

0From Salvation To Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930 [T. J. Jackson Lears](#)

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1"On or about December 1910," Virginia Woolf once said, "human character changed." This hyperbole contains a kernel of truth. Around the turn of the century a fundamental cultural transformation occurred within the educated strata of Western capitalist nations. In the United States as elsewhere, the bourgeois ethos had enjoined perpetual work, compulsive saving, civic responsibility, and a rigid morality of self-denial. By the early twentieth century that outlook had begun to give way to a new set of values sanctioning periodic leisure, compulsive spending, apolitical passivity, and an apparently permissive (but subtly coercive) morality of individual fulfillment. The older culture was suited to a production-oriented society of small entrepreneurs; the newer culture epitomized a consumption-oriented society dominated by bureaucratic corporations.

¹ 2It is easy to exaggerate the suddenness or completeness of this transformation. Early on it occurred primarily within the official norms and expectations of the dominant social groups—and even there it was halting and only half conscious. Further, a producer orientation survived in the consumer culture, though it was cast in a secular mold. By the 1920s, among the American bourgeoisie, the newly dominant consumer culture was a muddle of calculated self-control and spontaneous gratification.

3Focusing on the United States, this essay aims to explore the role of national advertising in this complex cultural transformation. Since the subject is too large for comprehensive treatment here, what follows will attempt to be suggestive rather than exhaustive — to indicate a new approach to the history of American advertising, which has long remained a barren field. Aside from in-house or administrative histories, there is little to choose from. The few historians who have addressed the subject in recent years tend to fall into two opposing camps, best represented by Daniel Boorstin and Stuart Ewen. Boorstin thoughtfully sketches some moral and emotional dilemmas in the culture of consumption, but he ignores power relations. To him advertising is an expression of impersonal technological, economic, and social forces. Ewen, on the other hand, can see nothing but power relations. To him the consumer is the product of a conspiracy hatched by corporate executives in the bowels of the Ministry of Truth, then imposed with diabolical cleverness on a passive population. Neither Ewen nor Boorstin grasps the complex relationship between power relations and changes in values — or between advertisers' changing strategies and the cultural confusion at the turn of the century.

² 4My point here is obvious but usually overlooked: Advertising cannot be considered in isolation. Its role in promoting a consumer culture can only be understood within a network of institutional, religious, and psychological changes. The institutional changes have been much discussed elsewhere; the religious and psychological changes have not. To thrive and spread, a consumer culture required more than a national apparatus of marketing and distribution; it also needed a favorable moral climate. In this essay, I shall argue that the crucial moral change was the beginning of a shift from a Protestant ethos of salvation through self-denial toward a therapeutic ethos stressing self-realization in this world — an ethos characterized by an almost obsessive concern with psychic and physical health defined in sweeping terms.

5Of course, one could argue that there is nothing specifically historical about this therapeutic ethos. People have always been preoccupied by their own emotional and physical well-being; all cultures, ancient and modern, have probably had some sort of therapeutic dimension. But my research in magazines, letters, and other cultural sources suggests that something was different about the late-nineteenth-century United States. In earlier times and other places, the quest for health had occurred

within larger communal, ethical, or religious frameworks of meaning. By the late nineteenth century those frameworks were eroding. The quest for health was becoming an entirely secular and self-referential project, rooted in peculiarly modern emotional needs — above all the need to renew a sense of selfhood that had grown fragmented, diffuse, and somehow "unreal." The coming of the therapeutic ethos was a modern historical development, shaped by the turmoil of the turn of the century. And the longings behind that ethos — the fretful preoccupation with preserving secular well-being, the anxious concern with regenerating selfhood — these provided fertile ground for the growth of national advertising and for the spread of a new way of life.

³ In the emerging consumer culture, advertisers began speaking to many of the same preoccupations addressed by liberal ministers, psychologists, and other therapeutic ideologues. A dialectic developed between Americans' new emotional needs and advertisers, strategies; each continually reshaped and intensified the other. Sometimes deliberately, sometimes unwittingly, advertisers and therapists responded to and reinforced the spreading culture of consumption. Their motives and intentions were various, but the overall effect of their efforts was to create a new and secular basis for capitalist cultural hegemony.

I use the term "hegemony" reluctantly but unavoidably, because it suggests an illuminating perspective on the consumer culture — a way to transcend the "one-dimensional" model developed by Herbert Marcuse without losing its grasp of power relations. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci used the concept of cultural hegemony to suggest that ruling groups dominate a society not merely through brute force but also through intellectual and moral leadership. In other words, a ruling class needs more than businessmen, soldiers, and statesmen; it also requires publicists, professors, ministers, and literati who help to establish the society's conventional wisdom — the boundaries of permissible debate about human nature and the social order. Outside those boundaries opinions can be labeled "tasteless," "irresponsible," and in general unworthy of serious consideration. Even if ordinary people do not consciously embrace the conventional wisdom, it shapes their tacit assumptions in subtle ways. One thinks, for example, of Theodore Roosevelt's remark to a political foe that "we do not have 'classes' at all on this side of the water" — a conventionally wise belief that has shaped American opinion throughout the twentieth century. By helping to create a taken-for-granted "reality," the leaders of the dominant culture identify beliefs that are in the interest of a particular class with the "natural" common sense of society (and indeed of humanity) at large.

⁴ Yet cultural hegemony is not maintained mechanically or conspiratorially. A dominant culture is not a static "superstructure" but a continual process. The boundaries of common-sense "reality" are constantly shifting as the social structure changes shape. As older values become less fashionable, they are widely discarded but persist in residual forms. Newer values, which sometimes seem potentially subversive at first, are frequently sanitized and incorporated into the mainstream of enlightened opinion. This cultural "progress" is a messy business, generating social and psychological conflicts that remain unresolved even among the affluent and educated. The changes in the dominant culture are not always deliberately engineered; at times they stem from attempts to resolve private dilemmas that seem to have little to do with the public realm of class domination. Without conspiring to do so, sometimes with wholly other ends in view, the ruling groups continually refashion the prevailing structure of feeling to express — more or less — their own changing social experience.

⁵ This is a schematic and abstract way of stating my major theme. In what follows I plan first to sketch the emerging therapeutic ethos, which was promoted from the beginning as a liberation; then to show how it became diffused by advertisers and incorporated as a new mode of adjustment to the developing corporate system; and finally to turn to Bruce Barton, an advertising executive and therapeutic ideologue whose career not only illustrates the centrality of therapeutic attitudes in the new consumer culture but also demonstrates that a cultural transformation can never be reduced to a conspiracy or an impersonal conceptual scheme. Calculating, ambitious, and successful, Barton was also confused and ambivalent — a doubting high priest of prosperity whose work both celebrated and protested the emerging consumer culture. The domain of values remained a contested terrain, in Barton's divided mind as in the dominant classes generally.

The Emergence of a Therapeutic Ethos

¹⁰The origins of the therapeutic ethos are too complex to describe in detail here. In part, its genesis involved the professionalization and growing authority of medicine. That process had been under way at least since the early antebellum era, when health reformers sprouted like mushrooms, linking medical with moral standards of value. But during the late nineteenth century, medical prestige became far more firmly established. While urban ministers' authority waned, doctors of body and mind became professionalized into therapeutic elites. This meant a growth in influence not only for traditional M.D.s but also for neurologists, psychologists, social scientists with panaceas for a sick society, and even for mind curists on the penumbra of respectability. Ministers and other moralists began increasingly to conform to medical models in making judgments and dispensing advice.

⁶ ¹¹But besides the rise of medical authority, there was a subtler process at work as well. For the educated bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century, reality itself began to seem problematic, something to be sought rather than merely lived. A dread of unreality, a yearning to experience intense "real life" in all its forms — these emotions were difficult to chart but nonetheless pervasive and important. They energized the spread of the therapeutic ethos, underlay the appeal of much national advertising, and mobilized a market for commodified mass amusements. They formed, in short, the psychological impetus for the rise of the consumer culture.

¹²These feelings of unreality constitute a huge subject in their own right. In *No Place of Grace* I attempted to document these elusive emotions, to locate their origins in specific social and cultural changes during the late nineteenth century, and to connect the spreading sense of unreality with the emergence of a therapeutic world view. In the next few pages I must compress that argument without, I hope, losing sight of its full complexity. To begin: Feelings of unreality stemmed from urbanization and technological development; from the rise of an increasingly interdependent market economy; and from the secularization of liberal Protestantism among its educated and affluent devotees.

¹³The first and simplest source of a sense of unreality was the urban-industrial transformation of the nineteenth century. Changes in material life bred changes in moral perception. As Americans fled the surveillance of the village, they encountered the anonymity of the city. Escape was liberating but also disturbing, as any reader of late-nineteenth-century literature knows. William Dean Howells, himself a refugee from village tedium, sensed the corrosive impact of urban life on personal identity. In Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), his protagonist Basil March notes that the "solvent" of life in the metropolis seemed to bring out the "deeply underlying nobody" in everyone. Yet there was more to the change than urban malaise. During the second half of the nineteenth century, technological advance brought unprecedented comfort and convenience to the more privileged sectors of the urban bourgeoisie. To affluent Americans reared with the agrarian bias of republican moralism, urban "luxury" could be a symptom of "overcivilization" as well as a sign of progress. Freed from the drudgery of farm life, they were also increasingly cut off from the hard, resistant reality of things. Indoor plumbing, central heating, and canned foods were pleasant amenities but made life seem curiously insubstantial; they contributed to what Daniel Boorstin has perceptively called "the thinner life of things." Complaints about prepackaged artificiality may seem a recent and faddish development, but as early as 1909 cultural commentators were lamenting "the Era of Predigestion," which had rendered vigorous, firsthand experience obsolete. According to *The Atlantic Monthly*, "The world is by degrees getting ready to lie abed all day and transact its business." Yet this ease of life had not produced healthy people; on the contrary, the most comfortable people were also the most anxious, the most likely to fall victim to "our now universal disorder, nervous prostration."

¹⁴"Nervous prostration" or neurasthenia were shorthand terms for the immobilizing depressions that plagued many among the urban bourgeoisie during the late nineteenth century and after. While descriptions of neurasthenia varied, they were united by their emphases on the neurasthenic's paralysis of will, his sense that he was no longer able to plunge into "the vital currents of life," his feeling that life had become somehow unreal.

⁸ 15Technological change alone could not account for such extreme symptoms. There was another and equally mundane source: the spread of an interdependent national market economy. Besides distributing the tinned meat, condensed milk, and other "modern conveniences" that insulated people from primary experience, the national market laid claim to venerable concepts of the self. As more and more people became enmeshed in the market's web of interdependence, liberal ideals of autonomous selfhood became ever more difficult to sustain. For entrepreneurs as well as wagedworkers, financial rise or ruin came to depend on policies formulated far away, on situations beyond the individual's control. And by the 1890s, as Alfred D. Chandler and a host of economic historians have made clear, the large, bureaucratically organized corporation was becoming the dominant model for businessmen who sought to organize the national market. Jobs were becoming more specialized, more interdependent; personal autonomy was becoming more problematic. It was not surprising that believers in self-made manhood grew uneasy. Even the privileged ones fretted over "Our Lost Individuality" as they pondered the coming of a mass society. "We are a mass," an Atlantic writer complained in 1909. "As a whole, we have lost the capacity for separate selfhood."

⁹ 16As self-made manhood became ever more chimerical, the meaning of success began subtly to change. In a society increasingly dominated by bureaucratic corporations, one dealt with people rather than things; "personal magnetism" began to replace character as the key to advancement. In advice literature after 1900, as Warren Susman has observed, success seemed less often a matter of mastering one's physical environment or plodding diligently at one's trade, more often a matter of displaying one's poise among a crowd. The author of *Personality: How To Build It* (1916) advised his readers to "be original but retain the esteem of others" and to "love company, widen your connections." At work and at home, behavior became more finely attuned to the ubiquitous presence of "others."

¹⁰ 17As success became more dependent on evanescent "impression management," selfhood lost coherence. The older ethic had required adherence to an internalized morality of self-control; repressive as this "inner-direction" had been, it helped to sustain a solid core of selfhood. The newer ethic of "other-direction" undermined that solidity by presenting the self as an empty vessel to be filled and refilled according to the expectations of others and the needs of the moment. After the turn of the century, success manuals increasingly prescribed what the sociologist David Riesman has called "modes of manipulating the self in order to manipulate others." The successful man or woman had "no clear core of self" (in Riesman's words), only a set of social masks.

