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THE UNCONSCIOUS ELEMENT IN TODAY'S MAINSTREAM ADVERTISING

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The definition of "subliminal" in the Oxford English dictionary reads: "below the threshold of sensation or consciousness".

The letter also concludes that there is little if any effect from subliminal communication in the fields of selling and advertising. It states:

The dangers of this method of communication - which have given rise to public comment are therefore not justified by the evidence submitted (6, p.5).

Within these two statements there is a re-definition of the word subliminal, and evidence to show that what was made illegal was in fact not concluded to have worked. However other areas that were considered in the experiments demonstrate other ways to bypass the conscious. These approaches were excluded from the definition of subliminal communication.

One experiment involved invited audiences who sat and watched a short thriller. One group was subject to subliminal messages 'HAVE AN ICE'. Those people did not respond in any unusual way. Another group was shown the message clearly but only at high tension moments of the film. There was a significant increase in the sales of ice pops as a result of this (6, p.28). At a moment of high tension they were offered an alternative, an ice.

Another experiment flashed a message at 1/200th second 30 times 'CHOOSE BRAND M' for one group. Another group had a squiggle in place of the message. All participants were offered 3 brands B, F, and M. They could choose one. The results were as follows:

Group 1, 13 chose M
Group 2, 23 chose M. (6, pp.28-29)

As these results showed little response to the subliminal message, the organisers examined the people who chose brand M to see if they had other reasons for choosing the brand. 9 people from each of the two groups were found to have a personal association with the letter M. An example of this would be their first initial. To put it another way, 4 were influenced by unconscious communication and 18 were influenced by unconscious associations. Consumer associations with certain elements (sex for example) were not con-

sidered in the definition of subliminal communication.

Anagrams were used in similar experiments where the brand that should be chosen was called Madcap (6,p.30). The message shown was 'CAMPAD' or synonyms such as a picture of a dunce's cap. Those people who were exposed to the message subliminally acted according to the law of averages when choosing the brand but those who were shown the message clearly responded in favour of the message with significant proportion. Is this not subliminal communication?

Since the discovery of subliminal advertising, the industry has continued to demonstrate its recuperative capability in a movement of its own. Product and design trends change but the undertow of suggestion is in itself a movement and not a fashion. Advertising will work with any material at all, it will bounce back uninjured from both advertising restriction laws and from criticism. In the second part of this thesis I will attempt to outline how this is done through the use of signs, symbols, mythology and in the creation of ways in which the message can bypass the conscious mind.

Since the beginning of the 1990s advertising has moved further away from the product and closer to the message that sells it. In some cases the restrictions on the freedom to advertise have provided a spring board for new ideas. Others have created new paths without legal compulsion. In the third part of this thesis I will examine the advertising campaigns of two companies both of which have been highly controversial and examine them in the light of the findings in the second part. The first is the Silk Cut campaign created by Saatchi and Saatchi and the second is the Benetton campaign created by Luciano Benetton and Olivera Toscani.

Cigarette advertising used to be a straight forward business. Advertisers could use doctors, celebrities, health and sexual imagery as part of the product benefit. However since the late 1970s more and more restrictions are being placed on the advertising of tobacco. In the case of Silk Cut (a Benson and Hedges product) there is nothing at all outwardly said about the product in their current campaigns, not even a product shot, no celebrities and no people. Yet

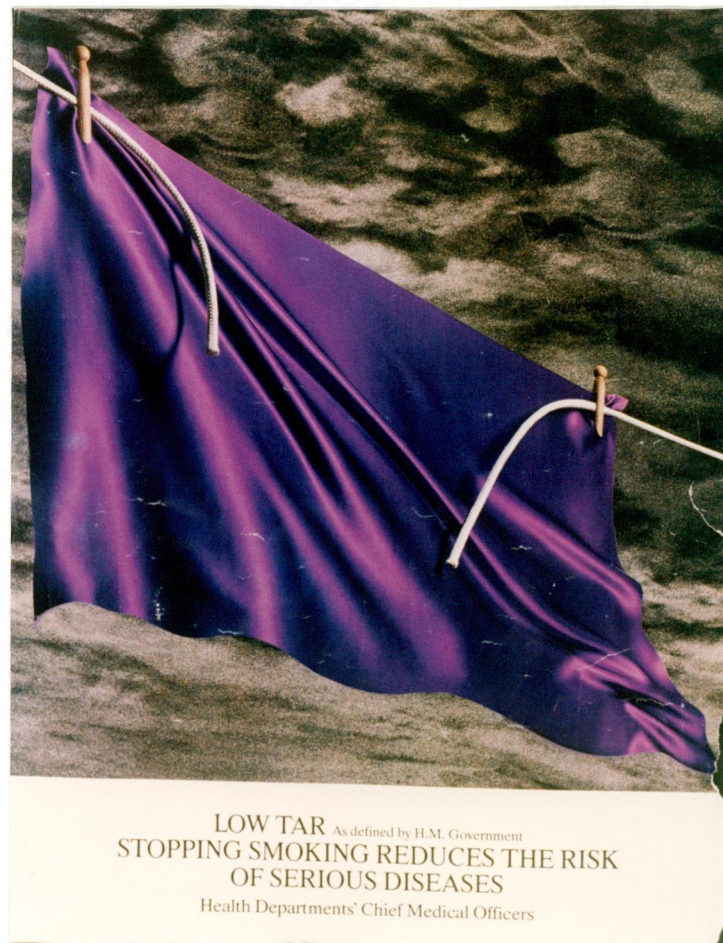
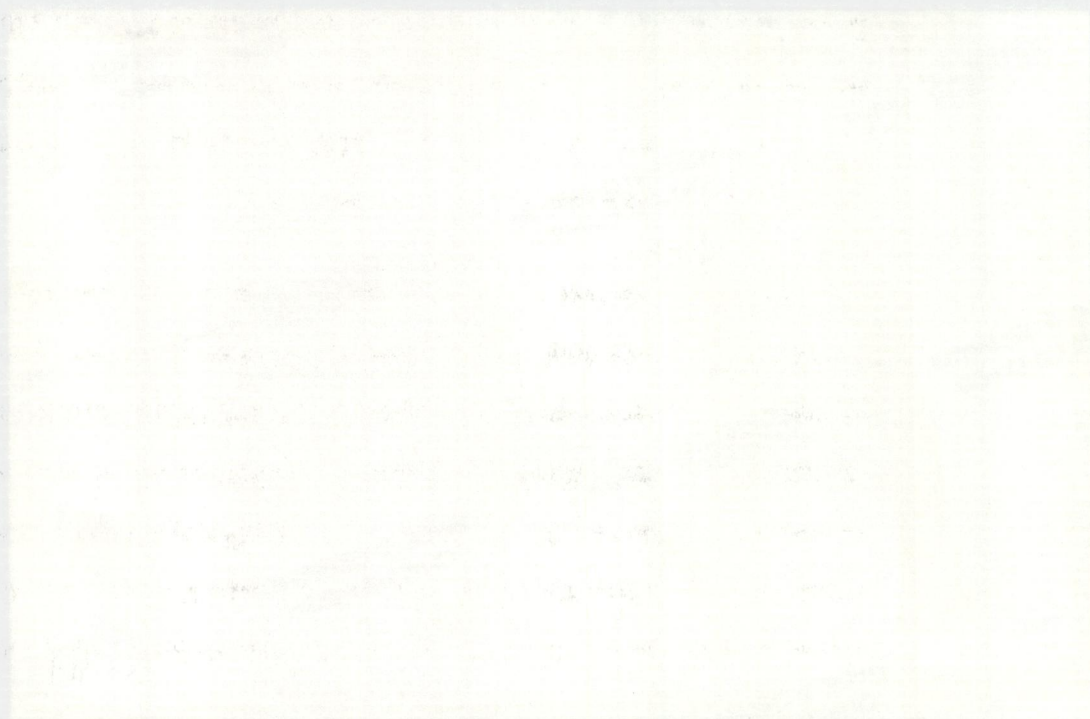


fig1. Silk Cut Visual pun on brand name.



fig2. Benetton A soft social statement..



between Benson and Hedges and Silk Cut they have built a 25% market share from recent advertising (15, p.44). The presentation and content of all current Silk Cut ads is essentially the same. One could recognise one of their adverts at a glance. This on a business level is of course excellent advertising. It uses the format to sell a product without actually saying anything about the product.

Similarly in a completely different business Benetton sell clothing without ever saying anything about the product. Again their adverts can be recognised at a glance and currently increase the size of the Benetton Corporation by 24% per annum. Gross sales in 1990 amounted to Bn2,060 Lira worldwide (3, p.4). There are no special restrictions on the freedom to advertise cloths other than standard codes of conduct which apply to all advertisements. However the similarities between both campaigns are quite extensive. Both have developed a style, a message and an attitude which act as identifying icons. Both have been extremely successful and controversial. Neither use the product as a seller or make any claims for it. Through the use of signs, symbols, identifying icons and the media in which they present their campaigns they create a vehicle for the delivery of a message to the public. These messages on the surface have nothing to do with the products in question.

In this thesis I will attempt to break down the rationale behind the campaigns in an effort to discover how these campaigns are so successful and what the associations are between the contents of the adverts and the products. My aim is to demonstrate how both campaigns are similar in how they work, and how they differ in both moral and practical analysis.

In terms of the products obviously cigarettes have been proven to cause lung cancer, heart disease, complications in pregnancy and many other undesirable things. Clothes and accessories are considerably less harmful. It would be important to take the nature and effects of the product into account while making any evaluation of the effects of its advertising on the public. However I will cross examine both campaigns with the same criteria and show both in the light of the report drawn up as a result of the concern over subliminal communication.

1. WHAT ADVERTISING IS

Advertising is a form of communication intended to promote the sale of a product or a service, to influence public opinion, to gain political support, to advance a particular cause, or to elicit some response desired by the advertiser. Advertising is delivered through many different kinds of medium, depending on the message, the product and the target audience. The main difference between advertising and other forms of communication is that the advertiser has sole control of the message. This is subject to various codes of practice.

Advertising started in ancient times when "public criers" walked the streets calling to the attention of the people the sale of slaves, cattle and imports. The earliest written ad found was in the ruins of Thebes and offered a gold coin as a reward for the return of a runaway slave called Shem. Advertising works to a format. When in this case the reader sees the ad, this format is evident. There is an invitation for the reader to take a course of action. If he or she should do so there will be a reward. The function of advertising is to bridge the gap between the suggestion and the reward.

