

A Word With You

ONE by-product of Madison Avenue is the captivating word "think." It seems that an advertising man in a private brainstorm doodled it forth. "Think" has since swept the nation, and this illegitimate child of the old slogan "Think," has in turn spawned all sorts of progeny which by now adorn every other office desk in the country.

One relatively serious variation is "Think, don't think." This intriguing bit of advice prompts a bit of explication. What is "think?"

Well, first, what is "think?" Real thinking is a process by which the mind takes a premise and by a series of connected steps reaches a conclusion.

I offer this definition of "think" (past tense, thumk):—A process by which the mind takes a notion and by a series of disconnected steps jumps to a conclusion.

Thinking is much more popular than thinking, and even the best of us will have to concede that he spends more time thinking than thinking. After all, it's a much quicker and easier method of reaching a nice resounding conclusion than the hard slow process of thinking.

It's all right to think providing that it's recognized as such. Thinking can even be useful in getting some unresolved fancies, problems and ideas out into the air, providing it's followed up with thinking. Unfortunately, too much thinking is palmed off as the real *think*.

Don't people think that if only stock market prices can keep going higher and higher, that's our surest sign of continued prosperity?

Thinkers tell us that if only the people of today would be more like the hardy venturesome pioneers of

yesterday, they would find limitless horizons in this land of opportunity. But the same thinkers are very unhappy about Puerto Ricans and other hardy venturesome pioneers entering this land of opportunity.

Some thinkers claim there's nothing wrong with our set-up today—anybody who has a mind to can do very well for himself. These same thinkers will complain bitterly about this tax or that law or about the set-up in general which is leading us straight to communism (forgetting that anybody who has a mind to can do very well for himself under communism).

Keynes (or should we say Keymes?) has prompted an awful lot of thinking. We're still smack in the middle of his funny-money thinking era.

Henry George was a thinker and was tackled by a lot of thinkers. If George's ideas had been tried in 1879 it would have been fine, they think, but certainly not in 1957. Back in 1881, Karl Marx already thumk that Henry George was a "back number." In 1889, when Edward Bellamy appeared on the scene, thinkers said that George was now old hat. And—unless people can be persuaded to think otherwise—no doubt in 1984 they will think that it would have been great in 1957 but not any more.

If I keep on, you'll begin to think that I'm thinking, so maybe I'd better bring this to an end.

Robert Clamcy

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