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Programme of study: Surface pattern and Textiles

Module: ADDA4022/C Ways of Thinking

Task Two: Observational Writing (695 words)

Julia,

Apologies for being way over the word count.

I got carried away writing, then didn't know what elements would be best to cut, can you please advise.

Thank you so much,

Sophie.

Semiotic analysis of an advertisement.

In our consumerist world where 'seeing comes before words' (Berger, 2008, p.7), advertisements hold the power to influence our choices, beliefs, and how we perceive ourselves, others, and the world around us.

As a result of digital advancements and the overwhelming popularity of social media we are continually bombarded with advertisements, 'we are now so accustomed to being addressed by these images that we scarcely notice their total impact' (Berger, 2008, p.130). These carefully constructed publications are designed to persuade the consumer to purchase a particular product or lifestyle are argued to be 'one of the most influential ideological forms in contemporary capitalist societies,' Williamson (1978, cited in Rose, p76).

'Publicity increasingly uses sexuality to sell a product or service' (Berger, 2008, p.144), whereby beautiful, glamorous models are flaunted to encourage the consumer to buy a certain perfume or car for example. Jonathan Bignell writes 'the iconic sign of a model can signify beauty because she is not elderly, overweight or below average height' (Bignell, 2003, p.35). In 2004, Dove chose to challenge this precise ideology.

Dove 'Real women, Real beauty' campaign 2004. (Fig 1)



The iconic campaign 'Real Beauty' (See Fig 1) launched by Unilever used 'Real women' spanning a variety of ages, sizes, and ethnicities to promote their brand. This impactful campaign, fighting the stereotypical 'model' broke the mould, with Dove advocating that 'beauty is for everyone and should be a source of confidence not anxiety,' Dove, (2023) Real Beauty Pledge. This bold inclusive move instantly allowed Dove

to stand out in the beauty world, crying out for a broader definition of beauty.

The 'Real women, Real beauty' advertisement at a denoted level, displays a diverse group of happy, smiling 'real' women with 'no digital distortion,' Dove, (2017) Announcing the Dove real beauty pledge. They are all standing and in contact with the person next to them. All the women are wearing differing styles of white underwear. The background is plain white with natural lighting. The dove logo and slogan are displayed centrally above the image.

Delving deeper into the connotations, the diverse group expresses that you are beautiful no matter your age, shape, size, or ethnicity, opposing the 'dominant ideological myth of what feminine beauty is' (Bignell, 2003. P.35), supporting Doves' brand values that 'beauty is for everyone,' Dove, (2023) Beauty Pledge. The women are all in close contact holding one another creating a sense of unity.

The women are smiling, standing in a natural stance, expressing comfort within their own skin and with the women around them. The plain white background allows no distractions and draws your eye to the women. The plain white, no-frills underwear symbolises hygiene and purity, reflecting the brand (see Fig 2).



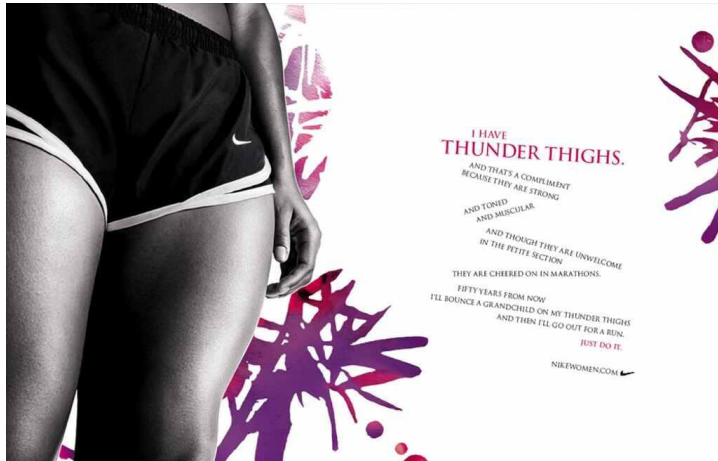
Dove 'pure & sensitive' soap (Fig 2).

The text is aligned centrally to the image, written in a natural handwritten font, adding to the sense of familiarity. The prominent punctuated statement clarifies the core message. Coloured blue it echoes the brand name on the product (see Fig 2), semiotically the colour blue is associated with freedom, trust, and loyalty reflecting Doves values which they have held for 60 years and have cemented recently with the 'Dove Real Beauty Pledge,' Dove, (2023).

When looking at the brand's trademark symbol 'the dove,' we consider Barthes 'tri-dimensional pattern: the signifier, the signified and the myth' (Barthes, (1985) p.114). The myth, 'constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it' (Barthes, (1985) p.114), is the firmly established Christian biblical connection between a dove, peace, and purity, where Noah sends a dove out into a flooded world to find dry land, representing new hope and new expectations. We can determine that the 'signifier' is the gold dove, with purity, and new hope the 'signified'. Here we can view the successful communication of 'Doves' vision of a 'pure' product and a campaign that is initiating 'new expectations' on how the world perceives beauty through Barthes concept.

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In conclusion, Doves controversial groundbreaking campaign endorsing body positivity, empowerment, and self-love challenged the preconceived view of beauty in the media and called for change. 'Publicity exerts an enormous influence' (Berger, (2008) p.153) and thanks to this, other retailers such as Gap, Nike (Fig 3) and Adidas (Fig 4) have followed suit in their use of 'real people' in their advertising campaigns.



Nike 'Real women' campaign, 2005. (Fig. 3)



Adidas sports bra collection, 2022. (Fig. 4)

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List of figures

Figure 1:

<https://www.liveoakcommunications.com/post/why-dove-s-real-beauty-campaign-was-so-successful>

(Accessed: 18/11/23)

Figure 2:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Dove-Sensitive-Beauty-Cream-Packs/dp/B01E2JNE84> (Accessed 22/11/23)

Figure 3:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna8998863> (Accessed 22/11/23)

Figure 4:

<https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/adidas-bare-boobs-sports-bra-ad> (Accessed 22/11/23)