Advertising on a worldwide scale has become so influential and extensive that in the US the people are exposed to over 7,000 advertisements per day in some form or another ranging over 1,300 products. Our resistance to such widespread suggestion of how to live our lives and spend our money has got stronger and as such on a significant scale we pay little attention to advertising that only provides information.

Advertising must tap into something of the individual person if it is to have an effect. Since the 1950s advertisers have recognised this as advertising increased in volume and content. Psychologists were employed as part of the creative teams in ad' agencies and very quickly people started to worry about the methods being used to sell. At this time books such as Vance Packard's The Hidden Persuaders aroused wide spread concern. However, in the 1990s the problem as such has not resolved itself. It is impossible to say where the

line should be drawn as to how deep into the Person advertising should be allowed to go, but in recognising the situation many companies have used advertising in a socially responsible manner. Others continue to exploit the findings of the "depth probes", particularly in the case of advertising where raw information about the products will either have an adverse effect or won't be sufficiently interesting to the consumer. Common examples of these are cigarette companies, the drinks industry, lending institutions, cosmetics and clothing industries.



fig3. Benson & Hedges *Rolled Gold* , richness and surrealism.



2. ADVERTISING TODAY

Advertising at present is undergoing a great change. The line between a totally fabricated and a realistic ad is becoming considerably more defined. The movement at present is towards either a mirror image of real life, or to a completely surreal approach. However it could be argued that all advertising is surreal, as is the opinion of Andrew Cracknel (creative director of BSP Dorland). This opens up an argument currently running in the advertising business. What is reality and how can advertising ever get closer to it than 'realistic' ?

As far as advertising goes, reality is a relatively new concept. For decades the industry has had its own way and its own world. People presented in ads were always clean cut, fathers were always manly and smiling characters, mothers were sweet and always did the domestic work and the children always looked up to the parents. In 1988 OXO released a television ad where the children were nasty, dad was going bald and the mother looked very stressed. The aim was to present a more realistic scene to sell the product. At first there were many complaints from consumers. Angry letters complained that people should not be allowed to act this way in advertising: i.e. like normal human beings.

This actually demonstrates that people preferred to be fooled by the fictitious world previously created. Later the campaign became a success and although still criticised, was producing the desired result. Many other companies followed suit including Radion who have recently adopted a policy of handing a camera to a family and asking them to make an advert. Wrangler now use imagery of the rough side of New York to sell jeans, and Fuji use photos of handicapped people to sell photographic goods. The interesting point to note is that although there has been wide spread criticism of this trend, it works. Notwithstanding that these adverts are not saying anything more about the product, in many cases less.

On the other side of the coin, some industries have chosen the opposite path and that is to fabricate their commercials even more than before. Benson and Hedges' advertising (fig. 3) has become so surreal that there are no mani-

**play...
and
replay**

... and play and play and play.

The SEGA MEGA DRIVE Games Console is like that. You think you've mastered it. Hey, after all, it's only a 'game'. You're feeling good - huh, man vs box of microchips ...

Do me a favour ...

Then it wipes the floor with you, leaves you feeling like so much dirty laundry and laughs in your face ... hehe.

The SEGA MEGA DRIVE Games Console - with 16-Bit Power ... your fingers become weapons. £109.99 includes free game - 'Altered Beast'.

SEGA
from *Virgin*

Available now from selected outlets of Comet, Currys Supercenters, Dixons, Poundstretcher, Sainsbury's, Toys 'R Us, Virgin Games Centres and independent computer stores.

fig4. Sega Games *A mind of fantasy.*

fest connections between the advert and the life of the consumer at all. Computer games manufacturers continue to take the viewer further from reality, an example being this advert for Sega Games consoles (fig.4) where the whole world is one of fantasy. The mind of the boy in the illustration is represented by a mess of striking images made up of computer pixels. The mental world of simulated reality is clearly glorified. Even the boy himself is represented by computer generated colour. The boy is the real part of the composition and for some reason still looks realistic in spite of the fact that his skin is purple.

These and any other approaches taken by the serious advertisers of the 1990s need to work for two aims. The first is to interest the consumer in the specific brand, the second is to place the product in the market place. The second aim, for companies such as Silk Cut or Benetton is considerably more important than the first as both are in highly competitive businesses. As every day we are subject to such huge volumes of suggestive messages, the advertiser must realise that the battlefield is not in the media, but in the mind of the consumer. Having a well known name is by no means a guarantee of success. The product or service must have a place in the market. In the 1960s advertising was run completely on creativity. From the beginning of the 1970s the era changed dramatically to one of placement within the business. Strategy became more important than creativity.

This change happened dramatically and had a serious impact on the distribution of business between competitors. A report written by Jack Trout and Al Ries suggested that the sudden change of the time was a result of one advert placed in the New York Times by David Ogilvey (considered in his time to be the father of advertising). The advert appeared on April 7th 1971 and outlined the 38 vital steps needed to create a successful campaign. The first point made was that the most important decision a company can make is where in the market they wish to place themselves (10, p.18).

In the 1990s, the positioning business has by no means diminishes, but advertising is crying out for different approaches. "Radion" type advertising although appearing to represent a realistic aspect of modern day society, has

actually chosen the sort of people in its adverts as its target place in the market. Through these kind of examples we can see that advertising is moving at the same speed as our social and economic culture.

"*Farouche*"
The perfume created by NINA RICCI, Paris
for all the women you are.

fig5. Farouche *Perfume*.



3. SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND MYTHOLOGY

The strongest method of communication we have is language in that we can reach a great number of people through speech, the written word and the use of signs, symbols and associations. This is the vital element between the message, the messenger and the receiver. Most products available today are either in competition with other brands or are not sufficiently attractive to the consumer to sell themselves. Advertising must offer the consumer a reason to purchase that brand. This is where mythology easily finds its way into advertising.

Myth is a form of communication directly linked to speech. It is a necessary part of our communication system as it stands, but nevertheless has to be treated with some care as it is mythology that promotes misunderstanding and communication breakdown. As much as anything can be described by speech, it can also become a myth, although needing special conditions to do so (1,p.117). In terms of advertising many products make use of mythology in an effort to be distinctive from other brands.

If one were to write a poem about a tree describing the tree in a romantic way and describing one's satisfaction with its beauty, it becomes a myth. The tree has become an accessory to an expression of poetry and feeling, not a tall plant made of wood and leaves. There is nothing wrong with this but nevertheless the tree has been seen as something different to that of the same tree described by a carpenter who may have an equal appreciation for the tree but for a different reason. As both speech and language are the most definite forms of communication in most cultures, people make little allowance for our power to change them. As people both have and exercise the power to change language, language can never be solid and can never be real. This is clearly demonstrated by the re-definition of the word subliminal by the Association of Advertising Practitioners.

On the following page we see an advert for 'Farouche' perfume (fig.5)

created by Nina Ricci. On the surface it reads as a clear statement. The product name, no specific image or pretty girls or sensual imagery, just 'For all the women you are'. At a quick glance it can read two ways. It can be explained as meaning all women. This is the plural, uniting all women together through the medium of the product and would be most attractive to those that would read it that way. The other way that it can (and is most likely to) be read is that 'for all the women you are as a private individual reading the ad. This way using the word all breaks the individual down into a fragmented ego. This illusion of multiple identities is both created and resolved in the same sentence. The only thing left outstanding is the suggestion that the person has to purchase the product to be liberated as an individual.

In Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*, he draws our attention to the image of a young Negro in a French magazine (1, pp.113-114). He is in a French uniform, saluting with uplifted eyes fixed on a fold of the French tricolour. What this picture suggests is that France is a wonderful place and that regardless of colour or creed, the people will serve under the flag. The French soldier, Barthes explains, is a signifier of a message. By doing so he has become signified himself and as such has become a myth. By placing the young man in this context he has become a myth (in this case a political accessory).



LOW TO MIDDLE TAR As defined by H.M. Government STOPPING SMOKING REDUCES THE RISK OF SERIOUS DISEASES
Health Department Chief Medical Officers

fig6. Marlboro *The Marlboro Man is still alive.*



4. ICONISM IN ADVERTISING

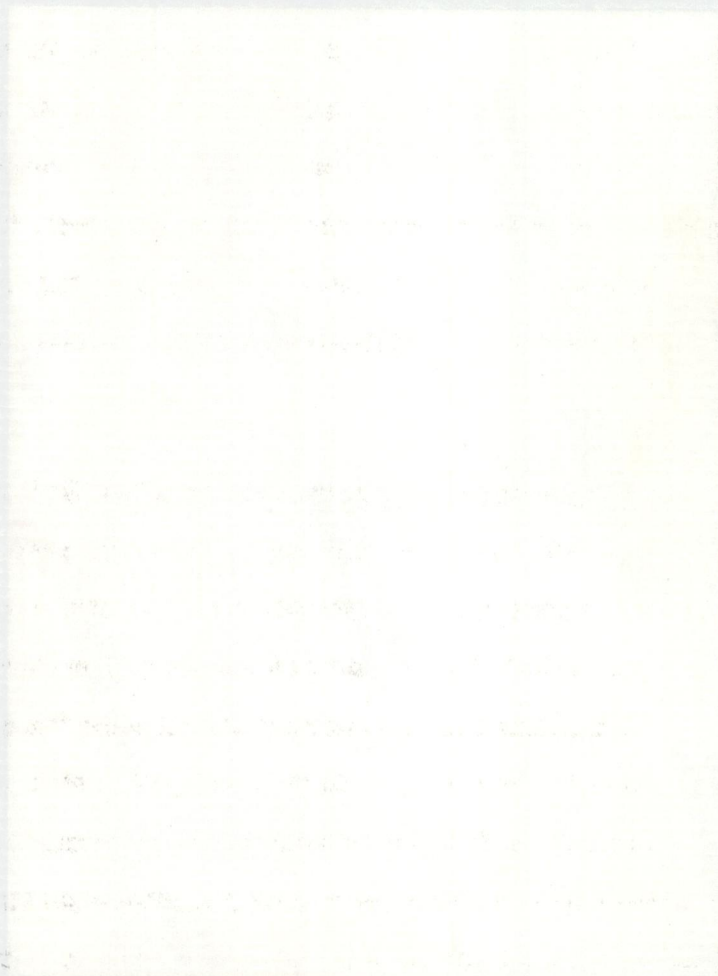
When most products that sell are available from many producers it is important for the individual suppliers to monitor the success rate of different approaches in advertising. Through advertising a company develops a public image. In the case of breakfast cereals there are many types made by Kellogs alone, most of which taste similar. In order to identify with both the consumer and the specific brand the product often develops an icon. These are mythological characters or indeed attitudes that act as the foundation of the particular strategy of campaign.