¹¹ 18The notion of social masks had been abroad for centuries, but Americans had nearly always assumed the existence of a "simple, genuine self" beneath the layers of convention. By the turn of the century, for many Americans, that assumption was no longer tenable. From lowbrow success literature to the empyrean realm of theory (in the work of William James and George Herbert Mead), Americans began to imagine a self that was neither simple nor genuine, but fragmented and socially constructed. As Howells wrote in 1890, the human personality seemed like an onion which was "nothing but hulls, that you keep peeling off, one after another, till you think you have got down to the heart at last, and then you have got down to nothing."

¹² 19This feeling of inner emptiness was not confined to literati like Howells; it pervaded much of the educated bourgeoisie. One can sense it in many aspects of Victorian culture: in the immobilized depressions of neurasthenics, in youthful seekers' yearnings to "be a real person," in all the anxious earnestness which often seemed — by the late nineteenth century — to lack clear focus or direction. The autonomous self, long a linchpin of liberal culture, was being rendered unreal — not only by the growth of an interdependent market but also by a growing awareness of the constraints that unconscious or inherited drives placed on individual choice. As the educated public grew fascinated with "The Loss of Personality," multiple "selves," and other mysteries unearthed by psychiatrists, conventional definitions of "will power" began to seem oversimplified and familiar feelings of selfhood began to seem obsolete.

¹³ 20The decline of autonomous selfhood lay at the heart of the modern sense of unreality. Without a solid sense of self to deny or control, standards blurred and Victorian moral boundaries grew indistinct. Yet the internalized injunction to "produce" remained. The result was anxious busyness. The magazines of the

1880s and after were full of complaints about "overpressure" in businessmen, housewives, and even schoolchildren. For some, repression seemed pointless but remained a psychic necessity. It was not surprising that the sufferers from "overpressure" often took to their beds with nervous prostration. Victorian, imperatives persisted while their religious and even ethical sanctions faded.

¹⁴ 21 These difficulties were exaggerated by the sorry state of liberal theology. As Nietzsche had predicted, "with the decline of Christianity it will seem for a time as if all things had become weightless." Isolated and idiosyncratic as Nietzsche may seem, his observation aptly caught the platitudinous vagueness, the sheer banality of much late-Victorian Protestantism. And, as I tried to show in *No Place of Grace*, many late Victorians would have agreed with his characterization of their culture. Indeed, a feeling that one can call "weightlessness" reinforced the spreading sense of unreality among the educated bourgeoisie. As liberal Protestantism became assimilated to the secular creed of progress, as Satan became an Evil Principle and hell a metaphor, the preferred personal style shifted from shrill earnestness to formulized benevolence.

¹⁵ 22 Religious beliefs have historically played a key role in defining an individual's sense of reality. Without distinct frameworks of meaning, reality itself becomes problematic; the individual slides into normlessness, or anomie. It would be a gross exaggeration to assert that many educated late Victorians had reached that point. Most still celebrated liberal Protestantism as the best of all possible religions. Yet behind the paeans to spiritual progress there were many glimmerings of doubt. Numerous editorialists wondered whether the decline of orthodoxy had lessened intensity of conviction and endangered moral standards. The bicentennial of Jonathan Edwards' birth in 1903 stirred a *Century* writer to comment that while "the rigid atmosphere of old-fashioned orthodoxy" had produced "moral giants," the more relaxed religious beliefs of the twentieth century seemed unable to match that achievement. People seemed more tolerant of others' beliefs but less committed to their own. By the turn of the century such observations were common among the educated professionals who wrote for prominent magazines. It is possible to hazard some generalizations about religious experience among the late-Victorian bourgeoisie: As supernatural beliefs walled, ethical convictions grew more supple; experience lost gravity and began to seem "weightless."

¹⁶ 23 In all, the modern sense of unreality stemmed from extraordinarily various sources and generated complex effects. Technological change isolated the urban bourgeoisie from the hardness of life on the land; an interdependent and increasingly corporate economy circumscribed autonomous will and choice; a softening Protestant theology undermined commitments and blurred ethical distinctions. Yet a production ethos persisted: Self-control became merely a tool for secular achievement; success began to occur in a moral and spiritual void.

24 It was no wonder, then, that so many young Americans who came of age at the turn of the century found themselves gasping for air in their parents' Victorian home, no wonder they yearned to fling open the doors and experience "real life" in all its dimensions. Among the educated bourgeoisie, this quest for "real life" was the characteristic psychic project of the age. It energized the settlement house movement, as legions of sheltered young people searched in the slums for the intense experience they felt they had been denied at home; it lay behind Van Wyck Brooks's attack on the anemia of American culture; it provoked Randolph Bourne's insistence that ossified school curricula be replaced by "education for living." This reverence for "life" as a value in itself was a new development in American cultural history. Never before had so many people felt that reality was throbbing with vitality, pulsating with unspeakable excitement, and always just out of reach. And, most important for my purposes, the feeling of unreality helped to generate longings for bodily vigor, emotional intensity, and a revitalized sense of selfhood.

¹⁷ 25 These new emotional needs underlay the shift in moral climate that began to occur during the late nineteenth century. At its most mundane, this change involved a loosening of the work ethic in response to "overpressure," a growing acceptance of what William James called "The Gospel of Relaxation" among educated business and professional people as well as factory and clerical workers. While avant-garde bohemians dramatized the appeal of life in extremis, captains of a nascent "leisure industry" played to the yearning for intense experience at all social levels. They commodified titillation at cabarets and in amusement parks; they catered to the anxious businessman as well as the bored shop girl; they

assimilated immigrants and WASPs in a new mass audience. Roller coasters, exotic dancers, and hootchy-kootchy girls all promised temporary escapes to a realm of intense experience, far from the stuffy unreality of bourgeois culture. In more elevated tones, social theorists spoke to the same emotional needs: Attacking Victorian repression, men like Walter Lippmann and Simon Nelson Patten set about "the task of civilizing our impulses by creating fine opportunities for their expression" within the new corporate system. Intense experience was their philosopher's stone, anxious boredom their implacable enemy.

¹⁸ 26 But if the flight from unreality ranged widely, it was most clearly embodied in the therapeutic ethos. By looking more closely at therapeutic ideals, we can more clearly map out the territory claimed by therapists and advertisers alike. To a bourgeoisie suffering from identity diffusion and inner emptiness, the creators of the therapeutic ethos offered harmony, vitality, and the hope of self-realization. The paths to self-realization could vary. One might seek wholeness and security through careful management of personal resources; or one might pursue emotional fulfillment and endless "growth" through intense experience. These approaches were united by several assumptions: an implicit nostalgia for the vigorous health allegedly enjoyed by farmers, children, and others "close to nature"; a belief that expert advice could enable one to recover that vigor without fundamental social change; and a tacit conviction that self-realization was the largest aim of human existence. This last assumption was the most important: Whether one sought self-realization through controlled or spontaneous experience, commitments outside the self shrank to meet the seeker's immediate emotional requirements. Rooted in largely personal dilemmas, the therapeutic ethos nevertheless provided a secular world view that well suited the interests of corporate proprietors and managers in the emerging culture.

27 The older form of the therapeutic ethos had existed since early Victorian times. It promoted a defensive, maintenance-oriented strategy toward psychic and physical health. This prudential attitude marked many early remedies for neurasthenia. The neurologist Silas Weir Mitchell designed a "rest cure" to "fatten" and "redden" his patients; others, like George Miller Beard and Mary Putnam Jacobi, simply counseled the careful hoarding of physical and emotional capital. Physicians and laymen alike resorted to money metaphors. In a *Good Housekeeping* story of 1885 a healthy lady remarked of her neurasthenic sister that "Louisa lived on her *principal* of strength, I on my *interest* ... the secret of health, as of wealth, is to lay up a little each day." Similar analogies persisted well into the twentieth century. Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, president of *Good Housekeeping's* "League for Longer Life," told readers in 1920 that "thousands have written for the League's questionnaire which will enable them to find out just where their health account stands — whether they may draw on it for many years or whether it is about to be closed out." The improvident faced bankruptcy if they failed to heed their investment counselors.

¹⁹ 28 This prudential attitude toward health rested on assumptions of physical and psychic scarcity. Children as well as adults were warned to conserve their energies; even babies faced psychic ruin if they became overexcited while at play. The older form of therapy, with its frequent money metaphors and its insistence on careful husbanding of resources, expressed the persistent production orientation within the dominant culture. The Victorian morality of self-control was surviving, but on a secular basis. Therapists counseled prudence because it promoted well-being in this world, not salvation in the next.

29 Yet by the 1890s there was a growing sense that health might not be exclusively a matter of moderation. Alongside the prudential "scarcity therapy" an exuberant "abundance therapy" began to appear. Charging that the prudent man was only half alive, abundance therapy promised to reach untapped reservoirs of energy and open the way to a richer, fuller life. More directly and aggressively than scarcity therapy, abundance therapy offered bracing relief from the stifling sense of unreality.

30 Assumptions of psychic abundance marked a wide variety of cultural figures. Annie Payson Call, a popular self-help writer, counseled neurasthenics to achieve *Power Through Repose* (1891): Instead of fighting fatigue, she advised, yield to it; instead of remaining constrained by "sham emotions" and "morbid self-consciousness," emulate the healthy baby who "*lets himself go*" with unconscious ease. "The most intense sufferers from nervous prostration," Call wrote, "are those who suppress any sign of their feelings." Contrary to the prudential view, Call believed that one could actually increase psychic energy through emotional release. She won a wide readership that included William James, who was fascinated

by "The Energies of Men" and eager to explore doctrines of psychic abundance ranging from mind-cure to psychoanalysis.

²⁰ 31 James's rival, the psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall, was even more preoccupied by instinctual and emotional vitality. Like James, Hall drew on Bergson, Freud, and other European sources in formulating a vitalist critique of late-Victorian culture. His *Adolescence* (1904) was a paean to the spontaneity of the budding youth; his *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology* (1917) presented his subject as an adolescent superman, strikingly handsome and brimming with enthusiasm — a model for bourgeois revitalization. World War I provoked Hall to his fullest statement of therapeutic ideals. In *Morale* (1920), Hall argued that the war had proven the bankruptcy of the old criteria of right and wrong. It was time to replace morality with morale, which he defined as "the cult of condition" — of feeling "alive, well, young, strong, buoyant, and exuberant, with animal spirits at the top notch." Morale "is found wherever the universal hunger for more life is getting its fill," Hall wrote. "The great religious, especially the Christian founders who strove to realize the Kingdom of God, that is, of man here and now, are perhaps the world's very best illustration of morale."

²¹ 32 Despite Hall's religious language, the tendency of his thought was fundamentally secular. He asserted that the Kingdom of God exalted "man here and now"; he believed that "more life" has its own reward. This was a typical pattern in the expression of therapeutic ideals: Clouds of religiosity obscured a growing preoccupation with worldly well-being. This pattern emerged most clearly among liberal Protestant ministers. Convinced that they were using psychology to renew spirituality, they unwittingly hastened the drift toward a more secular society. To be sure, religion has always had a therapeutic dimension; the "cure of souls" was an ancient Christian tradition. But in the Protestant pronouncements of the early twentieth century, psyche sometimes displaced soul; a larger supernatural purpose sometimes faded from view.

33 Among the most influential Protestant therapists were the Episcopal ministers Elwood Worcester and Samuel McComb, who joined with the psychiatrist Isador Coriat to found the Emmanuel Movement. In 1908, at their Boston church, they began to use hypnotism and autosuggestion in an attempt to heal disorders of body and mind among their parishioners. The Emmanuel Movement was founded at a propitious moment: Popular fascination with mysticism, mind cure, and depth psychology had reached unprecedented heights. News of the Emmanuel Movement's success spread quickly; soon other healing centers opened in New York, Chicago, Newark, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Northampton, Massachusetts. By stressing the therapeutic value of "unseen spiritual powers," the movement spoke directly to the bourgeois need for "more life." "We possess in our religion," its leaders claimed, "the greatest of all therapeutic agents, if only we deal with it sincerely." In their preoccupation with unlocking "the potentiality of human life" and their tendency to reduce religion to a "therapeutic agent," the Emmanuel founders anticipated the difficulties of much contemporary Christianity. Responding sympathetically to their troubled flocks, they unknowingly accelerated the secularizing process.

