

World History Project: Propaganda

Jorge Wei
March 14, 2006

Three visual examples of propaganda:

1 Nike Ad for Uptempo Sneakers

Motto of this sneaker style is "Change the Game"

The Ad shows a stunning photo of this gorgeous sneaker. In the background is an [apparently] professional basketball player in team uniform, also wearing these sneakers, who seems to be playing in a game.

We are supposed to draw the inference that wearing these sneakers will turn us into players on the level of the professional who also wears them on the court. By logical extension, by wearing them we will be as cool, and may become as wealthy, as a professional basketball player.

In fact, while appropriate footwear can be good for athlete's games and protect their health, only great players will play great games. Great sneakers won't make a mediocre player great.

2 Calvin Klein ad for men's and women's underwear

The Ad shows a man and woman whom are very vibrant, sexy and good-looking, engaged with each other in a pose which indicates that they will soon be physically intimate. Both are wearing CK underwear.

Both men and women are supposed to conclude that by wearing CK underwear we will be not only healthy, fit and sexy, but that we will furthermore become beautiful and have a great sex life.

It almost goes without saying that people need to do a lot more than just put on CK undies in order to have all this ad implies. Eat right, exercise regularly, brush your teeth, and learn some people skills, are items which come to mind.

3 The Marlboro Man

Picture of Marlboro Man portrayed as a ranch hand, smoking the ubiquitous Marlboro cigarette. The Marlboro Man is always portrayed as a very masculine man, with the perfect health we associate with outdoors lifestyles, a physically rugged type who is entirely self-sufficient. Often he is portrayed as being engaged in dangerous physical activity - in this case, we assume that activity to be cattle roping because of the lariat pictured next to him.

Men viewing this ad are obviously supposed to suppose that if they smoke Marlboro cigarettes, they will be as masculine and in control of their lives as the Marlboro Man appears to be.

In reality, cigarettes limit independence in those seriously addicted to them. Cigarettes cause many health problems over the long term and nicotine addicts often feel psychologically crippled when they become separated from their cigarettes. David McLean, one of the Marlboro Men, died in 1995 of cancer which began in his lungs.