be effective in getting results beyond a mere laugh.⁷⁷ I have rearranged the order of these somewhat to better suit our purpose. First, he says we must get our appeal to both the head and the heart of the consumer. In humorous advertising we are attempting to reach the "heart" in order to create a pleasant atmosphere for attitude change. Of course, we must include the presentation of a better solution to the situation than the old attitude provided. The humorous element of the ad should be meaningful to the head in this sense. It should lead logically into the solution. We want to create the inconsistency necessary for attitude change by creating a pleasant association with a previously negative or neutral attitude and give the individual cause to laugh at his old attitude. We should then reconcile his feelings by offering him logical reasons (adequate cognitive support) for the inconsistency we created.

A second suggestion Norins presents is the "plain art of thoroughness." We must point out all the inadequacies of the old attitude and meet them with new solutions. Without an argument which can thoroughly repudiate the cognitions of the old attitude, the individual has merely to repress our partial substitution and dismiss it as not being able to fulfill his need.⁷⁸ Of course, our attempts to re-direct his emotions must also keep in mind our quest for laughter. What type and technique of humor we use depends on the function

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 54 ff.

⁷⁸ Holleran, op. cit. p. 59.

the attitude serves and upon how it was formed, as we have discussed. For example, Halloran indicates to us that an attitude of an adjustment function formed because of group influence and desire for rewards probably is best changed by showing the incongruity of that attitude in the quest for a higher, more desirable reward, from a more desired group.⁷⁹

Another suggestion Norins mentions is to create the conviction that comes from believing you are getting a better deal. This is tied closely with undermining the affective and cognitive ties of the old attitude while presenting the better solution. The problem here is the copywriter's warning not to let the individual laugh at any part of the new solution (product or service), only at the folly of his old conviction.

Next, Norins says that we must "communicate something that can be acted upon". This is a very important point. Halloran says research indicates that if the goal of the message is complicated, unfamiliar, or difficult to take action on, then, particularly for a message to a mass audience, it is more effective to be quite simple and explicit in your recommendations.⁸⁰

We can use humor to create the perfect setting for an attitude change, but unless it is tied to a better solution, one all laid out and clear for adoption, our effort will be wasted. We must make certain that the inconsistency our ad creates is accompanied by a good solution.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 65-67.

The last suggestion on Norins' list is to adhere to the "age-old rule of repetition." The value of repetition in ads is well known to those in the advertising field. But what do we know about the repetition of humor? A study was made of audiences at a theater during a humorous performance and laughter at each feature was timed with a stop-watch.⁸¹ When an encore was given to a humorous song, the laughter was almost exactly half as long as it had been with the first presentation of the song. Everyday observation also indicates a joke is less amusing the second time it is heard, but it is also apparent that some jokes lose their flavor more quickly than others. The advertiser is interested in learning which kind of humor maintains its effectiveness with repetition over time.

The results of an experiment on this particular problem may be discussed. Hollingsworth found that subjective jokes lost their flavor comparatively more rapidly than did objective jokes.⁸² This result coincides with everyday experience. A characteristic groan usually arises when a pun is offered a second time. A joke told on oneself soon becomes annoying. On the other hand, people will frequently sit through a rerun of a good Peter Sellers' movie in which the humorous element is objective.

Here we can draw on the proposition of Relief Theory that mentions our desire to return to the childhood play state in which objective humor is the major force. Perhaps this element

⁸¹Burt, op. cit., p. 237.

⁸²Ibid., p. 237.

can offer a clue to advertisers in their choice of humor for an advertising campaign. Are physical calamity and derisive humor the best approaches to use in a long running campaign? We can only guess until more research is done in this area.

We have already listed several cautions about the use of humor, but the author feels he should make some further comments along these lines. Humor cannot be used to change every attitude, and it will not be effective on every person in the audience. As F.W. Jenkins, a noted English advertising man, says in his book, Copywriting, "What may seem funny to some people is insulting to others."⁸³ We must be sure not to go beyond the bounds of good taste in our use of humor. Usually, if the humor is done well, has been well researched, and gets right to the heart of the problem, we will not have any worries about violating good taste.

Where should humor not be used? When will it be ineffective? S. Watson Dunn feels that certain products and services do not lend themselves to humor by their very nature. He says it is difficult to be funny about death, sickness, or accidents.⁸⁴

I tend to disagree with this statement at face value. I lean more towards the position stated by Mr. Walker (quoted earlier) who excludes only death, although I would not

⁸³F.W. Jenkins, Copywriting, London, Crosby Lockwood & Sons, Ltd., 1958, p. 61.

⁸⁴S. Watson Dunn, Advertising Copy and Communication, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1956, p. 303.

entirely exclude this either. I am basing this upon what we know about fear and attitude change. Halloran cites a study done by Janis and Feshback which was done using strong, medium, and low fear appeals to bring about attitude change. Results showed that the strong fear appeal was least effective, but the low fear appeal was highly effective. Other experimenters have gained similar results.⁸⁵

Probable explanations of these findings are that the mild appeal may be just sufficient to act as a stimulus to absorb the message and act on it, whereas the strong appeal creates anxiety, impairs learning, produces aggression towards the source, and arouses other defenses.⁸⁶

I think that humor, tastefully combined with a mild fear appeal towards death, accidents, or sickness may result in a highly effective advertisement. Indeed, many life and accident insurance companies appear to feel this way also. There is a definite increase in companies using this technique as opposed to five years ago. (See Appendix Three.) The fear appeal inherent in these products, combined with the humorous element, seems to be producing results. There is a virtual boom in such advertisements among companies dealing with Dunn's "untouchable" products.

I must also disagree with Mr. Dunn when he says humor is a disadvantage when advertising products involving a large sum

⁸⁵Halloran, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 69.

of money, or an important purchase.⁸⁷ We need only refer to some successful examples of current campaigns to repudiate this statement. We can draw some examples from automobile advertising (American Motors and Dodge) or the campaigns of some large appliance manufacturers (Maytag and Frigidaire). For example, since American Motors switched to the Wells, Rich, and Green agency and has used humor in advertising its cars, its sales have increased appreciably. The Dodge success story of the mid-1960's is a milestone in creative advertising, with its use of the beautiful blond in a series of perilous, yet humorous situations. And Maytag's "loneliest man in town" (the Maytag repairman) is producing good results for that company.

So humor can be successful in the advertising business to change attitudes. But there are reservations and qualifications as to its use. Today the incorporation of humor into advertisements seems to be riding a tide of popularity. But it is not always being used to the best of its advantage. It needs to be studied and researched more as to its power in the art of persuasion. The public is more and more hardened to the messages of the advertiser. Humor may be just the device to break this crust of resistance, but we must better understand it before we can use it to its full potential.

⁸⁷ Dunn, op. cit., p. 305.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to change a person's attitudes through the use of humor. However, no single theory of humor as yet explains how this is done. Existing theories tend to be subjective and nonempirical. As a result, the topic of humor requires the examination of several theories.

We have examined three theories of humor which (oversimplified) explain laughter in terms of the incongruity of ideas or objects, the unadaptability or rigidity of people and the function of laughter as a social check, and as relief from restraint. All these explanations are applicable to changing attitudes of a knowledge, adjustment, or value-expressive function. However, it would appear that only that form which relies upon relief from restraint (i.e., a form of escape into a childhood play state) would have an effect on attitudes serving an ego-defensive function. The ego-defensive attitudes are more difficult to change because poking fun at the inadequacies of this type of attitude immediately arouses the individual to distort or repress the message. Humor does not usually allow the individual to pass through the three stages Katz has outlined as necessary for changing ego-defensive attitudes. The only exception might be for the role-playing situation as discussed earlier.

