

Commercial Indians: authenticity, nature, and industrial capitalism in advertising at the turn of the twentieth century

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Imagine the sorrow: an American Indian is paddling his way down a quiet river when his harmony with this benevolent natural world is abruptly interrupted by factories spewing pollution and motorists tossing the leftovers of their fast-food lunches out of car windows. The Indian has no recourse other than to shed a single tear of sorrow. Few of the tens of millions of Americans who were exposed to this 1971 advertisement ever forgot the image of Cherokee actor Iron Eyes Cody: the stoic yet mournful face, the famous tear, and the canoe, clothing, and braided black hair that dearly marked him as an Indian. (1) The Crying Indian, which the advertisement was commonly called, traded on the power of the stereotypical noble savage, displaced from an idealized past, paddling his way through a modern industrialized landscape. It was not industrial might that gave this advertisement its considerable passion, however; the emotional potency of the Crying Indian depended on viewers accepting that purity, grace, and simplicity are associated with both Indian people and unspoiled nature. The shock the advertisement created came from seeing nature's innocence defiled by industrial culture. Yet the Crying Indian was no back-to-the-land ecological revolutionary. The degradation of nature presented in the advertisement did not arise from an untenable relationship between industrial society and wild nature, but only from the irresponsible disposal of industrialism's bounty. Despite the ugly realities of pollution, the advertisement aimed to reassure the viewer that nature and industry could coexist.

The ideology underlying the Crying Indian commercials assigned contradictory meanings to different aspects of the material world. The Crying Indian exemplified a harmonious relationship between humans and natural landscapes, all the while justifying industrial society by carefully placing the blame for pollution not on the massive transformations effected by commercial manufacturing but on the irresponsible disposal of industrial wastes and trash. The conflicting ideologies embedded in this advertisement are further illuminated when one recalls that this advertising campaign was created by a trade association of manufacturers calling itself Keep America Beautiful, to help assuage the profound ecological concern that arose in many Americans during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This trade group's propaganda clearly sought to place responsibility for litter on individual actions by the consuming public, but not on the corporate manufacturers of disposable products, or, more fundamentally, on industrial capitalism itself. The advertisement admonished its viewers that people, not economic or social systems, start pollution, and only people (read: individuals) can stop it. Indeed, Keep America Beautiful vigorously fought attempts by environmentalists to enact legislation that would have reduced wasteful packaging and promoted reusable containers. (2)

Though the Crying Indian was created to respond to the specific circumstances of the 1960s environmental awakening, American culture had long associated Indian people with wild nature and had long translated that association into ideologies that simultaneously criticized and supported industrial society. The tensions between the wilderness and industrial modernity expressed by the Crying Indian were especially potent during the rapid industrialization of the late...

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20 SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION Southern state legislatures passed the Jim Crow laws which were used to create and enforce segregation in public places. 21 The Supreme Court case of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) upheld segregation by ruling that "separate but equal" facilities did not violate the 14th Amendment. 26 Many Native Americans did not get American citizenship until the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Download ppt "Section 3 Life at the Turn of the Twentieth Century". Similar presentations. Life at the turn of the 20th Century. How the history of advertising has evolved and adapted to suit new mediums and an increasingly savvy, increasingly social audience online. The aim was to turn filtered cigarettes from a feminine phenomenon to a more masculine one with the help of rugged cowboys and a stream of moody looking men. Even today it's considered one of the best advertisement campaigns of all time. On television, products and characters began to go hand and hand. The simple nature of the ad lent itself perfectly to spoofs, one key way viewers can interact with a brand – almost like a back and forth dialogue. To date, there are more than 300 spoofs of the ad. Taking things online, Lowe's "Fix in Six" home improvement ads filmed through the 6-second Vine app aren't overt ads. An industrial core, an agricultural domain, and a third world tied to the industrial core by economic colonialism → Beginning in the 1870s, the world economy consisted of three interconnected geographic regions consisting of an industrial core, an agricultural domain, and a third world bound to the industrial core through colonialism. The industrial core was bounded by Chicago and St. Louis in the west; Toronto, Glasgow, and Berlin in the north; and Milan, Barcelona, Richmond, and Louisville in the South. Immigrants provided a large percentage of the industrial labor force at the turn of the twentieth century. The Knights of Labor, a prominent labor organization of the late nineteenth century that advocated a "universal brotherhood" of all workers, pursued.