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In Love with a Stripper: When Corporations Target Young Girls The Substance of Truth By Tolu Olorunda BlackCommentator.com Columnist

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I would like to say this has gone too far, or this crowns the end of civilization, or this marks the decline of society, but I'm afraid that would be too tepid in the face of such sense-suspending stupidity.

In what can only be seen as the specific targeting of little girls under the age of 6, a toy is being sold by an unconfirmed company which features a female doll moving around a plastic stripper poll. Those who've seen it in action [describe it this way](#): "The doll begins dancing when the music is turned on, and she goes 'up and down' and 'round and round'."

This "doll" is being marketed to innocent kids - kids without the wherewithal to decipher the insidious suggestions being transmitted. These kids are being sold an idea, early on, of the stripper lifestyle as fun and *chic* - the thing to be. ([Talk to 'em, T-Pain.](#))

Kid 1: "I want to be a Doctor."

Kid 2: "I want to be a Lawyer."

Kid 3: "I want to be a Teacher."

Kid 4: "I want to be a Stripper."

This scenario is but the inevitable outcome of ruthless marketing run amok. But this trend of selling spiritual death to children is hardly new. For many years, corporations have found toddlers the most vulnerable demographic worth exploiting to enlarge their coffers.

Dr. Henry Giroux, Global Television Network Chair at McMaster University, has written voluminously about the [commodification of children](#) which, he argues, brings with it an end to innocence. In "[Commodifying Kids: A Forgotten Crisis](#)," Giroux writes: "Subject to an advertising and marketing industry that spends over \$17 billion a year on shaping children's identities and desires, American youth are commercially carpet-bombed through a never-ending proliferation of market strategies that colonize their consciousness and daily lives."

All this comes courtesy what Giroux calls "the sovereignty of the market" - a state in which corporations are held in higher regard than even government, rendered supreme in the estate of public affairs. And with that is granted the license to sell whatever is deemed profitable, and to whomever deemed vulnerable - even fetuses.

Giroux accounts several incidents that should alarm anyone concerned about the future being built for an unprepared generation of kids:

... Abercrombie & Fitch, a clothing franchise for young people, has earned a reputation for its risqué catalogues filled with promotional ads of scantily clad kids and its over-the-top sexual advice columns for teens and preteens; one catalogue featured an ad for thongs for ten-year-olds with the words "eye candy" and "wink wink" written on them. ... Children as young as six years old are being sold lacy underwear, push-up bras and "date night accessories" for their various doll collections.

But there's more. Turn on Disney and watch in horror.

In [The Mouse that Roared, Updated and Expanded Edition: Disney and the End of Innocence](#), Dr. Giroux took to task the mega-corporation for its promotion of unsavory ideals to kids. He contended in his wonderful text that kids who watch Disney are raised on a number of values that, often, are detrimental to their emotional well-being. The values being imparted upon them, Giroux wrote, are constructed through a Eurocentric Male Supremacist prism. Thus, young Black girls, whose TV schedule might be entirely devoted to Disney, luck out on all counts.

Through the deconstruction of blockbuster successes like *Aladin* and *Beauty and the Beast*, Giroux concluded that "Disney is not merely about peddling entertainment; it is also about politics, economics, and education." There's another side to it, he informed; and that's the "commercial blitzkrieg aimed at excessive consumerism, selflessness, and individualism" that comes with all Disney motion picture creations.

Michael Eisner, former CEO of The Walt Disney Co., once revealed in an internal memo: "We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art. We have no obligation to make a statement. To make money is our only objective."

Those who've watched Disney with a constructive eye can tell that it is anything but innocent in message and meaning. Disney, since its inception, has always targeted young girls vigorously, assuming them the most impressionable of all social sectors. And they may be right. For more, see the excellent documentary: "[Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power](#)."

Recently, *South Park* [tackled Disney's excessive promotion](#) of boy-band groups such as The Jonas Brothers, aimed at unsuspecting teenage girls. In "The Ring," the popular animated TV show eviscerated the concept that these groups are innocent or, as they would argue, avowed Christians, simply because they were "purity rings" and proselytize, upon every solemn opportunity, their love for "God." The episode was met with much controversy, but, as Henry Giroux would tell you, so is everything remotely critical of Disney.

South Park explained that the aim, above all, is to "sell sex to the little girls" - without being faulted for doing so. Thus, The Jonas Brothers are honored as holy and harmless, but, at their concerts, the band [routinely sprays](#) what appears to be white foam on the faces of adoring, however oblivious, teenage female fans.

And, yet, nothing more compliments the stripper doll toy concept than 16-year-old Disney pop sensation Miley Cyrus [dancing around a pole](#) at the most recent Nickelodeon Teen Choice Awards ceremony - the same Cyrus who had, shortly before that, [posed provocatively](#) in a spread for *Elle* magazine. You get the sense Ms. Cyrus is in good hands, with Fathers like Billy Ray Cyrus, who, asked last week about his daughter's antics, [replied](#): "You know what? I just think that Miley loves entertaining people."

Yes: entertaining people - even it means selling sex to fans too young to walk.

A number of lessons are available from this ordeal - that society is *officially* morally bankrupt, that common sense is as useful in modern-age as George W. Bush For President bumper stickers, that many corporations are willing to go down whatever road required to make profit. No one is safe anymore. Not even children. Not even toddlers.

In "[The Commercialisation of Childhood](#)," a report filed by UK-based group Direction for the Democratic Left, it was revealed that kids living in the U.S. and U.K. are, on an average, exposed to up to 40,000 Television ads a year.

So, we've arrived here, and we can no longer deny the reality that kids are at risk, more than they've ever been, to the reaching claws of authoritarian companies and complexes. But we've also been awoken to conscience about the infested minds of those whom many parents trust enough to live their kids with - unaware of the [inestimable effects](#) these media machines have on the minds of young ones.

Tolstoy once wrote: "... [I]n this business the only persons deceived are the poor unfortunate girls." And this *business* is not likely to halt production any time soon. Why, the revenue has been nothing short of record-breaking.

Riddle me this: Are you a customer?

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BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Tolu Olorunda, is an 18-year-old local activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Mr. Olorunda.

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