In order for any attitude change to occur, you must first get the individual to involve himself in your message. this involvement is needed for the introduction of inconsistency, which is necessary to the undermining of the old attitude. When using humor, it is probably easier to create the needed involvement and inconsistency in the affective element

of the old attitude rather than the cognitive. However, new cognitive solutions should be presented to validate the inconsistency created and to facilitate switching to the new attitude. In other words, you must change both the emotions and cognitions of the attitude to be successful.

Humor can be a very helpful device in the process of attitude change if it is used effectively, but it is not sufficient unto itself to bring about this change. The humor must be used to a purpose. That is, the humor used must play on the inadequacies of the old attitude and tie into a better solution for the individual. A solution he perceives as better.

Generalizing from the examples we have shown in this paper, every humorous ad (and every advertisement for that matter) has as one of its goals a shift in an attitude serving an adjustive function. That is, one object of every humorous ad is to convince the audience that the product or service in question will help them maximize their rewards and minimize their punishments. The advertiser is always trying to get the consumer to adjust his attitude in a direction favorable to the advertiser. Thus, we can conclude that all humorous advertising is (although it may also be other things) "adjustive advertising" from an "adjustment seeking advertiser."

. The humor used in advertising copy should be directed at the salesman of the product, the user or nonuser of the product, or at the foibles of human nature and society. It should never be directed at the product itself.

There is no rule to indicate which theory of humor, or which humorous technique, would best suit the advertising of

a particular product. This decision rests upon a number of factors including: the attributes of the product itself, the customers desired, and the goals of the advertising campaign.

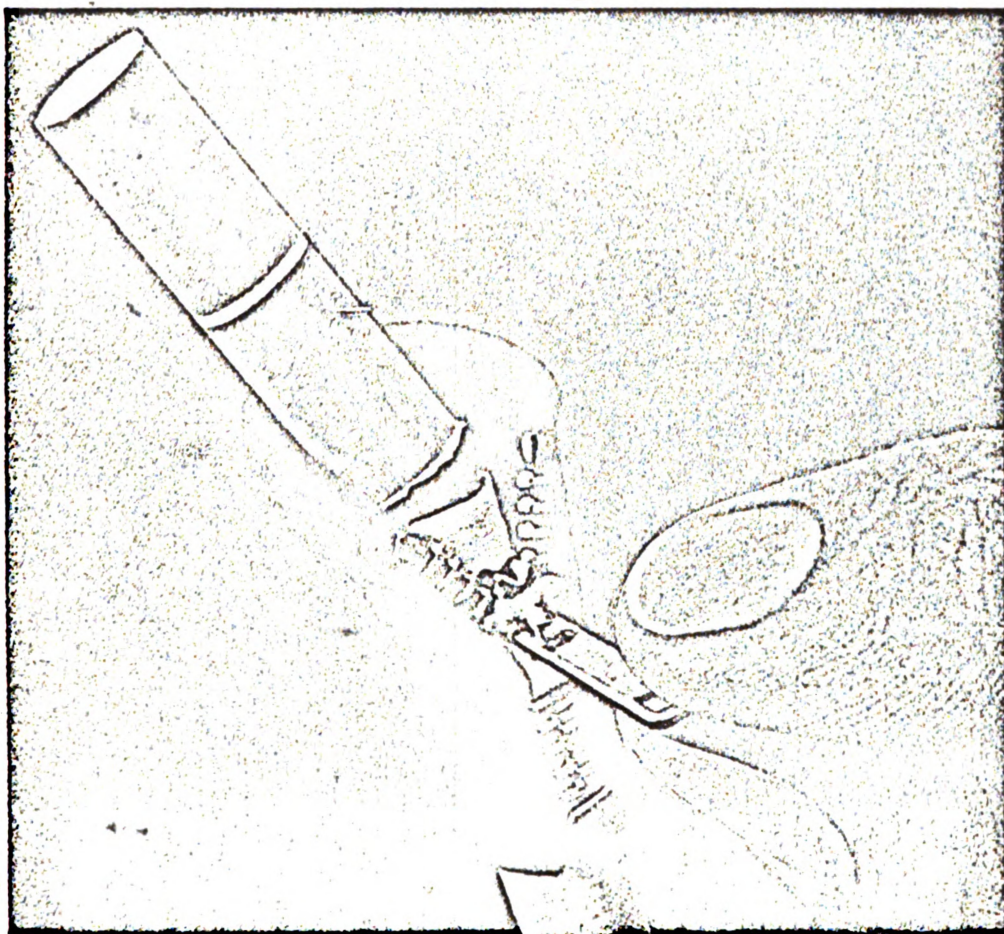
There are still differences of opinion over which products and services can or cannot use humor in their advertising. However, it appears that none can actually be written off as unsuitable for humorous treatment. The size of the purchase or the importance of the buying decision would seem to make little difference in the effect of the message. Of course, all ads must be done tastefully, the humor being suitable for the situation and the product.

Virtually any type of humorous technique is now available to advertisers due to the growing sophistication of the American public. Humor that was too subtle for the mass audience in the past can now be utilized with great effect. Advertisers are now realizing this fact and using all the major techniques and styles of humor in their advertising.

Evidence thus far indicates that an advertising campaign would be better off using objective humor rather than subjective due to the effects of repetition. In fact, humor involving pure hilarity or slapstick would seem to suffer least from the effects of a long campaign. It also appears that objective humor is the best technique to use in any attempt to initiate attitude change since it has the best chance to break through the individual's crust of resistance. This is especially so for attitudes serving an ego-defensive function.

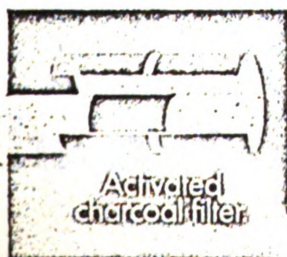
Appendix One

If you could put
Tareyton's charcoal filter
on your cigarette, you'd have
a better cigarette.

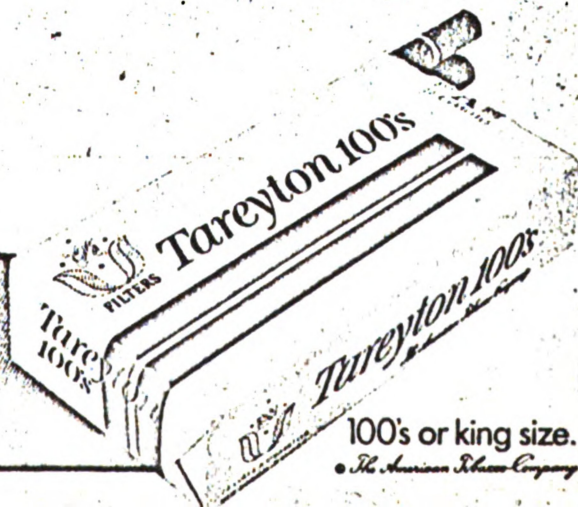
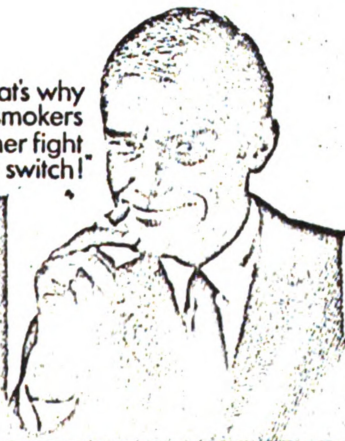


But not as good as a Tareyton.

"That's why
us Tareyton smokers
would rather fight
than switch!"



Activated
charcoal filter



100's or king size.

© The American Tobacco Company

When you come on in a Van Heusen shirt



*REG. TM EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY. FABRIC: 80% KODOL® POLYESTER AND 20% COTTON. PRICE: FROM \$7.

the rest come off like a bunch of stiffs.