Apart from acting as an identifier an icon will distract the consumer from the actual product. This is particularly useful when one product is just as good another or when the problems incurred by using them are covered over by the icon. An example is the Marlboro man who symbolises a healthy rugged character and shows no signs of lung cancer or heart disease. The opportunity to identify with the character is much more inviting than the negative aspects of smoking. This is where the use of an icon becomes a powerful accessory towards hiding the product on a conscious level. The conscious mind is what has to make the final decision to accept the product and will rarely go out with the intention of buying Rice crispies in order to be like 'Snap, Crackle and Pop'. Therefore it is important to examine the relationship between the use of the product as a result of "conscious" decision making and the latent suggestion of a secondary gain in the product which is attractive to the unconscious and the subconscious.

Characters which have already been established in world mythology have been well used in advertising. It is then possible to add an instant image to a product or service. Superman has become an advertising cliché. He stands for peace and justice and everything that's good. He also supplies a super-human power. The character begins as a basic human making him easy to identify with. He bridges the gap between the conscious and the unconscious. He acts as both fact and myth when he is merely a myth. When the Health



fig7. Health Education *Myth Vs Myth.*



Education Council were campaigning against young people starting to smoke, they were faced with a problem. Although people knew that smoking was bad for their health, the selection of desirable identities offered and promised by the various cigarette companies were more attractive than the health warnings. The problem was clearly identified as being that the attraction was to something that didn't even exist, as the solution offered would suggest. These promises had to be discredited by something of their own nature so Superman was employed (fig.7). The agency developed a mythical character and presented it as the arch enemy of Superman. This character represented all people that would offer you a cigarette and the cigarette itself. It was aptly named Nick O' Teen. The adverts also took the form of the comic book as most children are familiar with comics.

Icons are most commonly created for children. There are many reasons for this, the main reason being that anything that a child in western culture can do to earn its place in society, it instinctively will. Of course not deliberately, but the very fact that children all around the world crave the same cartoons, breakfast cereals, sweets and music would indicate that this is the case. However it would be foolish to underestimate the power that icons have on adults when used in advertising. Even among the conscientious types, as we not only know what these symbols mean, we also have a conditioned response to Mickey Mouse or to an attitude presented for our approval such as environmentally friendly packaging. If we see Mickey Mouse advertising a product the first thing we do is look to see what is magical or fantastic about the product. Basic fundamentals of selling would say that when the customer is looking for a specific quality in a product, the sales rep is very close to closing the sale, particularly if he/she has a good rapport with the customer.

Perhaps the biggest icon of all, however is the image of the perfect self. The will to achieve perfection is as strong as the will to reproduce (in many respects the same thing) and is the second most common seller in advertising (after sex). The true or the perfect self is something that has been lost or at least covered over in people and anything that can promise to replenish this in some way is a good seller. What lies at the root of this process is desire. Desire

When were you last yourself?



When did you last wake up and actually feel great to be alive?
Or even generally quite chuffed?
One of the dangers of our times is the temptation to over-react, to tighten belts till it's difficult to breathe and sit waiting numbly for something nasty but not quite identifiable to happen.
Break out with a Thomson holiday this

coming winter and you'll hardly recognise yourself.

The programme's not only more varied than ever. It's actually hotter. We've added Gran Canaria, Morocco and Egypt and piled in extra holidays in the heat of Tunisia, Tenerife and Malta.

We've brought in cities as different as Nice and Jerusalem, Warsaw and Stockholm.

We've got hotels, reps, even Baby Patrolters if you need them, to see you make the most of every day.

And 2 out of every 3 holidays cost less (usually much less) than £80.

So call at your travel agent quickly and tell him there's someone inside you screaming to get out.

Your good old chirpy, life-is-for-living self.







Thomson Winter Sun

We take the care. You're free to enjoy yourself.

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fig8. Thomson holidays *Security scare.*



is aimed at both the symbol (the self) and the unity with that symbol.

Desire does not recognise the boundary between imaginary and symbolic. It blindly strives after the unattainable, constantly replenished but never fulfilled (13,p.161).

The function of this kind of advertising is to cause an imbalance between the advert and the self, that can be balanced out by the use of the product. Desire is what will supply the lack and will always jump the gap between the self and something else.

Desire is very quickly reborn after the brief vertigo of its apparent extinction. It is largely sustained by itself as desire, the lack is what it wishes to fill and at the same time is always careful to leave gaping in order to survive as desire (13, p.163).

It is because of this that advertising has the power to change values, fashions and the distribution of discretionary income. This will always be a seller and will always play a strong role in advertising.

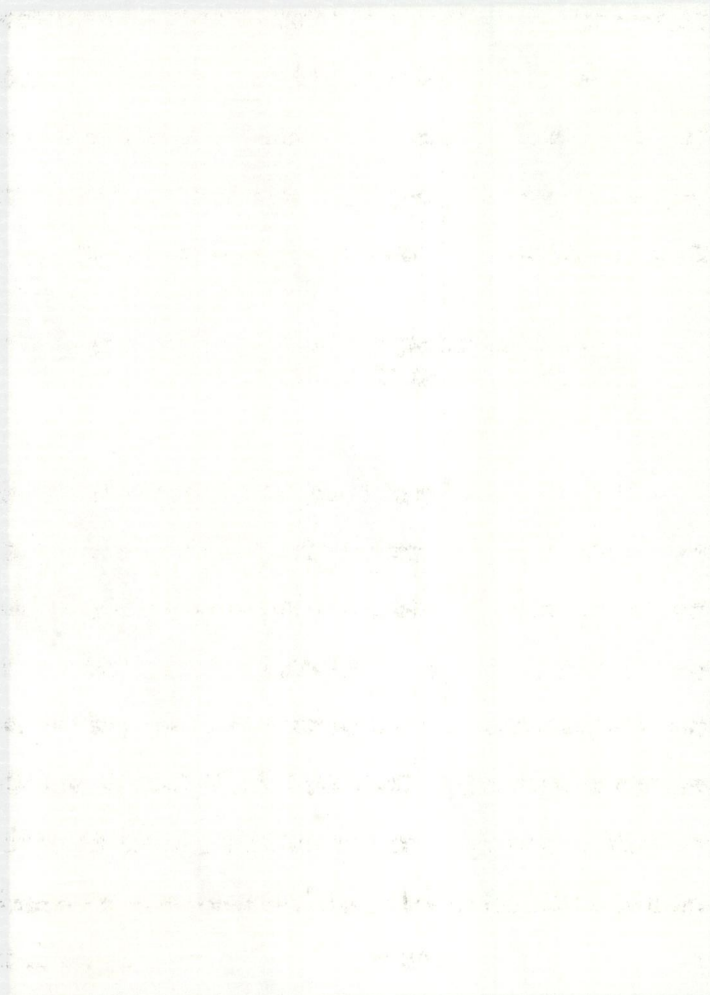
This advert for Thomson Holidays (fig.8) is a good example of how advertising can expose the gap between people and the true nature they seek and worship. The image of ones self that people continuously seek is in itself a golden calf in that unless one is in the state of no longer seeking, it is impossible to know what to expect. Variations of the golden calf appear in this advert. 'When were you last yourself?' This question exposes an insecurity already present in most people. If one is caught in the trap it would be difficult to resist reading on to see how the problem can be resolved. The suggestion in this advert is that not only will Thomson Holidays make you happy, they will also lead you back to your real self. The very fact that the company sells travel suggests that the only place where a persons' true nature is definitely not to be found is where the person is at that moment. This has to be the worst kind of lie. People that would dismiss the ad as 'only an ad' are most likely to dismiss the Thomson Group, but the message is a very effective trap as it speaks the language of our desires.

The subconscious will sort out the day gone by whilst we are asleep mak-

ing constant evaluations and supplying the person with information on how to improve their life. As most people ignore or don't remember their dreams due to a number of reasons, we have a well of information lying dormant and awaiting expression. Most people who have achieved success in anything or ever had a good idea will openly say that they were not sure where the idea came from. They may say that 'it came in a flash'. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that if only for a second, people are often able to open up to their intelligence that for the most part remains untapped. A small taste of this is enough for people to crave it. In many ways advertising has taken on the role of intensifying the craving for this intelligence or improved self by simply reminding people that it exists. In many cases (and I suggest quite deliberately) the signs and symbols take on the same (or at least similar) language as the information in our dreams, causing a confusion and an easy opportunity for people to confuse the message in an advert with a flash of inspiration from an intelligent force within themselves.



fig9. Belvedere cigarettes *Sexual suggestion.*



5. SEMIOLOGY IN ADVERTISING

It would be difficult to present an ad without causing minute perceptions. Every photograph, phrase or composition in an advertisement will only make sense when a series of signs and symbols is placed together to form a story. How the viewers respond to the advert depends on whether or not they give it any attention, their background, values, potential interest in the product and their associations with the elements of the composition.

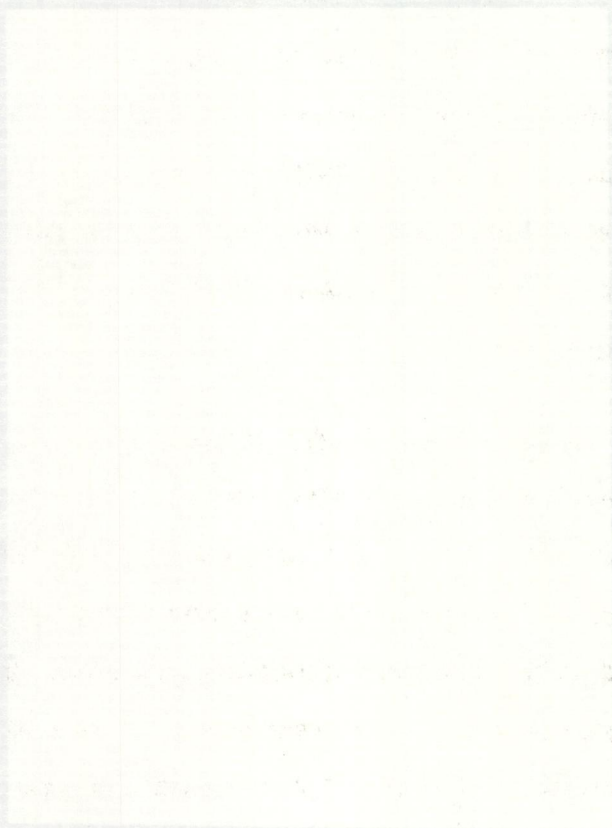
A sign is something that stands to somebody for something else, in some respect or capacity (1, p.131).

