

audience: bored boys with too many toys. The answers were also posted on a dedicated website. That is, dedicated to anyone who would navigate a website featuring cartoons of a car talking to an animal.

THE 'RED H' INSIGNIA

This latest campaign, Hondamentalism – can we be forgiven for thinking that there is a certain gratuitousness to this exploitation of current affairs? – a neologism charged with certain notions of single bloody-mindedness, uncompromising and uncritical faith, and extremist fanaticism, is no less demanding. Prima facie, it seems to be another celebration of speed: the vehicle advertised sports the famous 'Red H' insignia of Honda's motor racing cars. Again, as with the choice of name for the campaign, this appears, at least to us toss-pot liberals who write for arts magazines, verging on the irresponsible.

The car itself is a hatchback, which bears a striking resemblance to those machines that youths in baseball caps, always discerning drivers of course, use to career around shopping centres on weekend evenings much to the bemusement and consternation of anyone in the vicinity. By attributing to this vehicle an ensign hitherto associated

exclusively with the racing circuit, arguably the marketing strategy is cleverly, but questionably, circumventing the standards governing the association between speed and desirability that aims to reduce the all too frequent loss of the nation's reckless youth on the roads as they busy themselves driving their cars into trees and anything else that has the temerity to stand in their way.

FUTURIST MACHISMO

This cocktail of futurist machismo (of the seven engineers in the celebrated advert, only one is a woman who hides cowardly behind one of her male counterparts), of all *broom broom* but no *va va voom*, and a somewhat demode matrix aesthetic that has Agent Brown waste Neo before he gets past his first driving lesson, does indeed intend to show that the power of the engines lies in the power of the engineers, who are trained in the power of dreams, and are fundamentalist about Honda.

Playing on this theme, through the marketer's website, you enter a whole universe of games and tests – possibly more thorough than the 11 plus – which you need to pass in order to be a certified hondamentalist. The next step might have been a voucher spat out of the usb port on



completion of the exam which gives you a discount on, say, the purchase of your next Honda. We didn't manage to get that far but try it yourselves: www.hondamentalism.com.

Clearly Honda are continuing to break limits in their marketing, and in their alliance with Wieden & Kennedy (the agency that brought us the Nike advert with the all-to-difficult-to-erase image of a jingoistic, Christ-

like Wayne Rooney looking as if he had bitten the head off a live chicken), unsettling a few ethical boundaries too. As with all marketing, it is of course a question of appealing to a certain audience with a particular disposition. We are buying an idea – for some people the take-up should be relatively automatic – for us it would require a certain 'mentalism'. **ACJ**