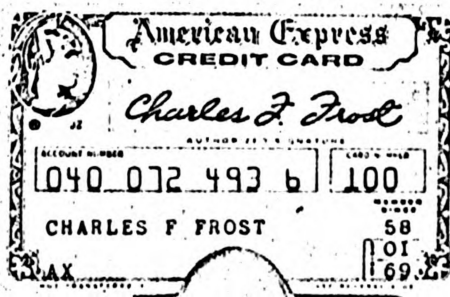


© Copyright 1968 American Express Company

**Sure, you can fumble through a fat wallet
to buy airline tickets**

but why?

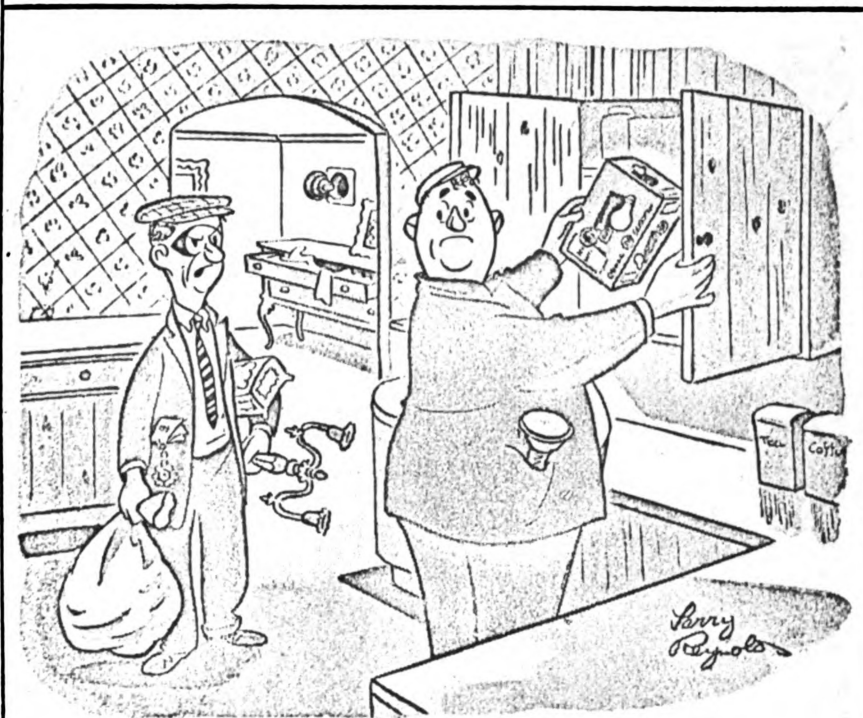
With American Express you simply "Sign & Fly."® This eliminates fumbling because (1) there's hardly an airline that *doesn't* welcome American Express, and (2) you get a choice of ways to pay. You can take up to a year to pay with the *lowest* service charge in the business. Or be billed on your next statement with no service charge.



**The only credit card you need
for travel and entertainment.
American Express**

Appendix Two

Bulbsnatchers



"Don't take their spare light bulbs. You'll just encourage bulbsnatching . . . and bulbsnatching's wrong!"

Don't put up with empty sockets, spills in the dark and too small bulbs in the wrong sockets. Laugh off these bulb-snatcher woes with G-E bulbs. General Electric's 4-bulb package makes it easy to keep G-E bulbs on hand. And most people do. Surveys show General Electric bulbs are used in 95% of all electrified American homes. Four 60-watt G-E bulbs only 76¢; four 100-watts for 88¢.



GENERAL  ELECTRIC

Figure 8-9. The humorous approach is frequently effective when handled correctly. (General Electric Corporation, and Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc.)



Should a gentleman offer a Tiparillo to a census taker?

Is this the old did-it-with-mirrors play? Look again.

Okay, that's enough looking. What you've got on your hands are carbon copy twins. And what you've got in your hands are Tiparillo® and Tiparillo M with menthol.

Since Tiparillo is the slim, elegant cigar with the neat tip, would it be statistically correct to offer it to this census-taking twosome?

Because all they really want is your name, address, phone number and a few other factual facts.

But what they get sort of depends on what you offer.

Mail to Tiparillo Calendar
Box 315 Murray Hill Station
New York, N.Y. 10016

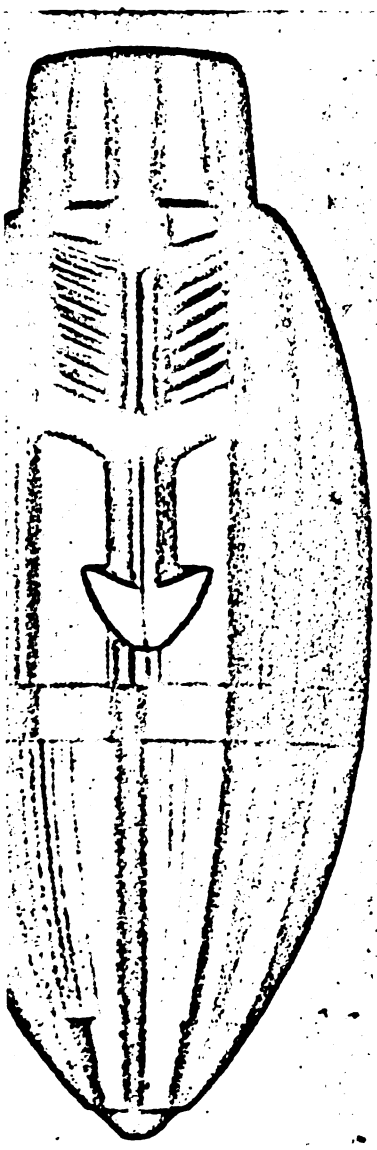
Gentlemen: Chicks are my bag. Please send the 2 above and the 11 others in the 1968 Tiparillo Calendar. (Calendar starts with March '68, goes to Feb. '69.) I enclose \$1.00.

Name _____

Address _____

City & State _____ Zip _____

66 "How I slimmed down to almost nothing?"



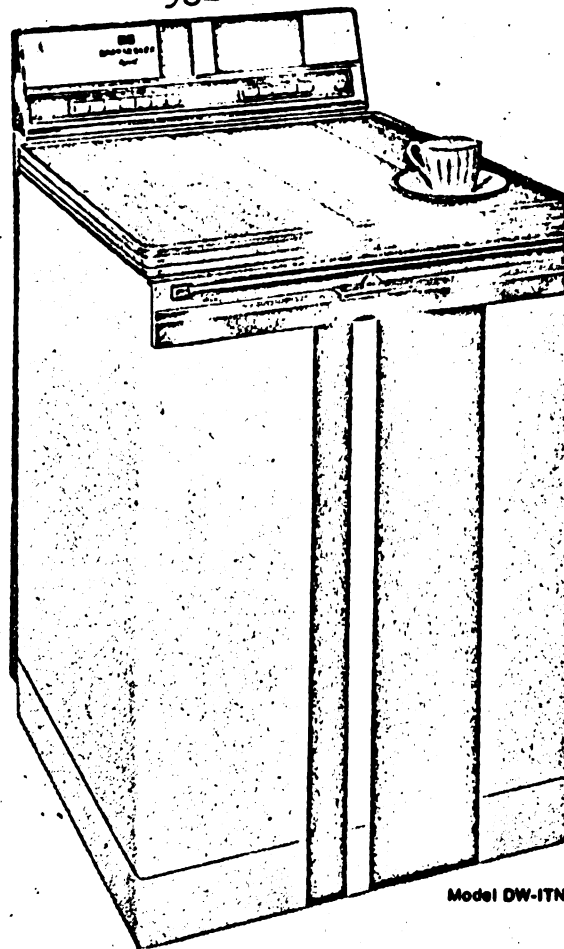
low I felt before"