These signs work as a kind of a currency in advertising in that currency represents value and interchangeability with other things. As it has been proven that the eye sees considerably more than the conscious mind perceives yet the unconscious stores the information, it is quite interesting to see how differently many adverts appear when all the signs and symbols are studied in detail in relation to each other. The advert for Belvedere cigarettes (fig.9) is a good example of how even the colours used can act as signifiers. Blue is not the most important colour in this ad. Everything is blue except for two areas. These are the areas that we first notice, the red top of the bottle and the red lips of the girl. There is obviously a sexual suggestion here. The only part of the girl we actually see is her mouth. This is paralleled to the action of smoking and carries the suggestion of buying the specific brand. The key elements in the advert are open lips, open bottle, cigarettes and taste. Lips can signify many things - speech, moods, sensuality, laughter but in this case by drawing our attention to the open lips and the open bottle, both in warm colour against a cold, its definition of meaning is well defined.

In the beginning of a product's life it has no meaning. It has to be given a value and a use by a person or an object that already carries a value or a meaning. This can even be done by association with a product that has been a success in the past, the classic example being what happened to the jeans



fig10. John Player *Reflection of a lifestyle.*



industry in the mid 1980s when Levis used nostalgic music and created a warm nostalgia towards denim (which was out of fashion). After a short time the roles had reversed, the signifier became the signified and the jeans became more popular than ever. Barthes explains: 'Where a product may initially reflect something exterior, it soon comes to represent it' (1, p.132).

In this John Player Special advert (fig.10) the people are literally reflected in the product. What we see reflected is an upper class, rich way of life. Most people will not buy these cigarettes to reflect their lifestyle but to create it. Semiology when controlled is advertising's most powerful link to the mind, in itself a kind of speech and indeed myth. As Barthes describes: 'As myth is a kind of speech, everything can be myth and of course it is described by a speech' (1, p117).

Semiology is a system of communication primarily dealing with mythology but it has unique power to attach to the mind any number of conditioned responses from a single advertisement. People through their background, their culture, their gender and many other factors form personalities which can be described as a series of conditioned responses. On a conscious level we have the power to change this according to our own will, or at least to discard information or suggestions that are presented to us on that level. But very simply, most people don't read into ads. They may be attracted by the stunning visual content of a page, or by the clever or informative copy, but it is at this point that people say yes or no to a product.

By associating words and pictures against one-another language has become myth. Where myth (according to Barthes) can only be read as a sign system, here it will be read as a factual system. The facts are of little significance except inasmuch as they are significant to the message being portrayed.

Symbolism is not peculiar to dreams, but is characteristic of unconscious ideation and is to be found in folklore, and in popular myths, legends, linguistic idioms, proverbial wisdom and current jokes, to a more complete extent than in dreams (4, pp.467-468).

All of these idioms are heavily used in advertising, particularly jokes and

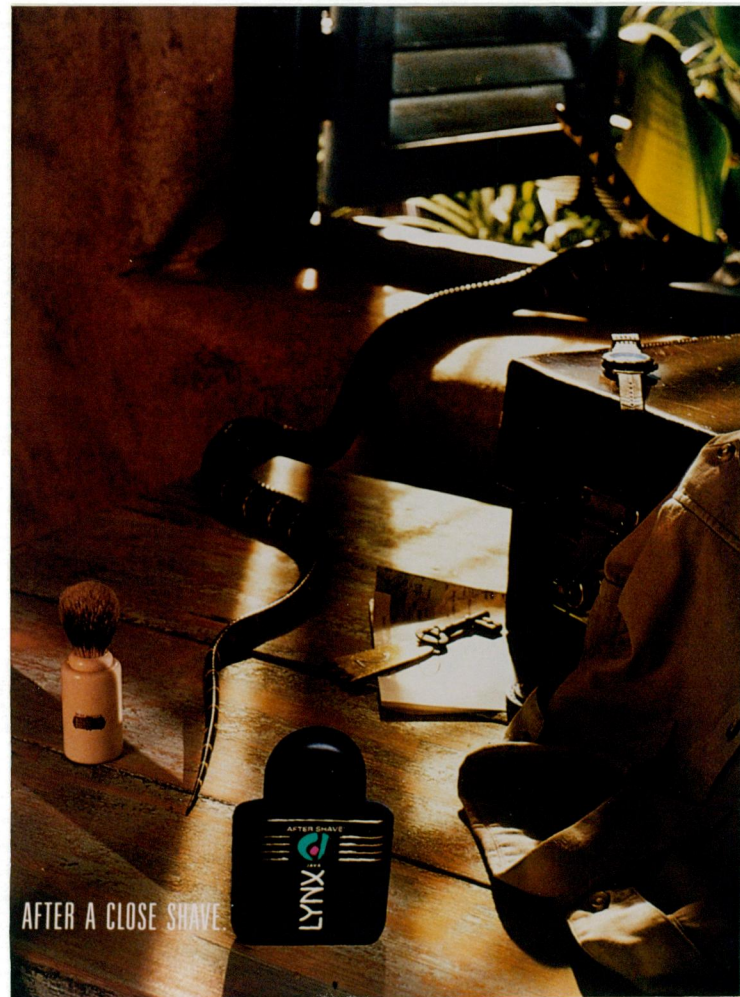


fig11 Lynx *Heavily charged with Freudian symbols.*

dream images. However, the similarities between much advertising and dreams is quite substantial, primarily in that both work in symbolism and are dealing mostly with the individual person. Perhaps the relationship between the content of the advertisements that advise us on how to spend our lives, and with our dreams is that where dreams express our latent thoughts and fulfil our wishes, these adverts with their signs, symbols and distorted reflections of ourselves (and our values) largely contribute to these latent thoughts.

The language that our unconscious speaks to us in our dreams is one common to most people. Many of us have the same dreams and according to Freud, with the study of an individual one could draw out the relationship between dream symbolism and wakeful life if specific contexts were also observed. As many symbols appear to have an equal significance to so many people, surely by using these symbols one can bypass the conscious power of reason and speak directly to the unconscious. This would work particularly well if two techniques put forward by Freud were considered. The first is the process of translating symbols and the second is the consideration of the dreamer's association with these symbols.

In this advertisement for Lynx aftershave (fig.11) we see a great number of elements with symbolic and associative meaning. First taking the written message; 'after a close shave' we look to see what it means. It can mean several things in this case. Firstly it can have the literal sense of using aftershave after shaving one's face. However there are too many other elements placed in conjunction with this simple message to be ignored. It is interesting to note that whether or not one actually agrees with the writings of Freud on the subject of representation by symbols, most of the symbols in this advert are described between page 472 and 473 of The Interpretation of Dreams (4). When viewing this advert in conjunction with Freud's descriptions the ad takes on a number of latent meanings acting as the kind of the person who uses the product. Any interpretation would be highly sexual. The snake is the strongest symbol for representing the male organ. The open case representing the openness of the female and the key to the room amplifies this. The key to the room is obviously to a hotel room in an exotic place. It is also clear that the snake has finished

whatever business it had, that the man suggested in the scene is not yet dressed, as his watch is still on the brief case so that he doesn't forget it before going to do his daytime business. As the key is to a hotel room the suggestion is that the man has many partners due to his exotic lifestyle. As many men would fantasise over a lifestyle like this, any part of their image that can be tailored towards this is fulfilment of a dream. The final touch is the open window. This signifies promise.

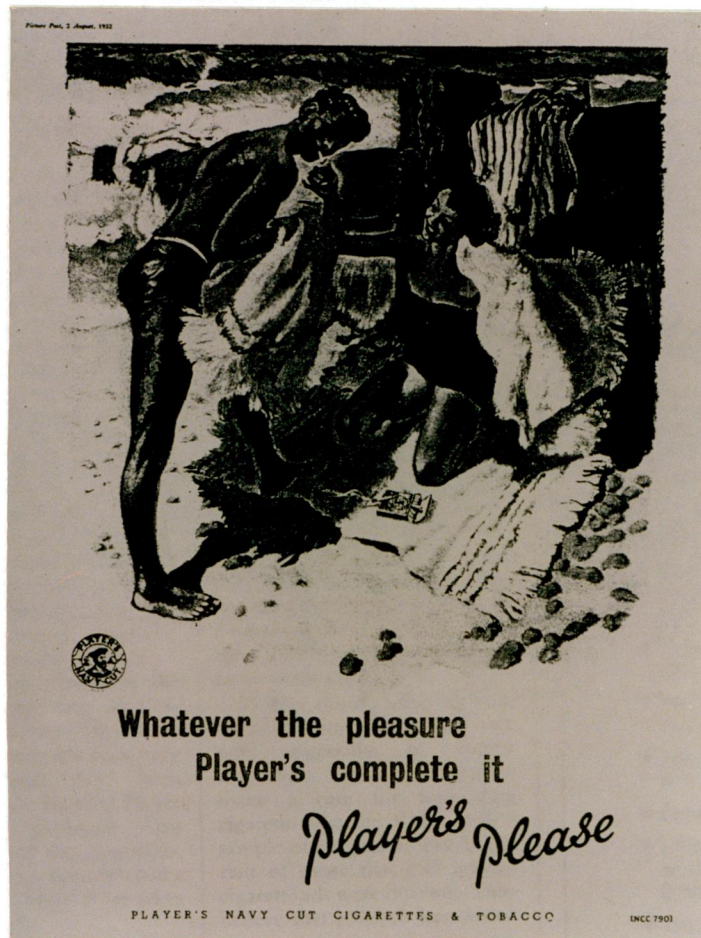


fig12. Players Whatever the pleasure.



fig13. Chesterfield Merry Christmas from Ronald Reagan.



1.a WHEN IS A SMOKE NOT A SMOKE?

It was discovered by American tobacco companies in the 1870s that if their tobacco was cured in the smoke house by flue instead of the traditional fire method, it would be considerably milder and as such would be easier for non smokers to try out without being sick. The other difference it made was that the smoke became acidic and this meant that the nicotine could only be extracted by the lungs (unlike other forms of tobacco). The most attractive reason for developing the cigarette was that by inhaling the nicotine it became highly addictive despite its effects (14, pp.179-181). Of course it was vital that these companies kept the facts of smoking away from the consumer if they were to stay in business.

