

## Example Essay Analyzing the Propaganda in an Ad

### “Milk”

Today there are very few things we can do without seeing an advertisement. Do the advertisers use unfair and unrealistic propaganda to sell their products? Clearly they do. One example of this propaganda can be seen by looking at a Milk ad in a magazine. In this milk ad, the advertiser uses unfair and unrealistic propaganda such as the bandwagon, testimonial, and card stacking techniques.

First, evidence of this Milk ad's propaganda can be seen in its use of the bandwagon technique. Largely centered in the middle of the page is the rock star singer Cheryl Crow, with a milk mustache standing holding a guitar in one hand and an hour glass shaped glass of milk. According to Ann McClintock, this technique is called bandwagon. Ann McClintock writes describing its persuasive appeal: “Everyone’s doing it. Why don’t you”(667). This image suggests that because Cheryl Crow drinks milk you should to. The hour glass shaped milk glass plays a role in the bandwagon technique because nowadays most everyone is health conscious. To continue with the bandwagon technique, the ad has the words Got Milk in the right upper corner. Ann McClintock used this very ad: “the national Dairy Council asks us, Got Milk?”(667). In the market place the bandwagon approach lures the buyer.

Secondly, this ad’s propagandistic nature is revealed in its use of the testimonial technique. McClintock, speaking about the propagandistic nature of testimonials, states: “the testimonial capitalizes on the admiration people have for a celebrity to make the product shine more brightly- even though the celebrity is not an expert on the product being sold”(665). We the consumer assume that the mustache is that of milk, received by Cheryl Crow after taking a drink of their milk. Cheryl has on a low cut sleeveless shirt, with buttons that show skin all the way down the blouse. She wears tight fitting blue jeans along with heeled boots. In the ad to the right of Cheryl’s leg is writing that reads: "To keep the fans on their feet, I keep my body in tune. With milk. Are we to believe she keeps her hour glass figure by drinking milk?" According to Ann McClintock, the testimonial technique works because it makes of think: “We like the person so much that we like the product too”(665). The attractiveness of Cheryl Crow is meant to attract us to milk too. This is just an example of the testimonial technique use of propaganda. If Cheryl Crow keeps in tune with milk, so will we. This is an unfair and unrealistic use of propaganda.

The final propaganda technique this milk ad uses is card stacking. McClintock defines card stacking as, “that one side may suppress or distort evidence, tell half truths”(666). One example of card stacking propaganda in this ad is the part they suppress. In the ad it states: "Studies suggest that nutrients in milk can play an important role in weight loss. So if you’re trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, try drinking 24 ounces of lowfat or fat free milk every 24 hours as part of your reduced-calorie diet." This is omitting exactly what role in weight loss drinking milk plays. It also uses the weasel words low fat or fat free milk on your reduced-calorie diet. As stated by McClintock, weasel words are defined as, “small words that usually slip right past us, but make the difference between reality and illusion.” Again weasel words are used in the way the ad has in the left bottom corner having a half shaped hourglass, which on one side reads milk your diet. 24oz, and on the other side of the figure are the words Lose Weight! 24 hours. This use of weasel words and card stacking is unfair and unrealistic propaganda used to sell milk.

This ad for Milk has used unrealistic an unfair propaganda. We can clearly see in the ad the use of bandwagon, testimonial, along with card stacking techniques which are intended to manipulate the viewer into trying their product.

See: <http://www.alamo.edu/sac/english/lirvin/0301/0301Essays/E5eg1.html>