²² 34 The same difficulty can be seen at the apex of liberal Protestantism, in the thought of Harry Emerson Fosdick. By the 1920s Fosdick was probably the most influential Protestant moralist in the United States (at least among urban liberals). He was a brilliant preacher and a serious thinker; he certainly cannot be reduced to a bland apologist for therapeutic ideals. Yet Fosdick too was caught up in the moral confusion he sought to alleviate. And at times his pronouncements may have undermined the Christian faith he wanted to preserve. Faced with the challenge of positivism on one hand and fundamentalism on the other, Fosdick did as liberal theologians before him had done. He opted for accommodation with modernity. While he sometimes assaulted self-absorption, the overall thrust of his preaching (at least through the 1920s) was to provide religious sanctions for an emerging therapeutic ethos. Like Hall, Fosdick stressed Jesus's physical vitality and confidence in human potential. The starting point of Christianity, Fosdick claimed, was not an otherworldly faith but a faith in human personality. "Not an outward temple, but the inward shrine of man's personality, with all its possibilities and powers, is ... infinitely sacred." By the 1920s that view had become a liberal commonplace.

²³ 35 An emphasis on the sanctity of human potential led to a redefinition of religion. Flaying formalistic Christianity for its "endless unreality and hypocrisy," Fosdick charged that "religion and life have been

drifting apart." As a result, "multitudes of people are living not bad but frittered lives — split, scattered, uncoordinated." To relieve this sense of fragmentation, Fosdick called for an *Adventurous Religion* (1926) that "will furnish an inward spiritual dynamic for radiant and triumphant living." According to Fosdick, every religious custom and doctrine must pass two tests: "First: is it intelligently defensible; Second: does it contribute to man's abundant life?" The problem, in other words, was not morality but morale. Like other religious leaders, Fosdick unwittingly transformed Protestant Christianity into a form of abundance therapy.

²⁴ 36 Yet the advocates of psychic abundance could not entirely muffle the voice of prudence, even within themselves. Fosdick exalted character, will, and restraint as paths to abundant life; Hall warned that "those guilty of [sexual] self-indulgence have less reserve to draw on for any emergency"; Call insisted that her largest purposes were "efficiency" and "true self-control." The emerging therapeutic ethos was a muddle of spontaneity and calculation.

²⁵ 37 This coexistence of abundance therapy with vestigial prudence surfaced clearly in the work of Luther S. Gulick — YMCA organizer, founder of the Campfire Girls, and apostle of *The Efficient Life* (1907). While Gulick frequently characterized health as the careful management of scarce resources, for him the efficient life was ultimately the exuberant life. He warned men that mere freedom from disease was inadequate; to be "men of power" they must cultivate "tremendous vitality." He warned women that "children inevitably grow away from mothers who do not keep themselves growing and their lives vivid." Avoiding constipation, taking regular exercise, thinking "strong and happy thoughts" before bedtime — for Gulick these were not only defensive strategies but paths to "full living" and "continuous growth." There was no larger purpose in life.

²⁶ 38 This fascination with "growth" as an end in itself linked Gulick not only with many other abundance therapists but also with a wide range of other cultural figures. Self-help advisers, social scientists, popular literati, and the avant-garde all began to elevate becoming over being, the process of experience over its goal or result. Some employed fashionable evolutionary analogies. "The true and living god," Hall wrote enthusiastically in 1920, "is the developmental urge." Others expressed conventional wisdom less self-consciously. The poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox, for example, warned in 1894 that "to love is to know happiness but not contentment, rapture but not peace, exhilaration but not satisfaction; for contentment means inertia, peace means stagnation, and satisfaction means satiety, and these three cannot exist where Love is." A dread of stasis affected many among the educated bourgeoisie.

²⁷ 39 The worship of growth and process in the therapeutic ethos was closely allied with other transformations in American culture: a "revolt against formalism" among social scientists; a "revolution in manners and morals" among the middle and upper classes generally; the rise of a leisure ethic for those subject to a regimented workplace. At the most obvious level, the therapeutic injunction to "let go" eased adjustment to the rhythms of life under corporate capitalism. Hall, for example, assumed that modern work would be degrading and that workers therefore needed regular bouts of revitalizing leisure. "Everyone, especially those who lead the drab life of the modern toiler, needs and craves an occasional 'good time,'" he acknowledged. "Indeed we all need to glow, tingle, and feel life intensely now and then." According to therapists like Hall (and social theorists like Lippmann), liberation should occur in homeopathic doses. Even self-styled "philosophers of play" like Gulick argued that play impulses should be organized and channeled in "healthy" directions. Private spontaneity promoted public adjustment to bureaucratic authority.

²⁸ 40 Even in the private realm, liberationist ideals concealed a coercive moral imperative. The therapeutic ethos implied not only that one ought to pursue health single-mindedly but also that one ought to be continuously exuding personal magnetism and the promise of ever more radiant, wholesome living. The coerciveness of the "ought" came less often from an internalized moral code and more often from the expectations of others; but the coerciveness was still there, wedded to ideals like "growth" and "spontaneity" that proved vague and elusive. Indeed, there was something inherently self-defeating about a deliberate cultivation of spontaneity or a calculated shedding of inhibitions. For many, the therapeutic quest led ultimately in circles.

²⁹ 41 There was a further problem as well. A loosening of repressive morality came at the price of increased banality. Defining the natural as the good, abundance therapists sought to liberate instinctual life by denying its darker side. Elwood Worcester expressed a common view when he said: "The subconscious mind is a normal part of our spiritual nature ... [and] what we observe in hypnosis is an elevation of the moral faculties, greater refinement of feeling, a higher sense of truth and honor, often a delicacy of mind, which the waking subject does not possess. In my opinion the reason for this is that the subconscious mind, which I believe is the most active in suggestion, is purer and freer from evil than our waking consciousness." With assertions like these, abundance therapists waved aside the towering rages and the insatiable longings in the human unconscious. And they dismissed the painful conflict between instinct and civilization. Instinct liberated became instinct made banal; the reaction against weightlessness produced more weightlessness.

³⁰ 42 Ultimately the most corrosive aspect of the therapeutic ethos was the worship of growth and process as ends in themselves. By devaluing ultimate purposes, abundance therapists (like "antiformalist" social scientists), tended to undermine possibilities for any bedrock of moral values. And by urging unending personal growth, abundance therapists encouraged the forgetting (one might say the repression) of the past. They embraced the creed of progress and transferred its effects to the most intimate areas of life. Devaluing the customs and traditions designed to preserve cultural memory, they devalued as well the personal memory enshrined in family continuity. Ancestral ties and familiar loyalties blocked personal as well as economic development.

³¹ 43 Yet the creed of growth remained unsatisfying. Even among therapists themselves, inchoate discontent persisted. Casting off the withered hand of the past, they slipped into nostalgia. That sentiment surfaced in Hall, Gulick, Call, and many others — in their distrust of the modern city, their admiration for the healthiness of rural life, their yearnings for a childlike state of nature. "Childhood," Hall wrote, "is the paradise of the race from which adult life is a fall." Gulick inveighed against the "mushiness" of modern urban life. Therapists wanted pastoral peace and technological advance, pre-oedipal innocence and bourgeois adulthood. The therapeutic ethos, in short, mirrored the contradictions of a class unsettled by the changes it was helping to promote.

³² 44 To sum up: The therapeutic ethos was rooted in reaction against the rationalization of culture — the growing effort, first described by Max Weber, to exert systematic control over man's external environment and ultimately over his inner life as well." By the turn of the century the iron cage of bureaucratic "rationality" had begun subtly to affect even the educated and affluent. Many began to sense that their familiar sense of autonomy was being undermined, and that they had been cut off from intense physical, emotional, or spiritual experience. The therapeutic ethos promised to heal the wounds inflicted by rationalization, to release the cramped energies of a fretful bourgeoisie.

45 Reacting against rationalization, the creators of the therapeutic ethos nevertheless reinforced that process by promoting a new and subtler set of controls on human behavior. The nature of control varied: Scarcity therapy addressed anxieties; abundance therapy addressed aspirations. But the main point is that longings for reintegrated selfhood and intense experience were assimilated by both therapeutic and business elites in the emerging consumer culture: not only by psychiatrists, social theorists, and captains of the nascent "leisure industry" but also by advertising executives. This was not a conspiracy but an unconscious collaboration. The elites' motives were diverse and contradictory; they were often as full of self-doubt as their clients and as enamored of the therapeutic promise.

³³ 46 This confusion was nowhere clearer than in the advertising profession. Responding to the therapeutic ethos, advertisers also reinforced it. Some were cynical manipulators; others were prophets of abundance deluded by their own ideologies; still others were uncertain seekers groping for secure identities in a rationalizing culture. Often their only intention was to sell a particular product, but their strategies accelerated their audience's endless quest for self-realization. As much as any other social group, national advertisers helped to popularize a pseudo-religion of health and all anxious self-absorption among the American population. But many would have been dismayed if they had known it.

Advertising Strategies And The Therapeutic Ethos

47Between 1880 and 1930, the mushrooming institutional growth of national advertising was accompanied by a shift in advertisers' assumptions and strategies. With the spread of a national market and urban conditions of life, advertisers began to imagine a buying public that was increasingly remote and on the run. The trade journal *Printer's Ink* noted in 1890 that "the average [newspaper] reader skims lightly over the thousand facts massed in serried columns. To win his attention he must be aroused, excited, terrified." While some advertising men deplored these habits of mind, others urged adjustment to them through the use of illustrations, brand names, trademarks, slogans, anything that might attract the attention of a busy, restless, and easily bored consumer. Amid a mounting din of product claims, many national advertisers shifted their focus from presenting information to attracting attention.

³⁴48The shift toward sensational tactics for attracting attention was accelerated by a broader movement from print to visual modes of expression. Technical advances in photography, film, and printing promoted a proliferation of images and made an exclusively verbal medium seem dull by comparison. "American civilization grows more hieroglyphic every day," Vachel Lindsay wrote in *The Art of the Motion Picture* (1915). "The cartoons of [Jay Norwood "Ding"] Darling; the advertisements in the back of the magazines on the billboards and in the street-cars, the acres of photographs in the Sunday newspapers, make us into a hieroglyphic civilization far nearer to Egypt than to England." Advertising was part of a new visual environment, where innumerable images jostled for the attention of a mass audience.

³⁵49But there was more to the change. By the early 1900s the most successful advertising agents were trying not only to attract attention but aggressively to shape consumers' desires. Albert Lasker of Lord & Thomas in Chicago typified this new approach by developing a new style of copy. Rejecting the dignified, low-key approach favored by professionals at that time, Lasker sought to arouse a strong demand through high-pressure "salesmanship in print." By 1904, six years after joining Lord & Thomas, Lasker owned a quarter interest in the company and an almost mythic stature within the advertising profession. Then he met Claude Hopkins, another phrasemaker who had sold astonishing amounts of beer, lard, and patent medicine by using what he called the "Reason Why" approach. The two men became an enormously successful team, and the term "Reason Why advertising" entered business school textbooks. Ironically it was not reasonable at all: Hopkins refused to appeal to a buyer's reason by listing a product's qualities; on the contrary he addressed nonrational yearnings by suggesting the ways his client's product would transform the buyer's life. Lord & Thomas writers applied such strategies to patent medicines, toothpastes, and automobiles. Other agencies followed Suit. Hopkins's "Reason Why" pointed advertising away from the product and toward its alleged effects, away from sober information and toward the therapeutic promise of a richer, fuller life.

³⁶50Therapeutic strategies became institutionalized as some advertising firms hired psychological consultants. The most conspicuous was John B. Watson, who joined the J. Walter Thompson Agency in 1920; but as early as the 1890s, *Printer's Ink* was discussing psychology in advertising, and Walter Dill Scott's text *The Psychology of Advertising* (first published in 1903) was in its third edition when Watson made his celebrated move. Whatever their theoretical perspective, early psychological consultants rejected the nineteenth-century view that the mind was a static collection of "faculties"; instead they followed the "new psychology" in viewing the psyche as a dynamic organism interacting in constant process with its environment. To some advertisers, the implication was clear that human minds were not only malleable but manipulable. And the most potent manipulation was therapeutic: the promise that the product would contribute to the buyer's physical, psychic, or social well-being; the threat that his well-being would be undermined if he failed to buy it.