Even at that early stage advertising of cigarettes was linked to social status, success and pleasure. As smoking became more popular and less of an elitist activity, advertisers did everything possible to hide the ill effects of smoking. Any suspicions that people had about the effect of smoking were discredited by campaigns, including doctors recommending certain brands. A JWT advert from 1935 read 'Smoke Craven A for your throat's sake'. Celebrity endorsement was popular and sexual associations were highly successful sales props (fig.13).

Since 1965 cigarette advertising has been banned from television. However as the ill effects of smoking have become more and more evident and restrictions on the freedom to advertise have been placed on tobacco, respected celebrities no longer appear on print ads. Sexual suggestion on the other hand still finds its way into print ads with as much intensity as the day this players beach scene advert was created (fig.12). In the 1990s with all the health warnings placed on the cigarette ads, it is essential for the advertisers to avoid associations between the product and the message at the bottom of the page. They must call on a receptive aspect of the person to connect with the product if they are to bypass reason. In a sense it would be impossible to sell smoking. People know better than to start. So if it's not smoking that they are selling,



fig14. Silk Cut Saatchi & Saatchi say it was a coincidence.



what are they selling? Here we have one of the first adverts from the Silk Cut campaign, no cigarettes, no people and no claim for the product. What we do see is a government health warning discrediting the act of smoking. The rest is a riddle. If we take the time to work out the riddle we feel clever for making the connection between cutting, silk, and the colour purple. The associations make the brand name, and the reader is in the frame of mind of making connections and associations with signs and symbols. This in the light of what was discussed in the chapter on semiology is a perfect position for the advertiser to have the consumer in.

As in the Benson and Hedges campaign Silk Cut have used conceptual appreciation previously only enjoyed by in conceptual art. Colour association is the surface identifier. This is all a response to restrictions and changing attitudes about the act of smoking. Cigarettes need mythology to sell. The Marlboro cowboy was banned from advertising, but by Marlboro showing a rugged country side people still see the character and not the product. Artistic surrealist images in Benson and Hedges adverts lead the consumer to recognise the box and not its contents. Cigarette advertising has now got to the stage that people simply don't look for the cigarette. This is selling cigarettes in the same manner as the negro boy described by Barthes sells the French army, not for what it is but what the creators of the adverts wish the public to see it as.

It is in this light that we must look to see what is being sold. Radical feminists were the first to draw attention to this question in relation to Silk Cut. The iconic representation of a missing name was a clever one but the manifest content hasn't changed in many years. The objections were to the sexual suggestion in the composition of the campaign as it developed (13, p.44). The voluptuous curves and qualities of silk suggests the female body. This is always coupled with something that will either mutilate or penetrate. To view a collection of these adverts in the light of this interpretation reveals a distinct pattern attractive to the sensual and exciting to the psychopathic.

1.b PURPLE SILK - THE ICON

These adverts for Silk Cut look perfectly clear, fresh and free of smoke or indeed any associations with the act of smoking. Nevertheless we know that the ads are for Silk Cut cigarettes. We recognise the format of the health warning and the colours in the ad, at least that's what is obvious. The purple silk is the icon. There is more to this icon than meets the eye (consciously). With each of these adverts comes two additional identifiers. The first is the classy image that the highly polished ads portray. This, in the opinion of ASH (action on smoking and health) is to attract young people who don't yet have enough education on the effects of smoking to disregard advertising of cigarettes(21, p.32). The adverts instead will programme a conditioned response in the minds of the recipients of the desired message, ie Silk Cut = class. Secondly there is an attitude of being clever associated with the brand.

The visual puns in Silk Cut adverts are both surreal and disturbing. In a sense they reads as magic. It is the myth of magic that allows our knowledge to interact with the contents and the message in the picture without first having been given the opportunity to 'accept or reject' the brand.

Purple silk is a clever icon for a cigarette company as it de-humanises the manifest appearance of the image. A human response to an image of a cigarette is one of disgust to a non smoker as it signifies the smoke from other people's cigarettes. On the other hand, a human response to the sensuality of silk is purely kinesthetic and is not associated with the effects of smoking.

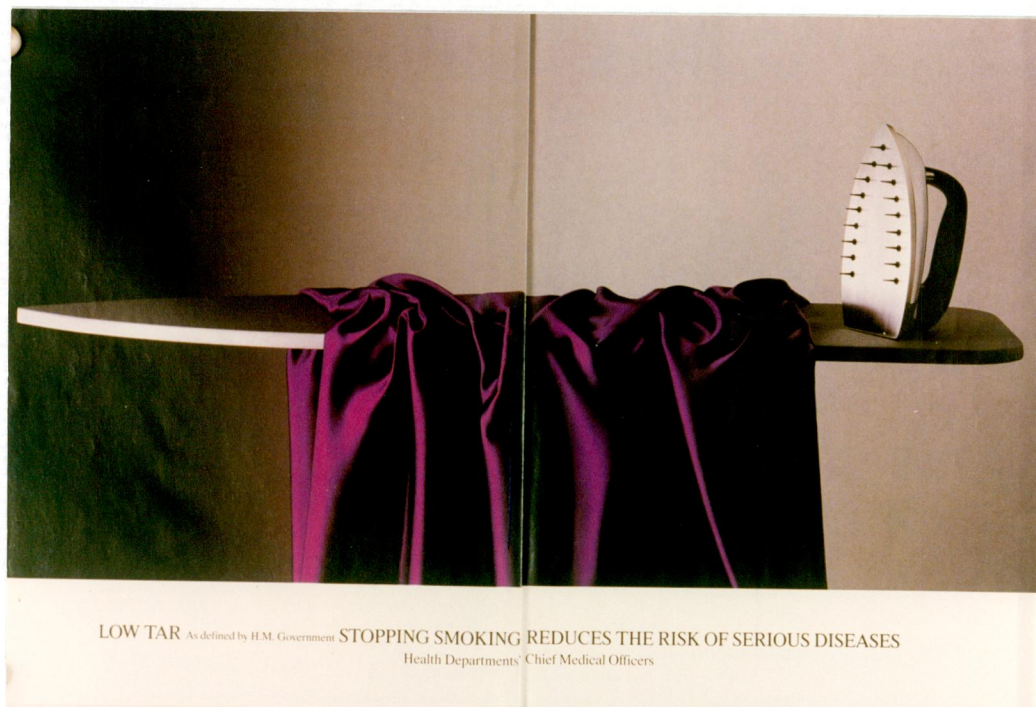


fig15. Silk Cut *Mutilation.*



1.c SEMIOLOGY IN SILK CUT ADVERTISING

The iconic attitudes associated with Silk Cut advertising is heavily supported by a currency of signs and symbols. As the campaign continues this becomes more powerful. Sigmund Freud spoke of dream work and its relation to wakeful life (4, pp.64-67). As we dream in symbols it is interesting to assess the messages behind the Silk Cut campaign in the light of the associations we have with the contents of the ads on an unconscious level.

Freud describes anything that penetrates as representing the male sex organ. This includes knives, swords, nails, keys and guns as well as anything else that will cut or tear (4, p.472). Of course this is not the only condition for an object to represent the male organ, nevertheless these are the kind of images that consistently find their way into Silk Cut adverts. Similarly anything that acts as a recipient represents the female body. Silk Cut ads always contain two elements; a recipient and a penetrator and/or mutilator. The recipient is normally the purple silk. Silk is in itself delicate and sensual. It has voluptuous curves and is soft to the touch. A woman described this way would have a particularly feminine physique. The words would also draw attention to the physical contrast between the two sexes.

In this example (fig.15) the image can be described in both a latent and a manifest way. The manifest message is the riddle and visual joke. The purple silk is going to be cut up by the iron because it has spikes. Therefore the ad is for Silk Cut. The image is classy and the composition is clean. There are two highlights, one on the iron and one on the end of the ironing board suggesting visually that the iron will move to meet the other side of the board over the silk. The latent description is quite shocking. For the purpose of describing the advert in relation to the significance on an unconscious level of its elements, I will refer to the iron as a male organ and to the silk as female. The man is standing above the woman who appears to be draped over an ironing board (or a bed). The man is about to penetrate the woman with his hard and hot (iron) organ. The motion of an iron is to move up and down, further suggesting the