Nobody loves a fat pen.
 "Look at the knockwurst," people said.
 "Is it a pen or a balloon?"
 "Watch out for Tubby. He'll rip the pocket right off your shirt."
 That's all I ever heard, day and night.
 "Fat pen." "Fat pen." "Fat pen."
 I wept bitter ink. After all, I'm sensitive. I'm a writer, you know.
 Besides, I wasn't just fat. I was fat for a reason: beneath that lumpy exterior bulged an enormous ink cartridge, that wrote more than any other pen's.
 Yes, I was fat. But I also wrote longer than any other ballpoint pen. A lot longer. More than a mile longer.
 I felt all mixed up. Proud and ashamed at the same time.
 Writing longer meant everything to me. I would never give it up. Never.
 But how I envied my pen pals. Those slim, trim jobs. So chic. So elegant.
 Short on ink, maybe. But long on looks. So I went right to the top.
 "Oh powerful Parker engineers," I pleaded. "Oh skillful Parker designers. Do something. Help me get into shape. Deliver me in a trimmed-down case."
 "I don't care what the cost or how sharp the pain. I'll do anything. But touch not a drop of my ink supply."
 Well. All the words in my big, fat ink cartridge can't describe the torture.
 The pushing, the pulling, the tightening! The stretching, the pummeling, the strain! It took forever, but they performed a miracle.
 A skintight sheath!
 No. Even better. *Five* skintight sheaths. A \$6 brushed stainless steel job. A \$15 12k gold-filled number. A \$17.50 sterling silver version. A \$25 14k gold-filled dream. And a dazzling vermeil outfit at \$32.50.
 I can't believe it's the same me. With exactly the same ink refill.
 But it *is*. At last, I'm the pen you love to touch.
 Long on ink *and* long on looks.
 It's changed my whole life. People want me near them. I feel needed.
 I'm writing things I could never write. I'm going places I've never been and doing things I've never done.
 I'm one of the beautiful pens.
 I even have a jet-set name: the Parker International Classic Ball Pen.
 Not bad for a fat little pen from Janesville, Wisconsin.

The Parker International



"Look at me now"

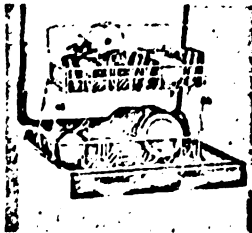


Top-loading dishwasher
in white or colors.
Add your own rallye stripes.

Frigidaire Helpmobile SS... the hardtop your wife will love.

And a Frigidaire top-loading Helpmobile is one dishwasher a man can understand.

As standard equipment, there's a hard-working SS powerplant. Super-Surge Wash Action with 70 g.p.m. water recirculation will help your wife get dishes really clean without a lot of bothersome, tedious pre-rinsing.



How about that hardtop styling? The smart work top in a cherrywood pattern is practical, too. It's extra counter space for her.

This Helpmobile is bus, not coupe, size. Holds 16 table settings* so she can often handle family-size loads.

It's as fast and easy to load as a station wagon. The top rack swings up, locks in place for instant access to both the top and bottom racks.

Complex controls? No, sir—she'll operate her Helpmobile as easily as she does an automatic shift. She has pushbutton

selection of 5 cycles, including 150-degree water to help banish germs.

Finally, there's 4-on-the-floor mobility. A quartet of smooth-rolling casters will help her move the dishwasher back and forth to the sink easily.

Check out a Helpmobile yourself. Think the top. Poke around inside. Roll it back and forth. (Sorry, you can't kick the casters. They're tucked away underneath.) But step on it. Mother's Day is just around the corner.

Luckily, a Frigidaire Helpmobile dealer isn't much farther.

* Table setting as established by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers.

Give Mom a Frigidaire Dishwasher because...

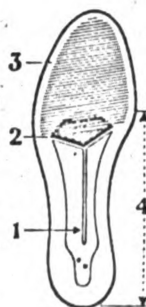
Frigidaire bothers to build in more help



style?

Obviously! But we put more than good looks into Wright Arch Preserver® shoes. We also put in our four exclusive comfort features. To support your arch, help reduce fatigue. To relax your foot. To hold the shape of the shoe for keeps. And to do a lot more to keep you feeling fit . . . and, in style.

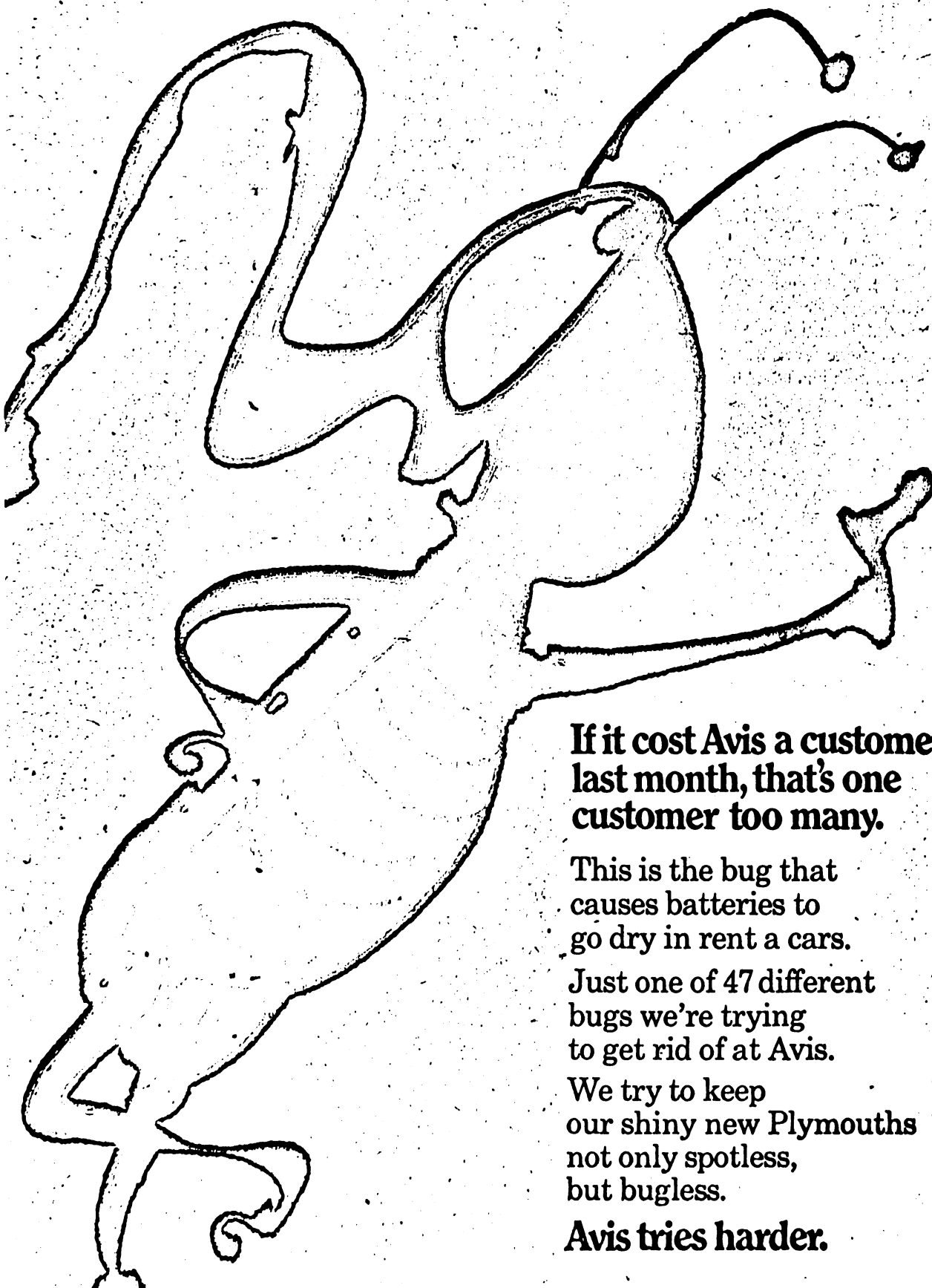
Style 219



1. Arch Preserver shank
2. Metatarsal lift
3. Flat forepart
4. Heel to ball fitting

wright!

The Battery Sucker.