³⁷51For many psychological consultants, therapeutic advertising became a method of social control — a way to arouse consumer demand by associating products with imaginary states of well-being. Scott, for example, challenged advertisers to speak more directly to consumers' desires for sensuous enjoyment. "How many advertisers," he asked, "describe a piano so vividly that the reader can *hear* it? How many food products are described so that the reader can *taste* the food? ... How many describe an undergarment so the reader can *feel* the pleasant contact with his body?" Scott's approach was shaped by the concept of suggestion, which dominated academic psychology in the early twentieth century.

Scott's version was that "every idea of a function tends to call that function into activity, and will do so, unless hindered by a competing idea or physical impediment." If an advertiser was persuasive enough, he could influence a consumer to act reflexively, without thought or hesitation.

³⁸ 52 Simpleminded as it seemed, Scott's concept of suggestion embodied an important departure from familiar ideas of autonomy, will, and choice. It portended a view of human nature that has become common among advertisers and public relations men throughout the twentieth century. From this standpoint, human beings were fundamentally unthinking and impulsive. "Man has been called the reasoning animal but he could with greater truthfulness be called the creature of suggestion," Scott wrote. "He is reasonable, but he is to a greater extent suggestible." In 1912, William A. Shryer's *Analytical Advertising* altogether dismissed appeals to reason. Because "the ordinary conduct of life demands but little exercise of reason," Shryer asserted, "it is ... unprofitable for the advertiser to center his appeal around copy that presumes the existence of a function so slightly developed in the average man." Lumping individuals en masse, manipulative strategies displayed a growing contempt for "the average man." It was left to Edward Bernays, nephew of Freud and "father" of public relations, to provide an epitaph for bourgeois ideals of individual autonomy and conscious choice. "The group mind," he wrote in *Propaganda* (1928), "does not *think* in the strict sense of the word. In place of thoughts it has impulses, habits, emotions." To ensure that consumption kept pace with production, Bernays advised, advertisers must learn how to "make customers" through an understanding of the "structure, the personality, the prejudices, of a potentially universal public."³⁹ The advertisers' job of "making customers" closely paralleled the new political consultants' aim of "making voters." From either view, the "public" was no longer composed of active citizens but rather of manipulable consumers.

53 In criticizing this shift I do not mean to endorse uncritically a liberal view of human nature as essentially rational and autonomous. On the contrary. Advertisers' growing recognition of human irrationality was a pale reflection of the most profound intellectual currents of the age: a recovery of the unconscious pioneered by Freud and Jung, a revolt against positivism led by James and Bergson, a broad questioning of the complacent liberal faith in human reason and progress.⁴⁰ The problem was that manipulative advertisers distorted this critique of bourgeois culture beyond recognition. Emphasizing human irrationality, they used that emphasis to limit rather than deepen understanding of the human condition — to reject human freedom, rather than acknowledge its precariousness. Instead of transcending bourgeois culture, manipulative advertisers (like early therapists) helped to revitalize and transform it, creating new modes of hegemony for new managerial elites in the coming era of corporate capitalism.

54 Even as psychological consulting helped to legitimize therapeutic strategies within the advertising profession, many advertisers continued to resist and deny the changes their business was accelerating. Striving for professional respectability, the editors of *Printers' Ink* assailed "the patent medicine evil," insisted on the informational dimension of advertising, and conducted innumerable "Truth in Advertising" campaigns. The National Association of Advertisers, meeting in Baltimore in 1913 under a huge electric sign that spelled TRUTH in ten-foot letters, adopted what became known as the "Baltimore Truth Declaration" — a code of ethics renouncing misleading copy. In part these actions represented cynical efforts to avoid federal regulation; in part they embodied advertisers' unease in a consumer culture where all values — including truth itself — seemed in constant flux. The same double significance can be assigned to the constant talk of "sincerity" in advertising trade journals during the early twentieth century. Many advertising men, like other carriers of the therapeutic ethos, were creating a culture they barely understood and only half desired.

⁴¹ 55 Yet in their creations — the advertisements themselves — the evidence was unmistakable. To be sure, informational approaches persisted; many products were simply not susceptible to a therapeutic appeal. But by the 1920s the symbolic universe of national advertising markedly resembled the therapeutic world described by Philip Rieff — a world in which all overarching structures of meaning had collapsed, and there was "nothing at stake beyond a manipulative sense of wellbeing."

⁴² 56 It is important to underscore the role of advertising in accelerating this collapse of meaning. The decline of symbolic structures outside the self has been a central process in the development of a

consumer culture, joining advertising strategies and the therapeutic ethos. To get a glimpse of that process, we need first to take a hint from semiologists and acknowledge that national advertisements constituted a new and bewildering code, a set of verbal and visual signs for which the referents were unclear. Unlike therapeutic prescriptions, advertisements were not meant to be taken literally — or were they? That was the problem. The new attention-getting strategies, particularly the therapeutic emphasis on manipulating feeling rather than presenting information, led advertisers to a nether realm between truth and falsehood. Promising relief from feelings of unreality, advertising nevertheless exacerbated those feelings by hastening what the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre has called "the decline of the referentials" — the tendency, under corporate capitalism, for words to become severed from any meaningful referent. Think, for example, of the beating that words like "personality" and "revolutionary" have taken in the consumer culture. One does not need to assume a precapitalist unity between word and thing to concede Lefebvre's point. Under capitalism, visual and verbal signs become detached from all traditional associations and meaning in general is eroded. The world of advertisements gradually acquired an Alice-in-Wonderland quality.

⁴³ 57 In part this devaluation of meaning involved the misuse of language. Apart from the bogus claims of patent medicine men, there were subtler strategies as well, such as the use of half-truths pioneered by Claude Hopkins. He played up Schlitz's steam-cleaned beer bottles as if the practice were unique, when in fact it was in common use among all brewing companies. The claim was hardly false, but neither was it completely true. There was also a common tendency to merge opposites: Factory-made furniture was associated with "traditional craftsmanship," canned foods with "old-fashioned home cooking." In the history of advertising, as at other points in our cultural history, the innovator presented himself as a traditionalist. And most generally, the devaluation of verbal meaning was accelerated by the advertisers' new therapeutic vocabulary, which emphasized diffuse states of feeling rather than precise information.

⁴⁴ 58 The difficulty was even clearer in the use of illustrations as attention-getting devices. Early advertising "cuts" often had no relation to the product advertised; later illustrations were adopted primarily to associate pleasure with the buying of the product or fear with the failure to buy it. Information was rare on the agenda. A 1928 *Good Housekeeping* advertisement for Drano posed the caption "Every wastepipe faithfully free flowing ... every day in the year" beneath a picture of a nude woman, towel draped over one shoulder, exposing back, shoulder, hip, and rump as she watched the water swirl down the drain, presumably due to Drano. At such times, the distinction between image and meaning was nearly complete.

⁴⁵ 59 Advertising helped to create a culture in which there were few symbols rooted in specific customs (as in traditional cultures), nor even many signs with specific referents (as in Victorian print culture). There were only floating, detached images that (like the flickering faces in the movies) promised therapeutic feelings of emotional or sensuous excitement. But fulfillment seemed always just out of reach.

⁶⁰ It seems sensible, then, to view advertising as the official art of twentieth-century capitalist culture, as the sociologist Michael Schudson has suggested. A counterpart to the poster art of Communist societies, advertising was garish rather than drab, titillating rather than didactic, and ceaselessly open to aesthetic novelty. It was no accident that by the 1920s and 1930s advertising had begun to assimilate the allegedly rebellious impulses of aesthetic "modernism." As the advertising executive Ernest Elmo Calkins recalled, "Modernism offered the opportunity of expressing the inexpressible, of suggesting not so much a motor car as speed, not so much a gown as style, not so much a compact as beauty." It offered, in other words, not information but feeling. Indeed one modernist strain specifically attacked the whole notion of content and meaning in art. From this view the advertisement (like the painting) was not a communication but a thing unto itself. Form was all.

⁴⁶ 61 Only a handful of advertising men would have gone that far; most were convinced that they were communicating information about products. My point is not that we should ignore content in advertisements but that we should keep in mind their impact on all contents, all meanings outside the narrow sphere of personal well-being. The corrosion of meaning was gradual and largely unintended. National advertisers rarely attacked familiar values; instead they suggested a new set of values centering around the therapeutic promise of psychic security and fulfillment.

62The earlier, prudential form of the therapeutic ethos was foreshadowed in the many Victorian advertisements that appropriated the prestige of science and played on intimate self-doubts while promising to restore or preserve the buyer's health and beauty. But after the turn of the century this approach became more intrusive as advertisers increasingly invaded that allegedly private sphere, the family, to promise the maintenance of domestic harmony through intelligent consumption. In 1900 Cook's flaked rice gave away a rag doll with every large package, warning that "Christmas is coming!" and "the children's pleasure must be planned for." Husbands and wives alike were constantly needled about their domestic roles. If husbands failed to provide a Laun-dry-ette or an Aetna Life Insurance policy, advertisements implied, their wives would soon degenerate into humpbacked slatterns. If wives overlooked the Puffed Rice or the Pro-Phy-Lac-Tic toothbrush, their children faced malnutrition and pyorrhea. The domestic ideal, long a focal point of Victorian morality, was being redefined to fit the new consumer culture.

⁴⁷ 63A characteristic therapeutic strategy linked domestic responsibilities with nostalgia for a pristine, "natural" state. "Mothers, do you not know that children crave natural food until you pervert their taste by the use of unnatural food?" a Shredded Wheat advertisement asked in 1903. "Unnatural food develops unnatural and therefore wrong propensities and desires in children." This marked an approach that has become even more common in our own time. The advertiser defined the "natural" as the good, implied that modern life was full of artificial imitations, and promised salvation through his product — which was ironically all the more natural in this case since it was "*made in the most hygienic and scientific food laboratory in the world.*"

⁴⁸ 64The appeal to nature addressed the half-conscious nostalgia of cosmopolitan elites. As the ties to their own past attenuated, the urban bourgeoisie became more susceptible to the commodified version of the past served up in national advertisements. Or so it seems when one surveys the advertisements in such middle- and upper-class periodicals as *Good Housekeeping*, *The American Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*; or the *Saturday Evening Post*. These were aimed not only at old-style entrepreneurs but also at the mobile, metropolitan professionals and managers who staffed the developing corporate system. Housewives among this group were more likely to respond to the nostalgia peddled (for example) by the Mennen Company in "Aunt Belle's Comfort Letters," which began in *Good Housekeeping* in 1920. "Aunt Belle is a real person and that is her real name. She really understands babies. She would like to correspond with you about your baby." It is a little pathetic, this appeal to isolated young mothers who may have yearned for kin and community advice even as they sought vigorously to be "modern." As ancestral authority grew culturally or geographically remote, advertisements replaced it with a merger of corporate and therapeutic authority — but often in a pseudotraditional guise.

⁴⁹ 65More commonly the new forms of authority invoked by advertising were overtly medical. The white-coated doctor became a ubiquitous figure in advertising of the 1910s and 1920s. A 1920 advertisement typified the dark side of the new religion of health.

Is your child

Run down
Frail
Delicate
Underdeveloped
Pale
Always tired
Easily upset
Irritable
Backward in school
Not himself?

These are signs of malnutrition!

Citing two doctors, the advertisement warned that "one child in every three — rich and poor alike — is undernourished." The way out? Quaker Oats.

⁵⁰ 66By the 1920s appeals the anxiety had intensified and spread. Watson's Scott Tissue campaign warned that harsh toilet papers caused irritation that "is not only a source of discomfort but also a possible seat of infection." One advertisement showed a photograph of a woman lying despondent in a hospital bed, a concerned friend hovering at her side; another showed a team of surgeons preparing to operate on a hapless victim of harsh paper. Social fears, too, were more overtly addressed. Before about 1920, Listerine antiseptic presented itself as a wound dressing; after that time it became an antidote for "halitosis," cautioning any young man whose wife rejected his advances to "suspect yourself first!" Inventive maladies became the order of the day. In a 1928 advertisement, the purgative Pluto Water pictured a young man moping amidst an effervescent crowd: "... he used to be the life of the party ... [but now he has] asthenia"— a mysterious lassitude resulting from prolonged constipation. In advertising's symbolic universe, both invalidism and ostracism were omnipresent threats to a secure sense of selfhood.