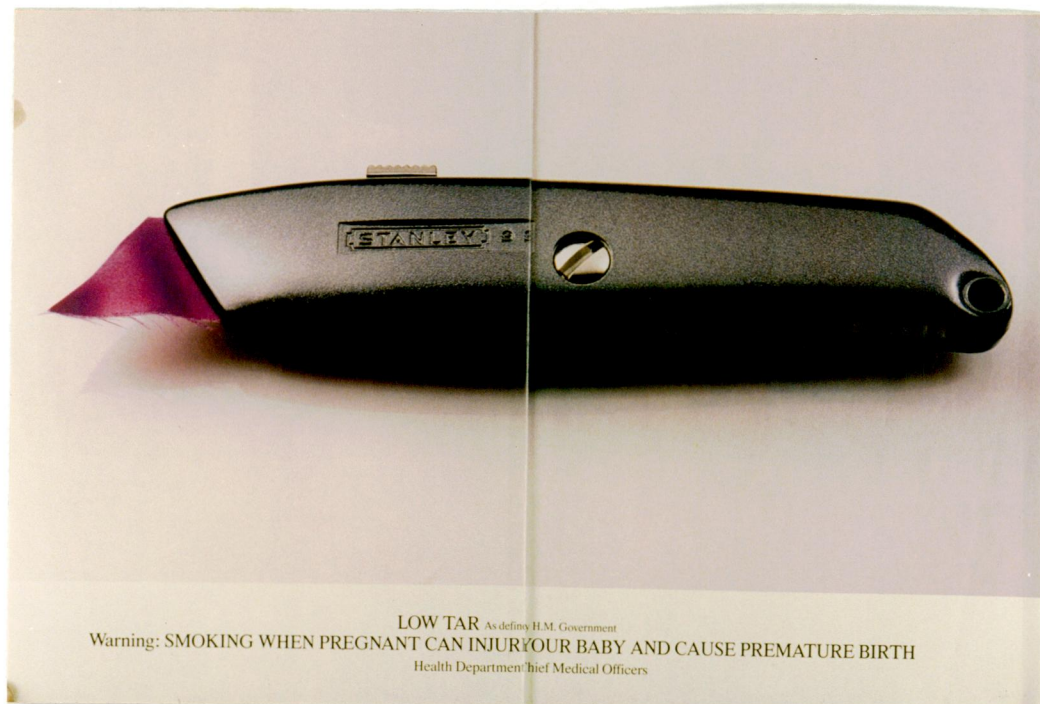


fig16. Silk Cut *Of course the male is not always successful.*

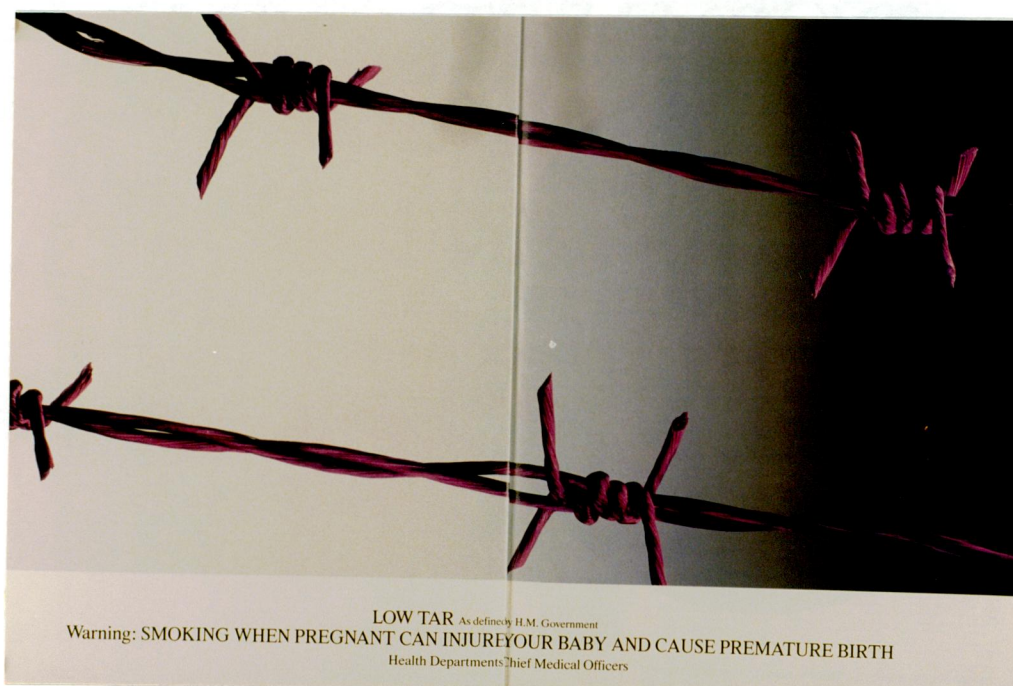


fig17. Silk Cut *Again the feminine element is stronger.*

Handwritten text on a rectangular piece of paper, likely a letter or document. The text is written in a cursive script and is mostly illegible due to fading and the quality of the scan. The paper is yellowed and shows signs of age.

Handwritten text on a rectangular piece of paper, likely a letter or document. The text is written in a cursive script and is mostly illegible due to fading and the quality of the scan. The paper is yellowed and shows signs of age.

sexual act. The inevitable result is that the woman will be mutilated.

This approach of analysis will produce the same explanation or a version of it when applied to any of the current Silk Cut ads. The very fact that all the ads are based on penetration or mutilation and use Freudian imagery to achieve this suggests a calculated decision to follow this path of unconscious manipulation.

This may all seem far removed from smoking, except for one thing; smoking actually does mutilate the body, and the desire to do so is a desire to further mutilate the body. This of course is an addiction and I do not mean to suggest that all smokers are masochists (consciously). However there must be a part of the mind that can justify such mutilation of the body when influenced by a physical addiction such as for nicotine and other drugs. Perhaps this is the same part of the mind that is capable of accepting perversity in response to a physical craving for sex. If this is the case, it explains the gigantic success of the campaign.

When asked if Silk Cut were intending to continue with this form of advertising, a senior executive at Saatchi & Saatchi, who handle the account, told Oliver Bennett that all the objections to the supposedly explicit adverts were just 'bullshit', and that there was never any intention to suggest anything other than the Silk Cut name, and that the consistency of the supposed subliminal stuff was coincidental. 'There are no plans to change until the restrictions get more severe'. He gave no indication of what that plan was (13, p.45).

The magazines containing Silk Cut adverts are mainly British magazines. Britain along with Germany, Denmark and Holland are strongly opposed to the EC directive to ban cigarette advertising. A government Health spokesman told Tessa Souter from Elle magazine that Britain currently earns in excess of £6 billion per year from revenue on tobacco, and that it would be unfair to ban cigarette advertising as smoking is not illegal. Furthermore, the list of rules and regulations about advertising of cigarettes in Britain is a voluntary agreement negotiated *in secret* between the government and the industry (21, pp.30-32). 'The agreement is a complete farce' according to Mark Flannagan (assistant

director of ASH), 'no industry that powerful will agree to restrictions that will endanger their trading viability'. The government's stated belief on the effects of cigarette advertising is that it probably doesn't affect consumption. A confidential marketing strategy report was handed to the Observer newspaper in November of 1991. The report concluded that Imperial Tobacco LTD (a subsidiary of British American Tobacco Industries) include 12 to 17 year olds in its target group (21, p.45). A spokesperson for ASH outwardly accused the industry of targeting young impressionable persons with glossy, surreal advertising and that there was more evidence to suggest that these ads were more for the non - smokers than the smokers.

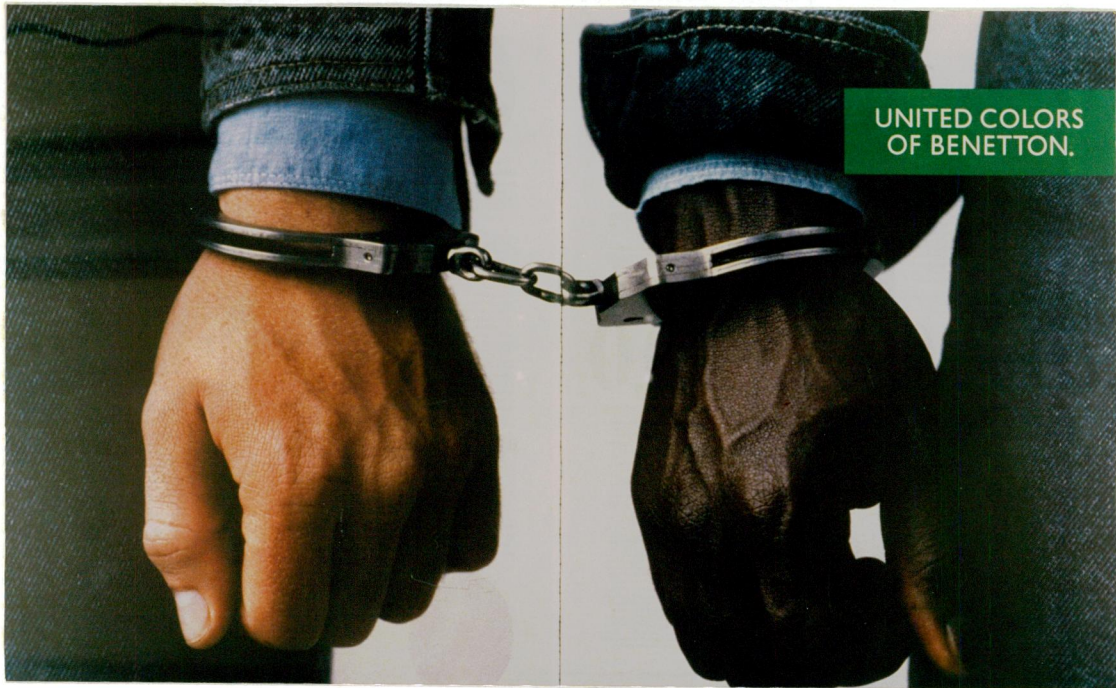


fig18. Benetton *The tall white man appears to be the police man, but is he?*



fig20. Benetton *A soft anti racist suggestion.*

2.a WHEN IS A JUMPER NOT A JUMPER?

A jumper by definition is a garment people wear to keep themselves warm and protected which covers the upper body. This of course is a crude definition as there is much more to a jumper than this in reality. People want to look well. They want people to like their clothes, the colours that they wear and the styles they choose. Every item of clothing a person wears acts as part of an identifying image. Clothes build an image reflecting fashion and culture.

In order to sell clothes, a company will have to decide who will want their brand. Levis have a certain "take" in the market, Wrangler have another. There are many ways in which a company can approach the market in order to secure a place. These include price, fashion, culture and above all the image attached to the garments and its relationship to the consumer.

From the beginning of the Benetton company, the founder Luciano Benetton decided that the market was flooded with companies selling identities. Benetton believed that a large fashion industry forms a world of its own (3, p.7). This world is not directly created by the consumer, but by the advertising that aims to win favour with the consumer. When this is analysed it becomes obvious that the seller is the image and not the functional use of the product (unless of course this is used as a seller in itself).