**If it cost Avis a customer
last month, that's one
customer too many.**

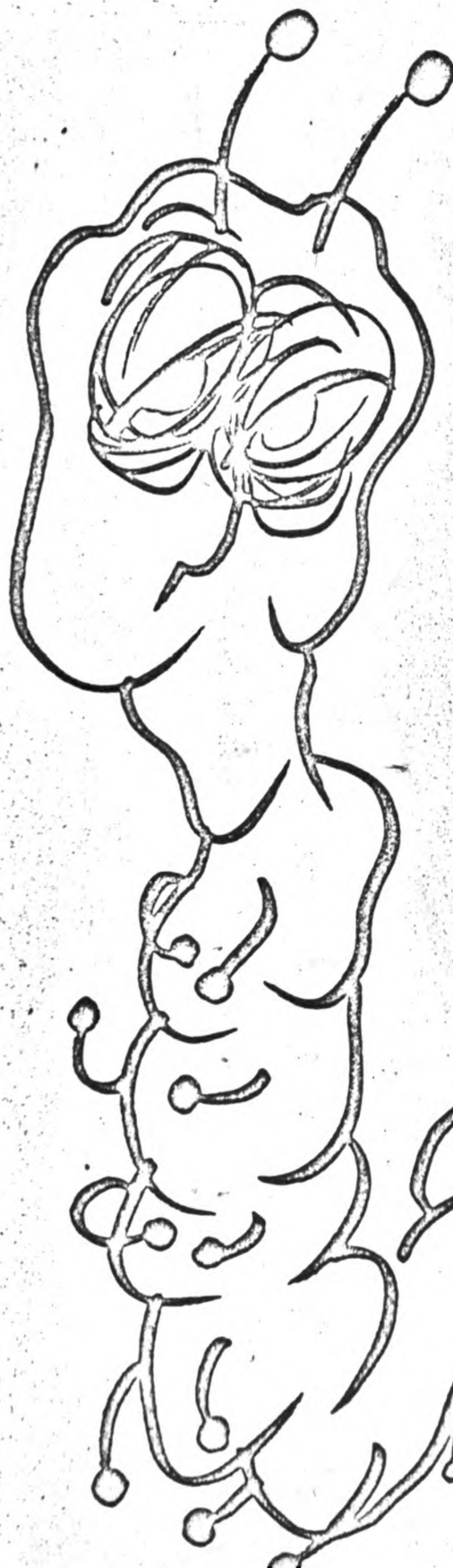
This is the bug that
causes batteries to
go dry in rent a cars.

Just one of 47 different
bugs we're trying
to get rid of at Avis.

We try to keep
our shiny new Plymouths
not only spotless,
but bugless.

Avis tries harder.

The Mirror Smearer.



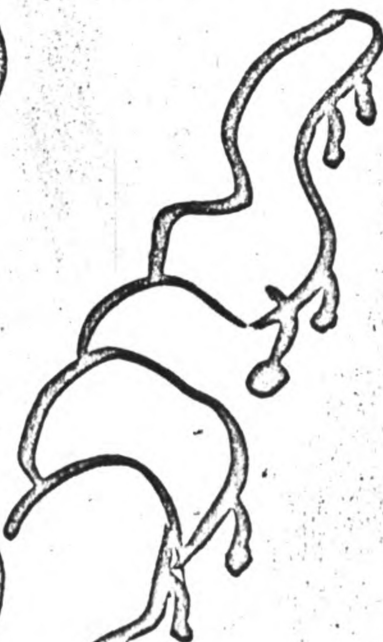
This is the bug to
blame for smeared mirrors
in rent a cars.

But we're rubbing
him out at Avis.

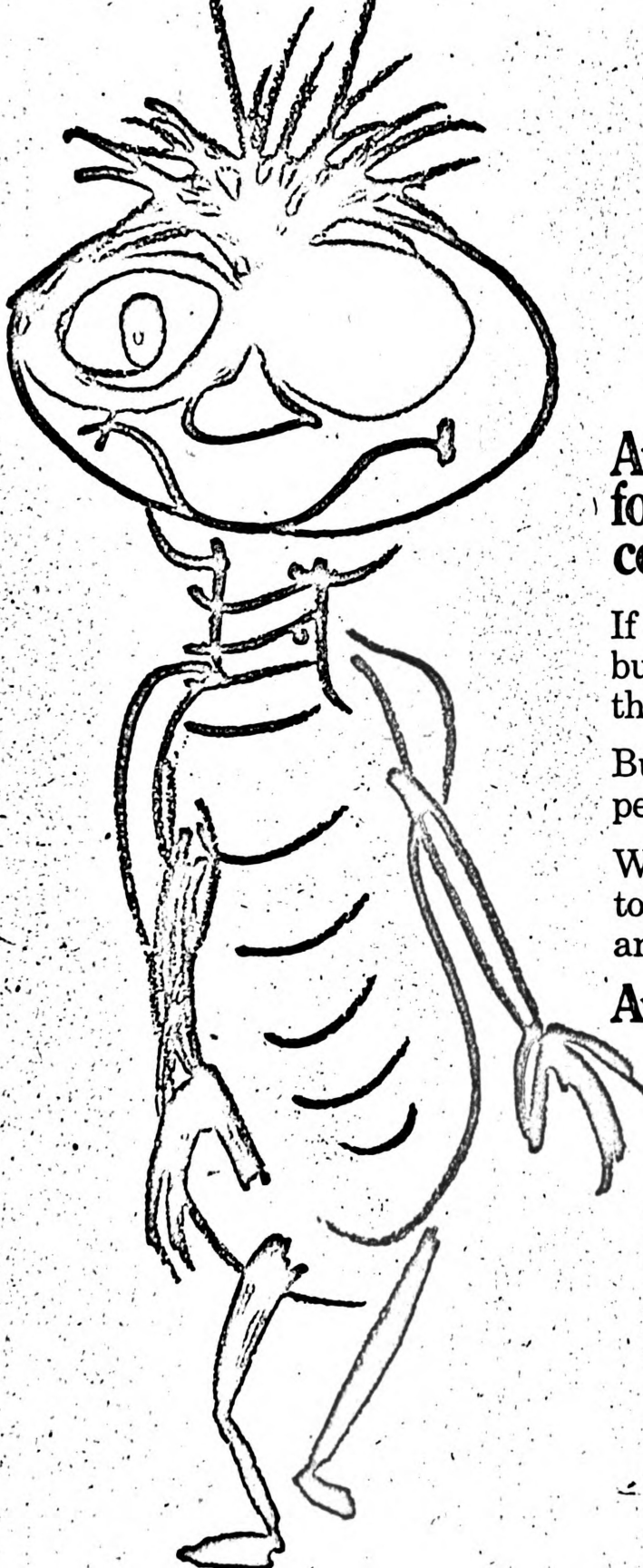
In fact, when you rent
our shiny new Plymouths,
there are 47 different
varieties of bugs you
probably won't be seeing.

We're winning
the battle of the bugs.

Avis tries harder.



The One-eyed-car Bug.



