

GRSJ 300- Culture Jam Assignment



The Perfect Body by Victoria's Secret.

Victoria's Secret (VS) is a world-renowned lingerie store that targets a wide age range of women as their customers. They not only market their products, but they also market their models. They are heavily involved in VS' marketing. Models who are faces of the brand and commit strongly to advertisement campaign as well as the annual show sign a special contract and are known as "angels". (Vogueaustralia 2018) These angels directly advertise the products themselves on their social media platforms, as well as attending store openings and interviews.

This particular advertisement was done for VS' Perfect Body bra campaign. The name "perfect body" in conjunction with the ad as being purely composed of half-naked models, leads the audience to focus more on the physical appearance of the models as a depiction of a perfect body rather than the product itself. In fact, there isn't a single mention of the word bra, which is the product being advertised.

Advertisements as such depict a false image woman has to look like to be perfect, attractive and desirable. Such unrealistic standards women are held up to places them under immense pressure to look a certain way which can often lead to low self-esteem, anxiety and eating disorders.

Women everywhere are held to a higher physical standard and are taught that their appearance is very important. Brands such as VS exploit that culture and create a fantasy through their products. The fantasy they create as a lingerie store is in fact intended for female customers. Subjecting girls themselves to uphold such standards and to be in pursuit of such fantasies create internalized sexism among women. This is particularly important as VS targets young girls as their customers who are especially vulnerable to fall victim to such campaigns.

Additionally, advertisements as such add intrinsic value to the product itself to make it more desirable. In other words, VS products are marketed to not only be of quality products but to be items that make a woman feel differently; to add sexiness and femininity to the customers. Such a strategy appeals to the consumer culture theory, attributing value to products and eventually to the consumer by using the product.

As a result of the black clash, VS made changes to the advertisement. However, instead of tackling the root by diversifying the body type presented on the ad, VS changed the slogan to “a body for everybody”. (Bahadur 2017)



The deconstruction of the advertisement was aimed at revealing the advertisement's controversy that lies in its presentation of a perfect body; as hypersexualized, unrealistically thin and perfectly polished.

The original quotation around the word body-being the name of the bra- was moved to encircle the word "perfect body", revealing the misrepresentation of the perfect body as what is presented on the ad; as tall, tanned and skinny. I believe the intention behind the marketing of this bra in this particular way and given this particular name, was to attribute it to having a perfect body and appearance by purchasing this bra.

Originally, the words under the models were the names of the type of bra they are wearing, however, the names were changed to the issues that arise from the pressure put on women from unrealistic standards of beauty. To name a few, anorexia, internalized sexism, fatphobia, etc. are all rooted in women's lack of confidence in their natural appearance.

Additionally, the three adjectives associated with the product, "perfect fit, perfect comfort and perfectly soft", only apply to women that fit that specific model body type. The product, in fact, might not be suitable the way it is advertised for girls simply not as skinny. However, by changing the phrasing, I took the attention away from describing the product to describing the phenomenon taking place through this marketing approach. What the ad is presenting is an unrealistic image of girls; a myth.

The last alteration made to the advertisement is the changing of the word collection to misogyny, highlighting the root cause of sexual objectification of women as a marketing strategy. Although VS is a lingerie line, and sexiness is part of the purpose of the clothing, the company is taking a non-inclusive approach to defining what is sexy and attractive. The company has been transforming men's constructed fantasy of sexy woman, into an unattainable fantasy for females. By doing so, VS is exploiting and targeting female insecurity as a marketing strategy to sell more products.

The models being so boldly and perfectly displayed on the ad are in fact some girls' angels of insecurity.

Bibliography:

- Bahadur, Nina. "Victoria's Secret 'Perfect Body' Campaign Changes Slogan After Backlash." *HuffPost Canada*, HuffPost Canada, 6 Dec. 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/11/06/victorias-secret-perfect-body-campaign_n_6115728.html?ri18n=true&guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAADzhvnwIRlq-GdwIMF4Yohx7rp-rAUewTnNLXl-1SMSZTkmdSGYBhdAKuoge4w42zF4vQEHE2P4P9PT4So3jCJtzieMckCNe-QdatjNKdCKNH2FhkjJPUf6fPWocxH35mWVteOq08WgPL3Es9v_zf5bueyEuYrbOIhzS44S-L9F.
- Vogueaustralia. "What Is the Difference between a Victoria's Secret Model and Angel?" *Vogue.com.au*, 16 Oct. 2018, <https://www.vogue.com.au/fashion/news/what-is-the-difference-between-a-victorias-secret-model-and-angel/news-story/f738a82eb658248bf2ea5f47f141ca54>.