⁵¹ 67In the emerging other-directed society of managers and professionals, advertisements increasingly assumed the importance of creating a pleasant social self. After the turn of the century, men's toiletries were no longer merely grooming aids; they became keys to success and barriers against embarrassment. Women as well were reminded repeatedly about the possibilities of giving offense through bad breath, yellow, teeth, body odors, and shabby home furnishings. In advertising's symbolic universe, the allegedly sacrosanct home became a testing ground for other-directed housewives. Guests were everywhere in *Good Housekeeping* during the 1920s — evaluating food, furniture, children's behavior, even the bathroom drains. From the advertisers' point of view, the bathroom became "the showroom of your home." Epitomizing the older therapeutic ideal of well-managed health, a spotless bathroom became a focus for female achievement. The culmination of this tendency appeared in 1930, when Brunswick toilet seats printed the following caption beneath a photograph of women sipping coffee in all upper-class living room:

68"And ... did you notice the bathroom?" At that moment the hostess reentered the room. She just barely overheard. But it was more than enough. She began talking about Junior, about bridge, anything — but like chain lightning her mind reviewed the bathroom. She saw it suddenly as a guest must see it, saw the one detail that positively clamored for criticism.

69That one offending detail was the obsolete wooden toilet seat; the appeal to other-directed anxieties could hardly be carried further. To paraphrase Sartre: In the new consumer culture, hell was — truly — other people.

⁵² 70Yet other-direction could embody aspiration as well as anxiety. By the 1890s, while many advertisements still exploited fears of giving offense, others began to address longings for a more vibrant personality and a fuller life. From this new perspective, toothpaste might do more than prevent "acid mouth" and "pink toothbrush"; it might also provide the consumer with a positively dazzling smile and (ultimately) intense romantic experience. ⁵³ While the same performance ethic underlay both approaches, the newer one upped the emotional ante. Rooted in ill doctrines of psychic abundance, it promised revitalization rather than maintenance — a self not only made whole but made vigorous.

71The newer abundance-oriented approach appeared earliest and most clearly in health-related advertising. As early as 1873 an advertisement for Tarrant's Seltzer in *Harper's Weekly* noted that "thousands of people who are not actually sick complain that they are — 'never well.'" This feeling of enervation promoted yearnings not merely for well-regulated health but also for abundant vitality; during the 1890s advertisers began addressing those yearnings directly. Paine's Celery Compound was promising to "increase the appetite" and "brighten the eye," Pabst Malt Extract to give "vim and bounce." By 1913 an advertisement for the White Cross Electric Vibrator was telling readers of *The American Magazine* that "nine out of ten people are only *half alive*. How about yourself? *Vibration is life*. It will chase away the years like magic ... you will realize thoroughly the joy of living. Your self-respect, even, will be

increased a hundred-fold." Like abundance therapy, this newer approach offered unprecedented possibilities for rejuvenated life at full throttle.

⁵⁴ 72 That promise spread beyond the realm of health products; it became diffused among other varieties of advertising, though it was often expressed more obliquely. In 1916, for example, Home Billiards became the "year-round sport that banishes brain-fog, aids digestion, and *puts new blood into folks who work all day!*" and Lucky Strike appended the following jingle to a familiar winter scene:

A glassy pond —
A red-cheeked maid —
And, mingling with the frosty air
The rich relish of Lucky Strike
In sweet-cruled pipe
Or fragrant cigarette
That's the sport to make
The red blood leap and tingle! No other tobacco gives you that old tasty yum-yum out-of-doors smack you get from Lucky Strike.

⁵⁵ 73 Women as well as men proved an inviting audience for offers of revitalization. In 1924, Ellen J. Buckland, a "graduate nurse" writing for Kotex in *Good Housekeeping* noted that "the modern woman lives every day of her life" thanks to improved feminine hygiene. Here again there was the implicit assumption that without scientifically sanctioned consumer goods one missed out on full life. The same year, Cantilever Shoes pictured a fagged-out mother in a wicker chair: "Tired and listless, she sinks back in a chair to envy little children at play, to wish for their energy, their easy activity. Not so long ago she, too, was joyously active. Her feet were young. And they can be again. At this time of year there is gladness in the air and renewed life for those happy folks whose feet are young." In a culture increasingly enamored of youth, the promise of rejuvenation touched women with particular force.

⁵⁶ 74 Women played a critical role in the spread of older and newer therapeutic strategies. They led in forming the "helping professions" that promoted therapeutic ideals; they dominated the clientele of mind cure and the Emmanuel Movement. Advertising trade journals constantly emphasized the importance of reaching women, who (it was assumed) managed household purchasing, read advertisements avidly, and proved especially vulnerable to emotional appeals. *Good Housekeeping* reinforced these conventional assumptions by acclaiming "The New Shopping" as a science that would be pioneered by female consumers who had received instruction from advertisers and other professionals.

⁵⁷ 75 There is no doubt that many women were victimized in new ways by the leaders of the consumer culture. As dominant values were revitalized and transformed through incorporation of the therapeutic ethos, the chief beneficiaries were the upper-class male executives who managed the developing corporate system. There was no male conspiracy. Rather, tendencies inherent in the therapeutic ethos helped to defuse demands for female equality. Feminist political claims were deflected into quests for psychic satisfaction through high-style consumption. The emphasis on self-realization through emotional fulfillment, the devaluation of public life in favor of a leisure world of intense private experience, the need to construct a pleasing "self" by purchasing consumer goods — these therapeutic imperatives helped to domesticate the drive toward female emancipation. With great fanfare, advertisers offered women the freedom to smoke Lucky Strikes or buy "natural" corsets. They promised fake liberation through consumption, and many women accepted this new version of male hegemony.

⁵⁸ 76 But it is easy to exaggerate the sexual dimensions of hegemony. Men, too, were being eased into conformity with all levels of the corporate system. As frequently as women, they were the target of therapeutic appeals. And even the relatively comfortable could be victimized in subtle ways. Promising wholeness or rejuvenation, advertisers addressed those immersed in routine work or domestic drudgery; they held out the hope that life could be perpetually fulfilling; and they implied that one ought to strive for that fulfillment through consumption.

77By 1930 the therapeutic ethos was far more pervasive and intense than it had been in the 1880s. The older prudential style had spread; the newer abundance orientation had taken hold and had been applied even to products having little to do with health. The clearest illustration of this change appeared in automobile advertising. Pre-World War I advertisements were nearly all based on the straightforward presentation of technical details. By the twenties they were virtually devoid of information; instead they promised style, status, or escape to an exotic "real life" far from the reader's ordinary experience. The earlier ads assumed a knowledgeable, rational audience; the later ones offered therapeutic fulfillment of nonrational longings.

⁵⁹ 78It would be a mistake to read the changes in advertising as a direct indication of value changes in the advertisers' audience. Like the proliferating therapies, changes in advertising represented a shift in official norms and expectations, not a ground swell of popular sentiment. Unlike therapies, moreover, advertisements did not always contain direct prescriptions for behavior. And the advertisers' audience was neither as passive nor as gullible as critics sometimes assumed. Ever since the days of P. T. Barnum, at least a few advertisers had called attention to their own humbug for its entertainment value; exaggerated claims and publicity stunts were part of the confidence game pervading market society. As the historian Neil Harris has observed, Barnum's audiences expected humbug and admired his skill at it. There was a kind of inside joke between the humbug and the stickers. Twentieth-century advertising institutionalized this joke by mass-producing a fantasy world of wish fulfillment. No doubt many ordinary Americans refused to embrace this world literally, but they were drawn into it for its entertainment value — the sensual appeal of its illustrations, the seductiveness of basking (however briefly) in the promise of self-realization through consumption. Many advertisements took their place alongside other mass diversions — the amusement park, the slick-paper romance, the movies. None demanded to be taken literally or even all that seriously; yet all promised intense "real life" to their clientele, and all implicitly defined "real life" as something outside the individual's everyday experience.

⁶⁰ 79A web of connections joined national advertising, the therapeutic ethos, and the new forms of mass entertainment. One can see those connections, for example, in the cult of youthful vitality surrounding stars like Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and in the star system itself. As the historian Larry May observes, "A star — unlike the nineteenth century character actor—was a young person who experimented with a number of roles, identities, and styles." ⁶¹ He was other-directed, creating and recreating a series of personalities according to the expectations of his producer and his audience. Further, movies and advertisements alike engaged in a therapeutic renovation of sensuality — cleansing sex of Victorian associations with poverty, disease, and dirt; locating eroticism in settings characterized by affluence, respectability, and, above all, health. Cecil B. De Mille's famous bath scenes closely paralleled advertisements for toiletries and bathroom fixtures: All presented half-nude females in scenes of cleanliness and opulence; all sanitized sex by associating it with health and high-level consumption.

⁶² 80The clearest example of these connections was the career of Douglas Fairbanks — "Mr. Electricity," a tyro of abundant energy who was one of the first film stars to endorse products for pay. Therapeutic ideals, advertising, and mass amusement merged in Fairbanks's popular film *His Picture in the Papers* (1916). Fairbanks plays a young man who works in his father's office. The father is a dour vegetarian and temperance man; the son outwardly conforms to the paternal code but conceals a martini mix in his lunch bag. Rebelling against enervated refinement, the son learns to box, becomes attractive to several New Women, and ultimately acquires enough pep to rescue a big businessman from criminals. When reporters ask the secret of his strength, the young man answers "Pringle Products"— the cereal his father's company makes. Pringle Products sell merrily, now advertised as the creators of robust fun-lovers rather than boring vegetarians. ⁶³ *His Picture in the Papers* typified the cultural packaging of Fairbanks. The film, like Fairbanks's whole career, suggested that in the new social world of the corporate system, the middle- or lower-level manager could tolerate dull work and bureaucratic paternalism, provided he had the chance to pursue intense experience in his leisure time. A quest for self-realization through consumption compensated for a loss of autonomy on the job. Therapeutic ideals converged with advertising and mass amusement to promote new forms of cultural hegemony.

81Yet the human agents of that process often had other ends in view. Certainly many advertising executives would have been horrified to think of themselves as manipulators or mass entertainers; they

remained committed to truth and convinced they were providing a public service. In part this was the self-serving myopia of the powerful. I do not mean to suggest that all advertising men were complex and troubled: Many were surely stupid and self-deceiving. Claude Hopkins's autobiography, for example, is a tale told by an egotist, full of heroic triumphs won through sheer force of will, signifying its author's moral obtuseness.⁶⁴ But some of even the most forward-looking executives were not merely confused; they were also troubled by nostalgia and doubt.

82This complexity marked the career of Bruce Barton. His work is worth close examination because it illustrates nearly all my major arguments: that the therapeutic ethos often stemmed from personal quests for selfhood in an ambiguous moral universe; that therapeutic ideals linked diverse components of the new consumer culture; that the transformation of cultural hegemony was shaped by half-conscious psychic needs as well as by conscious class interests; and that even the most enthusiastic apostles of change could be troubled by persistent doubt. As a young man, Bruce Barton grew discontented with the "weightless" Christianity he had been offered in Sunday school. Since Barton's father was a liberal Congregational minister, the problem was intensely personal. Eager to please his father yet determined to establish a solid sense of independent selfhood, Barton sought to revitalize his religious faith by suffusing it with therapeutic ideals of "personal growth" and "abundant life." Most important for my purposes, those ideals tied together the many strands of his career. Barton was an influential popularizer of a therapeutic version of Christianity, a founder of a major advertising firm, and a phenomenally successful slick-paper journalist — an early expert at concocting the blend of titillation and uplift that constituted mass entertainment in the twentieth century. Animated by therapeutic ideals, Barton's work entwined and expressed the major preoccupations of the emerging consumer culture. Yet it also embodied fitful protest against that culture. Sometimes clinging to older bourgeois values, sometimes doubting the worth of his own vocation, Barton yearned for transcendent meaning even as his profession corroded it. His personal turmoil has a broader historical significance: It illuminates the moral and psychological conflicts at the heart of our consumer culture.

