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Analysis Essay

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"Onslaught"

With a catchy tune called "La Breeze" ("The Breeze") playing softly in the background Dove's commercial introduces us to a fresh faced, smiling little girl, representing the essence of what it is to be uninfluenced, be ourselves and be untainted; the little girl is starting right at you through your Television screen, with an expression of curiosity and expectation. The ongoing song playing in the background, its lyrics announcing, ''here it comes...'' a type of announcement, a futile attempt to warn the girl that is unable to heed the onslaught that is about to start.

Dove's Onslaught commercial uses repetition, contrast, emphasis and pathos to focus and communicate the importance of cultivating self-esteem from an early age so that young girls don't give into the peer pressure of looking perfect created by society and the beauty industry.

All women have gone through it at one point or another experienced that pang we feel when we in one way or another compare ourselves to other women we consider beautiful, those women from television and magazines. The punches that the beauty industry delivers so that they can lend us their hand in a soothing gesture, telling us not to worry because they have a solution and that their products and procedures will take care of "it". The "IT" they talk about, ranges from wrinkles to freckles, from overweight to skin color, natural things that define us and make us who we are, problems that may not even exist but that once a tag or label has been placed we find ourselves unable to let it go. Therefore, it begins, the pursuit of beauty, which now is perfection and idealized images.

Once the audience has an opportunity to take in what they later on understand is at stake. A rail of images from frame 0:25 through frame 0:33 depicting lean yet well endowed women, whether on a swimming suit, underwear or provocative clothing, poses and expressions, flashing by so fast expressing that they if not their objective is one and the same, sell through physical appearance or sex appeal. These kinds of advertising campaigns regardless of its point or product can be found anywhere and everywhere. The way the commercial slows down at frame 0:31 to show girls dancing in a television screen, showing how this invasion has reached the comfort of home.

In addition to this from frame 0:33 to 0:36, in the blur of repeating images we are able to distinguish about 8-10 magazine articles with titles such as “Lose inches” or “what will you weight in a year?” Half or more we are only able to distinguish one word, "DIET", and a TV commercial encouraging you to "TRANSFORM YOUR SKIN".

From there we get a glimpse of window shopping, store displays filled with thin framed manikins that are to serve as a demonstration, illustrating how the clothing articles would look best and hinting not so subtly what body they would work better on.

A display of women that almost blend into one and the same comes into view. They describe weight loss supplements utilizing the phrase "You'll look..." followed by emphasized words such as: younger, smaller, lighter, tighter, firmer, all these contexts preying on women's vulnerability, with over the counter products that make promises, "Quick Trim" "Flab Farewell" "Starve Now". All these offers end with these women stressing in unison, making use of emphasis once again declaring, "it really works".

Pursuing this further in frames 0:47-0:52 we can see the contrast when thanks to technology we are presented with the opportunity to take a peek and see the struggle a lot of women go through to lose weight; we see a young woman standing on a scale gaining and losing weight to just gain the weight once again; her eating habits decreasing from eating healthy to eating less and less, and exercising more and more. These routines turn into obsession which brings complications like mental and/or eating disorders.

Consequently we arrive to the plastic surgery territory, when all else has failed or at least women have been convinced of this. Surgery becomes the answer, arrangements for breast implants, procedures, liposuction, eyelid surgery, all these to change the very essence of our beings, our bodies, our given image.

After presenting us with the grim truth we find ourselves finding the contrast between the twisted concept that the beauty industry feeds us and the purity of the little girls we now see on the screen, walking home from school. The girl from the beginning now lags behind, wondering, perhaps affected by what she has seen.

The title of Dove's commercial is very appropriate "Onslaught" which by definition is a type of fierce-full and destructive attack, the relentless bombardment that not only women but also young girls are exposed to on a daily basis is encompassed by such word.

With powerful imagery, music and context, our emotions stir and we have experienced frightening thoughts. Along with the shock, anxiety and perhaps even remorse, this video delivers a condensed version of our distorted standards as well as an eye opener, educating us on how important teaching the new generations about self value can be and the invitation to start doing so now.

Work Cited:

"Onslaught." Youtube.com. October 2007. Web. 29 October 2010.