Benetton decided that in order to gain a market share he would have to turn the trend and instead of selling the world of Benetton, he would use the Benetton name to sell the world as it is to the consumer by causing people to reflect on what they have and what they do with it (3, p.9). Cosmetics companies will sell the perfect self, but Benetton will remind us that we are far from perfect in the issues that they raise, and force us to examine.



fig21. Benetton *All the same inside.*

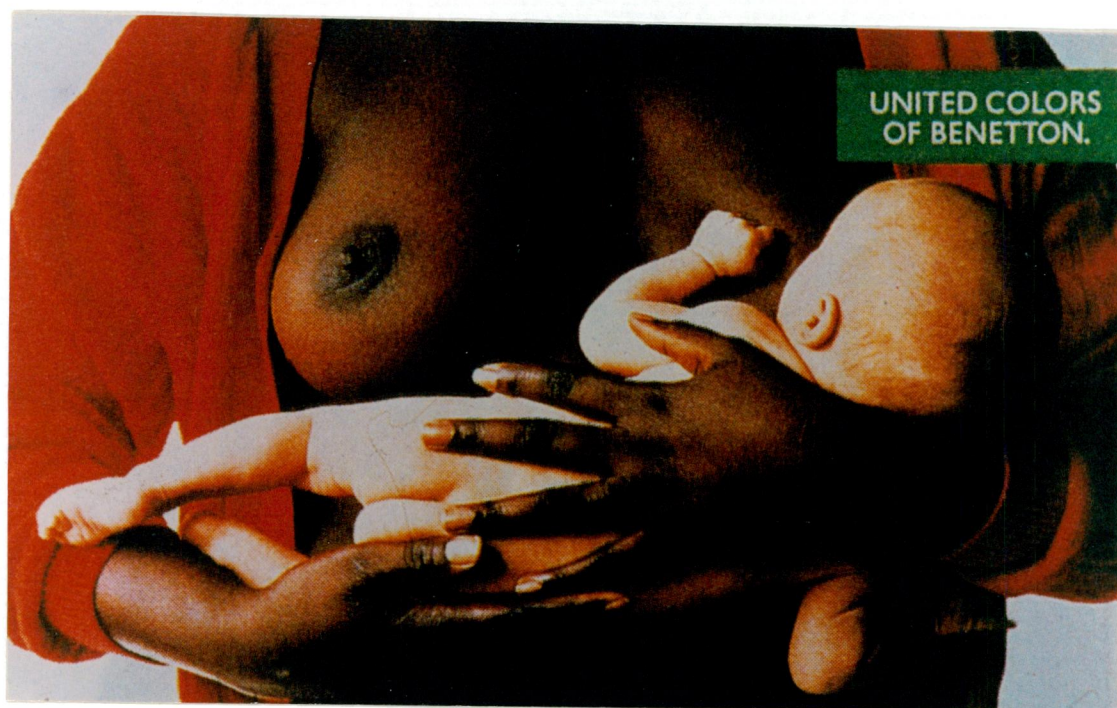


fig19. Benetton *Wet nurse.*

Handwritten text on a piece of aged paper, likely a letter or document. The text is written in cursive and is mostly illegible due to fading and the quality of the scan. It appears to be a single paragraph of text.

Handwritten text on a piece of aged paper, likely a letter or document. The text is written in cursive and is mostly illegible due to fading and the quality of the scan. It appears to be a single paragraph of text.

2.b SOCIAL AWARENESS - THE ICON

As with the Silk Cut campaigns, these adverts for Benetton never include a shot of the product. We can however recognise a new Benetton poster merely by the attitude. The manner in which the compositions have been put together has a consistency in style and the colours are usually intense and defined. The strongest identifier is the fact that a Benetton poster will always raise a social question (often with accusation towards the company).

In the example of the three different coloured children with their tongues sticking out (fig20), we are forced to notice that the tongues are the same colour. The message here is that whatever colour, creed or nationality we have, we are all the same inside. Another example of the same message is the highly controversial 'Wet Nurse' image (fig.21) where we are shown a black woman breast feeding a white child. The image caused completely different responses in different countries. In Holland, France Italy and Denmark the poster was highly regarded and received a wealth of awards. In New York there was a storm of protest over the same poster (3, p.5). The advertising standards office in Ireland received hundreds of letters complaining about the crudity of the image.

As the message in both of these examples is that we are the same inside, why then are there so many different responses to them, and for so many reasons? This is the whole point of the campaign, to expose the difference and to demonstrate the difference in attitudes to social issues such as black and white, and the borders of respectability in advertising.

Where Benetton differ from most other approaches in advertising (including Silk Cut) is that they don't seem to mind whether or not we approve of these messages. An adverse responses from one individual will only serve to strengthen the positive attitude of another.

As the campaign continues, Benetton produce more and more images



fig22. Benetton *Black, or white?*



fig23. Benetton *AIDS victim.*

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The paper then goes on to discuss the various factors that have shaped the history of the United States, including the role of the government, the economy, and the culture.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the history of the United States. It is argued that the government has played a central role in the development of the country, and that its actions have shaped the course of history. The paper then goes on to discuss the various ways in which the government has influenced the country, including through its policies, its actions, and its institutions.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the role of the economy in the history of the United States. It is argued that the economy has played a central role in the development of the country, and that its growth has shaped the course of history. The paper then goes on to discuss the various ways in which the economy has influenced the country, including through its production, its distribution, and its consumption.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the role of the culture in the history of the United States. It is argued that the culture has played a central role in the development of the country, and that its values and beliefs have shaped the course of history. The paper then goes on to discuss the various ways in which the culture has influenced the country, including through its art, its literature, and its customs.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the role of the people in the history of the United States. It is argued that the people have played a central role in the development of the country, and that their actions have shaped the course of history. The paper then goes on to discuss the various ways in which the people have influenced the country, including through their voting, their protests, and their participation in the government.

6. The sixth part of the paper discusses the role of the future in the history of the United States. It is argued that the future is a central part of the history of the United States, and that the actions of the present will shape the course of the future. The paper then goes on to discuss the various ways in which the future has influenced the country, including through its dreams, its hopes, and its fears.

that cause great offense to many people. In late 1991 an image of a blood smeared baby still attached to her umbilical chord (fig.22) appeared on billboards all around the world. In Ireland over 200 angry letters a day arrived in the advertising standards office until the poster was withdrawn. Again the USA and the Netherlands gave the poster prestigious awards. The message behind the image was that regardless of colour, we are all born the same way and that colour is external (It takes 20 minutes for a "coloured" baby's skin to colour).

The most recent of the campaigns seem to work in a three point plan. The first part is that the poster will cause a shock, the second is that the people want to know why the image was used and what it means and the third stage is that the people make up their minds what they think of the message. Before the Irish people had considered the message behind the baby poster they had rejected it as immoral and disgusting.

In the meantime Benetton's sales figures continued to increase. Silk Cut adverts programme a conditioned response to the product with their approach. Benetton adverts while programming a response to their products, first allow the consumer to decide what that response is, by requiring a personal response to their posters.

As an icon, social awareness could work for many products so long as they are not seen to be contradicting themselves between their ads and their actions. In the beginning of this year a photograph of an american AIDS victim David Kirby, at the moment of his death surrounded by his family was used as a Benetton poster (fig.23). The poster caused huge upset in many countries. News papers and magazines urged the public to steer clear of Benetton shops and the public complained intensely about the campaign before it was used. This was the first part of the three part plan. At the opening of the current series of posters, the family arrived unexpectedly to the event and announced that they had in fact asked Benetton to use the poster. They said that 'Benetton are not exploiting us, we are exploiting them'. Furthermore, Benetton have pledged to sponsor centres to help people with the AIDS virus. This is the second part of the plan. What happens next is impossible to say.



fig23. Benetton *Black Devil, White Angel*.

What all this would suggest is that the apparently reckless approach of the corporation is by no means so. It is clear, calculated and the group have opened up new ideas in poster advertising. Marlboro, Rothmans and John Player will sponsor sporting events that will entertain people in their armchairs at home, but Benetton will sponsor social awareness. Posters that would normally be at the mercy of small budgets or none at all can be used for a corporation with considerably more power than the charities and organisations that would otherwise tackle these issues alone.

This is certainly an iconic attitude and undoubtedly acts as an identifier for the Benetton group. Nevertheless the question still remains, are Benetton being responsible and are they justified in their approach? After all they sell clothes. There is one thing for sure, Benetton have upset many people and offended many cultures. This is partly due to misinterpretation of the material, and partly due to the fact that people don't like to be told that they are wrong.

In the example of the two young girls, one white and the other black (fig.23), there was probably great misunderstanding of the message. We see the white child appearing like a little cherub with her golden curls. The black girl by contrast has her hair shaped like a devil's horns. The poster says that black people are bad. The message is different, the spectator should disagree with the poster. A company so large and successful as Benetton would hardly undermine their whole approach with one poster. The idea was to question our values and attitudes to "coloured" people.

Silk Cut adverts in their technique of hiding the message from the conscious mind of the consumer do not offer the opportunity to accept or reject, the main defining feature of subliminal advertising. Benetton make a deliberate statement in their campaigns, forcing people to make the decision to accept or reject with little compromise. However, to accept Benetton goods in the light of the campaign is to accept the icon of their image, not necessarily the clothes.

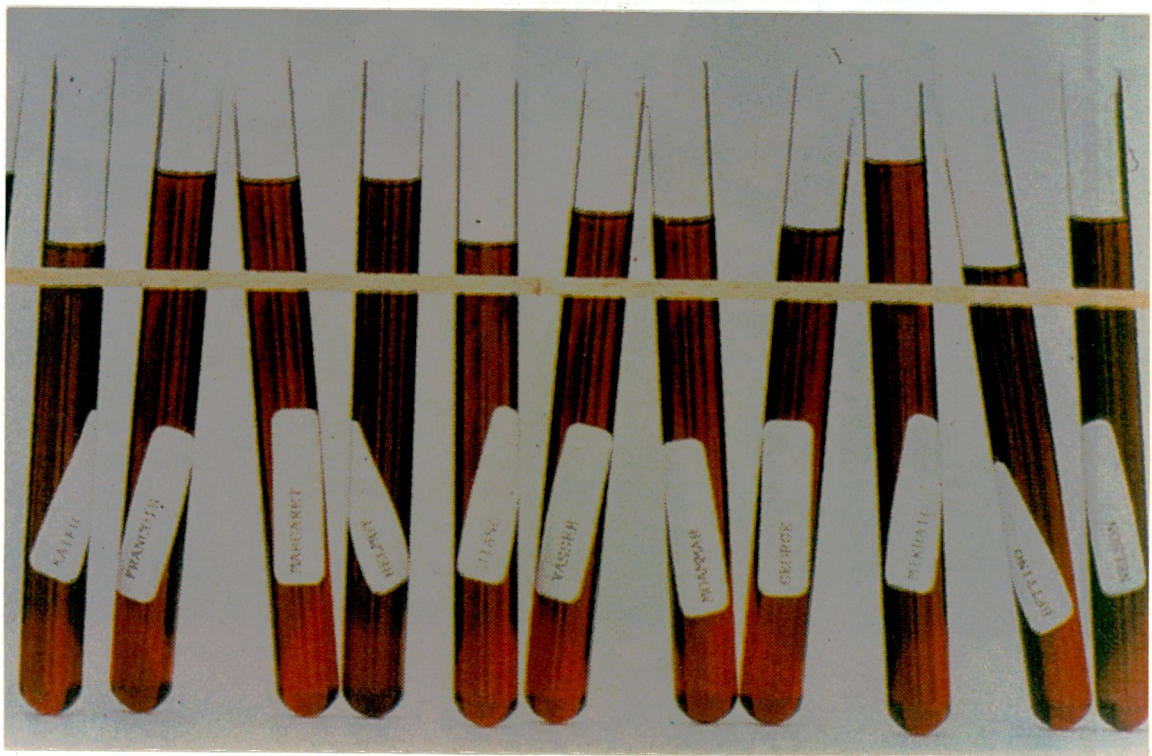


fig24. Benetton *Is one of these infected ?*



fig25. Benetton *AIDS awareness.*



2.c SEMIOLOGY IN BENETTON POSTERS

As with all good advertising the Benetton posters use signs and symbols shrewdly in their campaigns. In the writings of Freud he always reserved interpretation of symbols as a general guide as the individual association with a symbol is what counts:

I should like to utter an express warning against underestimating the importance of symbols in dream interpretation, against restricting the work of translating dreams merely to translating symbols and against abandoning the technique of making use of dreamers associations (4, p.477).

