

Controversial advertisements and racial discrimination essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



Nowadays, companies would launch different types of campaigns to advertise and promote their brands in order to gain people's attention and raise their awareness. However, the public would just skip or flip through the 'normal' ones since we are confronted with a large amount of advertisements everyday; hence it is important for the agencies to create or come up with something that could make us remember the brand. Some brands succeeded because their campaigns were imaginative and thought-provoking, thus creating a good reputation within the industry while some brands were successful in terms of letting people know their brand but not in a good way by producing controversial advertisements.

Controversial advertisements usually involve elements of gender stereotype and/ or racial discrimination. An example to illustrate the above idea is shown in Fig. 1. This was an advertisement created by Kalyan Jewellers Company in India and it featured the Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. The aim was to sell jewellery through creating a fantasy- by reconstructing a scenario showing the aristocracy from the past. This implied if people buy and wear Kalyan jewellery, then they could be the same as well i. e. the 'upper class'. However, the advert had stirred up controversies because it was too racist. We could see a thin, black child serving his mistress by holding a red parasol over the fair, glamorously dressed actress. The company later explained the advertisement was to portray "royalty, timeless beauty and elegance". This led me to think how far the companies are willing to go in order to leave an impression in their viewers' mind- in this case depicting their brand as royalty by showing child slavery and racial discrimination.

In addition, Fig, 2, 3 and 4 were images taken from the ' Be My Slave' fashion shoot by a Pakistani fashion designer Aamna Aqueel for DIVA magazine showing a dark skin toned child slave serving a well dressed fair skinned model. This series of images had indeed outraged the public and received lots of criticism although the designer claimed that she was just trying to raise awareness for child labour.

However, we should keep in mind that this designer was new to the fashion industry at the time when this editorial shoot was launched; therefore we could not deny that the possibility of her wanting to create something provocative in order to get the public's attention considering the fact that the photos taken were more focused on the haute couture that she designed rather than the issue of child labour. Besides, the title of the shoot ' Be My Slave' definitely showed a high degree of racism and obviously headline making. To the audience, it seemed Aamna Aqueel was trying to support/ tolerate the matter rather than what she claimed.

Fig. 5. (2007) Intel Core 2 Duo Processor advertisement [online image]

Another example was an advertisement created by Intel. We could see in Fig. 5 that there was six black sprinters in position ready to set off and a white man in the middle. A slogan " Multiply computer performance and maximize the power of your employees." was also shown. The sprinters' postures suggested a group of black employees bowing down to the white man whom supposedly to be their supervisor. Don MacDonald, the director of global marketing for the company, explained it was not their intention to show racial discrimination but to " convey the performance capabilities of our

processors through a number of visual metaphors” (2007). Although this ad was pulled back after being widely criticized; it could not be seen as a complete failure in raising the public’s attention because this ad was covered by the media online and in the news, therefore it could be another way to advertise their brand.

Fig. 6. (2011) Nivea ‘ Re-civilize Yourself’ Advertisement [online image]

Fig. 6 showed an advertisement by a personal care brand Nivea selling men’s face and body shaving products. It featured an African- American man with a clean haircut and shaved beard throwing a mask away. The mask was a head of another African man with an Afro hairstyle and a non- shaved beard. The slogan was ‘ Re- civilize yourself’.

List of illustrations

Fig. 1. (2015) Kalyan Jewellers advertisement [online image]. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3053208/Jewellery-brand-withdraw-Aishwarya-s-racist-ad.html> [Assessed 20 November 2017].

Fig. 2, 3 and 4. (2013) ‘ Be My Slave’ fashion shoots for DIVA magazine [online image]. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2325295/Designer-racist-photo-shoot-called-Be-My-Slave-white-women-dressed-high-end-clothes-waited-young-black-boy.html> [Assessed 21 November 2017].

Fig. 5. (2007) Intel Core 2 Duo Processor advertisement [online image]. Available at: <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-10-most-racist-ads-of-the-modern-era-2012-6?IR=T#intel-released-an-ad-they-knew-was-racist-7>

<https://assignbuster.com/controversial-advertisements-and-racial-discrimination-essay-sample/>

[Assessed 2 December 2017].

Fig. 6. (2011) Nivea ‘ Re-civilize Yourself’ Advertisement [online image].

Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nivea-ad-racist_n_930501 [Assessed 7 December 2017].

Bibliography

Agrawa, N. et al. (2015) ‘ Open letter to Aishwarya Rai Bachchan: This ad you figure in is insidiously racist’. Available at: <http://scroll.in/article/722272/open-letter-to-aishwarya-rai-bachchan-this-ad-you-figure-in-is-insidiously-racist> [Assessed 20 November 2017].

BBC News Reporter (2015) ‘ Aishwarya Rai racist jewellery ad withdrawn in India’ in BBC News India. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-32426714> [Assessed 20 November 2017].

Wilson, J. (2013) ‘ Aamna Aqeel Be My Slave Shoot Is Yet Another Example Of ‘ Racist’ Fashion Antics’ in The Huffington Post. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/aamna-aqeel-be-my-slave-shoot-fashion-racism-_n_3268648 [Assessed 21 November 2017].

Daily Mail Reporter (2013) ‘ Designer under fire for racist photo shoot called Be My Slave where white women dressed in high-end clothes are waited on by a young black boy’ in Daily Mail. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2325295/Designer-racist-photo-shoot-called-Be-My-Slave-white-women-dressed-high-end-clothes-waited-young-black-boy.html> [Assessed 21 November 2017].

Feerasta, S. (2013) ‘ Aamna Aqueel: It’s certainly not fashion!’ in The Express Tribune. Available at: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/546542/its->

certainly-not-fashion/ [Assessed 21 November 2017].

Richards, J. (2007) ' Intel issues apologies for racial insensitivity in its recently pulled new product ad'. Available at: <http://targetmarketnews.com/storyid08060701.htm> [Assessed 2 December 2017].

Krupnick, E. (2011) ' Nivea Ad: Is ' Re-Civilize Yourself' Racist?' In The Huffington Post. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nivea-ad-racist_n_930501 [Assessed 7 December 2017].

Moss, H. (2011) ' Naomi Campbell: Cadbury Ad Insulting & Hurtful' in The Huffington Post. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/naomi-campbell-cadbury-ad_n_868909 [Assessed 7 December 2017].

Davis, M. (2005) More than a name: An Introduction to Branding. Switzerland: AVA Publishing SA.

Holt, D. B. (2004) How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding. United States of America: Havard Business School Publishing Corporation.

Klein, N. (2005) No Logo. London: Harper Perennial.