**Avis has to watch out
for this one. He only
comes out at night.**

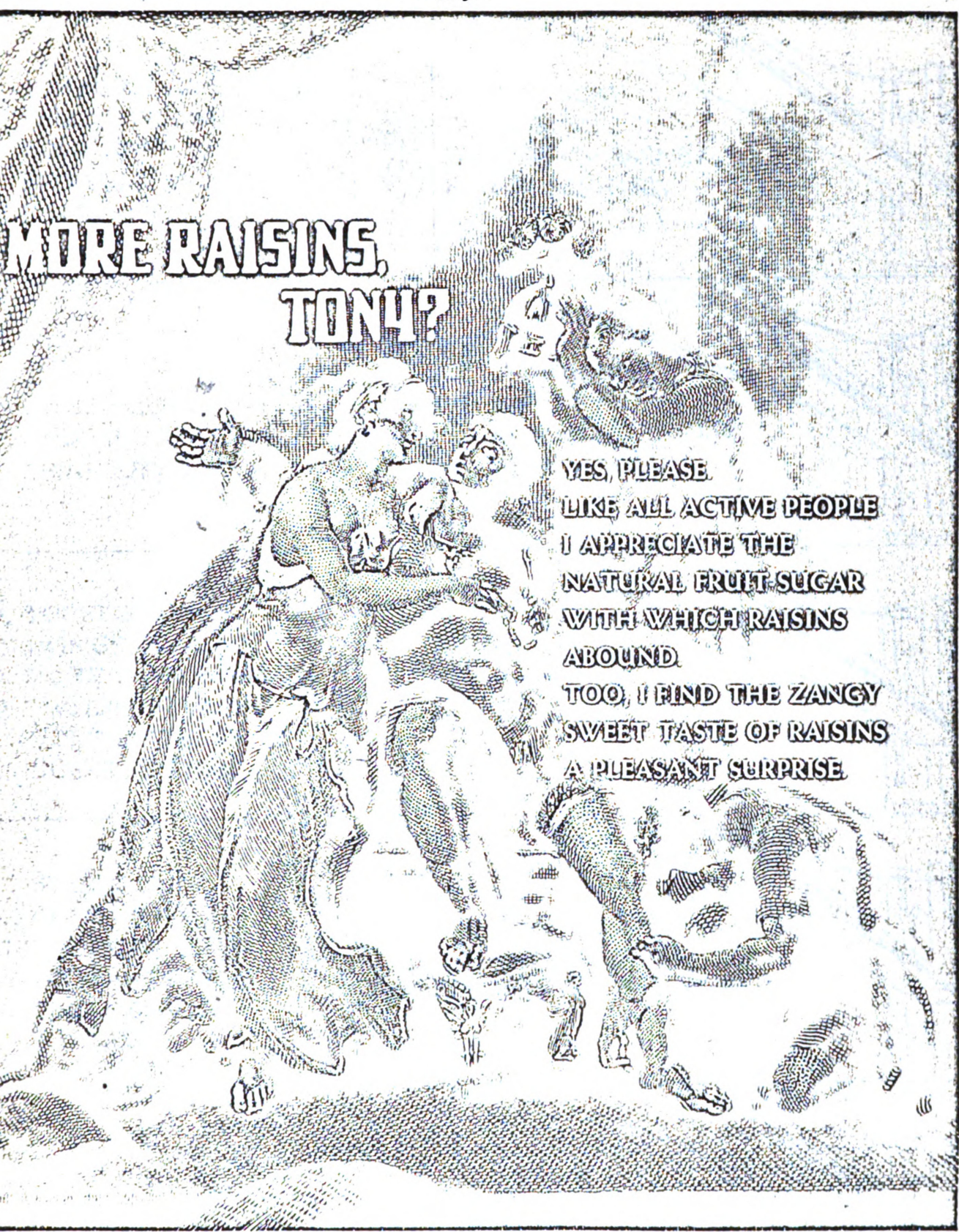
If a rent a car has a
burnt-out headlight
this is the bug to blame.

But we're keeping our eyes
peeled for him at Avis.

We want our new Plymouths
to be thoroughly dependable,
and thoroughly debugged.

Avis tries harder.

MORE RAISINS, TONY?



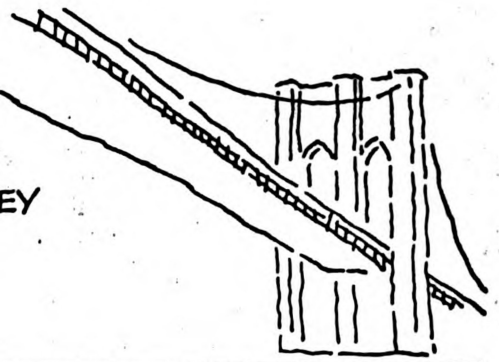
YES, PLEASE
LIKE ALL ACTIVE PEOPLE
I APPRECIATE THE
NATURAL FRUIT-SUGAR
WITH WHICH RAISINS
ABOUND.
TOO, I FIND THE ZANGY
SWEET TASTE OF RAISINS
A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

It's recorded historical fact: When Cleopatra set out to snare Mark Antony, she "gathered the rarest varieties of raisins for him." ¶ Two years later Mark was still eating raisins. ¶ So wherever you roam—look for sweet, neat, handy, dandy little raisins. They help to Nile away the time.

YUH MEAN YUH'LL
SELL ME THE WHOLE
GOLDARNED
BROOKLYN BRIDGE
FOR \$1000?



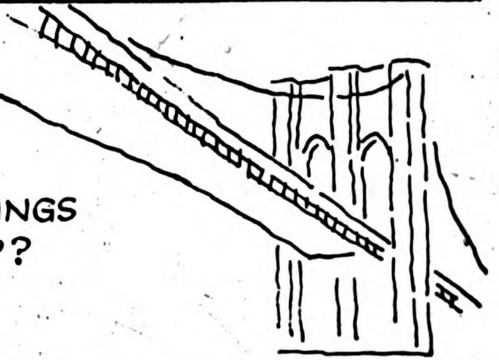
THEY DONT
CALL ME
BARGAIN BARNEY
FOR NOTHING.



THROW IN
TIMES SQUARE
AND I'LL
THINK ABOUT IT.



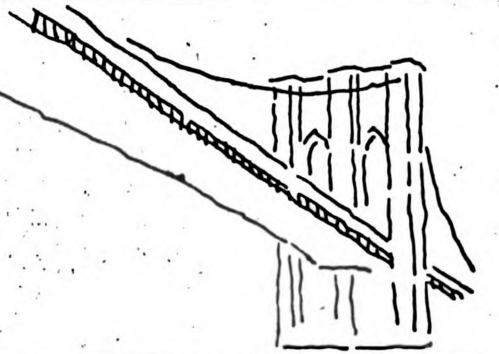
DO YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA
HOW MUCH THINGS
HAVE GONE UP?



YUP. COST OF
LIVINGS GONE UP
MORE THAN 16% IN
THE LAST 9 YEARS.
BUT THAT THERE
BRIDGE IS STEEL.



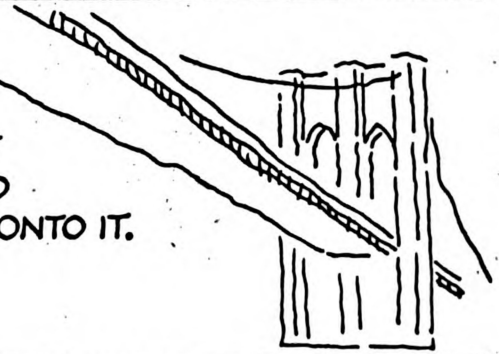
WHAT'S THAT
GOT TO DO
WITH IT?



STEEL'S ONLY
GONE UP 4% IN
THE SAME PERIOD.
YOU CAN'T HARDLY
FIND A BIGGER
BARGAIN.



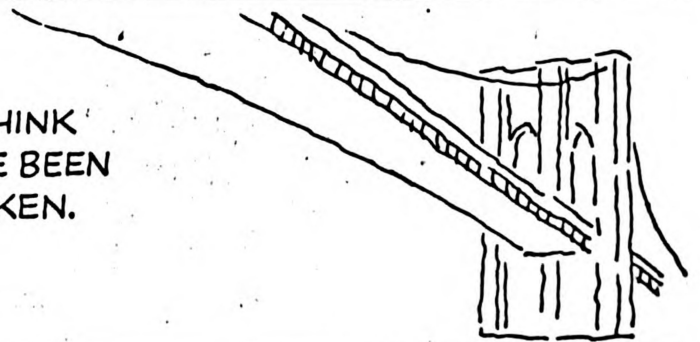
YEAH? IN THAT
CASE MAYBE I'D
BETTER HANG ONTO IT.

