

Harvesting Minds

How TV Commercials Control Kids

Roy F. Fox

What happens when the historically protected and increasingly valuable sphere of the public classroom is invaded by the very images and messages that it should help students to evaluate? This ground-breaking, remarkable study addresses that question.

--George Gerbner

Dean Emeritus, Annenberg School
for Communication, University of
Pennsylvania

If there were any doubts about the effects of advertising on children, Roy Fox's book should forever banish them. Fox lays out in chilling and disturbing detail the sale of our children to the influence of corporate advertising on television.... This book should be read--and studied--by every parent, teacher, school board member, and legislator who is concerned about the welfare of all children. After reading Fox's book, you will never again use the phrase "just an ad" when talking about television advertising.

--William Lutz

Rutgers University

What happens when kids are held captive to an endless stream of MTV-like television commercials? Armed with a tape recorder, Fox, a language and literacy researcher, spent two years interviewing over 200 students in rural Missouri schools. Why? Because more than eight million students in 40% of America's schools watch TV commercials as part of Channel One's broadcast every day. Students "read" commercials far more often than they read *Romeo and Juliet*. These ads now constitute America's only national curriculum. In this groundbreaking study, Fox explores how these commercials affect kids' thinking, language, and behavior.

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ROY F. FOX teaches at the University of Missouri-Columbia and directs the Missouri Writing Project. He is the author of Technical Communication: Problems and Solutions (1994) and Images in Language, Media, and Mind (1994). He has published numerous articles and chapters on thinking, writing, media, and culture.

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Harvesting Minds is an important contribution not only to the Channel One controversy, but also to the wider issue of understanding the relation of kids, ads, and TV. Kids today may well know the glittering surfaces and superficialities of ads--the slogans and the celebrities--but this book shockingly reminds us that kids are still kids.... As a patient researcher and listener, Roy Fox elicits and records the comments of children as they talk about the ads they've seen on Channel One as part of the nationwide captive audience.... His recording of this anecdotal evidence may be more powerful than the statistics and abstract ethical arguments of other observers.... He concludes with provocative proposals, worthy of consideration by those who are not content to accept the growing intrusion of commercialism into the classroom as a fait accompli.

--Hugh Rank, Governors State
University