Therapy, Advertising, And Doubt: Bruce Barton

83Barton was born in 1886, the first child of Esther Bushnell and William Eleazar Barton. His father soon became an eminent Congregational pastor in Oak Park, Illinois, as well as a popular biographer of Lincoln. In 1907, during his senior year at Amherst, Barton won a fellowship to study history at the University of Wisconsin. A restless, driven student, he had finished undergraduate work in three and a half years and had been selected to Phi Beta Kappa. But soon after graduation Barton's psychic and physical health collapsed; he gave up the fellowship and went to a railroad camp in Montana for revitalization through physical labor. After six months he left Montana to travel aimlessly. The whole postgraduate period of drift, Barton recalled, caused "great distress, both to myself and to my parents." He performed well enough in business but had no interest in it; he gave up attractive job offers "merely because I was tired and had no ambition." Finally he sought success in journalism but floundered; several magazines failed under his editorship. Then in 1913 his laudatory article on the evangelist Billy Sunday in *Collier's* caught the eye of John Siddall, editor of *The American Magazine*, who hired Barton as a major contributor. The following year Barton took over the editorship of *Every Week*, a syndicated Sunday supplement that typified the new mass-market journalism. In 1919 Barton turned to more lucrative pursuits. He and Roy S. Durstine founded the advertising agency that by the 1920s had become the fourth largest in the United States — Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborne. Yet Barton continued to pour out magazine articles and inspirational books, including *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), an extraordinarily successful best-seller that presented Jesus as "the founder of modern business."

⁶⁵ 84Historians have usually dismissed Barton as an archetype of business vulgarity in the 1920s, but his writings even at their crudest are historically significant. They reveal the importance of therapeutic ideals in fusing a cohesive consumer culture. Melding therapeutic religiosity with an ideology of consumption, Barton retailored Protestant Christianity to fit the sleek new corporate system. Rejecting the "weightlessness" of liberal Protestant sentimentality, yearning for a more vigorous and manly religion, Barton produced a creed even more vacuous than its predecessor.

⁶⁶ 85In his earliest articles for the *Chicago Home Herald*, a nondenominational religious magazine, Barton began to merge religion with therapy and corporate business. His "Peers of the Pulpit" series (1908) celebrated eminent divines for their success in building up church membership through modern business methods, including advertising. One of these ministers was the Reverend A.C. Dixon, pastor of the church founded by Dwight L. Moody in Chicago, who sent men into the streets with "floats" advertising his lunch-hour meetings at the Great Northern Theater. He also wrote a weekly newspaper column where, in Dixon's words, "I put the gospel white hot before a million readers." Advertising, spectacle, and self-promotion were already being widely adopted by urban Protestants, and Barton applauded them for it. He also lauded ministers who belied their profession's weak-sister image. Billy Sunday, above all, seemed to Barton to embody energy and virility. Focusing on Sunday and others, Barton began to create a cult of ministerial personality rooted in nineteenth-century antecedents but well suited to a new and therapeutic version of Christianity.

⁶⁷ 86By his late twenties, Barton had found his voice as a therapeutic ideologue. Like Hall and Fosdick, he exalted Jesus as a healthy personality. *A Young Man's Jesus* (1914) presented Jesus as "a young man glowing with physical strength and the joy of living" who had "our bounding pulses, our hot desires," not to mention "perfect teeth." And this Jesus would enthusiastically attend the spectacles of the consumer culture. "If there were a world's championship series in town, we might look for Him there," Barton wrote. This refashioning of Jesus was only part of Barton's promotion of the therapeutic ethos. His *Every Week* editorials frequently stressed the importance of health in attaining "maximum efficiency" and told young men how "to grow instead of stagnate." His book titles suggested the willed optimism of the search for self-realization: *More Power to You* (1917), *It's a Good Old World* (1920), *On the Up and Up* (1929).

⁶⁸ 87During the 1920s, Barton slipped his promotional activities into high gear. Besides *The Man Nobody Knows*, he published *The Book Nobody Knows* (1926) and *What Can a Man Believe?* (1927), two other books that also sought to trim faith down to fit the business creed. In the *American Magazine*, Barton interviewed other leading therapeutic ideologues. G. Stanley Hall told him "How You Can Do More and Be More." Harry Emerson Fosdick recommended the belief in immortality as a tonic, "lifting us at moments of crisis out of lassitude and onto a wave of great deeds." Fosdick also epitomized Barton's cult of ministerial personality. Vigorous, muscular, "Dr. Fosdick is 44 years old and looks as if he spent every morning in a gym," Barton marveled. Elsewhere, Barton warned against "the petty thoughts that fritter away power," urged faith as a cure for depression, and presented Jesus as a psychotherapist. In Palestine two thousand years ago, Barton told *Good Housekeeping* readers in 1928, "Whoever was mentally unbalanced, whoever had suffered a nervous breakdown, was said to have a devil. The devils which Jesus expelled from sick folk were the devils of shattered nerves and divided minds, what we term 'complexes.'" And, Barton implied, he can do the same for you. Like many of his contemporaries, both within and without the churches, Barton reduced Christianity to a therapeutic agent.

⁶⁹ 88During the same period, Barton linked therapeutic ideals of "enjoyment" and "growth" to the brave new consumer culture. Having interviewed Henry Ford for *The American Magazine*, Barton hailed the installment plan and the five-dollar day as signs that a repressive era was ending. Calling for training in "creative leisure," Barton rejected "the old fashioned notion that the chief end in life is a steadily growing savings account, and that one must eliminate all pleasures from his vigorous years in order to prepare for possible want in old age." He insisted that "life is meant to live and enjoy as you go along If self-denial is necessary I'll practice some of it when I'm old and not try to do all of it now. For who knows? I may never be old." ⁷⁰ The unwillingness to postpone gratification became a hallmark of the dominant culture under corporate capitalism.

89Barton, like other prophets of consumption, tied this multiplication of wants to a larger scheme of progress. Victorian moralists had long linked work and progress, had long assumed that civilizations (like individuals) must not stand still. But Barton's scheme was slightly different: One worked in order to satisfy wants for consumer goods, not because one had to survive or because one was committed to Victorian notions of character. In fact, Barton often seemed to dismiss character formation in favor of personal magnetism and social poise. Success, he said, is "eighty-five percent ... personality." In 1922 he told *American Magazine* readers "What to Do If You Want to Sit at the Boss's Desk": Learn to express

yourself clearly, put yourself in the boss's place, know his petty likes and dislikes, and shape your own habits and preferences accordingly — down to and including the choice of a necktie. Barton's views on success often seemed tailor-made for the other-directed world of the corporate bureaucracy. And if individuals required a pleasing "image," so did corporations. Echoing Bernays and other public relations consultants, Barton said in 1929 that the greatest question facing business was "How are great aggregates of capital going to make themselves not merely tolerated but actually liked?" Therapeutic ideals of personality and popularity were assimilated to corporate needs.

⁷¹ 90 Barton's advertising copy assisted that assimilation. Though he was preoccupied with managerial decisions and his own journalism, the advertisements he did write reflected the wider diffusion of therapeutic strategies. He specialized in snappy slogans, such as "A man may be down but he's never out" for the Salvation Army, but he also wrote institutional advertisements, such as the one for Bankers' Trust Company (1928) which emphasized the "radiant personality" of the bank's president, Henry Davison. Advertising the Oakland Motor Car in 1928, Barton resisted the manufacturer's plea for a technical description, dismissing it as a "product job" and urging instead an emphasis on style and "popular favor." In short, Barton's approach to copy was closely attuned to the transformation affecting the advertising profession at large.

⁷² 91 *The Man Nobody Knows* contained the clearest evidence of Barton's importance as a cultural weather vane. While the Y.M.C.A. and other liberal Protestant groups had long been urging Barton to republish *A Young Man's Jesus*, Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows* was more than a restatement of his earlier book. The new book joined advertising ideology to therapeutic ideals of abundant vitality and intense experience, suffusing the whole with an atmosphere of religiosity. Barton's Jesus personified personal magnetism and outdoor living. He was no weak-kneed Lamb of God; "no flabby priest or money changer cared to try conclusions with that arm." His personality was not fragmented or divided against itself; all responded to his "consuming sincerity" and "the steel-like hardness of his nerves." Women adored him. The most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem, this vibrant Jesus was also the most successful advertising man in history — a master self-promoter who created "big stories" by healing the sick and provoking controversy. His parables were models of advertising copy — simple, condensed, repetitive, sincere. Indeed, "sincerity glistened like sunshine through every sentence he uttered." Far from denying life, his creed enhanced it. "He did not come to establish a theology but to lead a life," Barton wrote. "Living more healthfully than any of his contemporaries, he spread health wherever he went." He offered righteousness as the path to "a happier, more satisfying way of living."

⁷³ 92 This was not merely a businessman's Jesus, but a Jesus fashioned to meet widespread longings for "more abundant life" and a revitalized sense of selfhood. It comes as no surprise that *The Man Nobody Knows* was soon made into a motion picture, or that Cecil B. De Mille hired Barton as a consultant on *King of Kings* (1926), Hollywood's first Biblical spectacular. Barton's version of Jesus was a perfect emblem of the "real life" peddled by therapeutic ideologues, advertising men, and the makers of mass entertainment.

⁷⁴ 93 For all that, Barton was neither a cynical huckster nor a one-dimensional man. Eager to believe in his own optimistic vision, he was nevertheless troubled by it. His writing often reflected the nostalgia implicit in the therapeutic ethos. Celebrating economic development and personal growth, he worried about their impact on stable communities and secure identities. Complaining about the pace of life in New York, he noted the anxious faces on Wall Street and observed in irritation that "before a building has acquired the decent drabness of age it is torn out by the roots and a gay new structure leaps to the sky." He yearned fitfully for the rural and the natural. As early as 1908, having just returned from his regenerative stint in Montana, he asserted that "the open life of the country still gives men better opportunities to live *natural* lives, which means *better* lives." Throughout his young manhood, Barton remained nervous, driven, and plagued by a worsening insomnia that finally drove him to a sanatorium for a brief period in 1928. An earlier generation might have called him "neurasthenic." Office work and modern life in general often seemed "artificial" to him; "true producers" remained on the land. Despite Barton's zeal for a therapeutic consumer culture, he sustained deep commitment to an imagined simpler past.

⁷⁵ 94There was more involved here than nostalgia. Barton was genuinely divided between consumer and producer values. In one breath he praised personality and teamwork as agents of success; in the next, character and individual initiative. His son could have any job he wanted, Barton said, as long as he had to start at the bottom so he could learn to scuffle and hustle. Even as Barton extolled the merits of the corporate system, he complained in 1922 that young WASP males of his own class no longer had "*the courage to dive off the dock*" into individual enterprise. ****This courage used to be pretty common in America But what are the descendants of the Yankee traders, doing now? They're wearing white collars and saying "Yes, sir" and "No, sir," and "Right away, sir" to the sons of men who came over in the steerage, or off the farms, and built businesses of their own out of nothing but nerve.

⁷⁶ 95This was a new concern, rooted in old republican fears of elite decay. In fact, Barton fretted like any republican about the effects of prosperity on moral fiber. "It is the men who 'stand like a beaten anvil' who have done the great things," Barton wrote in 1926. "But men can't stand like beaten anvils if they're made of French pastry, or are wrapped up always in the gentle softness of prosperity." ⁷⁷ Apologist for a new economy of abundance, leisure, and high-level consumption, Barton was also at times its bitter critic.

96In part, this inner conflict stemmed from Barton's own search for an identity that measured up to his father's. The father-son tension mirrored a broader clash of values: between the older Protestant supernaturalism and the newer therapeutic ethos, between producer and consumer cultures. Bruce Barton remained suspended between two worlds. Troubled by his inability to enter "his father's business" of preaching, Barton may also have sensed at times that his therapeutic ideals were hollow even by comparison to liberal Christianity. As a boy, young Bruce had worshiped his father and had dreamed of someday sharing a pulpit with him. But during his senior year at Amherst, Bruce turned away from the ministry — not, he claimed, because he had lost his faith or because the financial rewards were inadequate. "Rather, the thought of the ministry began to lose its appeal as I came to know myself, to realize that never under any possible conditions could I be as successful in it as my father had been." Now, Barton wrote in 1914, "I try to convince myself that I am doing as important a thing in my business as he did in his But ... I fall somehow short of being assured." Even after he had scaled the heights of power and popularity, Barton may have felt himself a Barnum, a bit of a humbug in his father's long shadow.