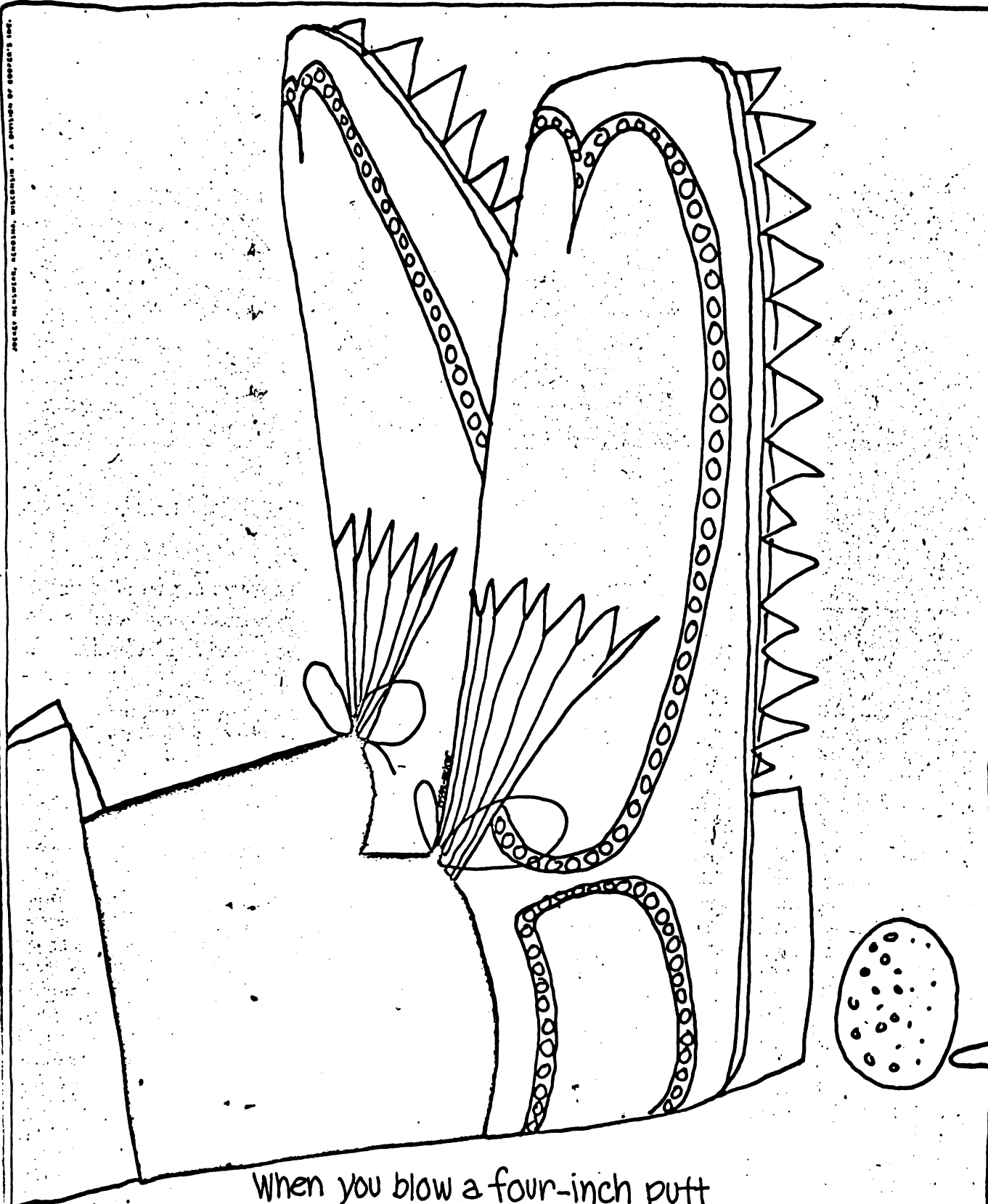


DO THAT.



I THINK
I'VE BEEN
TAKEN.





When you blow a four-inch putt
isn't it nice to know your socks match your shirt:

Just one of the compensations of Life. Jockey LIFE socks.
Plenty of terrific colors to play around with. To show you know
how to put yourself together with. The "Trophy" in Orlon® is only \$1.50,
a fancy any man can afford.

Jockey LIFE
HOSIERY

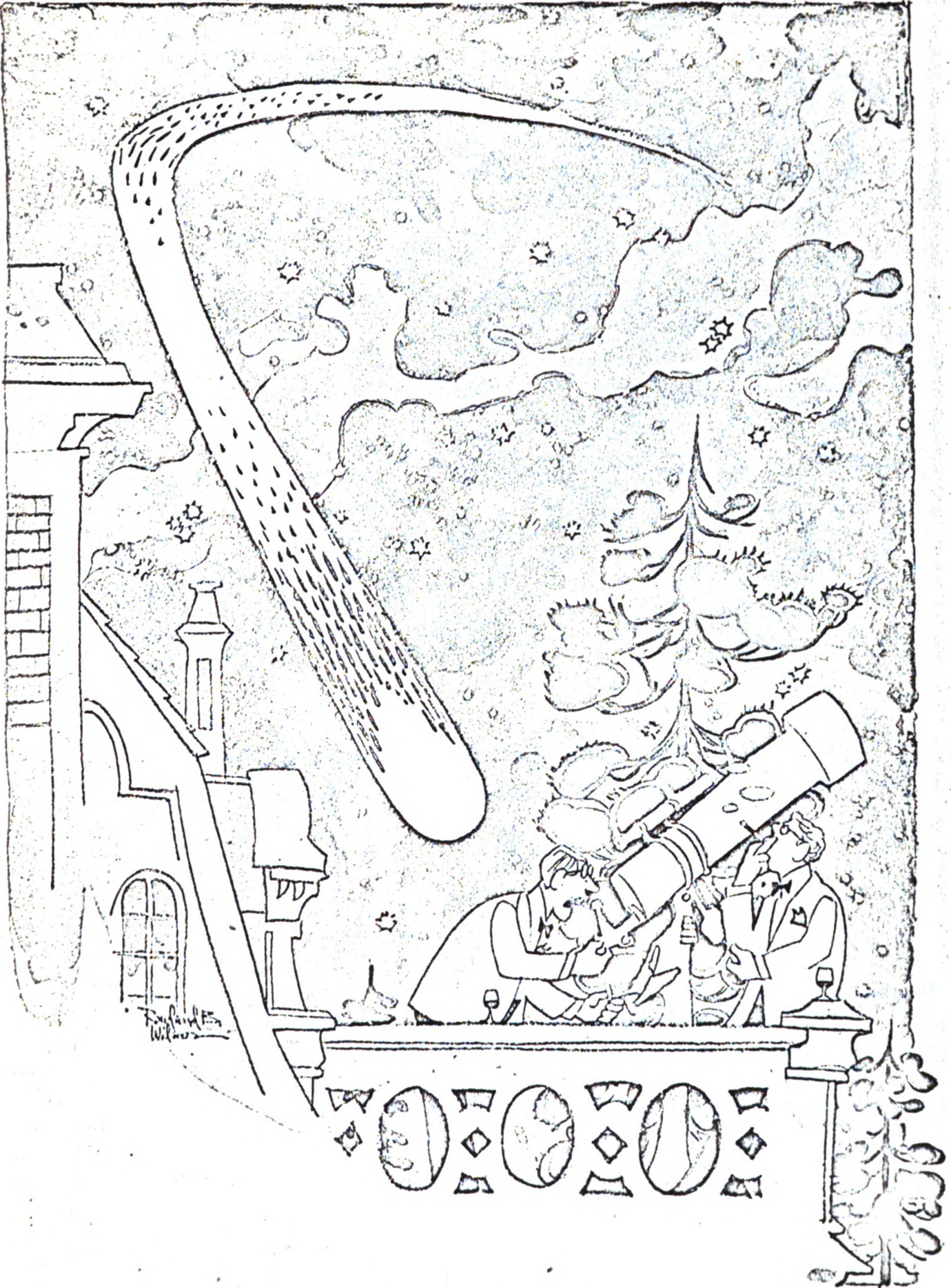
Appendix Three

-107-



Rowland E. Wilson

"My insurance company? New England Life, of course. Why?"