This of course is true of symbolism in advertising, and would seem to be deliberately and well utilised in Benetton work. The image of twelve test tubes containing the blood of famous people, all lined up beside one another is quite a disturbing image (fig24). Perhaps ten years ago the message behind such an image would suggest that people should give blood, or in the context of a Benetton poster could mean that we are all the same inside. But it doesn't. It clearly disturbs us as one of the test tubes could contain the aids virus, and is very close to the other 11. As they all look the same it is impossible to know which one is infected (if any). Where culture and things that effect culture change, so do our associations with relevant symbols.

Immediately after this campaign came the coloured condoms poster (fig.25). Condoms represent sex, contraceptives and as sexually transmitted diseases have become a serious problem they now symbolise protection. Again condoms have unorthodox associations to practicing Catholics as they are not allowed to use them (this campaign was not used in Ireland).

By the very nature of the imagery and the messages in the posters sponsored by Benetton, people will read into them and depending on all the factors that go together to conclude an interpretation, the "right or wrong" decision will be made. This is a grey area in the recent campaigns as the group run the risk of the approach overshadowing the message due to the uncertainty of the asso-

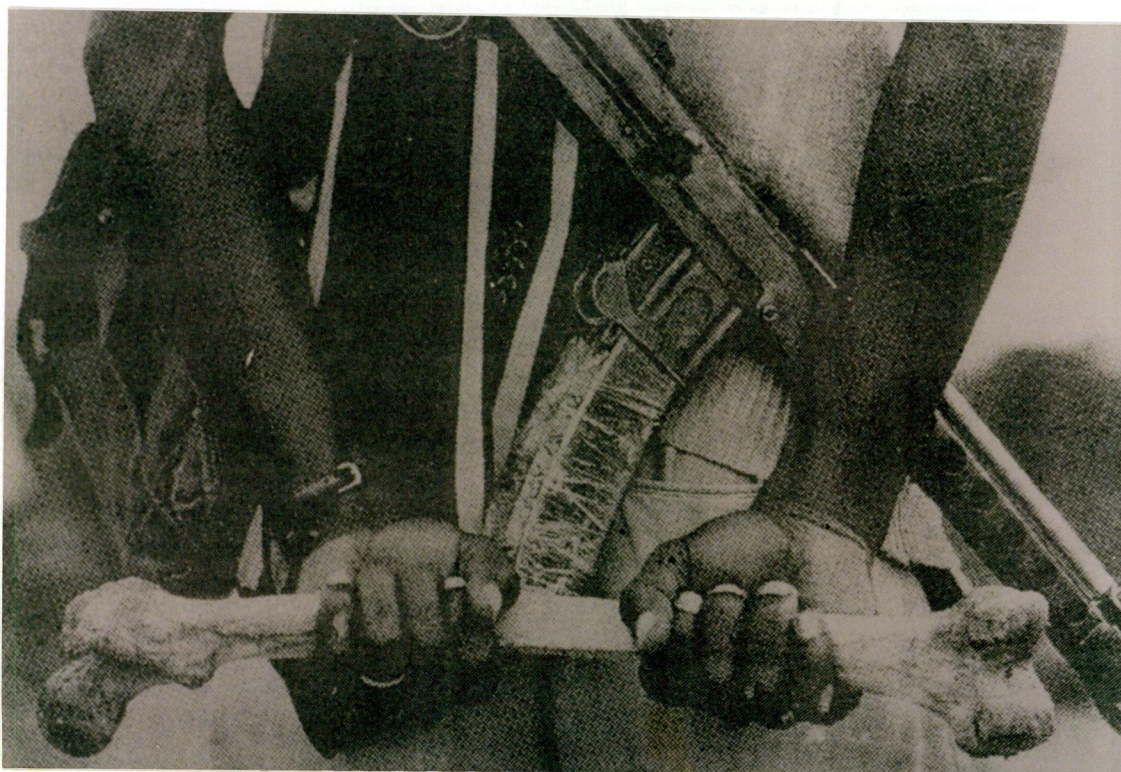


fig26. Benetton *Latest poster, set to cause a storm of protest.*

Handwritten text on a piece of paper, likely a letter or document, with faint, illegible markings.

ciations people have with the symbols.

The next poster to run will be an image of a black soldier with a gun slung over his shoulder and a thighbone behind his back (fig.26). The image was accused by the Sunday World of being racist and of associating Africa with barbarity and cannibalism. As the rifle is a western weapon, and was designed to kill, is that not barbarity in itself?

Whereas much advertising sells the promise of the perfect self, Benetton sell much the same thing, but prove that this cannot be achieved by simply suggesting that people buy their clothes. They can not be accused of creating a false world for advertising. The reaction to such an approach is bound to be mixed as the glossy world of advertising that people are used to offers false comforts and tells people what they want to hear. The approach has become so controversial at this point that it is difficult to say whether or not they have crossed the boundary of decency. What Benetton have shown us is that advertising can be successful without telling lies and can work for more than one cause than that of selling the product. This is in itself both new and exciting for the future of advertising.

CONCLUSION

Although subliminal advertising in its original form was made illegal in the 1950s, it is still perfectly legal to communicate subliminally, provided adverts do not use any of the specific techniques quoted in the booklet published by the Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Britain (Subliminal Communication). Many of the ways by which unconscious communication can be achieved were included in this booklet, but excluded in the definition of "subliminal communication".

For advertising to be successful it must directly relate to the person viewing the ad. It must expose, or create a desire and at the same time offer a remedy for that desire.

From the beginning of the 1990s advertising has taken two specific directions. The first is to supply the consumer with surreal "glossy" images which have little or nothing to say about the product on a conscious level. This approach is most common in advertisements for companies that have something to hide. An example of which are cigarette companies who at all costs have to keep any associations with the dangers of smoking away from their adverts. The second direction that advertising has taken recently is to reflect the world as it is and not as an advertising creation. The recent posters of the Benetton campaign aim to achieve this.

Language as our strongest method of communication has provided the advertising industry with a vehicle for creating mythologies. This works on the fact that people trust that they understand their languages. However, as people both have and exercise the power to change language, advertising can use this to create new definitions. A prime example of this is the changing of the definition of "subliminal communication".

Mythological characters or indeed attitudes are often used to act as a product's identifier. An icon can also be used to distract the consumer from the

product itself. In many cases it will cover up the gruesome truth about a product (the Marlboro cowboy always looks healthy). The most common icons used are sexual drive and the image or promise of the perfect self.

Signs and symbols act as a currency for the advertising industry and are used with the associations people have with these signs in mind. This is the most powerful accessory the advertising industry has to the unconscious minds of the consumers, as we are mostly unaware of our associations with these signs. In many cases, advertising has chosen signs based on Freudian thought. The language spoken in these adverts is similar to the language of the unconscious. As such, there is a second message in these adverts which bypasses the conscious mind.

All the approaches and techniques mentioned so far, can be put together to form a simplified formula for unconscious communication. First take a product, decide on the target audience and add an identifying icon for the brand. Then supply the message on a bed of elements that mean something to the target audience. As all images mean something to the person it could be argued that to a degree all advertising contains an unconscious element and that how this is used is at the discretion of the creator of the campaign.

We have seen how Silk Cut use this formula in the development of their long running campaign. The campaign has been heavily influenced by Freudian thought, which has been demonstrated more and more throughout the campaign. The icon of the purple silk hides the effects of smoking perhaps even more successfully than the Marlboro cowboy did before he was banned from advertising. The collection of signs and symbols contained in Silk Cut adverts is clean and clever. To view the same elements in the language of the unconscious reveals a repulsive repetition of sexual and psychopathic stimuli. To this I would have to conclude that Silk Cut, while not actually breaking the rules on "subliminal communication", are doing nothing short of communicating subliminally, and in a very destructive way. The fact that the codes of conduct of the tobacco industry are a secret agreement between the industry and the Government demonstrates the power of such industries to protect themselves

from laws that would seriously threaten their trade. As protection will clearly not come from the Government, other factors must come into play.

We have also seen a contrast with the surreal Freudian imagery of Silk Cut in the Benetton campaigns. Benetton use the other approach currently popular in advertising. They represent the sore truth. This approach invites a direct response from the consumer. As was the case with OXO's adverts, the consumers complained initially. As the campaign continues, the approach gets closer to the edge and causes more and more offense. The earlier images were less offensive and produced the same result, but on an objective level, it is still producing the sales and we are probably going to find out just how far the approach can go.

A powerful institution with a large advertising budget has massive potential to influence culture, for better or worse. As demonstrated by the Benetton campaign, advertisers need not limit their campaigns to security scares and promises of dream fulfilment. The evidence is there, an honest approach sells. To lay all the cards on the table in this manner is a highly courageous move by Benetton. There is no reason why advertisers shouldn't use the Benetton's experiences as inspiration to a whole new area in advertising and as a gauge of consumer responses.

From the view of the consumer there is also a safeguard. If a company has something to hide, high mortgage rates, lung cancer or serious environmental dangers for instance, this approach to advertising would be guaranteed to expose this. In the future advertisers such as lending institutions, cigarette companies or breweries will have to rely more and more on surrealistic advertising.

Since the big scare over subliminal communication in the 50s, the advertising business has never been under such scrutiny. This can never be a bad thing when so many advertisers use questionable means to influence the public.

Regardless of ones opinion of the approach of Benetton, there is one

thing for sure, the posters encourage the scrutiny of current advertising (there own at the top of the pile) more than any other advertising campaign today. This is in itself a massive investment on behalf of the consumer. It automatically causes the likes of cigarette advertising to be further examined and paves the way towards a clearer distinction between the advertising of goods that have negative aspects to hide, and those who don't.

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