⁷⁸ 97The problem was not that William E. Barton was a stern patriarch. Far from it: His liberal Protestantism anticipated and paved the way for his son's banalities. "I am prepared to expect that men will interpret Christ in the phraseology of another and later age," the elder Barton told his congregation in 1898. He collapsed nature and the supernatural, exalted electric lights and radios as evidence of Providential design in the universe, and celebrated Jesus for creating a religion of "more abundant life." As he grew older, William Barton grew more liberal theologically, embraced the Chamber of Commerce mentality of his suburban flock, and collaborated sympathetically in the planning, research, and writing of his son's books.

⁷⁹ 98If anything, the father was too helpful. By all accounts Bruce adored his father and wanted to please him, but continuing dependence on the father may have generated a quiet desperation in the son. Particularly in his two books on Jesus, Bruce Barton seemed determined to throw off the burden of a religious past that was associated with his father. "It is time," he wrote in *A Young Man's Jesus*, "for those of us who are this side of thirty-five to unite and take back our Jesus." It was a conflict of generations, a question of youth versus age. The introduction to *The Man Nobody Knows* was all acerbic attack on the sickly-sweet image of Christ that Barton had been presented throughout his youth. One can assume that his clergyman father played a role in that presentation. Barton's critique of mainstream Christianity may have been in part a veiled and oblique outburst against paternal authority.

⁸⁰ 99Yet any hints of hostility were overshadowed by Barton's admiration for his father. Always an outwardly dutiful son, Bruce Barton even dedicated *A Young Man's Jesus* to his father, "a young man's preacher." Revering an idealized image of paternal authority, the son remained half convinced that he could never meet the ministerial standard. Doubting the worth of his own vocation, he tried to endow it with religious significance. Even more than success mythologists before him, Barton strained to find a

religious vocabulary for business success. "Should an Industry have a Soul?" he asked. Yes! and businessmen should have faith — in the (United States, in the business system, and above all in themselves. It was no accident, Barton claimed, that *credit*, the basis of modern business, was derived from *credo*: I believe.

⁸¹ 100 Even Barton's most ringing declarations of independence revealed his continuing insecurity about the identity he had chosen. Far from debasing Jesus into a businessman, Barton sought to transform businessmen into ministers of Christ. It was nonsense, he claimed, to distinguish between "work and *religious* work." Echoing traditional Protestant ideas, Barton was certain Jesus knew that "all business is his father's business. All work is worship. All useful service prayer." And most important, Jesus established Barton's own particular brand of service — advertising. The most dynamic young men on Madison Avenue were writing modern versions of Jesus's parables, Barton suggested, with the same high purpose. The most effective advertisements were "written by men who have oil abiding respect for the intelligence of their readers, and a deep sincerity regarding the merits of the goods they have to sell.

⁸² 101 Barton protested too much. Insistently equating business with transcendent "service," he eased his personal transition from salvation to self-realization by denying that it had occurred. The new corporate system was not secular but divine; that was Barton's message. But the stridency with which he repeated it betrayed his continuing self-doubt, and the enthusiasm with which his audiences received it suggested that they shared his need for self-; assurance. Given Barton's enormous popularity, it seems fair to say that his writings articulated widespread longings. In the Barton collection at the University of Wisconsin there are hundreds of letters responding warmly to his writings. Most are typed on business letterheads; but some are crudely handwritten, in pencil, on torn notepaper, from secretaries, stock boys, and barely literate marginal men. Whatever their source, their main message was gratitude — for recognizing the spiritual nature of business enterprise, for making Jesus seem human and "real," for giving hope in times of despair. Neither Barton nor his audience could remain at ease in the emerging consumer culture. Implicitly acknowledging that the older Protestant supernaturalism seemed bankrupt, they still longed for transcendent meaning and purpose in a secularizing society. For many, the only available ideals were therapeutic; and Bruce Barton supplied them. Spiritualizing the corporate system, he provided a theology for a secular age.

⁸³ 102 In his later years, Barton wrote fewer articles and books, turning his attention to politics. He was elected to Congress from Manhattan's "silk-stocking district" in 1938; for a time he was considered a vice-presidential or even presidential possibility. Until his death in 1967, he kept a hand in at the B.B.D. & O. office, devising (for example) a therapeutic appeal that urged nervous Americans to "un-tense" with Lucky Strikes. In 1948-49, lighting Luckies at tense moments became "the way to keep younger and get some fun out of life." And in 1952 his advertising agency handled the packaging of Dwight D. Eisenhower. But during this later period Barton retreated into private life. His chief cultural importance lies in his early career as success mythologist, advertising executive, and therapeutic ideologue.

⁸⁴ 103 Bruce Barton's early career suggests some larger speculations about the changing dominant culture in the early twentieth century. His enthusiasm for a therapeutic culture of consumption arose not only from his class interests but also from his half-conscious effort to realize a secure and independent sense of selfhood. The effort was never unambiguously successful; the enthusiasm was always clouded by uncertainty. Barton's career suggests that the convergence of national advertising and therapeutic ideals strongly reinforced the spreading culture of consumption; but it also suggests that the process was generated by unfocused anxieties as well as deliberate strategies.

104 The therapeutic ethos, which united so many facets of the consumer culture, originated in the thickets of the troubled self. Private needs had unintended public consequences. Advertising executives played a central role in promoting the consumer culture, but they sometimes resisted and often only unwittingly reinforced the changes that were under way. Raymond Williams, referring to contemporary Britain, has put the matter well: "The skilled magicians, the masters of the masses, must be seen as ultimately involved in the general weakness which they not only exploit but are exploited by ... Advertising is then no longer merely a way of selling goods, it is a true part of the culture of a confused society." ⁸⁵ My evidence suggests that by the early twentieth century this was already the case in America; and that by

the 1920s there was a larger Lost Generation, whose members haunted luncheon club and bedroom suburb as well as bistro and atelier.

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Notes

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[1.](#) Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," [1924] in *The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays* (New York, 1950), p. 96.

[2.](#) Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York, 1973), esp. Part II; Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness* (New York, 1976). By far the best treatments of advertising (though they concern England rather than the United States) are Raymond Williams, "Advertising: the Magic System" in his *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London, 1980), pp. 170-95, and Judith Williamson's thoughtful semiological study, *Decoding Advertisements* (London, 1978).

[3.](#) On the emergence of a therapeutic ethos, see Donald Meyer, *The Positive Thinkers*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1980); Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York, 1966); and Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York, 1978). *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York, 1981) attempts to refine and broaden the definition of "the therapeutic" — to present it as a way of life embraced by those sometimes only dimly aware of psychiatry.

[4.](#) Roosevelt, letter to Denis Donohue, Jr., October 22, 1886, in Elting E. Morison, ed. *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1951-54), 1: 114; Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964). Gramsci's concept of hegemony can be pieced together from his *Modern Prince*, trans. Louis Marks (New York, 1967) and his *Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1971).

[5.](#) Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review* 82 (October 1973) is a thoughtful account of this process. *No Place of Grace* attempts to go beyond Gramsci and Williams by stressing the unconscious determinants of hegemony.

[6.](#) The best description of these developments is John H. Haller and Robin Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (New York, 1974).

[7.](#) William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* [1890] (Bloomington, Ind., 1976), p. 243; Boorstin, *Democratic Experience*, Part VII; "The Era of Predigestion," *Atlantic* 104 (November 1909); 716-17.

[8.](#) Meyer, *Positive Thinkers*, pp. 21-31; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. 47-54.

[9.](#) Loren H. B. Knox, "Our Lost Individuality," *Atlantic* 104 (December 1909); 818, 824. On interdependence and its psychic impact, see Thomas L. Hashell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science* (Urbana, Ill., 1977), chap. 2, and Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. 34-37.

- [10.](#) Henri Laurent, *Personality: How to Build It* (New York, 1916), pp. 97-119; Warren Susman, "Personality' and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture," in John Higham and Paul Conkin, eds., *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 220-21.
- [11.](#) David Riesman et al., *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, 3. rev. ed. (New Haven, 1969), pp. 21, 25, 127, 149, 157.
- [12.](#) William James, *Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (New York, 1890), 1: 294; George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago, 1934); William Dean Howells, *A Boy's Town* (New York, 1890), p. 171.
- [13.](#) Ethel Dench Puffer, "The Loss of Personality," *Atlantic* 85 (February 1900): 195-204; William James, "The Hidden Self," *Scribner's* 7 (March 1890): 361-73; Nathan Hale, *Freud and the Americans* (New York, 1973), esp. chap. 9; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. 37-41.
- [14.](#) Hale, *Freud and the Americans*, pp. 236-37; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. 37-41.
- [15.](#) Nietzsche, quoted in Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche and Christianity*, trans. E. B. Ashton (Chicago, 1961) p. 14; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, pp. 41-47.
- [16.](#) "The Growth of Religious Tolerance," *Century* 67 (December 1903): 312-14.
- [17.](#) Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* [1910] (New York, 1960), p. 65; Vida Dutton Scudder, *On Journey* (New York, 1940), pp. 139-72; Claire Sprague, ed., *Van Wyck Brooks: The Early Years* (New York, 1968), pp. 2-3, 37, 43, 55, 56, 59, 127; Randolph Bourne, *Youth and Life* (Boston, 1913); Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America: The Intellectual as a Social Type, 1889-1903* (New York, 1965).
- [18.](#) William James, "The Gospel of Relaxation," *Scribner's* 23 (April 1899): 499-507; Joseph S. Zeisel, "The Work Week in American Industry, 1850-1956," in Eric Larrabee and Rolf Meyersohn, eds., *Mass Leisure* (Glencoe, Ill., 1958), p. 146; Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin' Out* (Westport, Conn., 1981); John Kasson, *Amusing the Million* (New York, 1978); Simon Nelson Patten, *The New Basis of Civilization* [1907] (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics* [1913] (Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 47. Patten was by no means a simpleminded "prophet of abundance." Daniel Horowitz analyzes the growing sophistication of Patten's thought in "Consumption and Its Discontents," *Journal of American History* 67 (September 1980): 301-317.
- [19.](#) Silas Weir Mitchell, *Wear and Tear* (Philadelphia, 1887); Hale, *Freud and the Americans*, pp. 60-63; Barbara Sicherman, "The Paradox of Prudence: Mental Health in the Gilded Age," *Journal of American History* 62 (March 1976): 890-912; Frances J. Dyer, "Economize Your Strength: A Reserve Force," *Good Housekeeping* I (October 31, 1885): 5; Harvey W. Wiley, M.D. "The League for Longer Life," *Good Housekeeping* 71 (July-August 1920): 71-72.
- [20.](#) Annie Payson Call, *Power Through Repose* [1891] (Boston, 1913), pp. 60, 64, 87; William James, "The Energies of Men," *Philosophical Review* 16 (January 1907): 1-20 and "The Powers of Men," *American Magazine* 5 (October 1907): 57-65.
- [21.](#) G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* 2 vols. (New York, 1904); Hall, *Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology* (New York, 1917); Hall, *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct*, (New York, 1920), pp. 16-17.
- [22.](#) Elwood Worcester, Samuel McComb, and Isador Coriat, *Religion and Medicine* (Boston, 1908), p. 103.
- [23.](#) Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Manhood of the Master* (New York, 1913), p. 13; Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion and Other Essays* (New York, 1926), pp. 34-35, 41; Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character* (New York, 1923), p. 47. Fosdick has been unaccountably neglected by historians, though there is a thoughtful discussion in Meyer, *Positive Thinkers*, pp. 220-32.
- [24.](#) Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion*, pp. 10, 18, 26; Fosdick, *Twelve Tests*, p. 3.
- [25.](#) Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion*, pp. 144-45; Fosdick, *Twelve Tests*, p. 81; Hall, *Morale*, p. 103; Call, *Power Through Repose*, pp. 65, 157.
- [26.](#) Luther H. Gulick, *The Efficient Life* (New York, 1907), pp. 10, 18, 180, 192-93. Gulick extended these views in *A Philosophy of Play* (New York, 1920), esp. pp. 277-81.

