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One Ad Campaign: Effectively Misinforming and Misleading the World

Once just an area of experimentation and discussion for scientists, the debate on global climate change is one of the most controversial and most talked about environmental topics of the 21st century thus far. By appearing daily in the media and on the internet, the topic has reached high public awareness. Due to the high visibility and interest in the topic, many companies are trying to publicize ads that warn about global climate change. This is very, very dangerous. The ultimate goal of most of these ads is to sell a product; not to present completely reliable scientific evidence. A good number of the ads that people see today, which relate to global warming, are highly false. They are successfully brainwashing and misinforming people on the true scientific evidence behind global climate change.

Out of all of the ads which try to relate to the science of global climate change, Diesel's set of "Global Warming Ready" ads are the worst in terms of scientific accuracy (Copeland 1). The set of seven ads were released by the Italian clothing manufacturer in January 2007 (Copeland 1)(Duncan's Print 1). The key purpose of the ads was to show off the company's spring and summer clothing collections. The ads not only obliterate the evidence and future predictions of global climate change, but even make it seem like climate change could make the world better than the way it is now. Each ad is "...stamped: 'global warming ready,'" implying something on the order that we are ready for global climate change and that it will be glorious

(Copeland 1). Even though the ads might be effective in getting people to buy Diesel clothing by relating to a current hot topic, it is absolutely despicable that a company would distort true facts to the extent that Diesel did, just for the sole purpose of making money. Clearly though, the marketing staff at Diesel who made these ads truly know nothing about the science themselves because of what they had to say:

‘Global Warming Ready’ portrays the potential look of this new world while representing it in an aesthetically beautiful way. ‘The shocking effects of Global Warming are not immediately noticeable but are subtly revealed through details in the ads depicting ordinary scenes in a surreal, post-Global Warming world.’ (Duncan's Print 1)

These “shocking,” but scientifically impossible graphics were seen everywhere from Toronto, Canada to the heart of Italy. Anyone who sees the ads will likely either be scared to death about the catastrophic effects of Global Warming as displayed in the photos, or will be looking forward to sunny and tropical weather that will supposedly embrace the world after the oceans rise.

The ads have several rhetorical fallacies and incorrect scientific facts. Yet they still could be viewed as effective ads. Even with all of their flaws, they still effectively draw in the viewer by showing *unbelievable* images of “Global Warming”. The audience is consequently sucked into the ad and is forced to view the clothing on the models. “The [ad] campaign won a Silver Lion for Print at [the] Cannes International Advertising Festival 2007” (Duncan’s Print 5). Not surprisingly though, it did not receive anything special from the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change). Even though the ads have a few rhetorical fallacies, they do not all hurt

Diesel. Some of them seemed to help make the ads more effective in getting people to look at their newest line of clothing.

Each of the ads display a well-known landmark or location which has apparently been “effected” by “Global Warming”. The best three locations to analyze scientifically and rhetorically are the ones at these three locations: The Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, Mount Rushmore, South Dakota in the United States, and Plaza San Marco in Venice, Italy. Scientifically speaking, the ads are completely ludicrous, and do not come close to truthfully displaying the potential sea level rise due to global climate change. The ad with The Christ the Redeemer statue in Brasil senselessly displays the statue, located atop 2296 foot Corcovado Mountain, half covered by ocean water. This is not even remotely possible because even if all of the ice were to melt on Earth, the oceans could only rise a maximum of 180 feet from today’s sea level (Henderickson 1). So if the sea level did rise by 180 feet, the Christ the Redeemer Statue would still be more than 2,000 feet above sea level! Many companies, just like Diesel, put out ads depicting sea level rise. Rarely however, do they have the knowledge, or authority to do so. They thus “speak”, and continue to “speak,” with false authority. The use of false authority in these ads is truly unbelievable. The ad displaying Mount Rushmore, located at 5725 feet above sea level, is another example of an extreme embellishment of what global climate change could do to ocean sea level. The Mount Rushmore ad has the ocean covering half of the Presidents’ faces with a palm tree lined beach with flaunty and near-naked models putting on suntan lotion. The ad itself certainly got a lot of attention, but the science behind it was blatantly flawed. This scene could never take place on Earth because of global climate change.

The ad of Plaza San Marco in Venice, Italy does not logically match the characteristics of all of the other ads. The ad shows the ever so pesky pigeons, normally known to poop all over

the plaza, replaced by beautiful tropical parrots. While not very noticeable at first, this particular ad is a noteworthy example of a Non Sequitur. It does not logically relate to the other two ads because Venice is located at sea level. This means that it would be the one location of all seven which would most definitely be affected by any increase in sea level. Whether they included Venice because it is in the Company's home country, or just because of stupidity, it remains one of the most oxymoronic things that I have ever seen. The least of their worries would be what would happen to the pigeons!

The most prominent emotional fallacies in the three ads are red herrings and scare tactics. Diesel's ads use red herrings to shift the audience's attention away from the general consensus that global climate change is a negative thing. They try to "...present global warming in a 'positive context,' says Wilbert Das, the company's creative director" (Copeland 1-2). Two words for him: Absolutely absurd. The ads also draw attention to the clothing by showing dramatic pictures of an unrealistic "post-global warming world," and thus are able to effectively catch a wondering eye passing by the ad (Duncan's Print 2). Even though the ads successfully caught people's attention, they still upset many people. This is because, "...not only [does it] misrepresent the truth of global warming but mock it entirely!!? An uneducated person who sees this campaign is now more likely to view global warming as a positive thing, an absolute blessing" (Duncan's Print 5). "These ads aren't creating an awareness of ...climate change...What they are doing instead is glamorizing it" (Torontoist 1). From these ads, it is extremely hard to ascertain whether it is worse for people to view global warming in a "'positive context,'" or for them to think that these depicted things could actually happen as a result of global warming even though they cannot.

Either way you look at it, Diesels “Global Warming Ready” ads have caught the attention of many people worldwide (Copeland 1). Whether the attention caught was out of disbelief or out of reassurance, the ads were effective in getting people to notice them and look at the new and chic Diesel clothing that the people in the ad were wearing (or not wearing). In contrast though, this ad campaign was corrupt because it completely distorted and obliterated the scientific findings of the research of global climate change. Diesel has successfully misinformed the general public, which can often be persuaded of things that are not necessarily true. It is appalling that Diesel, like so many other companies, has broadened and amplified the confusion and controversy behind global climate change. It will take the world scientific community years to correct the misinformation displayed by these, and other, ads. You might have made lots of money, but thank you Diesel for making our lives as scientists much harder.

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ADS:



