

## Background Information

### Consumerism

"History will see advertising as one of the real evil things of our time. It is stimulating people constantly to want things, want this, want that."

—Malcolm Muggeridge

"Consumerism is the equating of personal happiness with the purchasing of material possessions and consumption."

—"Consumerism" in *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*

"In economics, consumerism can also refer to economic policies that place an emphasis on consumption, and, in an abstract sense, the belief that the free choice of consumers should dictate the economic structure of a society."

—"Consumerism" in *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*

"The desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human stomach; but the desire of the conveniences and ornaments of building, dress, equipage and household furniture, seems to have no limit or certain boundary."

—Adam Smith

"Our personal consumer choices have ecological, social and spiritual consequences. It is time to re-examine some of our deeply held notions that underlie our lifestyles."

—David Suzuki

"Thanksgiving is a typically American holiday... The lavish meal is a symbol of the fact that abundant consumption is the result and reward of production."

—Ayn Rand

"... one must realize that as it becomes increasingly more "Westernized" in terms of economy and society, the world is turning into a much better place. Quite truthfully, it is becoming a much smaller and more intimate place as well. Formerly far-flung lands are now our key trading partners, and all citizens the world-over are becoming increasingly more dependent on the physical and intellectual production of all other nations. No longer is the global marketplace a stark contrast of the "haves" and "have-nots". Now, most areas are experiencing the benefits of consumerism and capitalism. The times are good and are destined to be even better...not only for the Far East but for we here in America as well."

—Bob Confer

"Consumerism is becoming increasingly important. Recently spreading into areas of life which in the past have been controlled by the state instead of private companies (education and health, for example), people have more choice and so can be identified through their consumption. We've moved from a work-based to a consumer-based society (Bauman, 1988) in which people are identified more through their consumption and less

so by their occupation and general citizenship. This consumer-based society incorporates its own culture, one with many widely different and contrasting principles to the work and citizen culture it is replacing."

—Jake Gordon

"Consumerism is equated with individual freedom; it utilizes identities along the margins—feminism, Black nationalism, gay rights presenting ads featuring hip gay men, people in ethnic dress, or women in suits, for example; it makes the globe seem like one big shopping mall, even for those with little money to participate. A characteristic often attributed to modern Western societies, according to which people are strongly motivated to acquire material items, especially those that have been publicly advertised, in order to establish a sense of themselves and to increase their status in the eyes of others."

—L. Stone and N. P. McKee

"For the past ten years, Équiterre has been striving to create a citizen's movement by promoting individual and collective choices that are ecological and socially just. Through its four programs—ecological agriculture, fair trade, ecological transportation and energy efficiency—the organization has developed projects that help citizens and consum'actors" take concrete actions that will have a positive effect on the environment and society. "

Équiterre (an equitable earth)