- [27.](#) Hall, *Morale*, p. 256; Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Men, Women, and Emotions* (Chicago, 1894), p. 12. Morton White, *Social Thought in America*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1957) and Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* examine the new fascination with process among social thinkers.
- [28.](#) Hall, *Morale*, p. 208; Gulick, *Philosophy of Play*, pp. 120, 236, 245; Lippinann, *Preface to Politics*, p. 47.
- [29.](#) Luther H. Gulick, "Exercise and Rest," *North American Review* 192 (October 1910): 536-42 offers one example of this circularity. Two perceptive discussions of the fretfulness behind the pursuit of pleasure are Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, pp. 141-58; and Martha Wolfenstein, "Fun Morality," in Warren Susman, ed., *Culture and Commitment, 1929-1945* (New York, 1973), pp. 84-92.
- [30.](#) Worcester et al., *Religion and Medicine*, p. 74. For similar views see Ralph Waldo Trine, *In Tune with the Infinite* (Boston, 1899), a popular mind-cure tract, and Meyer, *Positive Thinkers*, esp. chap. 6.
- [31.](#) On the corrosiveness of the Enlightenment creed of progress, see Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [1944] trans. J. Cummings (New York, 1972), chap. 1.
- [32.](#) Hall, *Adolescence 2:747*; Gulick, *Philosophy of Play*, p. 21.
- [33.](#) See Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. and trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittick (Berkeley, 1968), Vol. 1, chaps. 1-4; Vol. 2, chaps. 7-8; Vol. 3, chaps 10, 11, 14.
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- [36.](#) Wood, *Story of Advertising*, pp. 285-95.
- [37.](#) Merle Curti, "The Changing Concept of 'Human Nature' in the Literature of American Advertising," *Business History Review* 41 (Winter 1967), esp. 349; David Cohen, *John B. Watson* (London, 1979), pp. 177-87; Walter Dill Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising*, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1921); C. L. Watson, "What Psychology Can Teach Us," *Printers' Ink* 71 (June 16, 1910): 20-21.
- [38.](#) Scott, *Psychology of Advertising* 34; Scott, *The Theory of Advertising* (Boston, 1903), pp. 47-51.
- [39.](#) Scott, *Theory*, p. 59; William A. Shryer, *Analytical Advertising* (Detroit, 1912), p. 47; Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York, 1928), pp. 50-52, 63.
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- [41.](#) Herbert W. Hess, "History and Present Status of the 'Truth-in-Advertising' Movement," *Annals of the American Academy* 101 (May 1922): 211-20; Presbrey, *History*, pp. 531-40; Wood, *Story*, pp. 322-44; Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York, 1961), chaps. 5, 6; E. P. Corbett, "You Cannot Fake Sincerity," *Printers' Ink* 3 (April 15, 1920): 97-98 and "How to Acquire Sincerity of Style," *Printers' Ink* 3 (April 22, 1920): 25-26.
- [42.](#) Rieff, *Triumph of the Therapeutic*, p. 13.
- [43.](#) Henry Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, tr. Sacha Rabinovitch (New York, 1971), pp. 110-23. On semiological approaches to advertising, see Mark Poster, "Semiology and Critical Theory: From Marx to Baudrillard," *Boundary 2*, no. 8 (Fall 1979): 275-81. Mary Douglas, in *The World of Goods* (New York, 1979), also argues that patterns of consumption constitute "information systems" but overlooks entirely the ways that advertising can garble information and devalue meaning.
- [44.](#) Claude Hopkins, *My Life in Advertising* (New York, 1927), pp. 79-82; Grand Rapids Furniture, *Good Housekeeping* 78 (June 1924): 254.

- [45.](#) "Inappropriate Cuts," *Printers' Ink* 2 (April 30, 1890): 698-99; Drano, *Good Housekeeping* 87 (October 1928): 296.
- [46.](#) Michael Schudson, "Criticizing the Critics: Toward a Sociology of Mass Marketing," lecture at the University of Missouri, Columbia, November 10, 1980; Ernest Elmo Calkins, "and hearing not—" *Annals of an Ad Man* (New York, 1946), p. 239. For more on advertising's assimilation of modernism, see Jeffrey L. Meikle, *Twentieth Century Limited: Industrial Design in America, 1925-1939* (Philadelphia, 1979).
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- [48.](#) Shredded Wheat, *Harper's* 47 (April 25, 1903): 681.
- [49.](#) Aunt Belle's Comfort Letters, *Good Housekeeping* 71 (July-August 1920): 114.
- [50.](#) Quaker Oats, *Good Housekeeping* 71 (September 1920): 210.
- [51.](#) Scott Tissues, *Good Housekeeping* 87 (October 1928): 325, and *Good Housekeeping* 89 (May 1930): 190; Listerine, *Good Housekeeping* 62 (June 1916): 36, and *Good Housekeeping* 87 (July 1928): 229; Pluto Water, *Saturday Evening Post* 201 (July 21, 1928): 137.
- [52.](#) Church Sani-White Seats, *Good Housekeeping* 78 (May 1924): 188; Brunswick White Seats, *Good Housekeeping* 89 (January 1930): 183.
- [53.](#) Compare Sozodont, *Harper's Weekly* 36 (January 2, 1892): 21 with Pepsodent, *Good Housekeeping* 71 (July-August 1920): 115.
- [54.](#) Tarrant's Seltzer, *Harper's* 17 (May 31, 1873): 472; Paine's Celery Compound, *Good Housekeeping* 19 (October 1894): 191; Pabst Malt Extract, *Harper's* 41 (February 20, 1897): 188; White Cross Electric Vibrator, *American Magazine* 75 (May 1913): 127.
- [55.](#) Home Billiards, *American Magazine* 81 (February 1916): 73; Lucky Strike, *American Magazine* 81 (January 1916): 85.
- [56.](#) Kotex, *Good Housekeeping* 78 (February 1924): 223; Cantilever Shoes, *Good Housekeeping* 78 (June 1924): 99.
- [57.](#) Meyer, *Positive Thinkers*, esp. chap. 3; Nathaniel C. Fowler, "Reaching the Men Through the Women," *Printers' Ink* 5 (July 22, 1891), was among the first of numerous such articles in trade journals; "The New Shopping," *Good Housekeeping* 56 (January 1913): 130-31.
- [58.](#) Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness*, pp. 159-76; Gossard Corsets, *Good Housekeeping* 71 (October 1920): 127. Lary May, *Screening Out the Past: the Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York, 1980), pp. 125, 146, notes a parallel domestication of female emancipation in popular films.
- [59.](#) Reo Motor Cars, *American Magazine* 75 (June 1913): 79; Dodge Victory Six, *Saturday Evening Post* 201 (July 28, 1928): 38; Reo Flying Cloud, *Saturday Evening Post* 201 (July 7, 1928): 30.
- [60.](#) Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* (New York, 1973), p. 57; Robin Lydenberg, "The Rhetoric of Advertising," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 17 (1978): 65-75; Williams, "The Magic System," and Williamson, *Decoding Advertisement* are signs that Left historians have begun to abandon their emphasis on consumers' passivity and acknowledge the participation involved in entertainment.
- [61.](#) May, *Screening Out the Past*, p. 232.
- [62.](#) May, *Screening Out the Past*, p. 213; Palmolive Soap, *American Magazine* 81 (January 1916): 81. The therapeutic renovation of sensuality had an important impact on marriage, as Elaine May makes clear in *Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America* (Chicago and London, 1980).
- [63.](#) May, *Screening Out the Past*, p. 116.
- [64.](#) Hopkins, *My Life in Advertising*, esp. pp. 8, 31-32, 42.
- [65.](#) *New York Times*, July 6, 1967, p. 1; Bruce Barton to Mrs. R. T. Morris, July 15, 1926, Barton Papers, University of Wisconsin, Madison; Fred B. Barton, "Bruce Barton as A Brother," unpublished MS, Barton Papers.

- [66.](#) Exceptions to the general dismissal of Barton are Warren Susman, "Piety, Profits, and Play: The 1920's," in Howart H. Quint and Milton Cantor, eds., *Men, Women, and Issues in American History*, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill., 1980), pp. 202-27; Meyer, *Positive Thinkers*, pp. 177-80; and Leo P. Ribuffo, "Jesus Christ as Business Statesman: Bruce Barton and the Selling of Corporate Capitalism," *American Quarterly* 33 (Summer 1981); 206-31.
- [67.](#) Bruce Barton, "Peers of the Pulpit, V. The Rev. Amzi Clarence Dixon, D. D.," *Home Herald* 19 (September 1908): 8-9; Barton, "In the Wake of Billy Sunday," *Home Herald* 20 (June 2, 1909): 3-5; Barton, "Billy Sunday, Baseball Evangelist," *Collier's* 51 (July 26, 1913): 7-8, 30.
- [68.](#) Bruce Barton, *A Young Man's Jesus* (Boston, 1914), pp. 1-8, 14; "What Do Men Like in Women," *Every Week*, February 21, 1918; "A New Year Starts," *Every Week*, January 10, 1918; "Should We Be Sent to Jail for Eating the Wrong Food?" *Every Week*, February 7, 1918.
- [69.](#) Barton, "How You Can *Do* More and *Be* More," *American Magazine* 96 (November 1923): 14-15; Barton, "Does Anything Come After Death?" *American Magazine* 95 (March 1923): 120, 122; Barton, *On the Up and Up* (Indianapolis, 1929), p. 89; Barton, "The Washing of His Feet," *Good Housekeeping* 87 (August 1928): 50.
- [70.](#) Barton, "Can You Loaf?" *Review of Reviews*, October 1929, pp. 87-88; Barton, "Ill-gotten Gains," *Collier's* 77 (March 6, 1926): 27. The interview with Ford is "It Would Be Fun to Start Over Again," *American Magazine* 95 (April 1923): 8.
- [71.](#) Barton, *On the Up and Up*, p. 103; Barton, "What to Do If You Want to Sit at the Boss's Desk," *American Magazine* 93 (February 1922); Barton, "Should an Industry Have a Soul?" transcript of speech to National Electric Light Association, May 1926, Barton Papers.
- [72.](#) *New York Times*, July 6, 1967, p. 1; Bankers Trust advertisement, February 20, 1928, unpublished typescript in Barton Papers; Bruce Barton to W. E. Fellows, October 31, 1928, copy of telegram in Barton Papers.
- [73.](#) Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*, (Indianapolis, 1925), pp. 12, 43, 59, 61, 67, 69, 90, 143, 149, 151.
- [74.](#) J. L. Lasky to Bruce Barton, July 16, 1926; Bruce Barton to W. E. Barton, July 17, 1926. Both letters in Barton Papers.
- [75.](#) Barton, "Modern Distribution," *Chain Store Age*, November 1929, pp. 63-64, 76-78; Barton, "Our First Reader," *American Magazine*, August 1930, p. 156; Barton, "Back to the Land," *Home Herald* 19 (February 19, 1908): 11; "Being a Real Producer," *Every Week*, January 31, 1918. On Barton's insomnia, see Ribuffo, "Jesus Christ," pp. 223, 233.
- [76.](#) Barton, *On the Up and Up*, pp. 106-7; Barton, "Courage to Dive Off the Dock," *American Magazine* 94 (August 1922): 24.
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- [78.](#) Barton, "My Father's Business," *Outlook* 107 (June 27, 1914): 494, 497.
- [79.](#) W. E. Barton, "Jesus in the Twentieth Century," December 25, 1898, unpublished typescript of sermon in Barton Papers; WEB, unpublished autobiography in Barton Papers, pp. 359-61, 366; WEB to BB, June 28, 1921, Barton Papers.
- [80.](#) Barton, *A Young Man's Jesus*, pp. 1-2; Barton, *Man Nobody Knows*, unpaginated introduction. Ribuffo, "Jesus Christ," presents an alternative speculation: that BB's memory of Sunday school was "synthetic," a deception designed to boost sales.
- [81.](#) Barton, "Should an Industry Have a Soul?"; Barton, *What Can a Man Believe?* (Indianapolis, 1927), pp. 231-43.
- [82.](#) Barton, *Man Nobody Knows*, pp. 179, 180, 153.
- [83.](#) For example: Charles E. Adams to BB, April 14, 1925; A. M. Stouffer to BB, October 20, 1921; J. R. Angell to BB, September 29, 1925; Harold R. Thompson to BB, April 29, 1926.
- [84.](#) Helen Woodward, "Republican in Sheep's Clothing," *The Nation* 147 (November 5, 1938): 475; memorandum, BB to staff, B.B.D. & O., August 24, 1948, Barton Papers.
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