"My insurance company? New England Life, of course. Why?"



*Only 1 insurance company (we think)
deals with malevolent swans: The St. Paul*



IF THE SWANS
DON'T MATTER,
THE
ABSURDITY
DOES.

You may never want our new Swan policy. But you could want the elastic attitude that made us write it. This elastic attitude of ours means that your special problems get special treatment. Also of course, it leads us into absurdity, and delivers onto our desks such things as this:

SWAN REPORT, FROM OUR DEPARTMENT
OF UNUSUAL POLICIES

"Swans in question resided in a suburban pond, regarded affectionately by nearby homeowners. One swan, however, having fussy day, did push, poke, flap at or

otherwise annoy one local taxpayer.

"Taxpayer, unhinged, demanded Village Council remove swans from pond. Community rift developed. Coffee parties divided. Car pools suffered.

"Swans continued residence in pond, apparently enjoying publicity and extra bread crumbs.

"Council met, pondered, decided in favor of swans, but sagely insisted on Swan Liability Coverage for village. Hard to get. Didn't exist. Two insurance companies laughed at request.

"The St. Paul did not laugh, wrote policy. Suburban peace restored, car pools and coffee parties back to normal."

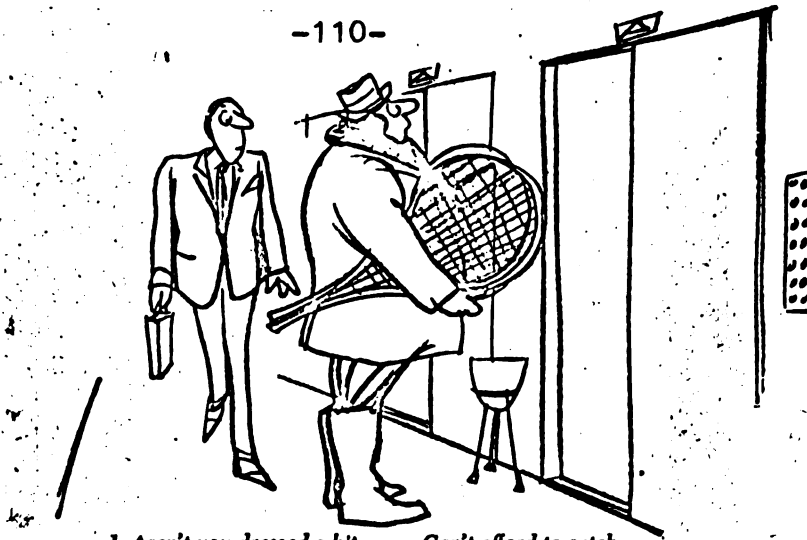
Why wait until you need an elastic insurance company? Find our Agents or brokers in the yellow pages. Get our quiet, venerable, solvent sagacity, too.

THE ST. PAUL
INSURANCE COMPANIES



Serving you around the world... around the clock

St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company
St. Paul Mercury Insurance Company
Western Life Insurance Company
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102



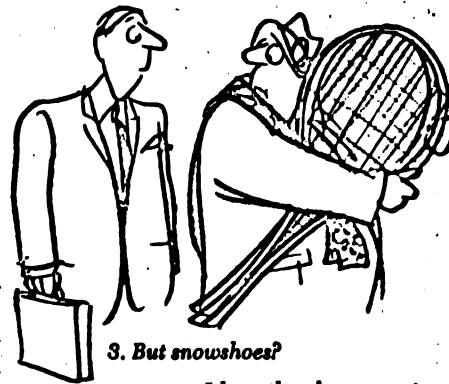
1. Aren't you dressed a bit warm for the weather? It's 79 degrees.

Can't afford to catch a chill.



2. The forecast for today is sunny and mild.

You can never tell when the North wind will blow.



3. But snowshoes?

I hear there's a storm in Manitoba heading our way.



4. Isn't that carrying caution a little far?

Listen, with all the mouths I have to feed in my mortgaged home, I can't take chances with my health. I need a regular paycheck coming in.



5. What you need is a Disability Income Policy from Equitable. It guarantees money to help meet living expenses if you get sick or hurt and can't work. Money that can keep coming in for months or years, depending on the plan you qualify for.

You mean I won't need thermal underwear anymore?

Look ahead with Living Insurance

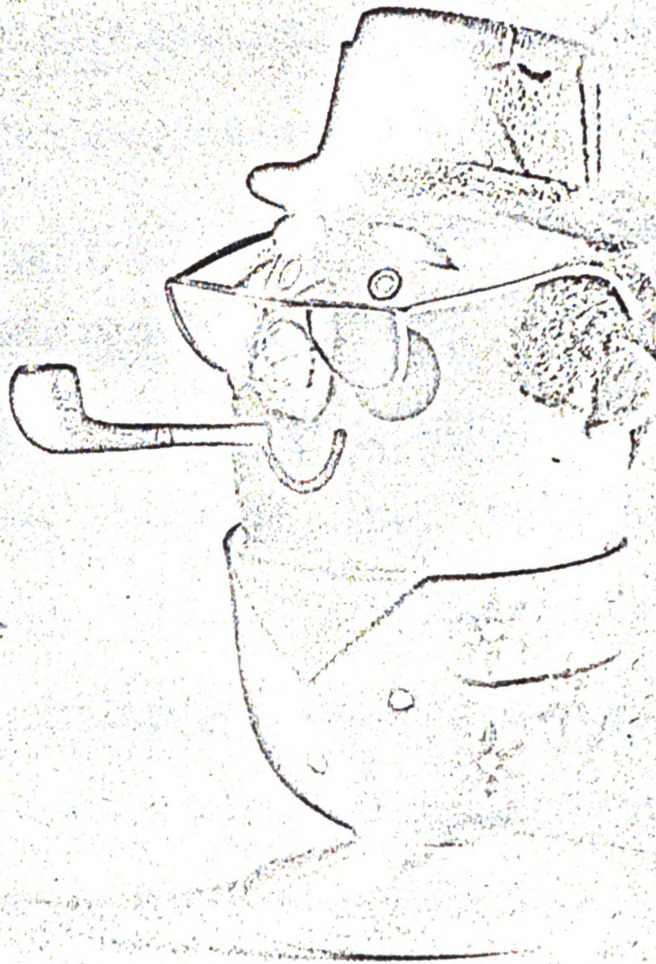
The EQUITABLE Life Assurance Society of the United States

Home Office: 1285 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10019



You buy Prudential insurance to protect your family. But, when the kids leave the nest, know what you'll have left?

A nest egg.

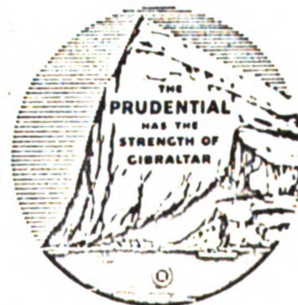


Who wouldn't like to be building a nest egg if he could afford to? But who can afford to when he's got a growing family to protect? The answer is—you can. You can with the same insurance you use to protect your family: Prudential's 2-Way Protection.

Prudential's 2-Way Protection can make sure your family doesn't lose everything if they lose you. It could guarantee them a check every month to help them keep on living the way you want them to.

And, when your family is grown and doesn't need protecting, Prudential's 2-Way Protection switches over and protects you. Through the years it builds a cash reserve that can be used to provide a monthly retirement check you can't outlive.

Big question is—can you afford it? You can—as your Prudential man will be happy to show you. When it comes to helping you get “double” protection from every insurance dollar, Prudential understands.



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