



Naughty?



Nice?

This is by no means a complex illustration, and there is no right or wrong reaction; but what is quickly evident is that the ad at some level willingly plays on racial stereotypes. This is simply one tiny example of how pervasive race is embedded in society.

Reflection

As you look at this ad, what are the first thoughts that come to your mind? With whom or what do you associate the two cars? What do you see? What do you not see? What characteristics would you apply to the two cars?

This advertisement clearly communicates multiple messages. When asked to isolate race, however, we focus our examination on an understanding of the racial tone that underlies the messages. For many people, the Volkswagen advertisement immediately conjures up deep thoughts and sound connections to race. Consider as evidence the following popular responses educators have given to the advertisement over the past five years in Courageous Conversation seminars:

- Black is naughty while White is nice
- Black is bad and White is good
- White is boring
- Black is evil
- Black opposing White
- Black is rebellious while White is conservative
- Black and White don't go the same direction; they are oppositional
- Face-off