

breaks down on a dark, remote highway. As these examples illustrate, nondeceptive forms of manipulation frequently depend on appeals to strong emotions such as guilt or fear.

One of the clearest examples of a manipulative technique was a past practice of some funeral directors. The funeral director would go to the home of a grieving family and up-sell to a more expensive funeral package by suggesting that the deceased deserves the nicest casket and that a failure to spend on the funeral implied that the deceased was not loved. The practices were so extreme in some instances that a number of state attorneys general sued, claiming that the practices constituted unfair exploitation of the grief and vulnerable emotional state of the families. These examples provide instances of nondeceptive practices that might still be manipulative interferences with a person's autonomy. They do not, by themselves, give us a reliable and principled way to evaluate just when techniques of influence cross the line into undue manipulative influence. The classic debates over John Kenneth Galbraith's claims about advertising can help us sketch a more principled approach, however.

John Kenneth Galbraith's classic book, *The Affluent Society*, presented a critique of modern advertising that can be stated as three simple propositions. First, Galbraith claimed that advertising creates wants in the consumer. Second, he suggested that the shaping of consumer demand by marketers is a violation of the consumer's autonomy. Third, Galbraith contended that this want-creation by advertising encourages consumers to demand, and the economy to produce, less important goods for individual consumption instead of goods necessary to satisfy important public needs. In a striking passage, Galbraith claimed that advertising causes an irrational economy in which we drive in expensive luxury autos past environments of polluted landscapes littered with billboards. (In today's climate of crumbling infrastructure, it's not hard to understand Galbraith's last point. However, we will not pursue that discussion here. We leave the assessment to you.)

Attacks on Galbraith's claims have continued for half a century. Those attacks have taken a number of forms, which we can separate into two categories. Empirical criticism of Galbraith claim that advertising simply is not all that effective at controlling consumer behavior. Studies of new product success rates have been used to indicate that advertisers are unable to guarantee success even for heavily advertised new products. This criticism has had meager success because historical evidence consistently indicates that new products actively introduced into the marketplace with strong research and strategic marketing behind them have a success rate of about 60%. That figure is sufficiently ambiguous that it provides neither conclusive support nor conclusive refutation for Galbraith's contentions. In any case, Galbraith himself said that he did not believe that the power of advertisers was "plenary" (absolute). In addition, Galbraith may be interpreted as claiming not that advertisers have control over consumer behavior but that they have unacceptable influence on consumer desire. If Galbraith were interpreted this way, evidence about sales of new products (consumer behavior) would be irrelevant.